Microsoft Powerpoint

Powerpoint is part of the Microsoft Office suite of programs. It is most commonly used to prepare slides for oral presentations and, in fact, many of the lectures you attend will have been prepared using it. Powerpoint allows the viewing area of each slide to be adjusted to accommodate different media such as 35mm film, A4 paper, Overhead Projectors and On-Screen shows. The latter is the format used for data projectors of the type seen in lecture theatres.

The dimensions of the viewing area can also be customised to suite a variety of non-standard media and this enables it to be used to prepare Poster Presentations.

Opening Powerpoint

Log on to your file space in the usual manner and start Powerpoint opening it from the Start > Programs > Microsoft Office menu

Create a blank Poster

Powerpoint should open with a single page created with the default settings. These include text spaces for a title and sub-title. On the right of the screen there should be a side-bar headed “New presentation”. If this is not shown open it

Select File>New

On the side-bar,

Select Blank Presentation and you will be presented with a number of options for laying out the viewing area.

Select the first under Content Layouts. This will turn the viewing area completely blank.

Now we need to change the dimensions of the viewing area to that of the final poster size.

Select File>Page Setup

A window opens,

Select Custom (scroll down) under Slides sized for: You now need to enter the dimensions of your poster. We want these to be A1 size, so enter 84.1 and 59.4 into the width and height boxes

Select OK

Note, these numbers need to be exact but it is up to you to decide the orientation of the page (portrait or landscape). The blank poster has now been created.

Note that Powerpoint automatically sizes the page so that it can be presented on a computer screen. You will see in the toolbar at the top of the screen that your poster is being displayed at 27% of its true size. Change this to 100% to see how it appears at full size.
**Basic principles**

**The Background**
The background can be anything you like. Plain colour, colour gradients even an image. However, backgrounds which are too complex can be distracting. To change the colour from the default (white)

Select *Format>Background*.

The window which opens assumes you are making a slide with bar charts etc. Ignore this and select the window underneath. You will be presented with some basic colour options, *more options* and *fill effects*.

Select *more options* and choose a colour from the chart or create your own by selecting the *Custom* tab.

Select *OK>Apply* and the colour of your poster background will change.

You can now add objects such as text, charts and images to the background. Each object occupies its own layer which extends over the whole viewing area even though the object you have added may only be small. Think of objects being drawn on overhead transparencies which are applied to the background one on top of the other. The position of these layers in the stack can be changed as you will see.

Objects are inserted by selecting *Insert* from the menu and then selecting the type of object you wish to insert.

**Adding text**
Text is applied within text boxes drawn on top of the background.

Select *Insert>Text Box*

Move the cursor over the drawing area. Note the change in the cursor to designate that you are creating a text box. Left click anywhere in the viewing area and type some text into the box. Once text has been added to a text box, the box and the text can be formatted in a variety of ways. Select the text box by right clicking anywhere within it and then

Select *Format>Text Box*. Experiment with the various options presented.

Any number of text boxes can be created, formatted differently and placed in different positions. Remember that they each occupy a layer which will be apparent when two or more overlap.

**Adding images**
Select *Insert>Picture>From file*

Navigate to the picture file in your filespace (H:), select it and then select *Insert*.
The picture will then appear in the viewing area.

**Note**
Images can be a problem because they can be re-sized simply by selecting the image, placing the cursor over one of the corners and dragging it across the page.
While this may produce an acceptable result on the computer screen which displays images at 72 dots per inch, it may be totally unacceptable when printed at 300 dots per inch which AVS will use to print your poster. You can estimate the quality of an image by test printing it in Black and White at the required size on A4 paper.

**Adding shapes**

Powerpoint provides a variety of shapes which can be formatted. Locate the Drawing Toolbar which is normally found at the bottom left of the Powerpoint screen. This allows you to insert lines, arrows, rectangles, ellipses and also provides an alternative route to enable textbox and picture insertion among other options. In *Autoshapes* you will find more complex shapes. Once drawn, shapes can be formatted including rendition in 3D. Take a little time to experiment with the various shapes and formatting.

Shapes can be used to create a border for your poster by drawing a rectangle to occupy all the available space except for a small area around the edge. Colour the rectangle differently from the background and you have created a border. Borders can be effective but make sure the colours do not clash.

**Positioning objects on the page**

You can change the layer an object occupies relative to the other layers by first selecting it then

Select *Draw>Order*

You can move elements around the page by selecting and dragging with the cursor. They can also be rotated by grabbing and dragging the rotate-handle marked in green.

To help you position elements on the page you can use a grid

Select *View>Grids & Guides*.

You can also snap objects to the grid or even other objects. Another positioning tool enables you to align objects relative to each other.

Select *Draw>Align or Distribute*.

Powerpoint contains much more than what has been covered and you are encouraged to explore the many different options. However you are advised not to produce an overly elaborate poster because this can be distracting.