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## A QUICK GUIDE TO GIVING A PRESENTATION

Presentations are intended to develop your communication skills. Giving presentations is one of the skills that employers expect graduates to have, so you should make the most of any experiences you get at university. You may need to give presentations:

- In tutorials
- As part of the assessment of projects
- In Union activities or staff-student committees.

The following notes are intended to help you prepare for giving a talk.

### 1. Preliminary Considerations and Arranging the Material

Decide what your presentation is meant to achieve:

- Is it intended to convey a body of information?
- Is it to persuade the audience to share a point of view?
- Is it to stimulate subsequent discussion?

The answer will influence the way you structure the presentation. In any case, be sure that you have prepared your key points or arguments in a clear and logical sequence. Try breaking the main body of the talk into sections, or into a set of questions to be answered.

Decide how you are going to deliver your presentation:

- Do you know how you will get the main points across to the audience?
- Will you use a visual aid or write important points on a board?
- Will you read your talk from a full text? (This ensures comprehensiveness, but often encourages a hasty and stiff delivery and should be avoided.)
- Will you speak from brief notes (headings and sub-headings) or from detailed notes? Spontaneity helps keep the audience's attention, but can lead to stumbling if you are not well prepared.

- Will you memorise the whole thing? (This can fail spectacularly, but can also be very impressive.)
- How will you conclude your presentation? a summary of the main points? a call for action? a provocative statement or question?

## **2. Performance**

By your final year you should be:

- Presenting arguments confidently
- Clearly articulating your ideas to an audience
- Engaging the attention of people during seminars
- Tackling nerves and answering questions calmly

## **3. Practical Points**

- Rehearse your presentation out loud, with attention to timing and delivery; this often helps with nervousness, memory and fluency
- Using handouts, PowerPoint presentations, etc. can often help get your point across and make the talk more interesting. Showing your
- Own enthusiasm for the subject can also contribute to the success of a talk.
- Speak distinctly; varying your pitch and speed and try not to talk too quickly
- Look at the audience as much as possible - not at your notes
- Try to smile!