Tip Sheet Academic Posters

Poster presentations are widely used in academic and professional circles. Most academic conferences include poster presentations, so if you have been given the opportunity to showcase your research using a poster medium, take the opportunity to learn the skills needed to prepare and present your poster.

This tip sheet will show you how to prepare and present an academic poster.

So, why present a poster?

Posters:
- present information visually so your presentation is likely to ‘stick’ in the minds of the audience,
- are often included in academic conferences, where presenters are given time to discuss content,
- are a good way for new researchers to present their work to others in the field, and
- are an effective way to grow your professional networks.

What structure will you use to organise your poster?

- It should be organised to suit your purpose.
- for scientific works – you may consider using the IMRD (Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion) structure.

What are the features of a successful poster?

- Coherence – focuses on the message to be conveyed.
- Thoroughly edited.
- Shows audience consideration.
- Follows basic poster conventions (outlined below).
- Prepared in conjunction with a marking rubric.
- Does not have too much text.
- Balances text, graphics and white space.
- Includes references (when you have used the work of others).

What are some layout considerations?

- Decide on whether the requirement is for a portrait or landscape orientation.
- Follow poster font sizes conventions:
  - Titles (80 – 96 pts)
  - Headings (30 – 36 pts)
  - Text (18 – 24 pts)
- Use font types that are easy to read e.g. Arial, Helvetica.
- Ensure that the text and background colours have sufficient contrast.
How do you communicate effectively when presenting your poster?

- Dress well.
- Arrive early.
- Speak loudly and clearly.
- Stand to the left or right of the poster (don’t block it).
- Interact openly with the audience.
- Point to the visuals to tell a story.