



Design for Digital Signage



UCC

University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

This guide describes the main criteria you need to consider when designing your own advertisement for the digital signage screens on the University campus.

A degree of creativity is required to make your advertisement stand out and reach your audience. Using your creative idea you should then follow the simple principles set out in this guide to produce your advertisement.

Content for your advertisement does not need to be uniquely designed. You can use good quality images and graphics already created from online sources or you can of course be creative and produce your own. This course does not teach you how to create new graphics or images, this course will show you how to combine already created images and content with words and messages to produce an advert.

10 seconds

Your advertisement must be conveyed in 10 seconds. It takes (the author) 10 seconds just to read two lines of text on this page. It could take an Erasmus student from mainland Europe or Asia twice as long, so you must consider the diversity of people you are advertising to.

Not only does your audience have to read text, they may need to understand or interpret your message, see the contact information and whatever else it is that you have used.

Keeping the content to the minimum is going to be one of the biggest challenges of producing your advert. The advert will be repeated during the day, however if you cannot convey your idea in 10 seconds then it's unlikely your audience will get the message.

Less is more.

How to be creative

When the word creative is mentioned most people think they need to *create* a new graphic or to *create* a fantastic looking photograph or *create* a completely unique advert. You don't need to do any of these.

From now on when you think about the word 'creative' you need to think instead about being creative in the way you convey your advertising message. So forget about sophisticated graphics and photo software, you don't need them to be creative. You just need *you* to be creative.

To convey your advertising message creatively these are some of the questions that you should consider answering first:

- What is the brief?
- Why advertise it?
- What service are you advertising?
- What product are you trying to get people to use?
- What habits are you trying to change?
- Why would your audience attend the event you are advertising?
- What do you want your audience to do?
- Who is your audience?

The last point on the list is very important.

Figure out who your audience is. When you have identified them you then need to put yourself in their shoes and ask yourself why would they avail of your service or product? What makes them tick? How do they behave? What motivates them? Why would they want to attend your event?

Knowing these answers first will help you be creative so that you can think of a way to convey your advertising message, creatively.

Know your Audience.

The call to action

A call to action is a few words used together to convey your advertising message. You may also consider using a statement to suit your message. In either case it's usually short, succinct and compliments the graphic, image or photo used.

If it's a powerful and clever enough call to action or statement you may not need a graphic, image or photo to compliment it.

Explore your idea

You know what it is you want to advertise and you have identified your audience. You should now have some idea what it is you want to say, it could be a call to action, a statement or an announcement and some idea how to convey it.

The next step is to take out a blank piece of paper and start doodling. Write down your ideas for your advertisement. Think about your call to action and play with different ways of saying it. Sketch your graphic or image to see if they work together. Write and sketch your ideas until you have exhausted them. Pick one idea and finesse it for another while. Put it away and come back the next day to change something or if you have no more ideas leave it the way it is. Different people work in different ways so do it the way that works best for you. If you are still struggling to produce an idea bounce your ideas off of your colleagues or your potential audience for ideas or feedback.

Follow your instinct.

Settle on your idea

You have decided what your advert is going to say, both in words and in pictures that can be conveyed in around 10 seconds. The most difficult *creative* challenge has now been achieved.

If you have written a statement or call to action that doesn't require imagery you are super creative! However, most advertising ideas make use of an image, photo or graphic with some text to attract attention and give the greatest impact.

Summary

10 Seconds

- Convey message in around 10 seconds
- Less is more

How to be creative

- Know your audience
- Know *what* you are advertising
- Know *why* you are advertising

Write a call to action

- Write a statement or call to action
- Compliment it with an image
- Explore your idea
- Follow your instinct

Part 1 described the process of creating the advertisement. You did this by doing rough sketches and bouncing your ideas off of other people. You now need to produce the advertisement for the digital screens.

The word 'produce' is going to be used from now on so that the two process of creating and producing are not confused with each other. To produce your advert you will need to assemble the most important elements together in a way that is:

- **Simple**
- **Bold**
- **Legible**
- **Brief**

Though digital screens show an advert for approximately 10 seconds, adverts that are most effective should be "devoured" in half that time.

