Creating a Research Poster

What is a Research Poster?

A research poster is an organized, visual display of the main points of your research or creative project. Typically, you present your poster in a poster session at a conference or seminar. Conference or seminar attendees will walk by your poster, study its contents, and ask you questions. You should be prepared to answer questions and to explain your project one-on-one frequently throughout the poster session.

To put it simply, a research poster is:
- A way to summarize and visualize your own research or creative work on a single large display
- Your opportunity to capture and convey the main points of your research to your audience

How you design your poster is up to you! Guidelines are offered to help you think about different aspects and the process of creating a poster for your research.

Who will see it and read it?

Your audience will depend on the context of the poster event. Generally, the audience is an assortment of colleagues, classmates, mentors, professors, and professionals as well as leaders in your field or a related field.

People walking by may glance at your poster, stop for a few minutes, or stop longer to hear you present, and some may ask you questions. An effective audience-friendly poster:

- **Presents your research in an organized and visually pleasing way.** Posters typically contain both text and graphics (charts, tables, lists, etc.).
- **Is self-explanatory.** In the case that you aren't standing by your poster, or if you are otherwise engaged in conversation, anyone walking by should be able to view your poster and understand the main points of your project.
- **Is easy to read.** Be sure your text and graphics are large enough that multiple people standing a few feet away can read your poster simultaneously.
- **Is concise.** Your poster should summarize your project quickly and efficiently. Avoid long paragraphs. Bullet points are often very effective. Figure out how you might present parts of your project through graphics. You should be able to explain your poster from start to finish in fifteen to twenty minutes, OR those who are reading it should be able to gather the main points in less than five minutes.
Undergraduate Research Week (May 20-24, 2019)

Undergraduate Research Week showcases undergraduate research and creative projects in the humanities, arts, social sciences, life sciences, physical sciences, and engineering. Events include oral presentations of student research, and presentations of research posters on Poster Day. **Applications are due April 15** – share your research or creative project at an interdisciplinary conference!

**Presenting Your Poster – a few suggestions**

- Wear business casual attire. Wear comfortable shoes as you will be standing for long periods.
- Plan a few versions of your presentation that can be given in 1-2 minutes and 2-5 minutes in length to accompany your poster.
- Your verbal presentation should align with your visual presentation. You shouldn’t be jumping inconsistently across your poster.
- Be prepared for frequent interruptions. Viewers will ask you questions as you go along. They do not wait until the end of your presentation.
- Face your audience when speaking, but point to your poster.
- Start with the big picture. Emphasize your project goal. Walk the viewer through all the panels on your poster. Make sure that you end with a take-home message that brings the viewer back to your big picture.
- Remember: If it is on your poster, you should be prepared to talk about it.

**Posters for Research Week**

- Your poster can be sized **up to 42 inches wide by 42 inches tall**.
- Your poster will be attached to a poster board with pins provided by the Undergraduate Research Center on Research Poster Day.
- You can make a poster in PowerPoint and print it as a poster.
- Posters can be printed at UCLA or at a local printer. See pages 7-8 for printer locations and pricing.
- Posters can also be printed on standard printer paper (8.5 inches by 11 inches). Print the sections of your poster on standard paper, then attached each section directly to the poster board. Arrange the sections into columns and rows on your poster.

**Research Week Poster Awards and Funding Opportunities**

- **UCLA Library Research Poster Grant**: students from all majors can apply for a poster grant within the Research Poster Day application. Poster grants support the cost of research poster printing at the UCLA Library!
  - Apply via the Research Poster day application on **MyUCLA -> Campus Life -> Survey** by **April 15**. Grant recipients will be notified by April 30.
- **Dean’s Prize**: students who are presenting posters for the humanities, arts, and social science projects can apply to be judged for a Dean’s Prize. Applications are due on April 18. Find out more: [http://hass.ugresearch.ucla.edu/urw/awardsfunding/](http://hass.ugresearch.ucla.edu/urw/awardsfunding/)
Elements of the Poster

Posters often have the following sections, which may vary by discipline:

- **Title**: At the top of your poster, you should have a title that is brief but descriptive, and it should clearly indicate the nature of the project. In no more than 200 characters (approximately 30 words, including spaces), describe your research in succinct terms, reflecting the contents of your abstract. Use key words, and do not use abbreviations, non-English characters, or symbols. Capitalize the first letter of all words in your title. However, do not capitalize article words such as “a,” “the,” “and,” and “of,” unless the article is the first word of the title. The title should be easily readable at a distance of about 4-5 feet away. It should be written in “active tense” if possible.

