

Guidelines and Tips for Presentation Slides

Slide Format

- Presentation slides should be built using a 4:3 aspect ratio; other sizes/formats (e.g., wide-screen, 16:9) may experience alteration in appearance in the scaling process.

Font Style

- Use the same font set throughout your entire slide presentation, and use no more than two complementary fonts (e.g., **Arial** and **Arial Bold**).
- San-serif fonts (**Helvetica** or **Arial**) are generally best for PowerPoint presentations.
- Serif fonts (e.g., **Times New Roman** or **Garamond**) are designed to be used in documents filled with lots of text and easier to read at small font sizes but for on-screen presentations tend to get lost due to the relatively low resolution of projectors.

Font Size

- Avoid using fonts smaller than 30 points in the presentation; general recommendations are 40 points for title text, 30 points for bullet text, and no smaller than 24 points for remaining text in the body of the slide.
- It is generally recommended to use 1” for every 10 feet of distance as a guide for font size when presenting. If the last row of seats is 30 feet from the screen, text should be a minimum of 3” high when projected on the screen.
- On average, a 10 points font will project to 1” on-screen; hence the recommendation to avoid using font size smaller than 30 points.
- Adjust spacing between lines of text to avoid cutting off the lower portion of letters.

Color

- High contrast colors between font and slide background is recommended; use dark text on a light background or light text on a dark background. See below for examples.
- Screens will be positioned in normal lighting conditions, therefore use of a light background is acceptable.
- As most presentation rooms will maintain normal levels of lighting, low contrast colors will not project well and not easily legible from a distance. See below for examples.

High Contrast

dark text – light background

light text – dark background

Low Contrast

light bright text – light background

dark text – dark background

Tables/Graphs/Figures

- **ENSURE** proper citation, referencing, disclosures are included on the slide, particularly with copyrighted material.
- Avoid creating a slide that you will provide a disclaimer prior to discussing the slide - “this table is really busy”, “you probably can’t see this graph very well”, or “sorry this image is a little blurry”.
- Inserting an image of a published item (e.g., table, graph, figure) is easy, however the image quality (resolution) and density of information may detract from the information being conveyed.

Other Tips

- Avoid extensive bullet points and text-heavy slides requiring the audience to read rather than listen to your comments. Consider the **5/5/5 rule** - no more than **five** words per line of text, **five** lines of text per slide, **five** text-heavy slides in a row.

- Avoid using clip art that is readily available and likely already been viewed by the audience.
- Limit builds (animations) and transitions; avoid having to speed through animations due to time constraints.