



Quick guide to **Research Poster Content & Design**

► **What is a research poster?**

A research poster is a visual method for presenting your research. It contains all the sections of your research in a condensed format. Due to its limited space it is beneficial to use visual communication to explain your research, so graphs, charts, tables and pictures are balanced with the text.

► **What is the purpose of the poster?**

There are many nuances to a poster, to present research findings, for an assessment, interview preparation, or to advertise a product or a service. All have one thing in common, to attract and maintain audience attention. Therefore, think about who your poster is for:

Academic - Peers - Students - Researchers - Public demographic

Ask yourself, does my audience know this terminology or, do they understand the topic? This will help when deciding what to include and what to omit.

► **Content**

Map out your project. Don't include everything in your poster; too much information will make it cluttered and lose the viewers attention. You need to select the information that is most relevant and will communicate your research in a creative and visual way.


► **Structure & Layout**

Help your reader navigate through the poster and the information. This can be achieved in various ways, for example, by numbering each section, a visual clue e.g. an arrow or, using text hierarchy (different font sizes).

The research poster should include:

An introduction	Outlines the aim/purpose of your study
A methodology	Highlighting what you did to carry out your research. You can present this visually using diagrams or flowcharts.
Literature, relevant and key	Explain the main points made by the authors. Include in text references that are current for your discipline.





Findings	Can be presented in a visual graph with labels that direct the reader to information within your discussion. Alternatively, use lists without bullets.
Discussion	Make sure there is a balance of information for your reader to understand the research, not too text heavy, but enough so encourage your reader to engage with the content. You can use lists and keep sentences succinct and to the point.
Reference list	In a format used by your department, and use a small text size.

► Orientation, Size & Design

Your handbook will inform you of the poster size, for example, PowerPoint or A1, A2, A3. Whichever size, all informative text should be readable from 1.5m away. Test this by printing a section.

If there is no guidance on orientation, evaluate whether the information is best presented using portrait or landscape.

Generally people read from left to right. You can use columns, as seen in a newspaper, to help your audience read and navigate through the information.

Colour and aesthetics, if executed well, will attract viewers. Use a minimum of two or three colours from the colour wheel (pg 4). Be mindful not to detract from the text colour, and be aware that some people have colour blindness.

Unless a typeface is specified it is advisable to use Ariel for clarity. Only use one typeface throughout the poster, using text hierarchy to communicate important areas of your research. To enhance your audience engagement keep your paragraphs short, left aligned and increase spacing. Also, keep italics, capitals and underlined text to a minimum.

The general rule for a balanced poster is 40-50% text, 30-40% image, and 20% blank space. Don't be afraid to use blank space and images as they enhance the audience's understanding and engagement with the poster.

Numerical data is best presented in graphs. Maintain good image quality by using a high resolution (see pg 4).

Please see example opposite

How do students perceive the effect of watching movies on their academic studies?

1. Introduction

Watching movies is a popular recreational activity amongst 18-25s (Watts, 2014; Davies 2016), but researchers have conflicting views on the effect of watching movies has on academic achievement of undergraduate students. This research aims to explore how students themselves perceive the effect of watching movies on their academic studies.

2. Literature review

Allen (2015) found that students who watched at least one movie per week were 30% more likely to achieve a 2:1 degree than those who never watched movies. However Stevens (2017) suggests that watching more than three movies per week can actually have a detrimental impact on grades. Studies on this topic have been quantitative and so do not offer an insight into the thoughts and feelings of students watching movies.

3. Methodology

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with twelve third-year undergraduate students at the University of Surrey. The students ages ranged from 20-64, with the most common age being 21. Seven of the students were female and five were male. The group of students included representation from all three faculties at the University.

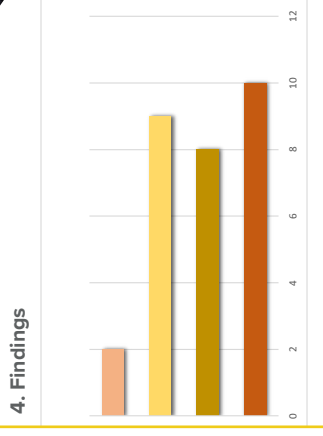
Interview data was analysed using a grounded theory framework (Wilson, 2011).



The findings of this study complement existing research on the topic by exploring how students perceive the effect of watching movies on their academic achievement.

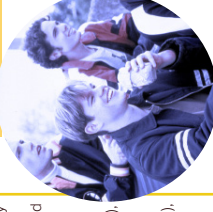


It appears that students use movies as a way to take a break from studying. Regular breaks from study is known to have a positive correlation with wellbeing (Stokes, 2015), which in turn may help the student to better cope with the pressures of academic study. However, it is important to note that for some students, watching movies becomes an activity which takes up too much time.



References

- Allen, S. (2015) 'Movie mania: does watching films increase the likelihood of achieving a first?' *Journal of Movies in Higher Education*, 12(2), pp.23-29.
- Davies, C. (2016) 'Recreational activities among UK university students' *Fun in Higher Education*, 8(1), pp.64-75.
- Stevens, B. (2017) 'End credits: measuring the impact of TV and film on undergraduates' *Journal of Academic Achievement*, 16(1), pp. 48-61.
- Stokes, J. (2015) 'Relax, don't do it: encouraging breaks for student wellbeing' *International Journal of Happiness*, 20(3), pp.16-25.
- Watts, K. (2014) 'Campus provision for recreation: a UK study' *Journal of Extra-Curricular Activity in Universities*, 15(1), pp.112-125.
- Wilson, T. (2011) *Qualitative Data Analysis*. London: Mosby Hartington.



Further research is required to understand why some students develop difficulties in this area.

Joe Blogs, module/programme

► Additional information

If your poster is solely a literature review, you will be presenting evidence about the articles in question; whether they have any bias or are a valuable source of information. This must be backed by evidence drawn from the articles.



► Picture quality and repositories

To maintain picture quality whilst scaling an image for your poster use a JPEG or PNG that has a high pixel per cm ratio, for example 300 to 500 pixels. The following online sites offer quality images under a Creative Commons licence; meaning they are free to use in any scenario:

unsplash https://unsplash.com/	Pixabay https://pixabay.com	BurningWell https://www.burningwell.org/
ImageAfter http://www.imageafter.com/	Clker.com (clipart) http://www.clker.com/	StoryBlock - images https://www.storyblocks.com/

► Colour

Rotate the shapes on the colour wheel to achieve the correct colour combination:

Complementary	
Triadic	
Analogous	