Creating a Poster using PowerPoint 2016
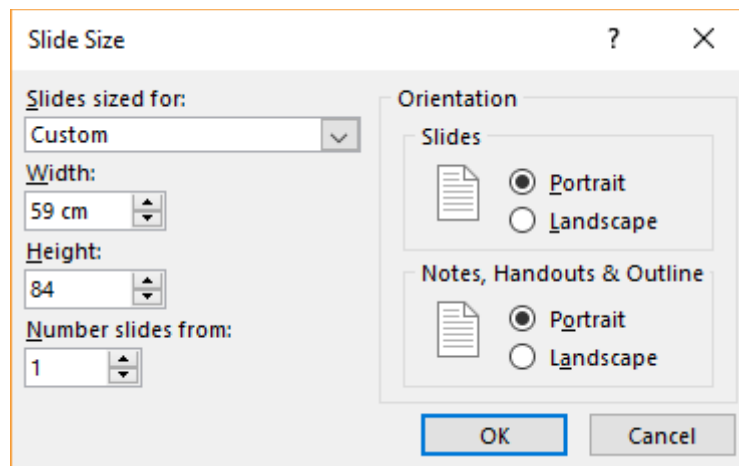
Creating a blank presentation

☐ Start the **PowerPoint** software by selecting it from the **Start** menu

☐ Choose **Layout** from the **Home** ribbon, and click on the **Blank** Content Layout.

Setting the size of the poster to A1 (or A2)

☐ Choose **Slide Size > Custom Slide Size** from the **Design** ribbon to see this dialog:

☐ In the **Slides Sized for** drop-down menu select **Custom** size

☐ **A1:** edit the width to be **59cm** and the height to be **84cm** and click on **OK**
  A2: width **42cm**, height **59cm**

☐ Don't forget to save your work every few minutes!

## Setting up a grid and guides to help align objects

Tip: the Grid is like 'electronic graph paper' that controls both the size and position of objects.

Tip: Guides appear as dotted lines on top of your poster in PowerPoint, but do not print. Objects will "snap" their edges to the guides if they are positioned near them, making alignment easy.

Tip: set up the guides before colour the background, otherwise the guide lines are hard to see!

☐ Choose **Fit to Window** from the **View** ribbon – you will use this and the adjacent **Zoom** control frequently to zoom in and out of the poster view as you work

☐ Click the **Show** arrow under **Ruler, Gridlines and Guides** on the **View** ribbon (as shown below) to see the dialog box on the next page:
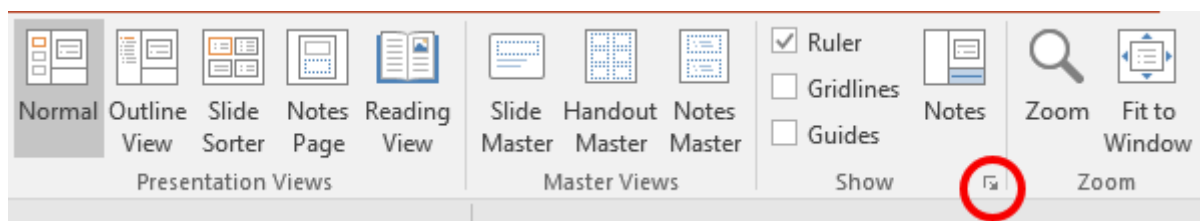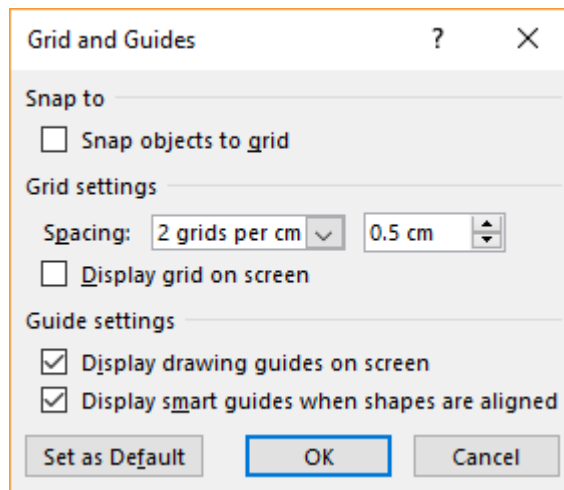
☐ Select the grid size required from the drop-down menu – for example '2 grids per cm' is a good choice that means that the grid size is 0.5cm and that the dimensions of any objects you draw will be multiples of this – e.g. 4.5cm x 2.5cm

☐ Click the checkbox to **Display drawing guides on screen** and then click **OK** – the vertical and horizontal guides are initially positioned in the centre of the poster

☐ Click-and-drag the vertical guide to define the left-hand margin that you want – you are shown a readout of the distance from the centre-line. Make a note of the final position.

