

Conference Poster Guidelines and Tips

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MD directly supports faculty with both the design and printing of academic research posters used at professional conference venues, free of charge. All projects for design and/or print will need to be submitted by ISU faculty or full-time staff (no projects can be accepted directly from students (graduate or undergraduate)).

For all printing and finishing projects that do not require design assistance, CIRT asks for **at least one week** turnaround time. For all projects that require design assistance, CIRT asks for **at least three weeks** to complete the design, proofing, printing, and finishing process.

Questions to Consider Regarding Conference Venue

How much space is available for displaying your poster?

Are there specific requirements on the size of the poster?

- Majority of conferences have this information available on the Web

Will you have wall space or table space available?

- This will determine whether mounting to foamboard is necessary

If you have wall space available, how are you able to attach the poster to the wall (push pins, tape, Velcro)?

- Some venues are very specific on what types of materials can be used to attach your poster to the wall

What do they (the conference) provide for you and what do you have to bring?

- If you prefer a digital display or presentation, you may need to consider outlets, extension cords, easels, etc.

Will you be flying or driving to the conference?

- If flying, you may wish to purchase a travel tube for carrying your poster. If driving, you may instead wish to have your poster dry mounted to foamboard for easy set up. See specifics below for details regarding printing alone vs. dry mounting.

What type of poster can MD create and what size should it be?

MD encourages faculty and students to move into creating one large printed poster rather than multi-board presentations. It looks more professional and it is much easier to transport and set up at the event.

If you are traveling by plane, you may want to consider just having the poster printed and then you can roll it up and transport it in a tube. **MD does not provide tubes.** You can purchase a tube locally at Rapid Reproductions, Staples, or shipping supply companies. Make sure to ask the designer the final printed size in order to purchase a long enough tube. We usually suggest a 42" tube so you can use it for other posters in the future.

If you have table space available, you may wish to have the poster mounted onto foamcore in a tri-fold fashion. Planning for these folds in the beginning stages of the design is important.

If you would like for the poster to be mounted on foamcore for support, the largest we can mount is 42" x 92" (so pretty much any poster we print, we can mount). However, this size poster would be very difficult to handle, so we suggest a more common size (Example: 36" x 48", 36" x 56", 40" x 60").

If you are having your poster printed through MD, the largest we can print on the height is 42".

We prefer to print conference posters on a matte or coated paper rather than a glossy paper. There are benefits to both but the major drawback of glossy paper is that it often reflects light, leaving the poster hard to read from a distance or if there is direct light shining on the poster. The matte finish or coated paper also holds up better if it gets a little damp.

Lamination: MD can laminate your conference poster with a satin lamination material that will help reduce damage to your poster during transport and can make for easier handling with pinning up to a wall. Satin lamination will not reflect as much light as a high gloss print or lamination.

What type of content should be included?

The faculty is always responsible for the content. The graphic designer is NOT the content expert and should not be expected to develop content or proof read provided content. Of course MD will read as much as we can and if we find a mistake, we will change it...but the faculty is responsible for the content being correct. The graphic designer will simply be cutting and pasting the information into the layout document.

The faculty must provide an electronic version of all content to be included on the poster layout. We can retype headings, sub-titles, etc., but the body of the text needs to be provided to us in electronic form, meaning a Word file, editable PDF, or PowerPoint.

The following are only examples of the type of information that is normally included on a research poster:

- Project Title and Faculty Name(s)
- Department/University
- Abstract
- Introduction
- Bulleted points with main subject areas
- Methodologies
- Conclusions/Results
- Further research questions
- References *(it is suggested to not have these on the poster, but rather on a handout)*

- Tables/Graphs/Charts/Images
- **ISU logo (MUST ALWAYS BE INCLUDED)**

What about graphics/images on my poster?

Images can make your poster more visually attractive in a sea of other conference posters. Images and color graphics/text can help your poster stand out among others. We always encourage images to be included on posters, regardless the subject matter.

Remember that we are printing larger than the normal 8 1/2 x 11 sheet, so using the same size images on a letter size paper will not work for a 40" x 60" size poster. We cannot just simply enlarge images clipped from the Web. This will result in a very pixelated image and will not look attractive, plus it is illegal to simply copy the images off a website without the owner's permission.

We always encourage faculty to provide any images they would like included on the poster, especially images they can take themselves. This is the best way to avoid copyright issues and to get the best end result. Another option is to use images taken by University Photography Services:

<http://www.isuphoto.smugmug.com/>

If you have an idea of the types of images you prefer, but do not have high enough quality images to provide, MD can select royalty free images to use on your poster.

We can also scan photos if you do not have them in digital format.

What if you would like to design your own poster?

We encourage faculty to take the initiative to design their own posters, however MD is here to provide that service. Design assistance is only available to faculty and staff. Conference posters that list the student as the first author, will need to be designed by the student and proofed by a faculty mentor. MD uses Adobe Illustrator and Adobe InDesign for poster creation and would encourage the layout be done in one of these design applications. We use Adobe Photoshop to edit any images that will be inserted into the layout document.

