GENERAL AIM AND FORMAT

Use the poster as a means for generating active discussion of your research. A poster is a graphically-based approach to presenting research.

Limit the text to about one-fourth of the poster space, and use visuals (graphs, photographs, schematics, maps, etc.) to tell your story.

VISUALS

Present numerical data in the form of graphs rather than tables (graphs make trends in the data much more evident). If data must be presented in tables, KEEP IT SIMPLE.

Leave out or remove any unnecessary details. Visuals should be simple and bold.

Make sure that any visual can stand alone (i.e., graph axes are properly labeled, maps have north arrows and distance scales, symbols are explained, etc.).

Use color to enhance comprehension. Neatly coloring black-line illustrations with color pencils is entirely acceptable.

Integrate the text and the visuals. Figures should be numbered consecutively according to the order in which they are first mentioned in the text.

Consider briefly titling each visual (for example: Figure 1- Location of Study Area).

TEXT

Keep the text brief. Blocks of text usually should not exceed three paragraphs (viewers won't bother to read more than that). Use text to: (a) introduce the project (What was tested, investigated, or created? Why was the project worth doing?); (b) explain visuals and direct viewers’ attention to significant trends or relationships portrayed in the visuals; and (c) state and explain the interpretations that follow from the project. In many cases, conclusions can be summarized in a bullet-point list.

Consider including sections on future research plans or questions for discussion with the audience, depending upon the stage or nature of your project.

Cite and reference any sources of information other than your own, just as you would do with a research paper. Ask your faculty mentor about the particular citation system that you should use (every discipline uses slightly different styles). Often a "References Cited" is placed at the end of the poster.

MISCELLANEOUS SUGGESTIONS

Keep to the point. Present only enough data to support your conclusions. On the other hand, make sure that you present sufficient data to support your conclusions. Simplicity is the key.

Create a list of the visuals that you would use if you were describing your project with only the visuals. Write the text after you have created the list of visuals.

Rehearse a brief summary of your project. Many viewers will be in a hurry and will want a quick "guided tour" of your poster. Don't be afraid to point out uncertainties in your work; this is where you may get useful suggestions.