Graphic designers solve visual creative problems using three basic principles. By understanding these principles you too can solve your creative problem.

Design principle 1 – Composition

Layout is the design principle that determines the finished look of an advertisement. The most important principle for producing effective content is visual prioritisation of the message, or hierarchy of communication. Your audience can't hear and understand four messages at once; they can't see and understand four messages at once, either. Define the items (ABC levels) you want to communicate and prioritise each piece in order of importance.

People read in chunks of information. They scan across, then down, and pick up information in logical sections. The more distinct these sections of information are, the faster people interpret the meaning or the purpose of the message. Visual and written information that overlap cause the reader to pause and sort the two apart before understanding the message.

Using hierarchy of communication helps speed comprehension and increases retention of the message.

Split the communication into levels. 3 levels is desirable, 4 is the maximum. Use the first level (A) to capture the viewers' attention with a clear, single point of communication. This tends to be a graphic, photo or image. The second level (B) gives the viewer definition or more detail that points back to the first level. Finally, in the third level (C) provide the viewer with the information they need to get more information, take action or inspire an emotion.

Level A

This piece of information is what is going to catch your viewers' attention. Usually it is a photo, image or graphic that stands out. It may be a photo with a very simple message.

Level B

This level provides supporting information that gives definition or detail to level A.

Level C

This level provides relevant information that tells the viewer where, how or who to contact for the information in levels A and B. Or it may tell the viewer what action they need to take to fulfil the information in levels A and B.



Figure 1

Design principle 2 – Typography

Typography is the art or procedure of arranging type (or fonts) on a page.

Legibility

Select easy to read fonts. Large, bold fonts make it easier for your audience to read and comprehend text from different viewing distances. In addition, text using all capital letters can sometime be harder to read and just like a text message on your phone the feeling of being shouted at may be perceived.

Example:

This text is easy to read from far away
THIS TEXT IS HARDER TO READ FROM FAR AWAY

Select fonts that are easy to read from different viewing distances, such as large, bold fonts. Remember to use text containing both upper and lower-case characters when you have a long message. Using text with all caps should be limited to short messages. Using a limited amount of text will help viewers' readability and comprehension. Avoid the use of serif fonts, they are difficult to read.

Example:

Times New Roman

Size

The viewing distance of the screens varies from location to location but in general a comfortable viewing distance is 10-12ft. In order for text to be legible at this distance, the font size should not be smaller than 24pt. (approx. 10mm in height).

This is 24pt text.

Design principle 3 - Colour

Take full advantage of colour by using rich, vibrant colours. Use the hue or shaded colours represented by the two outer rings in figure 2 and avoid tinted colours that look pale. Tinted colours are represented in the two inner rings.

