Poster Printing Guide for Students

Using OTS Student Computing Services' Large Format Printer

Introduction

Creating documents for and printing to the HP DesignJet printers in OTS Student Computing Services (SCS) is not particularly difficult. But, due to the high cost of paper and ink and considering that SCS does not charge students for this service, trial-and-error printing is not something we can afford to do. We need to take all reasonable steps to ensure that the first print is acceptable. To that end, we have developed the following advice, guidelines and procedures.

Only academic posters in fulfillment of a class assignment or other faculty-supported projects may be printed. Printing is by appointment only (see Page 2).

Start Fast with Templates

The poster templates available on the SCS website are preconfigured for the SCS DesignJet printers and can help you fast focus on your content.

1. Open towson.edu/scs
2. Click **Printing** on the right
3. Click **Large Format Printing** on the right

The available templates are PowerPoint, Publisher and Adobe InDesign files. For many users, Microsoft PowerPoint makes a familiar and flexible design and layout tool for large documents; Microsoft Publisher is even more flexible if you know or are willing to learn it. Adobe InDesign is a high-end layout application available across campus as part of the Adobe Creative Cloud collection. Regardless of the format, using a template will allow you to bypass the set-up tedium. If your file is not in one of these formats and does not print satisfactorily the first time, SCS reserves the right to postpone reprinting until a professional staff member can be consulted.

If you want to mount your poster on a presentation board, acquire the board dimensions before you create the poster so that you can size your document appropriately. A popular three-panel presentation board composed of a 24"x36" center panel and two 12"x36" side panels is available at the University Store and local office supply shops. The SCS website includes a template for this type of board.

If you can't find the right size template for your project, email scspro@towson.edu with the details and we'll investigate creating a new template.

Develop Your Poster

A Worthy Width: The SCS DesignJet Z5400 prints to either a 24-inch or a 42-inch wide roll of paper. Posters narrower than 24 inches will require trimming; if you use an SCS template or otherwise set your width/height to 24 or 42 inches, trimming will be unnecessary. Whether height or width, the smaller dimension of your poster must be 42 inches or less, or you will have to print it in pieces (tiles) and assemble it for presentation.

Breathing Room for the Eyes: Regardless of its size, a page filled to overflowing with text content is hard to digest. Sometimes assignments do not allow for much design flexibility; nevertheless, good design should make effective use of negative space, the empty areas of the page. The following general steps may serve as a useful guide:
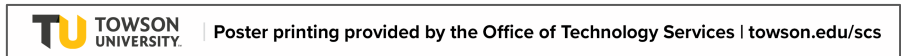
1. Edit your text down to the essential information before composing your poster. The longer argument is not necessarily the stronger argument. Further, eleventh-hour text edits can wreak havoc with an otherwise solid design.

2. Set page margins and column spacing to at least one inch. Margins of less than one inch will likely make your poster look overcrowded and you audience feel claustrophobic.

3. If possible, increase the line spacing (leading) of your text. Often, smaller text with greater line spacing is easier to read the larger text with lesser line spacing. (Say that ten times fast!)

Contrast is King: If the color of your text is similar to the color of the background on which you place it, it may be difficult or impossible to read. As a rule, if your text is difficult to read on a computer display, it will be even more so on paper. Towson gold text on a white background is a bad idea.

High Rez, It's Nice to See You: Image resolution is a measure of detail in the image. As a rule, the higher the resolution, the greater the available detail, the higher the image quality. High resolution images usually make for better looking posters. When selecting images, look for versions with pixel dimensions in the thousands. Images copied from web pages—typically 72-96 pixels per inch—will appear jagged and fuzzy when enlarged. Many clipart images, such as those available via PowerPoint's and Publisher's Insert> Pictures menu, are resolution-independent (vector graphics) and will remain sharp at any size.

Some Like it Dry: The DesignJet printer uses inkjet technology. Consequently, your poster will be particularly susceptible to the ravages of moisture. To play it safe, consider bringing a large plastic bag to your printing appointment so that you can safely transport your poster regardless of the weather conditions.

The Attribution Solution: To keep this free service free, OTS requires that all posters include a small attribution graphic. It is available in white, gold or black and is already included in the SCS templates. If you are not using a template, you can download the graphic from the SCS Large Format Printing page.

TU TOWSON UNIVERSITY. | **Poster printing provided by the Office of Technology Services | towson.edu/scs**

Make a Printing Appointment

To make a 15-minute printing appointment:

1. Sign into SCS ORBS at http://towson.siso.co/scs.

2. Click **Make Bookings**.

3. Select **Room** under **What would you like to book?**

4. Set your desired start (Pickup) and end (Return) times; be sure the difference between the two is only 15 minutes.

5. Click **Search Assets**.

6. Click **Printers Large Format**.

7. Click **Book.**

8. Enter your phone number.

9. Select your academic major from the **Major/Dept** drop-down list.

10. Click the **Terms & Conditions** slider to acknowledge your understanding.

11. Click **Confirm**. ORBS will announce your successful booking and send you a confirmation email.

12. Sign out of SCS ORBS.

What would you like to Book?

Room

Please select a time duration

| Pickup | Fri 28 Jun 2019 | 11:00 |
| Return | Fri 28 Jun 2019 | 11:15 |

Search Assets

Reset

Printers Large Format [LF

Poster Printing for Students

Book a 15-minute appointment to print your academic poster on our HP DesignJet Z5400 42-inch color inkjet printer. If at all possible,

Book

Submit Your File to SCS

We prefer that you bring your poster file to SCS (Cook Library, Room 35) in PDF format on a USB flash drive. If you are unable to do this, you may email the file to scs@towson.edu. However, **you must be physically present** for your printing appointment, during which a staff member will preview your poster **with you** and complete a brief pre-flight check to ensure:

- The dimensions of your poster are appropriate for the printer

- There is no critical content within the half-inch non-printing border region of the poster

- There are no graphical conflicts, such as obscured text or inadequate contrast between text and background

SCS may offer technical advice. While you are not obliged to revise your poster, SCS is likewise not obliged to reprint your poster if your disregard for our technical advice results in an unsatisfactory print.

Let's Roll!

Once we have addressed any potential problems, SCS will print your poster from one of the computers at the Service Desk. After the printer cuts the page loose, carefully remove it from the output bin and lay it flat for review and rolling. From this point on, the poster is in your hands. Keep it dry, avoid folding or creasing it, and enjoy the larger-than-life presentation of your hard work.

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