QUICK GUIDE: INFOGRAPHICS

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WHAT IS IT   Infographics (information graphics) are graphic visual representations of information, data, or knowledge intended to present information quickly and clearly. They educate and inform people in a quick, clear and engaging way.

FORMAT   The infographic is usually a mixture of short snappy text summaries, facts/figures and simple graphic images. They are increasingly used to communicate science via social media platforms and printed leaflets.

CATEGORIES   7 common infographic types are shown here: https://youtu.be/A6_7zC0mB9w. Science infographics are usually one of these four: visual article, list, data visualization or map.

PLANNING
- Familiarise yourself with the topic. Review existing infographics for that topic. See what works.
- Consider your audience.
- Define your narrative. For infographics, the narrative generally has three parts: (i) the introduction, or the 'hook', to grab your audience; (ii) the main body with text and visuals where the key research is presented; (iii) the conclusion, the take-away message or call-to-action.
- Keep notes and write a script.

CREATING
- Sketch a layout, inspired by other infographics you find. Consider the size and orientation of the graphic.
- Write your text content. Keep it minimum.
- Visualise your information. Data visualisations can be icons, graphics and charts.
- Be accurate, consistent and clear.

DESIGN
- Be consistent. Data visualisations should use the same formatting, scale and style across the whole infographic.
- Be clear. Highlight the trend or message in your data, not everything you know.
- Use icons. Any image that is used to visually communicate a concept can be described as an 'icon'. Icons are useful for communicating concepts more efficiently than with text, provided they are used properly. PowerPoint contains icon libraries.
- Use only 2-3 different fonts, but be consistent between titles, headers, and text. Text boxes should contain 50 words or less.
- Use colour to connect your ideas, sections, categories. Stick to 3 or 4 colours.
- The following websites are great resources for free images and vector files, which you can download and use in your designs. Make sure to attribute. www.flaticon.com | www.freepik.com | www.pixabay.com

SOFTWARE   There are many programmes/apps out there to create infographics, but most are not recommended or supported by Ulster University (for various reasons). We recommend that you use PowerPoint and start with a blank A4 slide.

EXAMPLES   The National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration has some wonderful examples to inspire: https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/infographics/. *Nature* features the year's best: https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-017-08542-5