Tips and Tricks:
When Creating a Scientific Poster

First, figure out the poster requirements and likely audience of the conference or other event.

Next, begin to sketch out your poster. Include such sections as:
- *Title* (1-2 lines)
- *Introduction* (200 words)
- *Materials and methods* (200 words)
- *Results* (200 words)
- *Conclusions* (200 words)
- *References*
- *Acknowledgments* (*including funders*)
- Further information (including your contact details or the address of a website with more information)

Remember that less is more and pictures are worth a thousand words!

Avoid long-winded sentences and instead use bullet points to highlight key methods, results, and conclusions. (Results are often better represented with simple figures, rather than words).
- Make sure to answer the questions:
- What did I do?
- What are the key (or unexpected) findings from my research?
- How does my research add to the universal body of research?
- Where is this research leading?

Now, choose a design program. Microsoft PowerPoint is often used but remember that it does have limitations.

Design tips
- Don't clutter the poster. As a rule, around 35% of the poster should be white space.
- Use a light, single-color background and a darker color for the text
- Keep the width of text boxes to around 11 words and the height to roughly 7 rows or 10 sentences.
- Include simple, informative titles for all figures and graphs
- Do NOT use 3D graphs.
- Ensure that all graphs and photographs can be seen and understood standing 6 feet or 2 metres away.
- Use high-quality images, no blurring or pixelation.
- Add a black or grey border on photos to make them stand out.
- Design your poster in an 'eye friendly' manner so that it is easy to navigate. Avoid making the reader guess where to go next.

After you've drafted your poster, print out your poster on smaller A3 or A4 paper and proofread and edit for both content and aesthetics.

Once you're satisfied with what you've created, ask friends and colleagues for constructive criticism. Ask somebody who doesn't work in your field (or even a non-scientist) to review the poster. If possible, find somebody with a creative or artistic flair to also review your poster.

In a good poster, good aesthetics and good science (content) meet. Posters are about effectively communicating your results. You want your readers to be thinking about the science – not how the background makes the text difficult to read.

Once you're received feedback, correct the poster and send it off to the printers. If you have the resources, laminate the poster as well. The poster's life doesn't end at the end of the conference-you can hang it in your office, your lab, or even your bedroom.

Prepare a talk of 3 to 5 minutes, to highlight and draw attention to key aspects of your research. Perhaps also prepare A4 copies of your poster as well as business cards or contact details to hand out at the conference.

Finally, get a good night's sleep the night before the conference and look forward to the next day. Remember, you're presenting your hard work and you're likely to know more about that specific subject than most people you'll speak to. Those who view your poster will be interested in what you've done. Give it your best shot and remember that creating a poster is a skill that takes experience and effort. Don't leave it until the night before!

Helpful resources:
http://colinpurrington.com/tips/academic/posterdesign
http://www.makesigns.com/tutorials/