

Leadership Alliance Presentation Guidelines

2020



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Presentation Guidelines

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Timeline and Requirements

Symposium Dates and Deadlines

- Register to attend the symposium: **deadline of July 3**
- Submit presentation application: **deadline of July 3**
- Submit abstract of your presentation: **deadline of July 15**
- PowerPoint Upload sessions at symposium: **July 25**

- Student Posters and Oral Presentations at symposium: **July 26**

Submission Requirements

In order to submit a presentation application, you must be **Registered And Approved** to attend the symposium. Students who are registered and approved may **apply** for an oral or poster or presentation. You will need to **use the e-mail address and password you created when you registered for the conference.**

Oral Presentations

All academicians, whether they are in the sciences, social sciences or humanities, have to make presentations. They have to stand up in front of a room or auditorium full of strangers or colleagues and share their research findings. Research findings presented at a national meeting as a **10-minute talk** can later form the core of a published article or the seed for an entire book. Speaking is an essential part of developing as a researcher, and is an essential form of professional communication.

For a junior researcher, one of the most important occasions for speaking is the **10-minute** presentation, and this is the focus of these guidelines. If you can plan a 10-minute talk, then you can plan a 50-minute talk - the same principles apply. Several key things to remember in preparing your presentation are outlined in the following pages.



Guidelines for Formatting and Preparing Presentation

Format

An effective 10-minute presentation includes the following information:

- **Title:** A title that specifically describes what you have done. Example 1: “The Effect of Growth Hormone on Bone Development in the Neonatal Rat” is more informative than “Hormone Studies in the Rat.” Example 2: “An Analysis of the Socio-Historical Context of Protest and Resistance Literature in the Early 20th Century” is more informative than “Protest and Resistance Literature.”

The preferred format for listing titles in the symposium program guide is **first-letter caps**.

Example: “*An Examination of the Effects of Poverty*” rather than “*A Study of The Effects of Industrialization*.” Articles, prepositions, and Latin words need not be capitalized, with the exception of the first word. **Example:** “In vitro Expression of Human Argonaute2 and Mutants.”

- **Statement of goals and significance:** A brief background of your research project and its significance for conveying new knowledge within your discipline. What research questions are you asking and why are you asking them? How are your research questions reflective of your academic disciplinary background and analyses? Are there similar research projects or analyses related to your topic that you are using as a point of reference?
- **Methodology:** A brief description of methods. How is your study designed? What key research method(s) are you using? What disciplinary methods are you using to explore the research questions?
- **Results:** What are your findings? If you have not completed your analysis, what do you expect your results to be and why? What data have you obtained? If you have not obtained any data, what did you expect your results to be and why? Have you considered sharing examples of brief case studies that capture what you have discovered?
- **Discussion and future implications:** How have you (or would you) interpret your results? How do (or would) the results answer the initial question that your study was designed to answer? Are there any problems or limitations to discuss? What would you do next and why?
- **Acknowledgements:** Consult with your mentor concerning the attribution of credit for the research you are reporting. Make a collective decision on the order in which authors’ names will be listed. The preferred format for the symposium program guide is to list your faculty mentor as your first co-author.

A presentation should be organized into the following broader components and time frames:

- Introduction: Background of the project, goals and the research question (2 minutes)
- Methodology & Data Sources: Description of research methods and data obtained or to be obtained (6 minutes)
- Discussion: Give a brief summary of the results as well as the conclusion(s) you drew, and mention the implications of this work for future studies and/or new research (2 minutes)

Tips

Rehearse your talk with a timer. Get ready far enough in advance to allow yourself time to revise the slides if you find errors or problems.

