



# **Presentation Skills: Planning and Delivering**

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# Using this guide

Starting in Higher Education can feel overwhelming but with the right approach to your studies, you can ensure you get the most out of your course and have a great time doing it!

We recommend that you take some time to work through this guide at the start of your course as a good understanding of this skill and the strategies discussed will help you to elevate your learning.

It is important to note that not every technique will work for you and you should take whichever approach suits your needs best.

This guide has been curated by the Student Experience and Engagement team with the help of other academic resources.

# Why are presentation skills important?

Effective presentation skills are essential for students as they are a fundamental aspect of academic and professional success. These skills empower you to communicate your ideas clearly and persuasively, whether it's during class presentations, group projects, or future job interviews. By mastering presentation skills, you not only convey your knowledge effectively but also boost your confidence and credibility.

These abilities will serve you well throughout your academic journey and beyond, helping you stand out in your coursework, collaborate more effectively with peers, and ultimately excel in your chosen career path. Moreover, they are transferable skills that will continue to benefit you in various aspects of your personal and professional life, making them a valuable investment in your future.

# Understanding your presentation brief

Understanding a presentation brief is a crucial first step in creating a successful presentation. Here are the stages to consider when digesting a presentation brief:

- **Read the Brief Thoroughly:**

Start by reading the entire presentation brief carefully. Pay close attention to the details, objectives, and any specific instructions provided. Make sure you understand the context and purpose of the presentation.

- **Identify the Key Objectives:**

Determine the primary goals of the presentation. What does the presenter aim to achieve? Are you supposed to inform, persuade, entertain, or accomplish another specific purpose? Understanding the objectives is essential for aligning your content and delivery.

- **Define the Target Audience:**

Identify the intended audience for the presentation. Who will be in the audience, and what do you know about their knowledge, interests, and expectations? Consider any demographic factors, such as age, background, or profession, that may influence your approach.

# Understanding your presentation brief

- **Analyse the Scope and Content:**

Break down the presentation brief to understand the scope of the content. What topics or themes need to be covered? Are there specific points or key messages that must be addressed? Make a list of the key content areas to include.

- **Clarify Any Ambiguities:**

If you encounter unclear or ambiguous instructions in the brief, seek clarification from your curriculum tutor. Don't make assumptions; ensure that you have a clear understanding of what is expected.

- **Research and Gather Information:**

Begin the research process to gather relevant information and data related to the presentation topic. This may involve reviewing literature, conducting surveys, or collecting supporting evidence.

# Understanding your presentation brief

- **Create an Outline:**

Based on your understanding of the presentation brief, start creating an initial outline for your presentation. Organise the main points, subtopics, and supporting details in a logical sequence.

- **Consider the Presentation Style:**

Think about the appropriate presentation style for the given brief. Should the presentation be persuasive, informative, descriptive, or another style? Tailor your approach to match the desired style and tone.

- **Plan Your Delivery:**

Begin thinking about how you will deliver the presentation. Consider aspects like the introduction, body, and conclusion. Start outlining key speaking points and visual aids, if applicable.

- **Review and Confirm:**

Finally, review your understanding of the presentation brief. Ensure that you have covered all the essential elements, objectives, and constraints. Confirm that your approach aligns with the brief's requirements.

# Understanding your presentation brief

By following these stages, you will achieve a clear and comprehensive understanding of the presentation brief. This understanding will serve as a solid foundation for planning and creating your presentation effectively. It will ensure that you are on the right track to deliver a presentation that meets the goals and expectations outlined in the brief.

**Task:** Use the checklist below to ensure you have followed all the stages:

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Read the brief thoroughly          |  |
| Identify the key objectives        |  |
| Define the target audience         |  |
| Analyse the scope and content      |  |
| Note any constraints or guidelines |  |
| Clarify any ambiguities            |  |
| Research and gather information    |  |
| Create an outline                  |  |
| Consider the presentation style    |  |
| Plan the delivery                  |  |
| Review and confirm                 |  |



# Structuring your presentation

Structuring a presentation effectively is the backbone of successful communication. Whether you're presenting in an academic, professional, or casual setting, a well-organised structure ensures clarity, engagement, and the conveyance of your message with impact.

The core components of a presentation structure:

## **Introduction**

Capturing your audience's attention and establishing the purpose of your presentation.

