University at Buffalo
College of Arts and Sciences

Preparing a poster

Tell a clear story for a wide audience

A research poster is a visual summary of your project. Before designing your poster, think about your story and your audience. The Better Poster template is strongly recommended poster design inspiration.

1. Your research story

Your poster should center on the main idea you want people to remember.

Ask yourself:

- What is the big takeaway from this project?
  - This becomes the center of your *Results* or *Conclusion* and can be the central message of your poster.
- How did I get to this result or outcome?
  - That information belongs in *Methods* or *Approach*
- What background does someone need to understand my work?
  - Add this to your *Introduction*.

Start with your main message and build the rest of the poster around it.

2. Your audience

Some viewers may know your field well. Others may be seeing this topic for the first time.

Ask yourself:

- Who is likely to stop at my poster?
- What do they already know?
- How can I explain this clearly without oversimplifying?

Your goal is clarity for everyone, not just experts.

3. Connecting story and audience

Once you know your message and audience, decide how best to show your work.

Consider:

- Which parts of the project are most important to display?
- What should be visual, such as charts, images or diagrams?
- What can I explain out loud instead of putting on the poster?
- Why should someone care about this project?

You may want to include a short section like “Why this matters” or “Impact” to highlight the bigger picture.

QUICK TIP:
The best posters tell a clear story, use visuals thoughtfully and help people from any major understand why the work is important. Being concise and limiting text is key.

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Poster design requirements

All posters must be printed before the event and follow these guidelines.

Poster size

- 36 by 41 inches
- Landscape or portrait orientation

Readability

- Posters should be readable from at least three feet away.

Recommended font sizes

- **Title:** 72 point or larger
- **Author name:** 48 point or larger
- **Section headings:** 48 point or larger
- **Body text:** 36 point or larger
- Figure or image captions: 20 point or larger

Font choices

- Arial
- Georgia

View the UB brand fonts

Color

- Use strong contrast between text and background
- Choose colors that support readability, not distraction
- A white background with dark text and colorful figures is strongly recommended
- Avoid complex background patterns that make text hard to read

Learn about the UB brand color palette

Layout

Posters are read top to bottom, left to right
Use three to four aligned columns
Keep text and visuals neatly aligned

Financial Support

Discuss any questions related to poster printing or presentation-related expenses with faculty mentor.
Please note that poster printing typically costs $60 or more, depending on printing options. If additional financial support is needed, the faculty mentor may contact the College of Arts and Sciences Undergraduate Research Director at cas-ugresearch@buffalo.edu for guidance on available resources.

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Poster templates

Download the UB research poster template

Poster checklist

Use this list while designing and before printing.

Content

- Clear title that reflects your main message
- Short introduction that gives necessary background
- Methods or process explained clearly and briefly
- Results, insights or outcomes highlighted visually
- A clear takeaway or “Why this matters” message

Design

- Poster size is 36 by 41 inches
- Text is readable from at least three feet away
- Fonts and colors are consistent and easy to read
- Visuals support your message and are labeled clearly
- Layout flows top to bottom, left to right
- Download the UB poster template

Before you print

- You can explain every section out loud
- Spelling and labels are correct
- The poster tells a clear story without you speaking