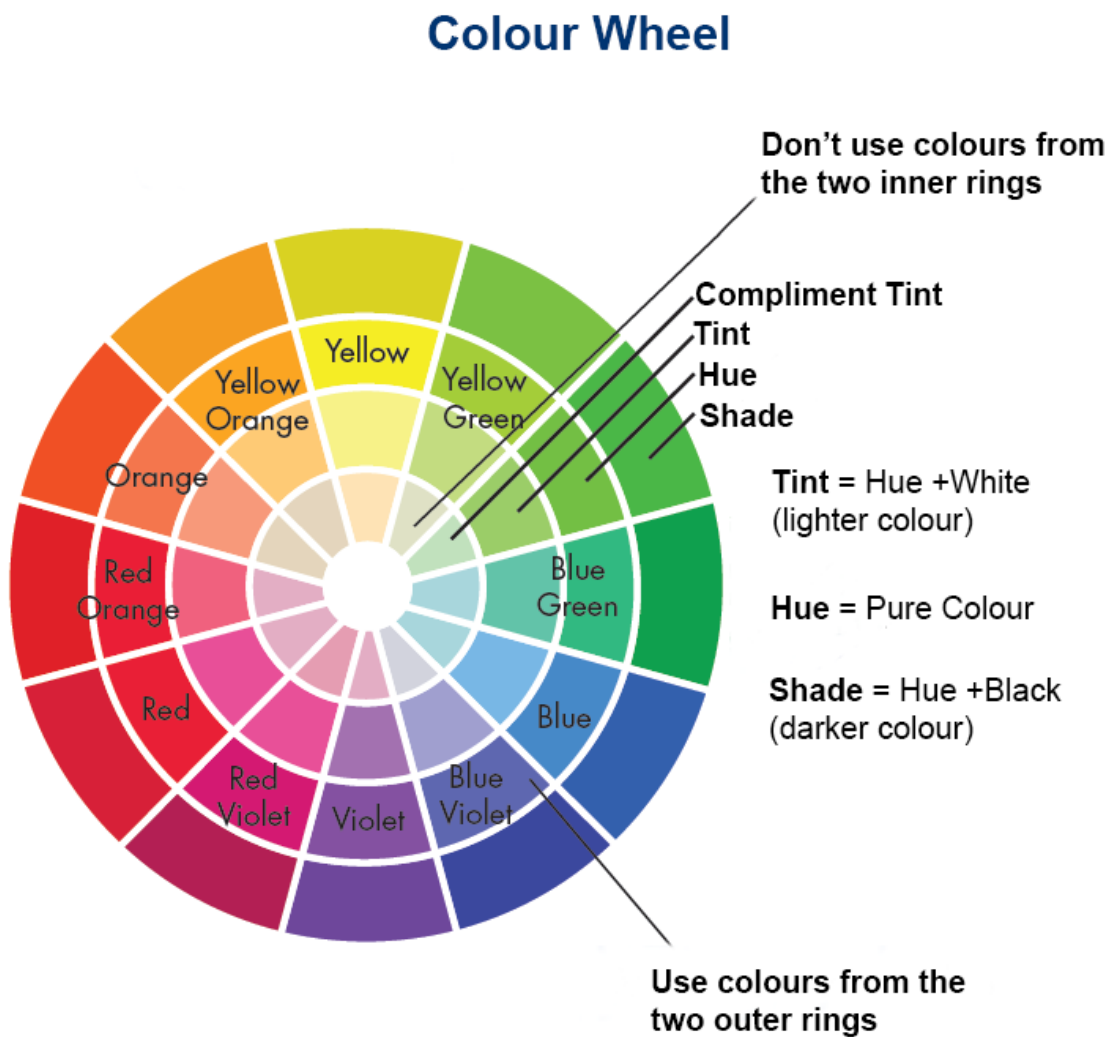


Figure 2

Certain colours tend to evoke specific emotions or ideas, so choose them carefully to help support products and ideas. See figure 3.

COLOUR	EMOTIONS EVOKED
Red	Stimulating, exciting, provocative, dynamic
Red Orange	Domination, aggression, and action
Orange	Friendly, vital, playful, energizing, inviting
Yellow Orange	Illumination, wisdom, and wealth
Yellow	Sunny, warming, cheerful
Yellow Green	Sickness, cowardice, discord, and jealousy
Green	Soothing, nature, refreshing, healing, fresh
Blue Green	Emotional healing and protection
Blue	Cool, quiet, serene, constant
Blue Violet	Uniqueness, preciousness, royalty, and sacredness
Violet	Creative, regal, spiritual, mysterious
Red Violet	Energetic, happy, sweet, romantic, youthful
Black	Strong, classic, elegant, mysterious

Figure 3

In the case where you are going to use a graphic or image with colours already present, simply adapt your palette to work with those colours.

Contrast

Using contrast is vital to your design because it helps the viewer distinguish between design elements. For best contrast, use tonal contrast (or value difference) instead of only colour difference.

Tonal contrast can be measured by simply printing your advertisement in grey scale. You can now easily measure the advertisement's tonal contrast. An example of this is shown in figure 4.



Figure 4

Using contrasting colours

Select colours that provide good contrast to make your content more appealing and easier to read. Achieve effective contrast by using colours with different values (how bright or dark a colour is).

Use the chart in figure 5 to guide your design. You can see that yellow is a bright colour with a very light-grey value. Purple, on the other hand, is a dark colour with a black value. Therefore, using yellow and purple together provides very good contrast.