- **Author(s)**: The first name should be the name of the poster presenter; after this, the authors are listed in the order of contribution to the work. Indicate the “presenting” author(s) (meaning you and any other authors who will present the work at Undergraduate Research Week) by writing these names in ALL CAPITALS. If it is appropriate to your discipline to list your faculty mentor as an author, you should list your faculty mentor as the last author. (Be sure to ask your faculty mentor if you are not sure!) Do not include titles or degrees such as Dr., Ph.D., etc.

- **Institution**: Below the list of authors, include your department and the university.

- **Abstract**: Your abstract must be at least 100 but no more than 1550 characters (approximately 225 words). The abstract should include introductory or background information, your argument or research question, the methods employed, and your results or conclusions. End the abstract by stating the significance of your research. Do not use symbols, non-English characters, italicized or boldfaced words, references, figures, or tables in your abstract.

- **Background or Introduction**: Present any background information necessary for the reader to understand your poster. Start with a general introduction to the field. Be brief, but include the important points to be sure the reader sees the relevance of your work. Bullet points are best, versus big paragraphs of text.
• **Hypothesis, Argument, or Research Question:** You should clearly state what you hypothesize based on the background information that you provided. You can include a model or diagram here to help explain the question you are interested in. State briefly your approach to answering your hypothesis. DO NOT go into details about methods in this section.

• **Methodology or Approach:** State briefly your methodology for answering your hypothesis or research question(s) (e.g. experimental methods) or your approach to crafting your argument or thesis (e.g. theoretical, disciplinary, etc. approach). You do not need to go into great detail here; it is often better to include details in figures or graphics.

• **Figures or Images:** Here you present the data or components of your project in visual form. Figures may be graphs, lists, tables, photographs, illustrations, diagrams, or other relevant graphics. Typically, each of your figures or graphics will have a title. If it is appropriate, you should also include a legend for each figure or graphic.

• **Results, Discussion, and/or Conclusions:** Here you state the results and conclusions of your project. Be brief and to the point. You should also indicate the significance of your project: what knowledge has your project added to your field? If it is appropriate, mention any alternative explanations for your results and possible explanations for unexpected results.

• **Future Directions:** If it is appropriate, you should explain what you plan to do next on the project. Do your conclusions lead you to a new question? Are you considering trying a new method to answer your original question?

• **References:** List all sources that you cite in the various sections of your poster. You should list your sources using the citation format appropriate to your discipline and project (MLA, APA, Chicago, etc.).

• **Acknowledgements:** If you are funded by a URC program, acknowledge your respective program (i.e. URFP, URSP, MMUF, etc.) as well as the grant you received. Otherwise, it’s highly recommended you acknowledge those who assisted you on or contributed to your research, which includes the funding source that paid you or provided the funds used to support your project.
Designing Your Poster

• Font size
  o Title – 72 point or larger
  o Author (you) – 48 point or larger
  o Headings – 48 point or larger
  o Content – 36 point or larger
  o Figure or Image captions – 20 point or bigger

• Font choice
  o Choose a clear font to read:
    ▪ Arial
    ▪ Calibri
    ▪ Times New Roman
  o Do not use unclear fonts – examples include:
    ▪ Comic Sans
    ▪ Broadway
    ▪ Harlow
  o Do not italicize text

• Visual information – Visuals can be figures or images. You can check the relevancy of your visual information by listing the visuals that you would use if you were describing your project with only figures or images – do they contribute to your presentation, or do they distract from it?
  o Figures – These should be clearly labeled according to the format used in your field or discipline (ex. APA, MLA, etc.)
  o Images – Make sure that images are high resolution – they should be at least 300 dpi (dots per inch) to avoid blurriness, and inserted (not pasted) to retain image integrity.

• Color
  o Text and background should contrast
    ▪ Background color should make the content stand out
    ▪ Font color should stand out but not be distracting
  o We strongly recommend that you have a white poster background with black or dark text and colorful, eye-catching figures. Having a white background saves ink, and posters with complicated background patterns are difficult for the reader to view.

