

Capture your audience's attention with a title that clearly and concisely indicates the theme(s) you are addressing.  
**How to Create an Academic Poster for the  
 Get Published! Student Research Conference**

Abdulla Omaigan, Oxford Brookes University

State your name and institutional affiliation under the title.

**Abstract** For guidance on how to produce an abstract for your poster, login to RADAR with your Brookes username and password at: <https://radar.brookes.ac.uk/radar/items/6acf8c11-a1fd-49a4-8ba7-a5ad7e90e2a5/1/>

Distilling your research to fit onto a poster is a valuable attribute (Hill and Walkington, 2016). The aim of this poster is to break the process down into three distinct, easy-to-follow steps: drafting the content, designing the poster, and dealing with copyright issues. By the end, you should have the confidence required to make a poster of your own.

**Poster Content**

Choose your research topic based on previous work you have done. Break your theme down into several key ideas to ensure your poster is structured. These can take shape under generic section headings commonly found in scientific papers e.g. Introduction, Methods, Results, Conclusion and References (Hill and Walkington, 2016); alternatively, you can replace these headings with key phrases that indicate each section's content e.g. in Figure 1, you can see how the author has split their poster into the two main sections besides the abstract and the summary: "The real needs of refugees" and "Insulation of canvas". Do not include everything – you will be there to explain the research; though, the poster should make sense without you as well. Consider your target audience – since they will be non-specialists, you will need to convey information in every-day language as opposed to

through disciplinary jargon (University of Leicester, 2016). In some cases diagrams or images may help (see Figure 1 again). Furthermore, consider how much space you have: approximately One source suggests in between 300 and 500 words (University of Leicester, 2016). However, anywhere in between 500 and 800 words is acceptable e.g. see this poster which is 796 words.

For more examples of posters, visit the Student Research Collection on RADAR at: <https://radar.brookes.ac.uk/radar/access/home.do>

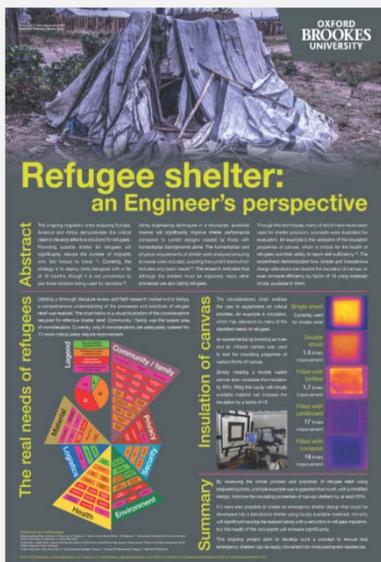


Figure 1: "Refugee Shelter: An Engineer's Perspective" Poster

**Poster Design**

**Layout**

Adjust your line spacing to 1.5 and ensure that information is set out in a way that is logical and easy-to-follow (e.g. see this poster). Choose a background that allows for ease of reading; that is, one that is not textured and, if you want to use a photograph as the backdrop, then adjust the transparency levels so that it does not dominate.

**Images**

This feature concerns the *relevance, resolution and referencing* of the photographs you use; ensure that all images are appropriate for the topic being explored, have a resolution of 300 pixels per square inch and are referenced in line with standard academic practices (Hill and Walkington, 2016).

**Colours**

Aim for around two to three main colours and use complementary ones, or shades of the same colour, to make your poster more visually appealing (e.g. see Figures 1 & 2).

If possible, also try to blend these colours with those in your images.

**Text**

This aspect takes into consideration *font type, size and style*, as well as use of *spacing*; whereas you should use the same font type across the poster, font size and style can vary with function e.g. see the difference between this poster's title and sub-titles, as well as between the body of the text in this section and the list of references.. Use a line spacing of 1.5 for the body of your text (e.g. see this poster) and determine whether left or full justification is more suitable for your poster.

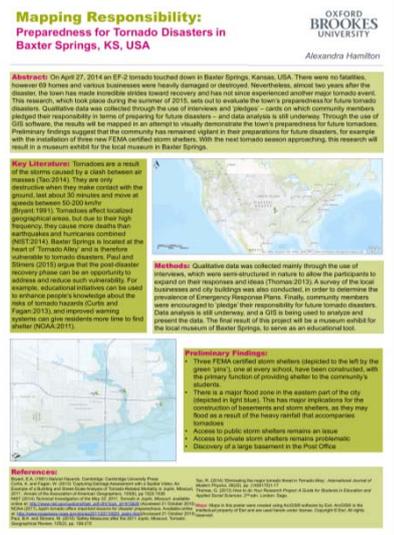


Figure 2: "Mapping Responsibility" Poster

**Copyright** For more copyright guidance, visit: <http://bit.ly/copyrightgetpublished>

Since you are presenting for an external audience and your poster may be made available online, it is important to be aware of copyright regulations before using any type of media material – such as images or diagrams – in your poster. These rules exist in order to protect individuals who create their own work (CopyRight User, 2016). Unlike referencing books or journal articles, you cannot simply use another person's media work and reference it in the same way; instead, you must have permission from the copyright owner. Some websites do give permission for their material to be used under specific circumstances; you should check the terms and conditions to see if you are allowed to use their material in an online publication for educational or non-commercial purposes. You are recommended to search for material on platforms which help you understand the terms and conditions available, e.g. Creative Commons (<https://search.creativecommons.org/> - chose the commercial purposes search), or which have been set up with the purpose of being shareable, e.g. MorgueFile ([www.morguefile.com](http://www.morguefile.com)), Pixabay ([www.pixabay.com](http://www.pixabay.com)).

**Summary**

In hindsight, there are three main elements to consider when creating an academic poster. Firstly, the content of the poster, where you distil your ideas into relevant sections and consider your audience, language and word count; secondly, the design of the poster, where you think about the layout, colours and text you will use; and lastly, the copyright regulations that accompany use of others' media files. If you follow all of these guidelines and follow-up on the references given below, then you will be able to confidentially create your own academic poster. Though, it is important to remember that your poster is only one step of the overall poster – once created, it becomes merely the basis upon which you start a dialogue with others about your research.

**List of References** Do not forget to include a reference list. It can be smaller than the rest of your text size, but it still has to be visible (Hill and Walkington, 2016).

- Hill and Walkington (2016) 'Effective Research Communication', in (eds) Clifford, N., Cope, M., Gillespie, T. and French, S. Key Methods in Geography. London: SAGE Publications, pp. 62-87.
- Oxford Brookes University (2016) *The Get Published! Student Research Conference: Guidelines for Producing Your Academic Poster*. Available at: <https://radar.brookes.ac.uk/radar/items/6acf8c11-a1fd-49a4-8ba7-a5ad7e90e2a5/1/> (Accessed: 28<sup>th</sup> June 2016).
- University of Leicester (2016) *Designing a Poster*. Available at: <https://connect.le.ac.uk/> (Accessed: June 22 2016).

