TO: Ph.D. Students Preparing Practicum Posters
RE: GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCH PRACTICUM POSTER PRESENTATIONS
Date: Revised 30 July 2025

16:194:608: Research Practicum (3 cr.) is required for all Ph.D. students. This requirement is met by a student registering for this course with a member of the program faculty who has agreed to supervise the student's participation in a research project of interest. Students are expected to contact faculty directly with practicum projects/ideas. The expected outcome of the Research Practicum is a poster or paper (single or co-authored) submitted to a recognized conference or refereed journal. The results of the Research Practicum will be presented by the student at a Ph.D. Poster Session typically held at the end of each semester.

Most of the professional conferences we attend have a poster session component. Posters are meant to visually communicate research findings. The researcher can elaborate on elements of the research study as other conference attendees look at the poster and ask the researcher questions. The research practicum emulates a conference poster session, where participants each create a poster describing their work, print them out, physically display them on easels (usually in the 2nd Floor Student Lounge at SC&I), and stand by them for approximately two hours while members of the SC&I community look at the posters and ask questions.

When you have completed your Practicum, you should let the Ph.D. program know so your name can be added to the list for the next poster session. You will then be asked to provide the title and a brief abstract of your practicum project and poster to the Ph.D. program in advance of the poster session. You will be emailed reminders and dates, so please pay attention to and respond to these emails promptly.

The following guidelines are offered to help you prepare your poster and participate in the poster session:

1. Think about your audience. Who are they and what message do you wish to convey to them? What do you want the audience to learn from your poster?
2. Past practicum participants have used several pieces of software to create posters, including Microsoft PowerPoint and Adobe Illustrator. There are also free online tools that can be used, such as Canva.
3. Remember that you will primarily be communicating visually. This might mean large text/words, appropriate use of color, large photos and other graphics.
4. Make sure to include at the top of the poster: your poster title and your name. Also be sure to include the name of your supervisor, whether on the poster, or printed on a sheet of paper displayed on or near the poster. It is also important to have the Rutgers logo prominently displayed.
5. Avoid too much text-heavy material and emphasize messages/titles and graphics/visuals that will grab people in a few seconds. It may be helpful to have some primary level headers and visuals that can be grasped in just a few seconds to capture audience interest. Then, have some more detailed information that may take several minutes to consider. Remember, you can elaborate on your research to observers of your poster, so only include the most critical details on the poster. Less is more!
6. Have your elevator speech ready. Anticipate questions and think about how you would answer these.

7. While the size of the poster varies by conference, standard sizes are 24" x 36" and 36" x 48" – both portrait and landscape (usually landscape). Many students choose to repurpose their practicum posters for a conference, and for this reason, students can choose a poster size based on conference requirements.

8. Poster printing is the responsibility of the student. A poster printing service is available through the SC&I IT office. You may also print the poster at Alexander Library. When printing the poster, submit it to the printer as a PDF or other file in which the text is embedded. Otherwise, the fonts might change based on which ones are available on printing center's computer. In addition, create and save the file using a CMYK color profile. Keep in mind that the colors displayed on the screen might vary from the colors that print, and avoid use of contrasting colors or those that might make text difficult to read. When in doubt use black lettering on white background for all text and leave some white space.

9. Allow enough time for: 1) review of your poster by your advisor for the practicum (students who skip this step regret it later), and 2) for printing the poster, which takes approximately two weekdays.

11. The Ph.D. program will provide you with an easel, poster board, and clips to display your work.

12. Consider creating supplementary materials, such as copies of a summary/abstract of what you did and what you discovered as part of your research project. If you have many references, create a handout for a bibliography rather than putting these on the poster which clutters it up.

We are looking forward to learning more about your project through this poster display. Email us at sciphd@comminfo.rutgers.edu if you have any questions!