

## Hints on MSc Project Presentations

The talks are to be no more than 15 minutes in duration (with 5 more minutes for questions and changeover to the next speaker). You may find it useful to practice beforehand so that you can judge the length.

Think about your audience: don't assume they know too much. They will enjoy it more and understand it better if the level is too low rather than too high.

Your talk will be assessed by at least two members of faculty. The marking criteria they will be using are available from

<http://www2.scitech.sussex.ac.uk/undergrad/projects/marksheet.pdf>

Don't panic don't worry even --- everyone else hates giving talks too, so you're all in the same boat! The audience is on your side...

Each talk should have a beginning, middle, and an end.

"First tell them what you are going to tell them; then tell it to them; then tell them what you have told them."

Don't try to cover too much. Quality is better than quantity.

You will probably want to use a computer for a PowerPoint or similar presentation. (LaTeX seminar style slides viewed with a PDF viewer may be easier if you need to show equations.) You may use either your own laptop or the PC in the seminar room. Check that your slides are compatible with the computer you will be using beforehand!

The title page should include your name clearly and prominently displayed, and there should be an overview either on the title or the next page.

- Aim for an average of no more than one slide per minute.
- There should be one simple "idea" per slide.
- Don't make the slides too detailed. Use a minimum of text, and large fonts.
- Make sure everything on the slide can be read --- graph axes are often illegible. If the audience can't read it, there's no point in having it there.
- Don't use too much maths, and don't stand there reading out equations!
- Use colour if you can.
- Be sparing in your use of text animations and other effects --- they can be distracting.
- Graphics are preferable to text: the brain is much better at remembering images than words, so use pictures. (You can sometimes use little icons in your conclusion to remind the audience of the pictures they've seen).
- Give the audience enough time to read whatever you display: there is no point in showing something and whipping it away before it has been registered.
- Look at the audience. Eye contact is very important.
- Brief notes can help to boost confidence, but **do not read** your talk.

Practice. For your first couple of talks we suggest that you practice out loud, preferably in front of an audience. When you become more confident then you can simply go through the talk in your head beforehand.