

## PRESENTATIONS

Many courses require students to give group or individual seminars and presentations about their work. Some students have better verbal skills and presentations can provide an alternative way for students to demonstrate their abilities. Presentations are also a useful means to develop and demonstrate **communication skills**.

Some **common difficulties** in giving presentations may include the following:

- Trying to do too much.
- Deference to the lecturer.
- Lack of structure.
- Lack of support for ideas.
- Fear of public speaking/nervousness.
- Anxiety about peers.
- Lack of practice.
- Reluctance to accept constructive criticism and learn from the experience.

### Preparing the presentation

- Identify the aim/purpose of the presentation – presenting information? A viewpoint? To raise awareness of an issue? To present your own ideas?
- Do you have to choose your own topic?
- Background reading/research?
- Structure of the presentation – introduction, body, conclusion.
- The venue and facilities.
- Technology – data projectors, laptops? Power point slides? Open source? Web browsers?
- Handouts?
- Other visual aids?
- Your audience – how will you capture and maintain their interest?
- Anticipate questions from the audience or lecturer/assessor.
- Are you being assessed? What are the assessment criteria?
- What is the time allocated?
- Are you working with a group? How will you allocate time and tasks?
- What are your references and how will you acknowledge them?
- Allocate time for questions and/or feedback.
- Think about how you will deal with nerves and how you can compensate by using notes or other aids.
- Consider talking to your lecturer in the preparation stage to help you feel more confident.

### Practising the presentation

- Either individually or as a group you need to practise to ensure your pace and timing is appropriate.
- Practise helps you feel more confident and will show you where your presentation may fall down.
- You will need to practise using technology, handouts, visual aids and integrating everything into a smooth presentation.

### Delivering the presentation

- Ensure you can access the venue early and set up.
- Set up all resources including laptops and data projectors and test your equipment.
- Consider the audience and how much interaction you will have with them during the presentation.
- Consider your body position relevant to the whiteboard, data screen and your audience.
- Maintain eye contact.
- Don't overuse gesture.
- Manage questions.

## Handouts

- What is the purpose of the handout? – a guide, something to read later? Something you will refer to during the presentation?
- Make sure the reader can navigate through the handout.
- Is the information in the handout in addition to the information on the slides?
- When is the best time to distribute the handout?
- Give the handout a title and clear structure.
- Use the handout for reference lists where relevant.

Last Updated: 15 October 2014

2

