Group Oral Presentation Guidelines

Overview
Design projects often require presentations to colleagues, clients, and users. These are given at various stages in the process. A great presentation accompanying a proposal may mean the difference between getting and not getting a contract. Presentations are frequently given during a project to report on progress or prepare the clients or users for the changes that they can expect once the project is complete.

Presentation Schedule
In ECE496, each group will give an oral presentation on their project. These presentations will be run in the evenings during the winter term, beginning in the second week. Presenters will be given two evenings. The first evening is a practice session. The presentation will not be marked but will receive comments from a representative of the Engineering Communication Centre and the administrator for the group. The second evening is the actual grading session. The oral presentation schedule can be found here.

Presentation Evaluation
During the grading session, the oral presentation will be marked by the administrator only. Marking will be done on an individual basis as far as delivery goes, and on a group basis for content and coherence of material. The other students presenting that evening will be part of the audience. Students in the audience are expected to take part by asking questions and becoming involved in the discussion of the other design projects presented in the second evening. The point here is not to be critical of other projects so much as to learn about them. Audience participation is included as part of the oral presentation mark. All presenters are expected to stay the entire time for both evenings.

- Presentation grading form in Word or PDF formats
- Summary of evaluation criteria and grading scheme can be found here.

Note 1: The course administrators will not assign an actual grade until after all groups have presented. This is done in order to get an overview of how all presenters performed. The administrator for your section will however comment on your presentation so that at least you have some preliminary feedback.

Note 2: Please do not request your mark during the term. The mark will be posted in early April. You can request a grade confirmation or explanation from your administrator after the marks appear on Blackboard.
Presentation Format and Delivery

Time limits: groups of two have 11 minutes total, groups of three have 14 minutes total and groups of four have 17 minutes total. Groups will lose marks if their presentations are too long or the time is not reasonably divided among the group members.

Presentation Order: You will have to decide how you wish to divide up the presentation amongst yourselves. Switching back and forth between speakers usually takes away from a talk’s momentum; therefore arrange your presentation material such that each member delivers a single part of the presentation. Make sure you practice the presentation beforehand and receive comments from peers or friends. Get the talk well organized at least a week before the date of the presentation so you can make appropriate modifications. Make sure that the presentation is of the right length and that the material is roughly evenly divided between group members.

You are always welcome to make an appointment with tutors at the Engineering Communication Centre to get help preparing or rehearsing your presentation. In addition, if a snowstorm postpones your dry-run and you are worried about having enough time between the dry-run and graded presentation, you should make an appointment for extra feedback from the Engineering Communication Centre.

Presentation Format: Presentations are typically done using a laptop computer and a presentation program such as Microsoft Powerpoint. Each group is responsible for bringing in their own laptop computer (or arranging access to a computer from another group) for both practice and grading sessions. The presentation material should be preloaded on a CD, memory stick, or on the laptop’s hard drive before the oral presentation. The first 10 minutes of the period will be available for the groups to set up their laptops so that the switching from one presentation to the next can be accomplished as quickly as possible. On occasion equipment fails so you should have a set of backup transparencies of your presentation.

In your presentation, summarize your project and your progress to date. Draw material from past reports and possibly from your Individual Progress Reports (depending on the timing of your scheduled presentation). Here is a suggested outline:

- A title slide
- Outline (One slide which outlines the presentation's contents)
- Introduction (explain to those not familiar with your work the background and motivation for your project)
- Project Goal
- Project Requirements
- Overview of System-level Design
- Report on progress to date and work yet to be completed
- Summary & Conclusions
Guidelines for preparing and using overhead slides were presented in last semester’s lecture and are available here. Some key points include:

- Use PowerPoint or some other presentation software, or use a standard word processor, but remember to use large fonts (at least 20 points), for example, 20 points, 24 points, 36 points. Use ‘sans-serif’ fonts such as Helvetica and Arial which show up better on screen. If you choose to use hand-written overhead transparencies, use no more than about 12 lines per page.
- Use bulleted lists and stick to key points.
- Use a spreadsheet such as Excel to prepare simple graphs.
- Do not present more than about one overhead per minute.
- "Walk" the audience through each overhead, and explain each graph and diagram.
- Think about ways to make your presentation and slides interesting and entertaining, without detracting from the technical and other informative content.
- There are many books and articles on preparing effective presentations. Consult one for more details. Some additional information can be found at the following link.