Tips for Designing a Research Poster

You put a lot of work into your research; now it's time to make it look great, too!
A well-organized design is essential in a good research poster, so don't rush through this part of the process.

Benefits of downloading a template from CURCA website
- ○ Templates are already sized correctly - - choose your preferred size
- ○ Three design options: Traditional, Modern, or Blend of Traditional & Modern
- ○ Hope College logo is already there in high resolution and with a transparent background
- ○ You can easily modify fonts, colors, and layout to fit your design needs

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Celebration Website: hope.edu/academics/celebration-undergraduate-research

TRADITIONAL DESIGN

Standard Sizes for Research Posters
Select the actual size of the poster

Research Poster   24"x36"   36"x48"

Below are samples of more modern templates which were designed by a MSU doctoral student. These templates are available as '36x48'. You may resize the document and if you need help, stop by the Digital Media Lab, located on the 2nd floor of Van Wylen Library.

MODERN DESIGN

BLEND OF TRADITIONAL & MODERN
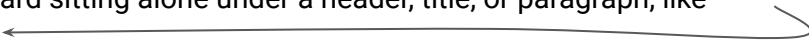
Checklist to Review Before Starting a Poster

Tips compiled by Sonja Glover, Digital Media Lab Specialist | glover@hope.edu

WHAT IS THE SIZE OF YOUR RESEARCH POSTER?
- ❏ Before you start, *resize* the document to the actual size of your poster.
  Research poster options: 24x36 and 36x48

- ❏ Make sure the Hope College logo is downloaded from the Public Affairs and Marketing website; hope.edu/marketing. **Download a PNG format** and **insert** into the document. DO NOT copy and paste; you do not get the same quality. Keep it in proportion, don't stretch it out to fit the space.

Visual Accessibility

TEXT

- ❏ What size is your smallest font? Try to avoid any text smaller than 24pt, which would be difficult to read from 6 feet away. Focus on words that grab the attention as people walk by. Visitors need to be able to read the poster efficiently.

- ❏ Check your tabs and bullet points to ensure they are aligned and indented.
  CHECK: Do all the bullet sizes and styles match? Be consistent.

- ❏ Don't leave a single word sitting at the bottom of a paragraph. One word looks exceptionally awkward sitting alone under a header, title, or paragraph, like
  this.

COLOR

Are the colors you choose accessible and appealing?
- ❏ Use high-contrasting color combinations
- ❏ Include white space
- ❏ Limit to 2-3 colors
- ❏ Color combinations to avoid:

Green + Red	Blue + Green	Grey + Green
Green + Brown	Blue + Purple	Grey + Blue
Light Green + Yellow	Black + Green	

GRAPHICS

- ❏ Step back and look at the poster from a 6 foot distance. Does it look too crowded? What can be eliminated or reduced? What stands out? Break up the wording with graphs or images.

- ❏ View the graphics and images at 100% on your computer screen. If they look pixelated or blurred on the screen, they will be pixelated when printed.

- ❏ Did you use any screenshots? If so, underlined words that are not in the dictionary will captures a screenshot with the red underline. Run spell check or "add to dictionary" to clear the underline before capturing a screenshot.

- ❏ Background: is it in color? If so, is it still easy to read the foreground text? Does the text need to be bolder? Avoid a large photo or patterned background; file size gets too large and won't print properly.

- ❏ Before you submit your poster to print, save it as a .PDF and make sure you open it, look it over. Carefully proof it one last time.