## **Body**

Organising the main content logically, developing key points, and providing supporting evidence.

## **Conclusion**

Summarising your message, emphasising key takeaways, and leaving a lasting impression.

# Structuring your presentation

## **Title Slide**

- Title
- Subtitle
- Your Name
- Date

## **Introduction Slide**

- Welcome the audience
- Briefly introduce the purpose or objectives of the presentation
- Offer an outline of what you will cover

## **Agenda (Optional)**

- Provide a slide that outlines the main topics or sections you will discuss through the presentation

## **Body Slides**

- Each slide should cover a specific point, topic or section
- Use clear and concise bullet points or visuals to support your spoken content
- Incorporate images, charts or graphs to enhance understanding
- Ensure some transitions between slides

## **Key Points Recap (Optional)**

- After covering each main section, you may consider adding a recap slide summarising the key points discussed

# Structuring your presentation

## **Examples of Case Studies (if applicable)**

- Include slides with real-world examples or case studies to illustrate your points

## **Discussion or Q&A Slides (Optional)**

- Reserve a slide for engaging the audience in a discussion or asking for questions

## **Conclusion**

- Summarise the main takeaway or key message of the presentation
- Restate the purpose and significance of the topic

## **Recommendations or Call to Action (if applicable)**

- If your presentation includes recommendation, strategies or call to action, provide a dedicated slide for this purpose

## **Thank You Slide**

- Provide contact information or resources for further inquiries

## **Q&A Session (if applicable)**

- Open the floor for questions and discussions with the audience

## **Closing Remarks**

- End with a closing statement, emphasising the importance of the topic or any final thoughts.

# Presentation Styles

Different presentation styles serve different purposes, and the choice of style depends on the **objectives** and **expectations** of the presentation brief and your assessment criteria.

## Informative Presentation:

- **Purpose:** Informative presentations aim to educate the audience about a particular topic or subject. The goal is to impart knowledge, facts, or insights.
- **Approach:** These presentations are typically well-researched and organized, with an emphasis on clarity and conciseness. They often include explanations, definitions, and examples to help the audience grasp complex concepts.

## Report Presentation:

- **Purpose:** Report presentations are typically used in academic or professional settings to convey information about a research study, project, or investigation.
- **Approach:** They follow a structured format, including an introduction, methodology, findings, and conclusions. Visual aids such as charts, graphs, and tables are often used to present data and results clearly.

# Presentation Styles

## Persuasive Presentation:

- **Purpose:** Persuasive presentations aim to convince or influence the audience to adopt a specific viewpoint, take a particular action, or change their beliefs or behaviors.
- **Approach:** These presentations often involve the use of compelling arguments, emotional appeals, and persuasive techniques like storytelling, statistics, and testimonials. The goal is to motivate the audience to agree with the presenter's perspective.

## Descriptive Presentation:

- **Purpose:** Descriptive presentations focus on providing a detailed and objective account of a topic, event, or subject matter without attempting to persuade or advocate for a specific stance.
- **Approach:** They emphasise clarity, accuracy, and thoroughness in presenting facts, data, and information. Descriptive presentations may use visual aids, such as charts and graphs, to enhance understanding.

# Presentation Styles

## Motivational Presentation:

- **Purpose:** Motivational presentations are designed to inspire and energize the audience. They often aim to boost morale, encourage positive actions, or instill a sense of purpose.
- **Approach:** These presentations use inspirational stories, anecdotes, and motivational quotes to connect with the audience emotionally. The presenter typically conveys enthusiasm and a sense of purpose to inspire others.

## Debate Presentation:

- **Purpose:** Debate presentations involve a structured argumentation between two or more sides with differing viewpoints. The goal is to present and defend a particular perspective or position.
- **Approach:** Each side presents arguments, counterarguments, and evidence to support their stance while rebutting the opposing side's points. Logic, reasoning, and persuasive skills are essential in debate presentations.