- Pitch your presentation to coincide with the knowledge level of your audience. A presentation to your classmates is different than one to a meeting of professional researchers or a group of high school science students.
- Type out your presentation word for word. Use only a few words on each line, as if you were reading a teleprompter. Try it out loud enough times so that you can comfortably look up and proceed without looking at notes.
- Speak loudly enough to be heard in the back of the room or auditorium. If you normally have a light or high-pitched voice, work to deepen and project it. If you have a particularly deep or low-pitched voice, you should work to pitch it a bit higher to avoid sounding as if you are mumbling.
- If you are working with a microphone, remember to ask the audience if they can hear you before you begin your presentation. Enunciate each word clearly, and do not trail off at the end of sentences. As you speak, try to make regular eye contact with the audience, which will help to keep them engaged in the presentation. Remember, this is a talk, not a reading.
- Keep to the allotted time (10 minutes for presentation, 5 minutes for questions and answers).
- Do not rush--speak at a natural speed. If your material exceeds 10 minutes, edit it before presenting. Rushing through the presentation will only diminish its effectiveness, increase your nervousness and disengage the audience.
- Prepare for questions and answers. Anticipate obvious questions and solicit questions from your peers, coordinator and others to prepare and practice your response capabilities while 'in the spotlight'.
- When asked a question during your presentation, repeat the question so that the entire audience knows what the question is. Throughout the question and answer period, try to relate each question to your project and its results, even if you do not have a specific answer. This will show that you know how to relate the unknown to the known, and that you can do it extemporaneously. Do not be afraid to say that you do not know the answer to a question. Often, you can respond by explaining how the question suggests further areas of investigation.
- Project a professional image. You know the material, and you are there to communicate that knowledge to the audience.
- Dress in a way that will not distract from your presentation. Dark, solid colors and suits work best. For women, avoid short skirts and high heels. For men, shirts should be tucked inside pants.
- Expect to be nervous—everyone is, no matter how old they are or how long they have been doing presentations. They have just had more practice and are more at ease because of it.
- Practice, practice, practice.

Visual Aids

You will have to organize your talk carefully and decide what important points you want to make within the brief time allowed. For longer presentations, you can expand on the above model. Timing at LANS is

especially important and monitored by the presentation session moderators.

Designing clear visual materials that you can use easily is a key part of preparing a good presentation.

The most common visual aid for an oral presentation is the PowerPoint slide.

In a 10-minute presentation there is usually time for only five or six slides if you plan your discussion well.

Use no more than eight slides for a 10-minute talk and never – even if you are giving a long seminar – have more than the equivalent of a slide per minute. You will be rushing your presentation if you use more than this recommended number of slides.

PowerPoint Guidelines

The major guiding concept behind a good PowerPoint presentation is keeping things simple. To maximize legibility and compatibility, please keep the following stylistic guidelines in mind.

Fonts

- Fancier or more ornate fonts are difficult to read, and may not be available on the computer used for the presentation. Please restrict yourself to the following core set of fonts:
 - Arial
 - Avenir
 - Calibri
 - Cambria
 - Geneva
 - Helvetica
 - Symbol (for Greek letters and mathematical symbols)
 - Times
 - Times New Roman
- Use font sizes that are clearly legible. Avoid cramming text onto a slide. Font sizes for headers should be 30-44 points, while text can be anywhere from 18-30 points. Anything smaller will be very difficult to read.
- Upper- and lower-case lettering is more legible than all capital letters.

Colors

- Use solid, clear colors. A dark background with light-colored text and graphics works very well for most presentations.
- Make sure that the colors used in the text and graphics provide sufficient contrast from the background. For example, a 50% blue is very hard to read against a black background.
- Use your colors to organize the different parts of the slide. For example, use one color for the slide title and a different color for your slide text.
- Avoid using too many colors on a slide—they will confuse the audience and make the slide harder to read. For example, bright reds, blues, and/or greens at the same time are extremely difficult to read together.
- Be tasteful in your use of colors. Do not let them distract your audience from your message!

Animation

If you want to use animation, keep it simple. While it may be fun to have a slide zoom around the screen while it comes up, it takes up valuable talk time and is a major distraction for the audience.

Film and Video

DO NOT INCLUDE FILM AND VIDEO CLIPS as we cannot guarantee that the formats will be compatible with laptops used at the symposium. **Speakers are not provided.**

Images and Graphics

If you import images and graphics into your PowerPoint presentations, you should also have available the original image files as well as any data files or source files you used to generate those images or graphics. In the event that there is a problem reading your embedded images or graphics, having those files with you will make the troubleshooting and problem-solving process a lot easier. Reminder to cite images that are not your own property; this may be done either on the photo or listed on your citations slide.