• Layout
  o Posters are typically read top to bottom, left to right
  o Sections should be organized by columns
  o There should be three to four columns on the poster
  o Columns should be aligned
  o Text should be aligned
Creating a Poster Using PowerPoint

You can create a poster just like a normal PowerPoint slide—only bigger.

- **Set the size of ONE PowerPoint slide to the size of your poster**
  Under the File menu, go to Page Setup. For the size of the slide, type in the actual size of your poster. Your poster can be sized up to 42 inches wide by 42 inches high. Be sure to check with your poster printing location to determine the maximum poster dimensions that the location can print.

  You should always set the page size **before** you begin laying out your poster. Otherwise, you will likely have to go back and revise your poster layout.

- **Insert text**
  Add text to your poster by inserting Text Boxes (under the Insert menu) into your slide. Insert multiple Text Boxes for all of your different text components (title, abstract, etc.). Recommended font sizes are at least 72 point for your title, 48 point for your headings, 36 point for your text, and 20 point for figure labels.

- **Insert images and objects**
  The best way to add an image or object is to insert it via the Insert menu. Make sure your images are high resolution; otherwise, they will appear pixelated once they are enlarged and printed.

- **Adjust spacing, alignment, and size of pictures and text**
  Once you have inserted all of the poster elements, adjust the spacing, alignment, and size of pictures and text to create your desired layout. Make sure your poster is easy to follow.

- **PowerPoint Tip**
  Zoom in to work on detail and zoom out to work on arrangement of parts. Some functions of PowerPoint may not work when you zoom out to fit the whole poster on screen. Select an area to work on and zoom back in to 75-100% to make adjustments.

**Resources**

- Undergraduate Research Center – Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences Poster Guidelines and Template: [http://hass.ugresearch.ucla.edu/urw/guidelines/#tab-id-3](http://hass.ugresearch.ucla.edu/urw/guidelines/#tab-id-3)
- UCLA Logo and brand identity information from the UCLA Library: [http://guides.library.ucla.edu/c.php?g=223540&p=1480860](http://guides.library.ucla.edu/c.php?g=223540&p=1480860)
  (Note: If you use the UCLA logo, it needs to be the official logo!)
- Ten simple rules for a good poster presentation: [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1876493/](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1876493/)
- A web resource for poster assembly presentation: [http://www.swarthmore.edu/NatSci/cpurrin1/posteradvice.htm](http://www.swarthmore.edu/NatSci/cpurrin1/posteradvice.htm)
UCLA & Westwood Poster Printing Locations and Rates

If you would like to have your poster printed, contact one of the following printing locations. Please note that due to the high volume of posters being printed, you should allow for ample turnaround time!

Please also note that some locations may be fully booked by the time you contact them. Contact the printing location ahead of time to ask about printing availability and to schedule the time when you will drop off your poster file for printing. Be sure to ask your faculty mentor about preferred printing locations and any poster printing funds that are available.

Prices may change at the discretion of the printer – remember to confirm pricing prior to printing!

**ASUCLA Bruin Custom Print Shop**
Ackerman Union on the A-Level (opposite Bruin Buzz)
(310) 825-3825
$6 per square foot (matte)
$2.50 per square foot (poster paper)
$7.50 per square foot (glossy)
42 in. x 42 in.: $30.63 (standard poster paper), $73.50 (matte), $91.88 (glossy)

**UCLA Design and Media Arts**
Broad Art Center, fourth floor
issag@arts.ucla.edu
https://support.dma.ucla.edu/print/
42 in. x 42 in.: $81.12 (matte)
42 in. x 42 in.: $83.02 (luster)
printing set-up fee may apply

**UCLA Life Science Illustration Office**
Hershey Hall, Room 210
illustration@lifesci.ucla.edu
$13 per linear ft
42 in. x 42 in.: $68 (glossy)

**UCLA School of Engineering**
Boelter Hall, Room 2685
https://www.matserv.ucla.edu/poster-printing/
$7.50 per square foot (glossy)
42 in. x 42 in.: $91.88 (glossy)
Mailing tubes in 36”, 42” and 48” lengths (3” diameter) at $3.50/ea
UCLA Mail, Document & Distribution Services  
555 Westwood Plaza, Level B, Los Angeles, CA 90095  
(310) 825-0433  
mdds@mdds.ucla.edu  
https://www.mdds.ucla.edu/document-services  
42 in. x 42 in.: $111.02 (matte or satin)