# Using templates

You can utilise the planning template provided below to assist you in outlining the key structure and organising your main points.

|                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Title</b>        | [Your Presentation Title]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Date</b>         | [Presentation Date]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Audience</b>     | [Target Audience]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Objectives</b>   | [State the main objective of your presentation]                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Key Points</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• [Main Point 1]</li><li>• [Main Point 2]</li><li>• [Main Point 3]</li><li>• [Additional Points]</li></ul>                                                                                                          |
| <b>Introduction</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• [Hook or attention-grabber]</li><li>• [Briefly introduce the topic]</li><li>• [State the purpose and objectives]</li></ul>                                                                                        |
| <b>Body</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• [Main Point 1]<br/>[Supporting details, evidence, examples]</li><li>• [Main Point 2]<br/>[Supporting details, evidence, examples]</li><li>• [Main Point 3]<br/>[Supporting details, evidence, examples]</li></ul> |
| <b>Visual Aids</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• [List the visual aids you plan to use]</li><li>• [Brief description of each visual aid]</li></ul>                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Conclusion</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• [Summarise key points]</li><li>• [Reiterate the main message]</li><li>• [End with a call to action or a thought-provoking statement]</li></ul>                                                                    |
| <b>Q&amp;A</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• [Anticipated questions and answers]</li><li>• [Any questions you'd like to pose to the audience]</li></ul>                                                                                                        |

# Planning Template

**Task:** Here is a blank version for you to complete:

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| Title        |  |
| Date         |  |
| Audience     |  |
| Objectives   |  |
| Key Points   |  |
| Introduction |  |
| Body         |  |
| Visual Aids  |  |
| Conclusion   |  |
| Q&A          |  |



# Audience Analysis Template

Not all presentations will require an audience analysis but it is good practice to know who you are delivering to as this can help you to tailor your content.

It is also really important that you understand what your tutor is looking for as part of the audience and ensure that you are hitting the relevant assessment criteria.

|                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Demographic</b>              | Think about your audience's age, gender, income, education, occupation and geographic location. Use this data to tailor your content/style to effectively engage and resonant with your audience. |
| <b>Knowledge</b>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What does the audience already know about the topic?</li><li>• What are their potential misconceptions?</li></ul>                                         |
| <b>Interests &amp; Concerns</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What are their interests related to the topic?</li><li>• What concerns or objections might they have?</li></ul>                                           |
| <b>Expectations</b>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What do they expect to gain from your presentation?</li><li>• What tone and style of presentation will best engage them?</li></ul>                        |

# Audience Analysis Template

**Task:** Here is a blank version for you to complete:

|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| <b>Demographic</b>              |  |
| <b>Knowledge</b>                |  |
| <b>Interests &amp; Concerns</b> |  |
| <b>Expectations</b>             |  |

# Storyboard Template

You can utilise the storyboard template provided below to assist you in organising the content, visual elements and narrative elements of your presentation.

|                           |                                                                                                       |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Slide Number</b>       |                                                                                                       |
| <b>Slide Title</b>        |                                                                                                       |
| <b>Content</b>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• [Brief description of content]</li></ul>                      |
| <b>Visual Elements</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• [List any images, charts, or graphs]</li></ul>                |
| <b>Narrative Elements</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• [If applicable, describe any storytelling elements]</li></ul> |
| <b>References</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• [Make sure to include a reference list]</li></ul>             |

# Storyboard Template

**Task:** Here is a blank version for you to complete:

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Slide Number</b>       |  |
| <b>Slide Title</b>        |  |
| <b>Content</b>            |  |
| <b>Visual Elements</b>    |  |
| <b>Narrative Elements</b> |  |
| <b>References</b>         |  |

# Effective Delivery.

Remember that effective delivery takes time and practice. Over time, you'll become more comfortable and skilled at presenting. Don't be too hard on yourself if you make mistakes; even experienced presenters encounter challenges. Keep refining your skills and learning from each presentation experience.

Below is a list of key points to ensure effective delivery:

## **1. Practice, Practice, Practice:**

- Rehearse your presentation multiple times to become familiar with the content.
- Practice in front of a mirror or record yourself to identify areas for improvement.
- Time your presentation to ensure it fits within your allotted time.

## **2. Start with a Strong Opening:**

- Begin your presentation with a compelling story, a thought-provoking question, a surprising fact, or a relevant quote.
- A strong opening grabs your audience's attention and sets the tone for the rest of the presentation.

## **3. Eye contact:**

- Maintaining eye contact with your audience establishes a connection and conveys confidence.

## **4. Gestures and body language:**

- Use your body language and gestures to emphasise key points. However, be careful not to over do it as this could distract from your message.