To get a feel for how the presentation will appear to your audience, practice giving your talk while looking at the screen from about three feet away. That is approximately how large the projected image will be to the audience. If the text and/or graphics are hard to read from that distance, then it will be hard for your audience to read it as well.

- Simple graphs, charts and diagrams are much more meaningful to an audience than complex, cluttered ones. Keep visuals CLEAR and SIMPLE.
- Use the format that matches the material you are presenting. Use a table for exact values, a graph to show relationships, a figure for a picture, and a chart for a process or sequence. Label everything.
- Keep color scheme consistent throughout your presentation. Changing colors and type styles can be very confusing and distract from your message.

Leadership Alliance Technical Requirements

For the presentations at the symposium, the following file formats are supported:

- Mac OS: Microsoft PowerPoint 2014 and current
- Windows: Microsoft PowerPoint 2014 and current
- JPEG or TIFF Slideshow (numerically ordered filenames)

Presentations should be saved on the following media:

- USB Flash Drive

IMPORTANT

Test your PowerPoint presentation on different computers and platforms (Windows versus Mac) to assure consistency of format. Save the final, tested version of your PowerPoint presentation on a USB Flash Drive prior to the symposium.

All students making an oral presentation must attend a PowerPoint Upload Session on **Friday, July 24** to verify that your presentation is compatible with computers at the symposium.

The Upload Session times are as follows:

- 11:00am – 3:00pm
- 5:30pm – 6:30pm

Do not plan on making changes to your presentation during or after the Upload Session. The final version you bring to the Upload Session will be saved to a flash drive on Friday evening to be used for your presentation on Saturday.

If you have any questions, contact Maria_DoVale@brown.edu

Online video resources:

- [Video Example of a Bad vs. Good Oral Presentation](#)
- [Presentation Advice for Students \(Tom's Tips\)](#)

Poster Presentations

A poster is a presentation of the results of a recent field or research project that can be described graphically. Presenters use materials such as maps, photographs, graphs, charts and/or tables along with textual summaries of their work on a **3' x 4' poster**.



Poster sessions provide an intimate forum by facilitating informal discussions between presenters and their audience.

Ideally, a well-constructed poster will be self-explanatory and free you from answering obvious questions so that you are available to supplement and discuss particular points of interest. Plan the presentation so that you are not obliged to devote most of your time to merely explaining your poster to a succession of visitors.

You should plan on an exciting interaction with your "audience." Poster sessions are an innovative and challenging way for you to present your data and new ideas and to meet colleagues in an interactive setting. The greater informality of a poster presentation encourages discussion between interested parties and, indeed, encourages preliminary dissemination of results and theories before finalization in print or in a formal lecture. Key components to consider in developing posters are outlined below.

Coverage

- Have you provided all the obvious information?
- Will a casual observer walk away understanding your major findings after a quick perusal of your material?
- Will a more careful reader learn enough to ask informed questions?

In addition to a title/author label and abstract, most successful posters provide brief statements of introduction, method, subjects or data sources, procedure, results and conclusions. Ask yourself, "What would I need to know if I were viewing this material for the first time?" and then state that information clearly.

Clarity

- Is the sequence of information evident? Indicate the ordering of your material with numbers, letters or arrows, when necessary.
- Is the content being communicated clearly?
- Keep it simple. Place your major points in the poster and save the non-essential but interesting sidelights for informal discussion.
- Be selective. Your final conclusions or summary should leave observers focused on a concise statement of your most important findings.



Layout

The poster display should fit on one upright panel and be **no more than three feet high by four feet in width**. Remember that your illustrations will be viewed from several feet away. Pushpins will be provided at the symposium to secure your poster to the poster board stand.

Material should be presented from left to right, starting at the top left of the panel under the title. Presenters should use a minimal amount of text consistent with providing enough information to emphasize essential data and/or stimulate discussion. It helps the viewer if you can indicate (by numbers, letters, or arrows) a preferred sequence that might be followed in studying your material.

