

Research Poster Basics

I. What Makes a Good Poster?

- Important information should be readable from about 5-10 feet away
- Title is short and draws interest
- Text is clear and to the point
- Use of bullets, numbering and headlines makes it easy to read
- Effective use of graphics, color and fonts
- Consistent and clean layout
- Includes acknowledgments, your name and institutional affiliation

II. Where to Begin?

Some questions to consider when formulating your poster contents:

1. What is the most important/interesting/astounding finding from my research project?
2. How can I visually share my research with the attendees? Should I use charts, graphs, photos, images?
3. What kind of information can I convey during my talk that will complement my poster?

III. Design Elements

1. Logos

A logo is a design that represents an entity. The FIU logo is proprietary. Use your unit's official logo. If in doubt, always use one of the logos created for the [College of Engineering and Computing](#).

Unacceptable Executions: Do not

- reproduce sloppily or in low resolution
- remove or omit the vertical lines
- distort
- add anything to the logo
- use other colors
- reproduce it if height is less than 0.28"



2. Spacing

Students often make the mistake of trying to fill all of their poster in their enthusiasm to include as much as possible. You want people to find the information easily and feel that they can absorb it quickly and comfortably while standing at a poster fair. Open space helps give them this impression and invites them to read. Try to keep 40% of the poster area empty of text and images.

3. Typography

A font should be readable. Make it easy for those who don't have much time to get the information they need. If viewers are familiar with a font, reading speed and comprehension are improved.

In **print** media, serif fonts are easiest to read and provide quick comprehension: the small finishing strokes guide the eye and the variation in stroke width aids character recognition. Convention, what people are most accustomed to, suggests choosing one of the common serif fonts for body copy. Use FIU official fonts and typography to achieve a professional, uniform look-and-feel in documents, presentations and other assets. FIU's official fonts are **Adobe Garamond** (serif) and **Helvetica** (sans-serif).

It is also acceptable to use **Arial** in PowerPoint presentations to ensure consistency across older versions of the software.

Try to use no more than three fonts in your document: If you use more than three fonts your information hierarchy gets confusing, order is hard to maintain, and your poster starts to look disorganized.

4. Font Size

Use large fonts that can be easily read from 5 feet away. Take two steps back from a test print out. Can you read the text? Do the headlines command attention? Body copy should be no smaller than ¼ inch—that's at least 18 points. Some sources recommend using body copy that's 24 points.

Your title should be about 1½ inches tall— that will usually be at least 120 points.

5. Colors

Use of correct FIU colors helps us create professional-looking assets that help reinforce our brand identity. Our official colors are provided in a variety of color spaces to address a range of print formats. Blue and gold are the university's official colors. Bright gold, cyan and magenta are the secondary colors that are used throughout the brand. White is used as a neutral and alternate background color to blue. More information about FIU colors can be found at [FIU Brand website](#).

	FIU Blue	FIU Gold
Coated Paper	PANTONE 282 C C: 100 M: 87 Y: 42 K: 52 RGB Hex Code: #081E3F	PANTONE 125 C C: 26 M: 46 Y: 100 K: 6 RGB Hex Code: #B6862C
Uncoated Paper	PANTONE 282 U	PANTONE 117 U

Black text on white has high impact and excellent readability.

For your poster to be read quickly and easily, you need to maintain high contrast between the text and background. A neutral colored poster on matte board is more pleasing to the eye than one on a bright colored background.

Using colored text for short passages can add impact as long as there's still contrast. Yellow text on white is difficult to read. Red on black, black on red, and blue on black are difficult to read, too.

Bright, saturated colors can be jarring or distracting to the viewer. The primary colors, red, yellow, and blue, tend to look garish. These effects can detract from your message or make viewing unpleasant enough that someone may choose not to bother.

IV. FIU Resources

- FIU Branding Standards: <https://brand.fiu.edu/brand-standards/>
- FIU News & Communications Style Guide: <https://externalrelations.fiu.edu/news-media/style-guide/index.html>

V. External Resources

- Contrast Checker: <https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/>
- Designing Communications for a Poster Fair, Penn State: <http://www.personal.psu.edu/drs18/postershow/>

VI. Contact Information

When in doubt, students can contact:

- 1) Their mentors, advisors, instructors
- 2) Staff administrators, program coordinators in their schools
- 3) Engineering Information Technology Center (EIC) for poster [print guidelines/assistance](#)

If the poster is prepared for the [senior design showcase](#), students can contact:

- 4) Senior design/capstone project coordinators/lecturers in their units
- 5) College of Engineering & Computing Senior Design Showcase Planning team for general questions about senior design showcase via CECShowcase@fiu.edu