Biochemistry and Microbiology Co-op—Oral Presentation Guidelines

After your work term, you’ll sign up for your 15-minute oral presentation (dates will be announced each term).

A) WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR ORAL PRESENTATION

• Background of the organization you worked for, its location and a brief description of its overall mandate.
• Introduction to your specific projects, goals and rationale.
• Description of your methods and results (this should be the main body of your talk—about 8 minutes—and you can use visual aids to emphasize your points).
• Project conclusions and description of further work that is needed.
• Leave 3 to 4 minutes for questions.

B) HOW TO USE VISUAL AIDS (like PowerPoint Presentations)

• Make writing large enough for everyone to see.
• Don’t include lots of details or too much text—include main points and expand on each point verbally.
• Be organized. Test your presentation beforehand, and bring everything you’ll need.

C) PREPARING FOR YOUR PRESENTATION

• Prepare well in advance.
• This is a talk, prepare it verbally, i.e., talk it as well as write it.
• Use cue cards, i.e., numbered, separate index cards with key words or phrases, rather than a fully written text on paper, or use your overheads as cues.
• Practice frequently, out loud, in several separate sessions well in advance rather than one huge session the night before.
• **Make sure the talk takes the correct amount of time.** Be sure to allow time for going through all the data on the visuals. The only way to do this is to do several complete trial runs, preferably in front of a friend. Students usually underestimate the time that is needed. If your practice shows your talk is too long, omit selected material rather than talking twice as fast.
• Get feedback from your friend, or use a tape recorder and listen to yourself.
• The more practiced you are, the more confident will be your delivery.
D) DURING YOUR PRESENTATION

- Speak to the audience; look at them, not your notes or the screen.
- Do not speak too quickly; speak clearly and pause frequently.
- Speak in a pleasant, conversational manner.
- Put yourself inside the audience's heads and tell them what you'd like them to know.
- Nerves are normal but try not to show them!

WANT HELP?

Check out the “Effective Speaking” reference in the Biochemistry/Microbiology Co-op and Career office, especially Chapter 4 (Visual Aids); Chapter 5 (Rehearsing); Chapter 6 (Speaking Voice); and Chapter 9 (Controlling Nervousness).