By looking at the chart again, you can see that yellow and green are not the best colours to use together because the contrast between the two is so low. Solve this problem by using a darker green that has a darker value to increase contrast and legibility.

The value range chart on figure 6 shows you how each colour (in this example red was used) has a number of values to choose from. This makes contrast easy to achieve.

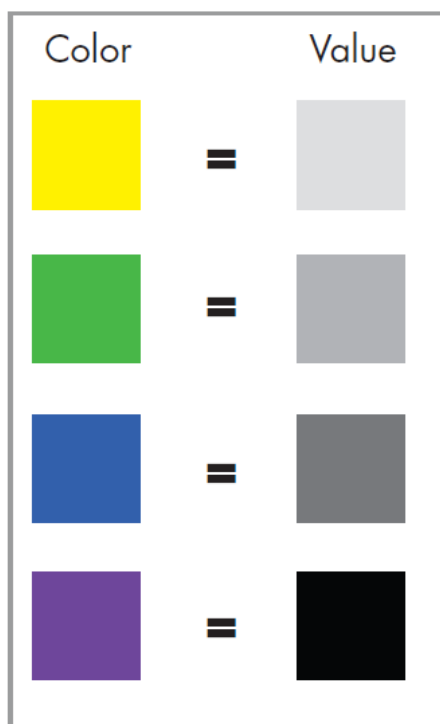


Figure 5

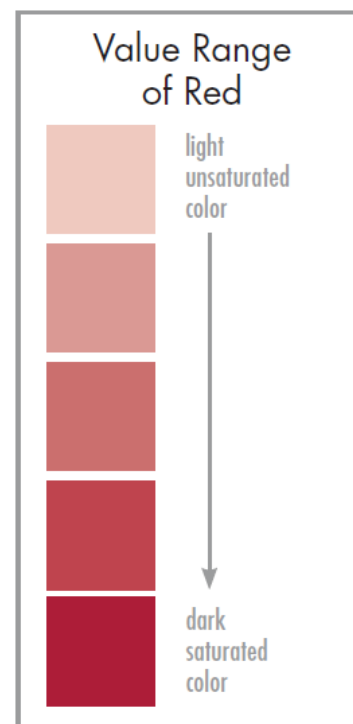


Figure 6

Summary

- Composition
 - I. Use levels of communication
 - II. Compartmentalise your information
- Typography
 - I. Use easy to read fonts
 - II. Size matters
- Colour
 - I. Use rich colours
 - II. Contrast colours for better legibility
 - III. Invoke emotion by using colour

Advertisement size

Produce your advert on a 16:9 aspect template.

16:9 (read as 'sixteen to nine') signifies a width of 16 units and a height of 9 units. This gives a widescreen aspect as shown in figure 8. The screens located on campus are all High Definition screens, which means they have a resolution of 1920 pixels horizontally x 1080 pixels vertically producing a 16:9 aspect. Making your advert on this aspect template will allow you to utilise the full area of the screen.



Figure 7



Figure 8

File type

You must submit your advert in .png (Portable Network Graphics Format) or .jpeg (File Interchange Format). If you create your advert in Microsoft PowerPoint you can save the file as one of these by choosing 'Save As' and then 'Save as type'.

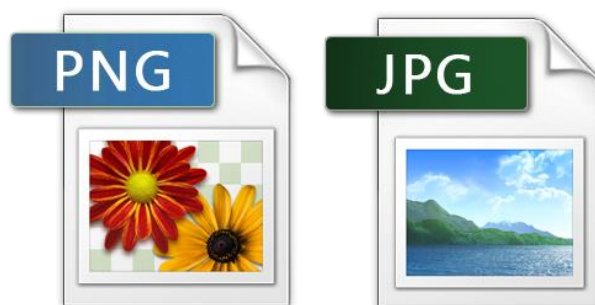


Figure 9

File Size

The image file size must not be larger than 4MB. If it is too big and you need an easy way to reduce the size, open the image in Microsoft paint and use the re-size function to reduce your image.

File Name

Files submitted will be stored on the digital signage system so they need to be easily identified. Give your file a name that relates to the subject matter.

