

Lightning (3 Minute) Talk Guidelines

Type	Recording Time Limit	Q & A Time Allocation
Lightning Talks	3 minutes	2 minutes

Lightning talks: (also called elevator talks or 3-minute talks) should be given quickly and should focus on the most important focus of the research. The presentation takes three minutes, using one to three slides (more can be used, but it is risky). The presenter explains only the most important highlights of their research.

Lightning Talks: Students are welcome to use visual aids such as Point Power but it is not a requirement. .

Helpful tips for creating a lightning talk:

1. **Less is more**– the aim of your lightning talk is to inspire your audience to research the subject after the presentation rather than flooding them with all of the information about a topic in the shortest time frame possible. Don't be afraid of not giving your audience everything they need to know!
2. **Simplicity is key**– You could perhaps use the Takahashi method, which is a way of distilling your ideas to their essence by including only one or two words per slide in a large font. This will make it easier for yourself to keep on track, as well as for your audience to understand.
3. **The art of delivery**– It is all too easy to get so absorbed in your topic that you lose track of the way in which it will be delivered. Arguably, it is the delivery of a lightning talk which takes precedence over the content. Make sure you have logical transitions of ideas in your presentation and that you stay confident. Remember that your audience is rooting for you!
4. **Practice, practice, practice**– Practice against a timer as much as possible to get an idea of how your presentation will flow. If you find yourself speeding up towards the end of the five minutes to be able to share as much information as possible, then take a step back and consider condensing your presentation.
5. The lightning talk format is a pretty dramatic break from the traditional academic presentation styles. They can be a fun and whimsical way to communicate science. Keep that in mind as you prepare. Humor can be particularly impactful for audiences and really help you drive home the key messages of your presentations. And if you're not funny, just make sure YOU are having fun during your presentation. Your audience will pick up on it.

See resources on how to give a Lightning Talk:

- [*16 Ways To Prepare for a Lightning Talk*](#)

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