UCLA Psychology Technical Services  
Franz Hall A544  
Open Monday-Thursday  
(310) 825-3430  
techservices@psych.ucla.edu  
http://www.psych.ucla.edu/departmental-units/facilities/technical-services/graphics-and-media  
Contact via email with initial printing inquiry in advance to see if they have the bandwidth to print your poster. This printer reaches capacity quickly and may not be able to print your poster.  
$11.04 per linear square foot (semi-gloss)  
42 in. x 42 in.: $38.65 (semi-gloss)

Copymat Westwood  
10919 Weyburn Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90024  
Open Monday – Friday 9AM – 5PM  
www.copymatwestwood.com  
printit@copymatwestwood.com  
(310) 824 5276  
$7.50 per sq foot (satin, semi-gloss, or matte)  
42” x 42”: $90 (satin, semi-gloss, or matte)  
Arrangements can be made outside of normal business hours for pickup  
Same day turnaround is available if needed at no extra cost

FedEx Office (formerly Kinko’s) in Westwood  
10924 Weyburn Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90024  
http://local.fedex.com/ca/los-angeles/office-0897/  
(310) 475-0789  
$7.50 per square foot (matte)  
$7.96 per square foot (heavy coat)  
$12.50 per square foot (photo glossy)  
42 in. x 42 in.: $91 (matte), $97.50 (heavy coat), $153 (photo glossy)  
UCLA students will receive an additional 10% discount
Research Poster Examples

The Effects of Cumulative Life Stress on Cardiovascular Stress Reactivity
Alisa Der Sarkissian, Ji Min Jun, Holly Rhum, Anthony Portesi, Alexandra Dupont, M.A.
Department of Psychology, UCLA

Solution

- Participants were divided into two groups based on their cumulative life stress levels (low vs. high).
- Participants were exposed to a stressor task (e.g., public speaking).
- Cardiovascular reactivity (HRV, blood pressure) was measured before, during, and after the task.

Posttest Relations

- Life Events Checklist: A questionnaire measuring perceived stress through life events.
- Participants were asked about the most stressful events they had experienced in the past year.
- Perceived stress was correlated with cardiovascular reactivity.

Outcomes

- Stressful life events were associated with increased cardiovascular reactivity.
- Participants with high life stress levels showed a greater increase in blood pressure and heart rate.

Method

- Male and female participants (N=120) were recruited from the UCLA community.
- Participants were randomly assigned to high or low life stress condition.
- Stressful life events were assessed using the Life Events Checklist.

Conclusion and implications

- The results suggest that cumulative life stress is associated with increased cardiovascular reactivity.
- This finding has implications for understanding the role of stress in health outcomes.

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A Nation of Change: Mapping Race and Poverty in the United States
By Gabriel Augusto Sanches (UCLA)
Faculty Advisor: Professor Matthew Snipes, Sociology
Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality (SPE)

Research Question

How have the economic circumstances for ethnic and racial groups in the United States changed from 2000 to 2017?

Background

- With the election of President Barack Obama, many have argued that the U.S. has become a post-racial society.
- However, recent data and research show that racism has become an unintended factor in determining opportunity in the United States.

Method

- Data regarding population size and poverty status for each racial group was obtained from the 2000 and 2017 decennial Census and the American Community Survey (ACS)

Findings

- The population of each racial group has changed significantly from 2000 to 2017.
- The population of the U.S. has increased overall, but the percentage of the population that identifies as White has decreased, while the percentage of the population that identifies as Black, Latinx, and Asian has increased.

Visual Analysis

The illustrations (map) displayed are of the various census maps that depict the percentage of persons belonging to the poverty line for White, Black, Latinx, and Asian populations throughout each U.S. county.

Moving Forward

- Whether poverty status has increased for each racial group remains uncertain.
- More data and analysis are needed to fully understand the impact of economic and social factors on poverty status.

Based on initial observations, poverty status for each racial group has changed in some regions while remaining stable in others.

Acknowledgments

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