If you do not feel comfortable using these programs, a large percentage of faculty/students design their posters using PowerPoint. PowerPoint is not a program designed for creating posters, however, there are still ways of using PowerPoint to achieve a high quality conference poster design. If you wish to design your poster using PowerPoint, you must setup your page size in the beginning to the appropriate poster size (typical sizes: 36" x 56" and 36" x 48"). Do not design the poster at the regular slide size, insert images, and expect the quality to be the same when printed and enlarged 300%+. PowerPoint will also limit your page setup size and will not create posters larger than 56" on the width.

If using a non-standard font, you may wish to send that font along with your PowerPoint file. If you are using Adobe software, make sure that all the images are embedded in the file, your text is converted to outlines, and that the *document color mode* is CMYK. If using unique symbols or characters or a specific plug-in in PowerPoint, we suggest saving your poster as a PDF file to submit to our office. This will ensure that all characters print correctly. If your poster needs to be reprinted due to character errors, you will be responsible for the cost of printing a second copy.

When submitting your file, it is always best to sit down with a designer and have them look it over on the screen for any general errors. You may even wish to print out a small proof before submitting your files, to proof read for mistakes.

Always check to make sure that you have included the "More From Day One" logo on your poster. The correct ISU logo must be somewhere on the poster in order for our department to do the printing. If it is

not included on the provided file, we will insert the logo before printing and notify you of the change. Please refer to the University Design Standards for proper use of the logo:
<http://www1.indstate.edu/marcom/gi.htm>.



Contact the MD office via e-mail for University approved logo files.

When do I need to get my files to MD in order to meet my deadline?

If you wish for MD to design your poster, we ask that you submit your files via e-mail or in person at least three weeks prior to your deadline. The longer MD has, the better the quality of the poster.

If given less than three weeks to complete the poster design and printing, MD **DOES NOT GUARANTEE** that the poster will be completed by the deadline. Projects are taken on a first come, first served basis... so the longer the faculty waits, they are less likely to get their project completed by the expected deadline.

If you design your own poster, MD asks for one week before the deadline to print and/or mount the poster. Minor changes may need to be made and printing issues can always occur, so the faculty/student cannot expect to have their poster printed by their expected deadline if their file is not submitted at least one week prior to the pick-up date.

The Design Process

Step 1: Contact MD to discuss project needs and timeline. If you would like MD to design your poster, set up an appointment to meet with a designer.

Step 2: Meeting with designer... what you will need to bring.

- Sketch up a storyboard or poster mock-up on a scratch piece of paper. This will help you get a better understanding of the content you will need to provide and give the designer somewhere to start.
- Bring all content in electronic form (images/text). Either e-mail the content before meeting or bring on a flash drive or CD.
- Only include the most important content... not your entire research. Cut down your information before submitting to MD.
- If you have a color scheme in mind or a layout you prefer, discuss this with the designer at this time.

During your meeting, the designer will let you know when to expect a proof (all proofs will be sent via e-mail, usually in PDF or JPG format). A completion date will be agreed upon as well at this time.

Step 3: The designer may contact you with any additional questions. If charges are necessary, pricing information will be sent to you and/or your Administrative Assistant at this time. Final billing will not be sent until project is complete.

Step 4: A design proof will be sent to you via e-mail. You will then be expected to proof the design and contact the designer with any changes. Your project will not be printed until you have approved the finished design. If major changes are needed, the completion date may need to be adjusted at this time. Proof reading is not the responsibility of the designer. If errors are not corrected at this point, reprinting after the project is complete can result in charges to your department.

Step 5: Once all changes are made, your poster will then be printed, mounted, laminated, etc. This can often take several days, depending upon the number of pieces and MD workload.

Step 6: A designer will contact you once your project is complete. All projects can be picked up at the receptionist desk in Normal Hall, 120 (basement). If billing is necessary, an intramural voucher will then be sent to your department.

Student Projects

All student projects will need to be submitted by a faculty or staff mentor. Faculty/staff requesting assistance on behalf of a student or student group, will assume all responsibilities for the requested project. This includes software or design training, reviewing content for accuracy, assuring that formatting and file type is compliant with CIRT requirements, and responsibility for all related material costs associated with the project. CIRT will provide a checklist and any support files to faculty/staff that can be used to ensure all requirements are addressed. CIRT will continue to offer printing services for student academic research posters, but charges will be assessed for printing and/or finishing materials. CIRT cannot bill students directly or accept payments from individuals. When the faculty submits a printing request on behalf of a student, his/her department is responsible for all billing charges related to that project. For all student projects, including academic research posters, the design/layout will remain the responsibility of the student. CIRT asks faculty requesting research posters on behalf of students, to collect all files and submit them in one batch, including all project details (size, deadline, finishing materials, etc.).