Tip: You may need to zoom in to set the guides accurately and easily to the value you want.

☐ Hold down the **Ctrl** key and **drag** a copy of the vertical guide to the right-hand side of the poster – you may want to have equal margins (i.e. equal distances from the centre-line).

☐ **Ctrl-drag** to define as many vertical guides as you need. Repeat the process to define any horizontal guides needed. Your aim is to create a **grid** that defines the overall layout of the poster. Don't forget to use two guides to define the gutters between columns.

☐ If you make a mistake, simply reposition the guide or delete it by dragging it off the poster.

Setting the poster background colour

☐ Select **Format Background** from the **Design** ribbon to see its control panel

☐ You can select a solid colour, gradient fills, pictures, textures and patterns. Please spend a few minutes experimenting with these, even if you decide to revert to a plain colour background.

Tip: remember to keep gradient fills subtle – avoid strongly contrasting colours!

Tip: if you want to use an image as the background, it should be a high-resolution JPEG file – for example at least 3000x2000 pixels. The image will be centred on the slide, but you can use the **Offset** controls to shift it left and right. For example if you increase the left offset by 20% then make sure you decrease the left offset by 20% to avoid squashing or stretching the image. You can also adjust the **Transparency** to 'wash out' the picture, which can be very effective.

Adding a title that exactly fills a specific width

Suppose you want to make sure that your title text fits exactly across the width of the poster:

☐ Choose **Shapes** from the **Insert** ribbon and select the **text box** shape.

☐ Click on the intersection of the top and left guide, then drag down and across to draw a text box that runs the whole width of the poster to the right guide. Type the title of your poster.

☐ Drag to select all of the text and use the **Home** ribbon controls (below) to choose the font (e.g. Calibri) and a first guess at the font size (e.g. 72 points).
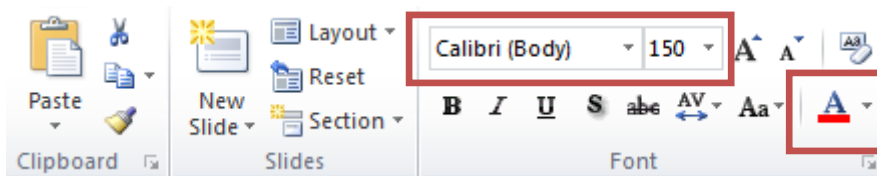
- ☐ To adjust the point size until it fits, simply type any larger number into the **font size** indicator on the **Home** ribbon the text splits onto two lines, then work backwards reducing the font size incrementally until you find the exact size you need!

- ☐ Select all of the text and choose a suitable colour.

Adding a text box

Text boxes allow you to easily position re-size and re-position blocks of text on your poster. They can have a coloured background and/or an outline, but can also be transparent so all you see is the text. How you use them depends on your design ideas.

- ☐ Use **Shapes** on the **Insert** ribbon to add a **Text Box** that fits the grid of your poster

- ☐ Type a short paragraph of text in the Text Box – your choice of words!

Tip: you should use the **Zoom** control on the toolbar to ensure you can read the text you are typing