Contact information

In general you are advertising to students and staff of UCC. Most people go online to get the information they need so your advert should direct them to that website. You may not even need to provide contact details because there is an assumption that whatever is being advertised these days has (and should have) the relevant information online.

For event notices however, you need to be specific. Unless you provide a web address for more information you must tell your audience:

- What the event is about
- Who is speaking
- Where the event is taking place
- What time and date is it on

If you do need to include a web address, ask yourself; “will the audience remember this web address?” If the answer is yes then you can include it, if it is no then perhaps you should consider including a web search term.

Example:

You wouldn't use the web address for UCC student policies and procedures:

www.ucc.ie/en/students/policies/#d.en.109974

You would use this:

Search - UCC Student Policies

Your audience now knows the information is online and the first search result for UCC Student Policies is just what they will be looking for.

Images

Only use images and graphics that you or UCC own the copyright to, or when you have been given permission by the copyright owner.

A host of websites offer high quality stock photos free for use. This website provides links to 25 websites.

www.wunderlist.com/list/134847064

Google search term: 'wunderlist free stock photos'

Professional Graphics & Photos

If you need professional graphics or photographs produced for your advert Audio Visual Media Services offer a graphic design service and a photographic service.

www.ucc.ie/en/avms

UCC Guidelines

For UCC guidelines on visual identity, logos, branding, colours, fonts and images go to the UCC marketing and communications web page.

www.ucc.ie/en/mandc

Case study #1

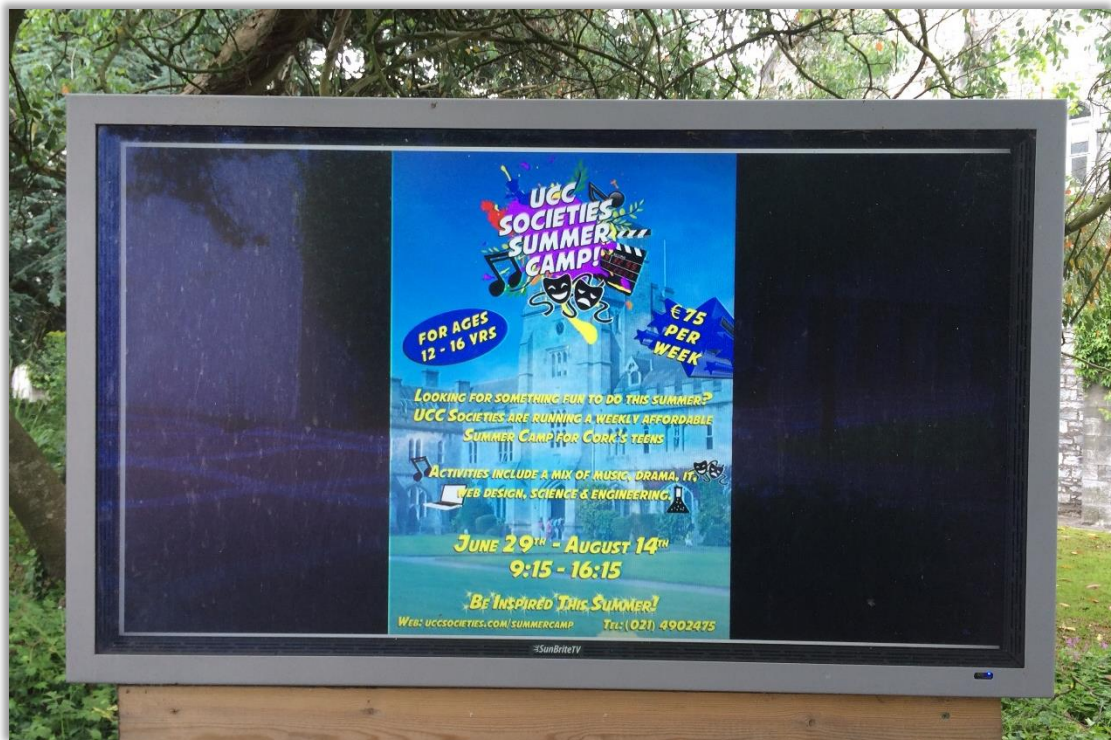


Figure 10

This advert looks like it was originally designed to be an A4 paper poster. Using this aspect makes very little use of the screen area. The main logo looks good and the yellow text contrasts well with the dark blue bubbles but the majority of text is too small and doesn't contrast well with the light blue background.

