



Designing an impactful Academic Poster

Purpose of an Academic Poster

- A poster stimulates **interest, discussion** and **feedback**
 - It should **stand alone** – readers must understand key points without you present
 - Your spoken explanation adds details, not essential information
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Core Elements of a Good Poster Design

Title and Author Details

- Keep the title **short, clear** and **descriptive**
- Use a **large font (60+)** so it can be read from a distance
- Include authors, affiliations and relevant contact information under the title

Layout and How People Read Posters

- English-language posters are typically read “**left → right, top → bottom**”
- Use a column structure (usually 2-4 columns). Avoid text spanning the full width
- Break columns into **clearly titled sections**
- Use visuals to break up text and guide the eye

Text: Amount, Style and Readability

Keep it short:

- Aim for 300 to 500 words in total
- Remove non-essential detail – “think, write and reduce”

Make it readable:

- Avoid **italics**, **underlining** and **serif fonts** (e.g. Times New Roman, Courier New). Choose **sans serif fonts** (e.g. Arial, Calibri)
- Do not use light or hard to read colours
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Suggested sizes for A1 posters:

- Title: 60+
 - Headings: 48+
 - Body Text: 24+
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Using Colour Effectively

- Use **2 – 3 main colours** consistently, e.g. same colour for headings. Avoid red/green combinations (due to accessibility)
 - Create a **visual sequence** that guides the reader
 - **White space is good** – don't try to fill every corner
 - If using background images, make them nearly transparent
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Images, Graphics and Data Visualisation

- **Graphics should dominate** – they communicate faster than text
 - Use **high-quality images** that can scale (check resolution)
 - Reference any images you didn't create
 - Use heavier lines in tables/charts for distance-viewing
 - Consider: charts, tables, photographs, infographics, illustrations
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Content: What to include

Focus on key components:

- Research question/background
 - Approach or methodology
 - Results or expected outcomes
 - Implications
 - Conclusions and next steps
 - Avoid overwhelming your audience and **choose what matters most**
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Background and Contrast

- Use background colour sparingly. Solid colours and gradient backgrounds work well.
 - Always ensure **high contrast** between text and background.
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