- ☐ Drag to select all of the text and use the pop-up font control to choose the font (e.g. Calibri or Georgia) and a suitable font size (e.g. 24 points).
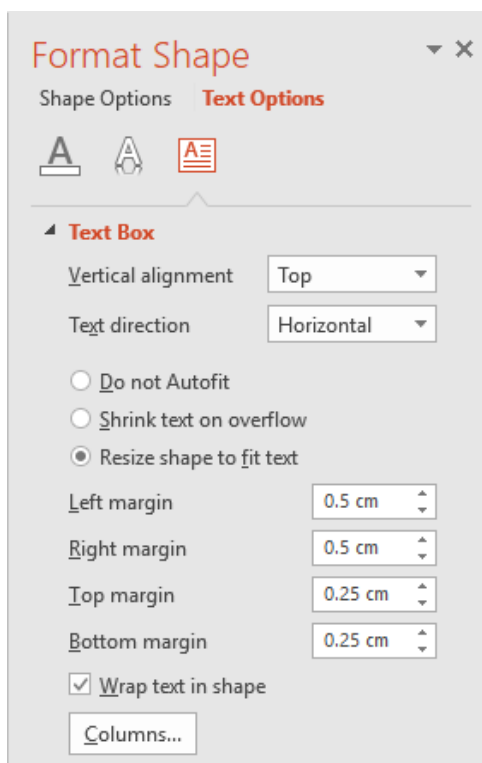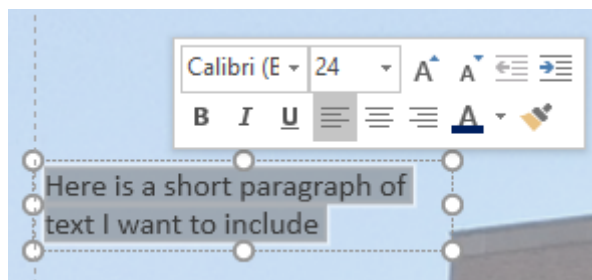
Tip: If you want to make the text block have a background colour, right-click on the text and choose **Format Shape** from the pop-up menu. The control panel that appears enables you to set the fill colour, line colour, line style and thickness.

- ☐ use **Format Shape > Shape Options > Fill** to choose suitable colours for the Text Box - try out various colours to see what looks best against your background colour

Tip: text boxes with no fill and no outline are transparent, and can easily be overlaid on other elements of the poster.

Tip: The **Text Options > Text Box** control allows you to define the alignment of the text and the margins within the block.

- ☐ use **Format Shape > Text Options > Text Box** to set suitable margins and alignment for the text – for a A1 or A2 poster the margins should be around 0.5cm

Tip: Click on the text to position the cursor so you can edit the words as required. A box appears around the block of text.

Tip: Click and drag on the box's "handles" to re-size the text block.

Tip: Click and drag the box outline (anywhere *except* the handles) to reposition the text block.

Tip: It is a good idea for all the text boxes to have a consistent style, so spend some time getting the first one exactly the way you want it. Then you can easily copy-and-paste the whole text box and just edit the text as required. You may want to create a heading within the text box (possibly using a different and bold font size) before you start copying it.

Not just text boxes

☐ Your text boxes do not have to be rectangular – you can also choose other shapes from **Shapes** on the **Insert** ribbon. Add the shape, then right-click on it and choose **Edit Text** from the context menu. In some cases you may find it helpful to right-click on the shape, choose **Format Shape** and set the **Vertical alignment** on the **Text Box** pane.

☐ An alternative method is to draw the shape you want and then add the text as a transparent Text Box on top of the shape.

Digital Photos

☐ Add a photo by choosing **Pictures** from the **Insert** ribbon.

☐ Locate the image file, select it and click **Insert** - photos should be JPEG or PNG format.

Tip: for maximum quality, the resolution of an image should be about 60 pixels per cm, so for example a photo that will be 20 cm wide will need a horizontal resolution of 1200 pixels.

☐ The **Picture Tools** ribbon appears whenever an image is selected, and has tools that enable you to modify its colour, contrast and brightness, and add artistic effects, frames, borders or reflection. You can also to crop it (i.e. trim the edges of the image).

Tip: You can use **Shapes** to create non-rectangular images – create the shape, then right-click and choose **Format Shape**. Set the **Fill** to **Picture or texture fill**, select **Insert picture from: File** and then select the image you want to use. You may need to experiment with the options to get the effect you want. For example, use the **Tile picture as texture** checkbox to avoid distorting the image, and the scale and offset controls to show the part of the picture required.

Importing Excel Charts

The easiest method is to simply copy-and-paste the chart directly from Excel into PowerPoint.

However, if you want to be able to edit the chart (for example to update the data or adjust the size and colour of the axes and text labels) you will have to use the following method.

In Excel, you should ensure that each chart is created on its own worksheet. Then use **Object** from the **Insert** ribbon to **Create from file**, browse to select the Excel file containing the chart and click **OK**

Only one worksheet is displayed at a time. To display a different worksheet, double-click the Excel object, and then click a different worksheet. Double-click chart elements to edit them – for example to change the font or size of the chart title.

Note that you can also use this method to insert tabular data from Excel into your poster.

Print or Export

If you are getting your poster printed, most print shops accept PowerPoint PPTX files. Alternatively, you can **Save As** a PDF file or **Print** as a PDF file. Make sure you use Standard quality (600dpi) rather than Minimum size if that option is offered.