

# A guide to oral presentations

The ability to undertake an oral presentation is a valuable skill for assessment tasks, interviews and your future career. This skill can be developed by everyone and is not reserved to those who are "naturally" confident at public speaking. This guide will provide you with some tips and techniques for ensuring your presentation is well planned, structured and delivered.

## 1. Plan

### Analyse your audience

Some questions to consider include:

- Who is your audience?
- What do they know about the subject? What terminology will they know?
- What do they want to know?
- How can you engage this audience? What matters to them?

### Determine a clear purpose

The purpose of a presentation may be to provide information, persuade the audience to accept a point of view, or encourage them to take action. Knowing your purpose will help you decide what to include and how to structure your presentation.

### Select effective information

- What kind of information will best support the presentation?
- What kind of information will be relevant to the audience?
- Are there useful examples or case studies to illustrate your ideas?

## 2. Prepare

Structure provides a framework for your presentation.



**Introduction** – an overview of the issue and the main ideas to be considered. Explain the issue, the background and the key terms



**Body** – the main ideas, reasoning, evidence and explanation provided. Avoid overloading your audience with too much information. Categorise your information into key ideas.

**Conclusion** – a summary of what you have considered with repetition of key ideas.

Consider how long you can spend on each section, given the time available.

**Select appropriate visual aids** - remember that the visuals are not the presentation. Their purpose is to enhance what you are saying by providing a visual link.

## 3. Practise and present

The key to a good delivery is to practise your speech and your body language. Here are some tips to assist you:

- **Practise** your presentation several times, aloud and standing up.
- **Time the presentation.** If it is too long, remove and/or simplify information, rather than speaking more quickly.
- **Stand straight** with your feet "planted" in the ground. You can move, but do so with purpose.
- **Establish a "resting place"** for your hands at the front of your body, such as cupped at waist level.
- **Eye contact** is a powerful means to engage your audience so look at your whole audience when you speak.
- **Speak more slowly** and clearly than you normally would. Provide emphasis through voice intonation, volume and pausing.