ORAL REPORTS GUIDELINES

Requirements

• *The Oral Presentation Task Leader will be the speaker and is responsible for bringing a laptop loaded with the presentation and read for plug-in on Oral day.*
• Oral reports will be evaluated on the basis of communication and technical results. The grading sheet that we will use is provided in the Course Overview packet.
• Plan for a 10 minutes presentation.
• Be prepared to answer questions on technical aspects for up to 5 additional minutes.

Organization

• Imagine that you are presenting your results to company management and orient your talk accordingly. Here is a typical organization for such a talk:

> • Briefly state the objectives, summarizing your team's actions, and the main recommendations (which should be repeated at the end).
> • Orient the audience to the physical context. Give an overview of the equipment used, the measurements performed or to be performed, etc. A schematic helps. A photo of the apparatus is rarely effective as an overview, as it includes too much detail. You might use a photo to highlight a specific item, however.
> • Very briefly discuss the theoretical background. Include only what is essential for clarity.
> • Focus on the data collected and main results (including uncertainties). This section should convince the audience that you used appropriate procedures, and that your esults are credible.
> • End with strong, specific conclusions and recommendations (supported by the previous discussion!). Motivate the audience to take the next step, whatever that may be.
> • It can be helpful to prepare extra slides to deal with questions on technical details.

Content

• It is better to cover a few key points well. Do not rush to cover every possible aspect of your project.
• Time your talk to be on the short side so you're confident you will finish on time.
• Avoid getting bogged down in procedural details, equations, etc.
• A little humor is a good way to connect with your audience, but make sure it is appropriate and do not overdo it.
• End with concrete recommendations that are supported by the results.
• Make your ending strong with a call for further action (*not* "Well, I guess that's all.")

Visual Aids

• Prepare all visuals in advance and E-mail the ppt file to the TAs.
• Include a title slide that introduces you and your team members.
• Use the appropriate number of slides. Most presenters spend 1-2 minutes per slide. This means you should have no more than 10-15 slides for a 10-minute talk (not including title slide). If you show a visual for less than 30 seconds you probably should not include it at all. If it takes more than 2 minutes, it is probably too detailed.

Delivery

• PRACTICE-there is no substitute. Deliver your speech out loud and use a stopwatch to record the length of time your presentation takes. This will help you master awkward phrasing and is essential for proper timing.
• Speak clearly and with volume adequate for listeners at the back of the room.
• Strive for vitality. The enthusiasm you project will be sensed by the audience and will affect their enthusiasm for you and your subject. You should change your pitch, volume, and rate of delivery. Appropriate (brief!) pauses can be helpful.
• Physical aspects of your delivery are also important. You should maintain eye contact with the audience and you should appear to be poised and relaxed. Good posture helps. Some movement helps but fidgeting and pacing should be avoided.
• Do not read your talk! Word-for-word reading is fatal to the spontaneity and enthusiasm. Reference to notes or an outline is fine.
• It is almost as bad if you seem to be reciting the whole thing from memory. Memorize the first sentence or two (for a good start), then shift to a more extemporaneous approach.
• Answer questions directly. Do not hedge or ramble.
• If unsure of a question, rephrase it and ask for confirmation before answering (This is a good technique in large rooms when some of the audience may not have heard the question.)
• Dress as you usually would for class.

Grading

• Oral Reports are graded on 100 points. 60% of the grade goes to the Task Leader; other team members do not collect any points. Thus, the Oral Report only measures the performance of the Task Leader. A sample grade sheet is available in the Course Overview packet and on the course website.