Recommendations:

- Use the correct aspect ratio (16:9)
- Use bigger text and better contrasting colours
- Apply the hierarchy of communication principle

Case study #2

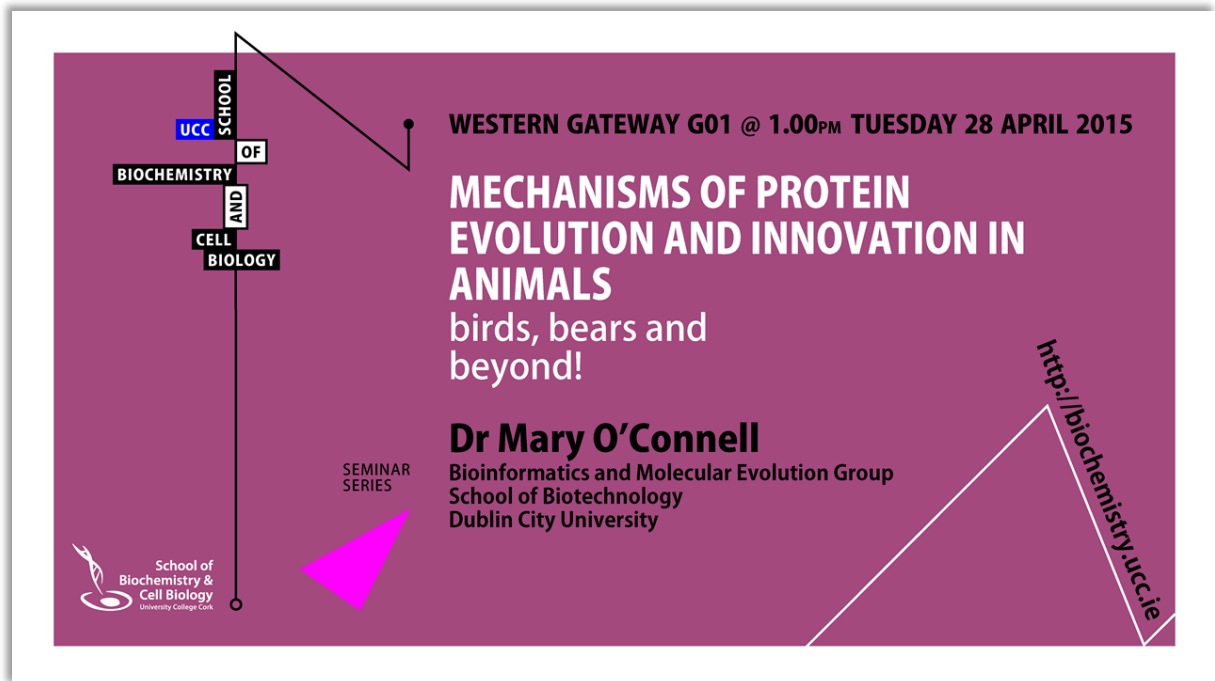


Figure 11

This event notice is one of a series used over the course of a semester. It makes good use of colour and contrast, makes good use of hierarchy of communication, uses a 16:9 template and is innovative in its design.

Recommendations:

- None

Case study #3




Figure 12

This advert demonstrates excellent use of imagery, hierarchy of information, good typography, colour and contrast. The advert's colour choice and message both evoke emotion.