# Effective Delivery.

## **5. Voice modulation:**

- Make sure to speak clearly and loudly. Aim to keep a good steady pace. Avoid a monotone delivery as this could make your audience lose focus.

## **6. Use Clear and Concise Language:**

- Avoid jargon and technical terms that your audience may not understand.
- Use simple and straightforward language to convey your message.

## **7. Use Visual Aids Wisely:**

- If using slides or visual aids, ensure they complement your spoken words.
- Don't read your slides verbatim; instead, use them to illustrate key points.
- Keep slides simple and uncluttered.

## **8. Handle Questions Gracefully:**

- Be prepared for questions and interruptions.
- If you don't know the answer to a question, admit it and offer to follow up later.

## **9. Conclude Effectively:**

- Summarise your key points and reiterate your main message.
- End with a strong closing statement or call to action.

## **10. Seek Feedback:**

- After your presentation, ask for feedback from peers or mentors to identify areas for improvement.

# Overcoming Common Challenges

## **1. Dealing with Technical Issues**

Technical issues usually occur at the worst time, like when giving a presentation! They can disrupt your flow and make you appear unprepared. However, with the right strategies, you can navigate these challenges seamlessly:

### **1.1 Preparation is Key:**

- Always arrive early to set up your equipment and do a technical run-through.
- Familiarise yourself with the presentation software and hardware you'll be using.
- Bring backup materials such as printed slides or handouts in case of major technical failures.

### **1.2 Stay Calm and Confident:**

- If a technical issue arises during your presentation, remain composed.
- Apologise briefly and assure the audience that you will resolve the problem quickly.
- Seek technical assistance if needed but continue engaging the audience in the meantime.

### **1.3 Know Your Content:**

- Be prepared to continue your presentation without relying on slides or technology.
- Memorise key points and stories to keep the audience engaged while technical issues are resolved.

# Overcoming Common Challenges

## **2. Addressing Time Constraints**

Presenters often struggle to stay within their allotted time, risking disengagement or rushing through important content. Here's how to manage time constraints effectively:

### **2.1 Plan and Practice:**

- Allocate time to each section of your presentation during the planning phase.
- Rehearse your presentation multiple times to ensure you stay on schedule.

### **2.2 Prioritise Content:**

- Identify the most critical points and focus on them if time runs short.
- Avoid tangents or going into excessive detail on non-essential topics.

### **2.3 Use Visual Aids Wisely:**

- Visuals can save time by conveying complex information quickly.
- Ensure that visuals are clear and concise to avoid wasting time explaining them.

### **2.4 Timekeeping Tools:**

- Use a timer or clock visible to you during the presentation.
- Have a colleague signal you when you're approaching the end of your allotted time.



# Overcoming Common Challenges

## **3. Adapting to Unexpected Situations**

Presentations rarely go exactly as planned, and unexpected situations can throw you off course. Here's how to adapt gracefully:

### **3.1 Be Flexible:**

- Mentally prepare yourself to handle unexpected interruptions or disruptions.
- Embrace changes as opportunities to showcase your adaptability and expertise.

### **3.2 Stay Positive:**

- Maintain a positive attitude, even when faced with challenging situations.
- Use humor and relatability to defuse tension and connect with your audience.

### **3.3 Pause and Regroup:**

- If something unexpected happens, take a moment to collect your thoughts.
- Communicate any changes or delays to the audience transparently.

### **3.4 Prepare for Q&A:**

- Anticipate potential questions or objections, including those related to unexpected events.
- Have well-thought-out responses ready to maintain control during the Q&A session.

# A final note

If after working through this booklet you are still unsure about how to plan and deliver your presentation, please do not hesitate to contact our Student Engagement Officer who can offer additional advice and guidance to build your confidence and skill-set.

- You can contact us via our central email - **[studyskills@ucenmanchester.ac.uk](mailto:studyskills@ucenmanchester.ac.uk)**
- One-to-one appointments are available through **Microsoft Bookings**.
- See the digital screens at your campus for drop-in session information

## Have your say.

Your input is invaluable in helping us to enhance the Study Skills package we provide. Your honest responses will enable us to identify areas of improvement and tailor our approach to better support your learning journey. After you have completed this booklet, please take 5 minutes to let us know what you thought!

You can do this by scanning the QR code below!



