Research Poster Cheat Sheet

Basics and Layout

- 800 words or less
- 56" wide, 40" tall maximum
- No less than 35% white space
- Align your columns carefully
- Put less important material at the bottom

Color

- Avoid dark backgrounds
- Pair strongly contrasting colors
- Don't make color the only way to understand a visual aid -- use symbols as well
- Screen color and print color are often different
- It's much easier to design on top of white backgrounds

Art and Graphics

- Design large and scale down if necessary
- Never make an image larger or stretch it
- 300dpi is minimum resolution
- Resist using images you find on random web sites
- Use only images created by you or those with open licenses
- Do not violate copyright law

Graphs and Charts

- White background is best
- Short, descriptive title
- Label elements directly instead of using a key
- Don't use grid lines
- It's best to create your graphs in PowerPoint itself, or to import them from Excel

Getting it Printed

- Make an appointment in advance
- Check printer guidelines
- Call: 804.828.0636
- E-Mail: libtmlsca@vcu.edu

Helpful Resources

General Guides and Hints

Advice on designing scientific research posters
http://www.swarthmore.edu/NatSci/cpurrin1/posteradvice.htm
An excellent, thorough guide to preparing and presenting scientific research posters, including helpful examples and templates

Creating a Large Format Poster in PowerPoint
http://ssrl.brown.edu/support/design/large_posters
A helpful step-by-step guide to laying out your poster in PowerPoint, including screen captures and tips

Ideas and Inspiration

ePosters.net, the online journal of scientific posters
http://www.eposters.net/

Poster Sessions Pool on Flickr
http://www.flickr.com/groups/368476@N21/

PhDPosters Gallery
http://phdposters.com/gallery.php

Art and Graphic Assets

VCU Identity (logos and other VCU graphic elements)
http://www.identity.vcu.edu/graphic/
Remember, the VCU Identity Standards require that if you use the VCU logo, you must use the "Virginia Commonwealth University" bar as well. Poster templates provided here are mostly half-size -- it's better to create your own full-size poster layout using the provided elements

PhDPosters Gallery
http://phdposters.com/gallery.php

Flickr (high resolution photos)
http://www.flickr.com/
Use the Advanced search feature to limit your search to Creative Commons licensed images and click through "All Sizes" to the highest resolution available

Wikimedia Commons (photos, charts, graphs, diagrams)
http://commons.wikimedia.org/
Try browsing by categories to find results, and always click through to the largest version of the image

VCU Libraries Resources

Large Format Printer Guidelines
http://www.library.vcu.edu/tml/information/printer_guidelines.html
Gives the requirements and rules for having a large-format print made at the Tompkins-McCaw Library

Large Format Printer FAQ
http://www.library.vcu.edu/tml/information/printer_faq.html
Get answers to frequently asked questions about the printer and poster design