Giving presentations

During your time at university it’s likely that you’ll be asked to deliver a presentation to your peers as part of your course. Planning and delivering an effective presentation is a skill that you can develop through practise, research and preparation.

Use our presentation checklist to help you plan and deliver your presentation so that you feel confident and prepared on the day. If you find it useful, put a tick beside the boxes that you find helpful so that you can easily refer to them in the future.

Dealing with nerves
If you feel nervous giving presentations, you’re not alone! You can use relaxation techniques before you do your presentation, such as deep breathing. It may also help to remember that nerves never show as much as you think they do.

Resources
For more help with presentations, visit the Skills Hub website or come to a workshop.

www.sussex.ac.uk/skillshub/presentations
Preparation
- Be clear about the task and assessment criteria
- Identify your key points – not too many!
- Have essential and additional points
- Have a clear structure – use headings, know the order eg:
  - **Introduction**: give overall direction and outline key points
  - **Key points**: make links between points clear
  - **Conclusion**: summarise key points and pull it all together
- Prepare slides – PowerPoint/video/handouts
- Make cue card/notes to use as memory triggers
- Practise your talk and time yourself (if you’re feeling brave record or video yourself or persuade someone to be your practise audience)
- Practise words and phrases you have difficulty pronouncing
- Familiarise yourself with the room and any equipment
- Consider ways to engage the audience eg. ask questions
- Think about how to conclude your presentation and leave time for questions

Delivery
- Arrive early so you can setup/be in the room before everyone else
- Wait until everyone is quiet and seated before you begin
- Know how you want to open your talk eg. introductory slide
- Try to speak from your cue cards or memory rather than reading out your presentation
- Speak slowly, clearly and loudly enough for everyone to hear
- Be aware of your body language eg. smile and try to avoid fidgeting
- Look up and try to make eye contact with your audience
- Have water to hand – and drink when needed
- Use a clock to time yourself (check the time when you start)
- Aim to project confidence – act as if your presentation was excellent (even if you don’t feel it!)

Responding to questions
- Try to predict possible questions – you could prepare slides with discussion points
- Listen carefully to questions from your audience
- Paraphrase questions to clarify – and for thinking time!
- If you don’t know the answer, offer to research it later or open it up to the group

Feedback
- Remember to listen for feedback from your lecturer and peers when you’ve finished your presentation