**What is a Poster Presentation?**

* A poster is a *visual* presentation of information and should be designed as such - do not simply reproduce your written paper in poster format.
* It should be understandable to the reader without verbal comment - someone might look at it while you are talking to another delegate, or while you're away from your poster
* Remember what you are trying to do:
  1. catch the delegate's attention
  2. tell them what question you were trying to answer
  3. tell them what you found out

**Creating your poster**

**Plan on paper first.** Let the technology serve the message, not dictate it.

Once you've planned it, you can use Microsoft PowerPoint or Word to create your poster. These are not graphical layout applications, but they are adequate in most cases.

* In **PowerPoint**, create your poster as a single slide. You can set the page size when you start using *Design > Page Setup,*so if you want an A1 poster (594mm × 841mm), you can specify this before you start (there isn't an A1 option, but you can enter the dimensions manually).
  + PowerPoint also allows you to add guidelines to help you line up the poster elements. Click *View,*then tick *Gridlines*.
* In **Word**, create your poster as a single side of A4. You can always scale it up when you come to print it.
  + Add a grid by clicking *View* and ticking *Gridlines.*
* In **both applications**, you can add text boxes to the page using *Insert > Shapes*. This approach allows you to control exactly how text is positioned on the page.

When the poster is designed, you should convert it to PDF for printing, using PDF Creator or Adobe Acrobat. The conversion process can be problematic: edges of words and images may be cut off near to the margins, images may appear degraded or misshapen, poster elements may have shifted and become overlapping. However, by ironing out these problems at the conversion stage, you avoid nasty surprises later when you come to print it out. When the PDF looks good, you can be pretty confident that the printed version will also be OK.

Test your poster early, and regularly, by converting to PDF and printing to A4, to make sure you're not storing up layout problems that will be difficult to correct later on.

**Images and PDF conversion**

When converting your poster to PDF, take care that your images are not degraded in the process. They may look fine on-screen but then look blurry or pixellated when printed as A1.

The following process, in Word or PowerPoint, will ensure that images retain their resolution up to A1 size (provided that they were sufficiently high-resolution in the first place - 300 pixels per inch should be sufficient).

First, set the page size:

* *Design > Page setup...* in PPT / *Page Layout > Size* in Word
* (Word only) Choose *More paper sizes...*at the bottom
* Set *Width* to *59.4 cm* and *Height* to *84.1 cm* (A1)



If using Adobe Acrobat to convert to PDF, check the print resolution before converting:

* Set printer to *Adobe PDF*and click *Printer Properties*underneath
* Select *Layout* tab and click *Advanced*...
* Set *Graphic > Print Quality*to at least 600 dpi

**Content of the poster**

* Make sure the **title** and **author's name**are prominent and eye-catching.
* Remember to include **contact details**.
* **Tell a story**: provide clear flow of information from introduction to conclusion
* Focus on your **major findings** - a common fault is to try to cover too much. Few delegates are going to read everything on your poster, so get to the point.
* Use graphs, tables, diagrams and images where appropriate. Use boxes to isolate and emphasise specific points.
* Always follow the conference guidelines, which may be specific about what you are expected to present.

**Design suggestions**

* Use all the **space** at your disposal, but do not cram in the content - white space is an important part of the layout, and good use of it can make a poster elegant and arresting.
* Use **colour** sparingly - limited use of a few colours is more striking than a 'rainbow' approach. Think about why you are using colour; it is especially useful for emphasis and differentiation.
  + Avoid colour combinations that clash (e.g. red on blue) or cause problems for people with colour-blindness (e.g. red and green in proximity).
* Use white or muted colour background (e.g. pastel shades)
* The **flow of information** should be clear from the layout; if you have to use arrows to indicate the flow, the content could probably be arranged better.
* Clearly label diagrams/drawings and provide references to them in the text where necessary.
* Again, follow the conference guidelines, which may be quite specific about paper sizes, font sizes etc.
* The title text should be readable from 6 meters away - at least 48-point text. (Note that if you are creating your poster in A4 format, to be blown up to A1 format later, the final printed font size will be approximately 3 times the size you are working with.)
* The body text should be readable from 2 meters away - at least 24-point text
* Choose a clear font with large inner space (i.e. the space inside the loops of letters such as 'o', 'd', 'p'). Good examples are Arial, Verdana, Georgia or Helvetica.
* Serif or sans-serif text? Short answer: it doesn't matter, as long as it's legible. See Alex Poole's thorough article ["Which Are More Legible: Serif or Sans Serif Typefaces?"](http://alexpoole.info/blog/which-are-more-legible-serif-or-sans-serif-typefaces/), which punctures a few of the myths surrounding this subject.
* Keep the word count as low as possible.