

Programs

- there are a number of programs you can use, but PowerPoint is the easiest and you probably have the most familiarity with it (InDesign, CorelDraw, etc. are others)
- there are some helpful things you can do in PowerPoint which make poster-making easier (e.g., “grouping” elements together to make sure everything lines up)
- you can start from scratch, but the fastest and easiest way is to find a free template you like on the internet (there are thousands!), download it and tweak it to fit your topic
- remember to adjust the poster size to fit the conference criteria

Aesthetics

- visually, it should be simple, tidy, vibrant, attention-grabbing, and guide your audience through your topic
- choose colours that coordinate well – ones that aren’t too garish, but aren’t too subtle, either (it needs to make an impact from a distance but still look good and be readable up close)
- symmetrical layouts are pleasing, but too symmetrical is boring – mix it up
- don’t go overboard with text – make sure you have some interesting pictures as well, but only as many as are appropriate and meaningful to your topic
- check your font and picture sizes – it’s hard to tell on the screen if the size is appropriate, so compare it to a ruler and see if it’s big enough, or too big (a “point” is 1/72 of an inch)
- a good, large main title size is 120 point and a good text size is 20 point (12 is definitely too small for text on a poster)

Elements/Headings

- the conference will dictate the elements required, but your topic will also lend itself to certain headings
- ones you shouldn’t neglect are: Introduction, Sources, Bibliography and Acknowledgements
- label everything well
- include your university or department logo

Proofing and Printing

- proof read! have a friend look it over for any problems (e.g., misspellings, crooked pictures, etc.)
- when you print it, get a proof and check it over (“Imagine” on main campus does a great job and isn’t too expensive)

Presenting

- you only get a small amount of time, so grab your audience’s attention and carry them through your topic with a brief narrative of it (or, hit all the interesting points)
- don’t expect to talk about *everything* on your poster – you don’t have the time and that’s not really what the presentation is for (this can be good – it can spark questions from the audience!)
- dress appropriately; some people dress to coordinate with their posters but that’s up to you – just don’t clash with it