Lettering needs to be large enough to be read from several feet away. Avoid using all capital letters since text presented in that format is hard to read. The title text size should be at least 60 point, but accommodations can be made for longer titles; headings can be at least 36 point and text at least 24 point. For textual material, a serif font such as **Times** is easier to read; for titles and headings a sans-serif font such as **Arial** is appropriate.

Extensive, imaginative use of captioned illustrations, photographs, graphs or other types of visually appealing material is the point of a poster presentation. Use of color can be very helpful both in maximizing the clarity of diagrams and in making the poster attractive. Do not simply mount the text of your paper on the poster. It will not be effective in this medium.

At the same time, try to keep your layout as simple as possible. Charts, drawings, and illustrations might well be similar to what you use digitally, but with less detail. Avoid overly ornate presentations. Captions should be brief and labels few but informative; block coloring can be useful to add emphasis and clarity. Primary components of the poster and principles for each are outlined below.

- **Title**—should be informative and printed in a boldface font. The title banner will include the title of the research, the author block, and the location of your research. It is essential that you consult with your mentor concerning attribution of credit for the research you are reporting, and make a collective decision on the order that authors will be listed. The preferred format for the symposium program guide is to list your faculty mentor as your first co-author. You may wish to display the logo(s) of your summer research institution, The Leadership Alliance and/or your home institution.
- **Introduction**—should include clear statements about the problem that you are examining or trying to solve, the characteristics that you are trying to discover or the proofs that you are trying to establish. These should then lead to declarations of project aims and objectives.
- **Materials and Methods**—explain the basis of the technique(s) that you are using or the procedure(s) that you have adopted in your study. You should also state and justify any assumptions, so that your results are viewed in the proper context.
- **Results**—show illustrative examples of the main results of the work.
- **Conclusion**—lists the main findings of your investigation and next steps.

Tips

- Use short headings.
- Eliminate material that is not essential to the presentation.
- Select only key figures or parts of an equation to illustrate a point.
- Posters should stimulate discussion, not give a long presentation. Therefore, keep text to a minimum, emphasize graphics, and make sure every item in your poster is necessary. Do not put entire paragraphs on a poster.
- Show information piece-by-piece, building to the final details.
- Show additional details in an overview diagram with a sectional breakout of details.
- Use simple block diagrams rather than intricate schematics.
- Use dashes, dotted or colored lines to make graphs more readable.
- When choosing a background, remember that neutral or gray colors will be easier on the eyes than a bright color. In addition, color photos look best when mounted on gray.
- Try not to stand directly in front of your poster, allow others to view the entire poster. Stand to the side.
- Come prepared with any relevant handouts you may wish to share and business cards to hand out.

Recommended sites for creating effective poster presentations:

- <http://www.ncsu.edu/project/posters>
- <http://www.ncsu.edu/project/posters/ExamplePosters.html>

Online video resource:

- [Poster Presentation Tips](#)
- [Giving an Effective Poster Presentation](#)

Abstracts

An abstract is a concise written summary of a research project, and is widely accepted as a standard format for publishing information in academic and professional journals. The abstract provides information about the hypothesis, purpose or objective, methods, results/expected results, discussion and conclusion (as appropriate by discipline).

The Leadership Alliance will collect abstracts for all student poster and oral presentations. Abstracts will not be published but will be shared with graduate student moderators for each respective presentation. Abstracts will also be filed at the Leadership Alliance Executive Office as permanent documentation of each participant's work.

Submission Requirements

Abstracts for all student poster and oral presentations must be [submitted](#) by July 15.

General Rules and Guidelines

Abstracts should be between 100-250 words in length. Only one submission per student is allowed and only students can be the presenting authors. Before you submit an abstract, you must:

- Register for the symposium by **July 3**.
- Submit presentation title by **July 3**.
- Have your presentation application approved by your summer program coordinator by **July 3**.

Proofread your work prior to submission.

The Leadership Alliance staff will not edit abstracts.

Have abstracts reviewed and approved by your research advisor and/or program director prior to submission.