Recommendations:




- None

Case study #4



UCC
Coláiste na hOileáirí Corcaigh, Éire
University College Cork, Ireland

SUMMER BURSARIES FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS 2015



The College of Science, Engineering and Food Science are offering Summer Bursaries to undergraduate students (see below). This will enable successful undergraduates to participate in research work during the summer period. Each bursary will provide €2000 for an eight week summer research project. A total of ten bursaries will be distributed among the following areas:

Engineering (including Architecture) & Computer Science, 2nd year students
Food Science and Nutritional Science Programmes, 2nd year students & Life Sciences and BEES Programmes, 3rd year students
Mathematical Sciences, Chemistry and Physics, 3rd year students

The deadline for submission of applications is 12 noon on **Friday, 27 February**.
Full details about the bursaries and application process are available at <http://www.ucc.ie/en/sefs/currentstudents/importantinfoforalstudents/summerbursaries/>

College of Science, Engineering and Food Science (SEFS), UCC

Figure 13

This advert was designed using an A4 page in landscape orientation. There is too much text in this advert for the audience to read, the images have been squashed and stretched and the web address is too long to be remembered.

Recommendations:

- Use the correct aspect ratio (16:9)
- Make the message concise
- Use bigger text
- Use a search term for the web address
- Use images that complement the theme of the advert

Case study #5

STUDENT EXPERIENCE FAIR

Facilitating a world class student experience through which all UCC students are empowered and supported to achieve their goals.



UCC
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Honan Plaza Thursday 10th September 10am – 2pm

The Student Experience Fair is an informal and relaxed opportunity for you to meet staff from the UCC Student Experience Office and a wide range of related student services.

Our initiatives aim to support your success, facilitate your engagement in student life, promote your health and wellbeing and enhance the development of your employability.

Our expert staff will be on hand at the fair to answer any queries that you may have about the supports and opportunities available to you. We are looking forward to meeting you and working with you to help you achieve your goals!

Dr Ian Pickup Head of Student Experience
Email: studentexperience@ucc.ie
www.ucc.ie/en/studentexperience/

COME AND CHAT TO OUR STUDENT EXPERIENCE STAFF PRIZES ON OFFER THROUGHOUT THE DAY










SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS	FACILITATING ENGAGEMENT IN STUDENT LIFE	PROMOTING HEALTH AND WELLBEING	ENHANCING STUDENT EMPLOYABILITY
Disability Support Service Mature Student Office Resources for Education UCC PLUS+	Accommodation Clubs Executive Granary Theatre Societies Guild Sport & Physical Activity Students' Union uLink Peer Support	Student Budgetary Advisor Student Counselling & Development Student Health UCC Chaplaincy UCC Health Matters	Career Services UCC UCC Works Internships Volunteering Work Placement

Figure 14

This advert was designed on an A3 aspect template and was submitted in .pdf format. The advert makes good use of the UCC branding guidelines and the colours contrast but it is too clustered and there is too much information presented for the audience to process.

Recommendations:

- Use the correct aspect ratio (16:9)
- Make the message concise
- Apply hierarchy of communication principle

Case study #6



Figure 15

This advert was originally designed on a 4:3 aspect template in Powerpoint. The slide size was then changed to 16:9 aspect and submitted as a png file.

The UCC logo was squashed as a result along with the Genovate logo. The time is also typed incorrectly. The genovate logo and graphic is innovative and appealing but the ordinary viewer will not know what this event is about because there is no supporting text for 'Genovate Open Day'.

Recommendations:

- Use the correct aspect ratio (16:9) when beginning your project.
- Do not stretch logos.
- Include supporting text to tell the viewer what the event is broadly about.
- Do not include web addresses that are difficult to remember.

Use a 16:9 aspect template (the same aspect as your TV in your living room).

Save it as a .jpg or .png

Max File size: 4MB

Step 1 Create your advertisement

10 Seconds

- Convey your message in around 10 seconds

How to be creative

- Know your audience
- Know *what* you are advertising
- Know *why* you are advertising

Write a call to action

- Write a statement or call to action
- Compliment it with an image
- Explore your idea
- Follow your instinct

Step 2 Produce your advertisement

- Composition
 - I. Use levels of communication
 - i. Good image or graphic
 - ii. Supporting message
 - iii. Point of contact/action to take
- Typography
 - I. Use easy to read fonts
 - II. Use contrasting coloured fonts
- Colour
 - I. Use rich colours
 - II. Contrast colours for better legibility
 - III. Invoke emotion by using colour