

DEPARTMENT OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERING GRADUATE STUDENT SEMINARS



**University
of Victoria**
Mechanical
Engineering

Overview

- Seminar requirements
- Ethos
- Picking a topic/focus
- Feedback form



Seminars (MECH 595/695)

- Presented by MASc & PhD students
 - MASc students X 1
 - PhD students X 2
- Some external speakers from time-to-time
- Required to attend 6 seminars per term
 - MEng & MASc
 - For the first 2 years, or to a total of 36 seminars
 - PhD
 - For the first 3 years, or to a total of 54 seminars
 - Sign-in indicates actual *attendance* at course
- Email announcements are sent out weekly



Ethos of graduate seminars

- Presenters
 - Opportunity to ***practise*** presentations
 - ***Focus*** research ideas & pitch
 - ***Communicate*** with more general audience
 - Receive ***feedback***
- Audience
 - ***Learn*** outside core research area
 - E.g. alternative analysis methods
 - ***Observe*** effective & ineffective practices
 - ***Support*** fellow students



Choice of two fundamental foci of talk

- Pick one of two key takeaway messages
 1. Key research idea/result
 - Impact
 - Why useful to world/other researchers
 2. Key analysis/experimental method
 - Uniqueness/capabilities/etc.
 - Translation to other areas
- Either way
 - Deliver to entire Mechanical Engineer audience
 - Ensure detail doesn't obscure key message(s)
- Unique presentation
 - Not just conference or thesis trial run



Feedback form used to help refine presenter techniques

- Mechanics
 - Make sure to write down presenter name
 - Fill out during question time
 - Hand-in at end
- Hand-back path
 - Student -> Supervisor -> Graduate advisor
- Provide constructive feedback
 - Anonymous feedback
 - Not to be nasty
 - To be able to be honest with friends

Seminar will be run like a conference with a competent chair

- Time limitation
 - 15 minutes talk
 - Chair will give 1 or 2 minute warning
 - Cut-off speaker regardless of place in talk
 - Practice timing
 - Avg. rule 2 minutes/slide but varies greatly
 - 10 minutes Q&A
 - Do include back-up slides
 - Number slides to reference questions
- Structure talk to deliver a message
 - Not just ramble through intro, methods, results

Feedback form has room for two presenters

Graduate Research Seminar Feedback Card

Name of Presenter #1:

What was the seminar's key takeaway message(s)?

<i>Circle your rating for each criteria</i>	Atrocious		Average		Excellent
• Delivery of key message(s)?	1	2	3	4	5
• Clarity of oral delivery & body language	1	2	3	4	5
• Ability to captivate audience attention	1	2	3	4	5
• Accessible conveyance of technical detail	1	2	3	4	5
• Text content of slides	1	2	3	4	5
• Image/video content of slides	1	2	3	4	5
• Overall effectiveness of slide design	1	2	3	4	5

Other comments/suggestions



Feedback form explanations:

Key takeaway message

- Write down what you understood to be the key message(s) of the talk
 - Did the audience understand the key message
 - Lost in detail?
 - Distill down to core idea(s)
 - Communication of ideas not messy details
 - Left for Q&A or other followup
 - Strive to achieve impact on audience



Feedback form explanations:

Feedback points graded on a scale

- 1 Atrocious
 - Totally failed to achieve point
- 3 Average
 - Effective, but nothing out of the ordinary
- 5 Excellent
 - Stand-out/stellar performance



Feedback form explanations:

Feedback points

- Delivery of key message(s)?
 - Do you think what you understood the key message to be get across to the audience in general?
- Clarity of oral delivery & body language
 - E.g. speaking clearly, eye contact, gesturing
- Ability to captivate audience attention
 - E.g. dynamic speaking, engaging topic
- Accessible conveyance of technical detail
 - E.g. not buried in equations
 - Clear where detail lies
 - Important areas identified

Feedback form explanations:

Feedback points

- Text content of slides
 - E.g. Spelling/grammar, point form vs. paragraphs
 - Style of headings, talk overview
- Image/video content of slides
 - Clear & legible on overhead
 - Good limited choice from many to show key result
- Overall effectiveness of slide design
 - Uniform theme/formatting
 - Color choice
 - Presentation order/tied together
 - Aid to oral presenter