

TIPS for MPH POSTERS

As an MPH graduate student, you will have many opportunities to make and give poster presentations related to public health. Please follow these general guidelines.

Allow yourself ample time to make a meaningful poster. Generally, **at least** 2 months before the event is not too soon to create your poster, at a minimum to have it reviewed by your major professor/advisor before it is printed. The MPH Office will also review your poster, but will not type or design it. This is a valuable skill for you to learn.

Posters are generally made in PowerPoint as one slide. The size will vary depending on the event/organization requirements, anywhere from 3’x4’ to 4’x4’. If stated, follow the instructions for size exactly. Also, if you are printing an unusual size, check with the printing service to make sure they can print the size you are requesting.

Attention to detail is vital. As a general concept, the information should stimulate discussion about the topic. Because space is limited, keep text to a minimum, emphasize graphics, and make sure every item in the poster is necessary.

To use printing resources available to MPH students, you must allow at least 2 weeks or more for printing. For PHN and PHPA emphasis areas, check with your major professor/advisor because they need to OK the printing. *Note: Proof read and check your poster carefully before submitting it for printing. The colleges listed below will only pay to print your poster one-time. You are responsible for any errors that result in a second printing.*

Emphasis Area	College Resource	Print Time	Contact Person
PHN and PHPA	Health and Human Sciences	2 weeks	Faculty mentor/ major professor
IDZ and FSB	Veterinary Medicine	2 weeks	MPH Program Office

PREPARATION and LAYOUT

- Include the title and authors of the poster as listed in your summary/abstract.
- Information on the poster should read like a book – flowing from left to right and top to bottom.
- Use arrows or identifiers (sequential letters or numbers) to guide the reader through the poster.
- Arrange it in two or three vertical columns, but not horizontal strips.
- Place the introduction at the upper left and the outcome/impact/concluding comments at the lower right. Objectives and other information will fill the remaining space.
- Keep it simple – too much information leads to messy or “busy” posters.
- Avoid overwhelming your audience with too many numbers, words, and/or complicated graphs.
- Stick to two or three main points; too many can confuse the viewer. Get feedback from others before finalizing.

TEXT

- Double-space all text, using left justification.
- Use short sentences, simple words, and bullets to illustrate discrete points.
- Written material should be concise. Avoid using jargon, acronyms, or unusual abbreviations.
- The outcomes/impacts should permit observers to focus on a concise statement of your central findings that lends itself to discussion.

FONTS

- All information should be large enough to read easily from at least 4 feet away.
- Suggested text size is no smaller than 24 point; Author(s) and affiliation(s) should be at least 42 point; Subheadings should be at least 60 point.
- The title should be printed across the top of the poster in characters of 80-150 point.
- San serif fonts are easiest to read and include: Arial, Calibri, Century Gothic, Lucida Sans.
- Choose one font and then use it throughout the poster.
- Add emphasis by using boldface, underlining, or color. (Italics are difficult to distinguish from regular print.)
- Do not use all caps unless it is for one or two word headings. ALL CAPS TEXT IS NOT EASY TO READ.

ILLUSTRATIONS (GRAPH, CHARTS, PHOTOS, ETC.)

- The success of a poster directly relates to the clarity of the illustrations and tables.
- Self-explanatory graphics should dominate the poster (at least 50% of your poster space).
- Keep captions brief.
- A minimal amount of text should supplement the graphic materials.
- Graphic materials should be visible from a distance of four (4) feet.
- Only include essential information in graphs and tables.
- Label data lines in graphs directly, using large fonts and color. The use of legends and keys requires the viewer to take more time to interpret your message.
- Lines in graphs should be thicker than normally.
- Use colors to distinguish different data groups in graphs. Avoid using patterns or open bars in histograms.

USE OF COLOR

- Overuse of color can be distracting – restrained use of 2 to 3 colors at the most.
- Two to three related background colors will unify the poster.
- Use a light background with darker photos; a dark background with lighter photos.
- Use a neutral background (gray) to emphasize color in photos, a white background to reduce the impact of colored photos.

MPH POSTER REQUIREMENT

- The MPH curriculum requires that you produce at least two items during your time in the program. A poster on a public health topic to a non-academic audience fulfills part of this requirement if you send a PDF of your poster to the MPH Program office.
- The MPH Office will accept any layout. If you do not have any guidelines, suggested template layouts are available on the MPH website (www.k-state.edu/mphealth/current/ scroll down to Other Resources at the bottom of the page)

OPPORTUNITIES for MPH POSTER PRESENTATIONS

- Graduate School research forum held in the fall and spring. Check the Graduate School's website for requirements and deadlines.
- Bug-A-Palooza held each Spring (generally the 1st week of April) in cooperation with the Riley County Health Department.
- Kansas Public Health Association meetings held each fall and spring.
- Phi Zeta Research Day (available for CVM students)
- College specific presentation forums
- Agency/organization where you complete your Applied Practice Experience on a relevant topic for the agency/organization.