

Oral Presentations

The Oral or Paper Presentation format mimics what you will find at many research conferences regardless of the discipline. There are 3-4 oral presentation sessions happening each hour of the conference. Students who opt for the paper presentation are grouped by the choice of time and research category. Each room consists of four 10-minute presentations back-to-back followed by 20-minutes of moderated discussion and question and answer. The rooms are moderated by trained volunteers.

Tips & Tricks for Oral Presentations

- In some disciplines the norm is to read a paper that you have written. In other fields, you may find that visuals (like a PowerPoint slideshow) with notes is the preferred. Consult your faculty about the best format for your work.
- If using notes, be sure to write ones that can be understood at a glance. Write in bold fonts, keep your reminders short and to the point, and make sure they help you stay on track.
- Some of us present faster with an audience present and some of us go slower. Practice your presentation in front of a few people to time its length. Nothing is worse than running out of time before you have gotten to your conclusions.
- Use visuals, but don't expect your audience to read and listen at the same time — keep slides minimalistic with the important information.
- Keep your introduction and conclusion brief, to the point, and similar. You want your audience to leave feeling they've learned something and a conclusion is a good opportunity to draw them back to what they've learned.
- The bulk of your presentation should be on your key points and evidence or focused on one point in particular. Try to hone your presentation to suit your time limit, audience, and field.
- Plan for questions! Your talk is likely briefer than what you would have written in a paper, so there will always be things you had to leave out and you may be asked about those.
- Remember, the people in the audience are interested to hear what you have to say. Breathe and look at your audience — they are likely excited by your subject and want to engage. Relax and remember that you are among colleagues not judges.