



**UNIVERSITY OF  
CALGARY**

# **Preparing your Research for Conference Presentation**

**Presented by:**

**Kendell Heydon Ph.D.**

**Program Coordinator, Writing Support Services**

**Student Success Centre**

The University of Calgary, located in the heart of Southern Alberta, both acknowledges and pays tribute to the traditional territories of the peoples of Treaty 7, which includes the **Blackfoot Confederacy** comprised of the **Siksika**, the **Piikani**, and the **Kainai First Nations**, the **Tsuut'ina First Nation**, and the **Stoney Nakoda** including **Chiniki**, **Bearspaw**, and **Goodstoney First Nations**. The City of Calgary is also home to **Métis Nation of Alberta, Region III**.

The University of Calgary is situated on land Northwest of where the Bow River meets the Elbow River, a site traditionally known as “**Moh'kins'tsis**” to the Blackfoot, **Wîchîspa** to the Stoney Nakoda, and **Guts'ists'i** to the Tsuut'ina. On this land and in this place we strive to learn together, walk together, and grow together “in a good way.”

# Moving from Acknowledgement to Action

- Land acknowledgements serve an important function in moving toward reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in Canada, but acknowledgement itself is not enough. How do we move beyond acknowledgement to being active participants in reconciliation?
- Scan the QR code for a list of additional resources and ways that you can support your own growth and contribution to reconciliation.

SCAN ME



- Scan the QR code to visit the Grad Success Week website.
- There are a lot of really valuable sessions taking place throughout the week. Sign up for more sessions, engage in meaningful learning, and connect with fellow graduate students!



## Goals of this presentation

1. How to structure your presentation
2. How to create effective slides
3. Presentation skills

# 1. Presentation Structure

## **Before you begin**

- Identify your audience
- Remember Conference themes
- Revisit your abstract
- What is/are the take-home message(s)?

# General presentation structure

Format of a presentation = Format of a paper



# Structure of the Presentation

## Sciences

- Introduction/background
- Research question and hypothesis
- Methodology
- Results and discussion
- Contribution to knowledge
- Conclusion

## Arts

- Introduction/background
- Main theme(s)/argument(s)
- Methodology/approach
- Arguments and supporting evidence
- Contribution to knowledge
- Conclusion

# Introduction and Background (2-3 slides)

## General considerations

- Consider your audience
- Set the stage
- Provide relevant information
- Avoid technical details
- Let audience know what to expect

## Format of Introduction

- Provide an attention grabbing opener:
  - quotation, anecdote, “fun-fact”, etc.
- Introduce your topic
- Provide background and context

# Research question & main argument (1-2 slides)

## Sciences

- Research objective(s)
- Research question(s) on one slide
- State hypothesis

## Arts

- Introduce main argument
- Identify points you will make in support of your argument
- Provide brief outline of how you will structure your presentation

## Research questions

- First Research Question
- Second Research Question
- Third Research Question

## Main Theme/Argument

- Main point 1
  - Development plan
- Main point 2
  - Development plan
- Main point 3
  - Development plan

## Methodology (1-2 slides)

### Sciences

- Study design basics
- Reason for study group (optional)
- Lab tests (optional)
- Visuals better than text

### Arts

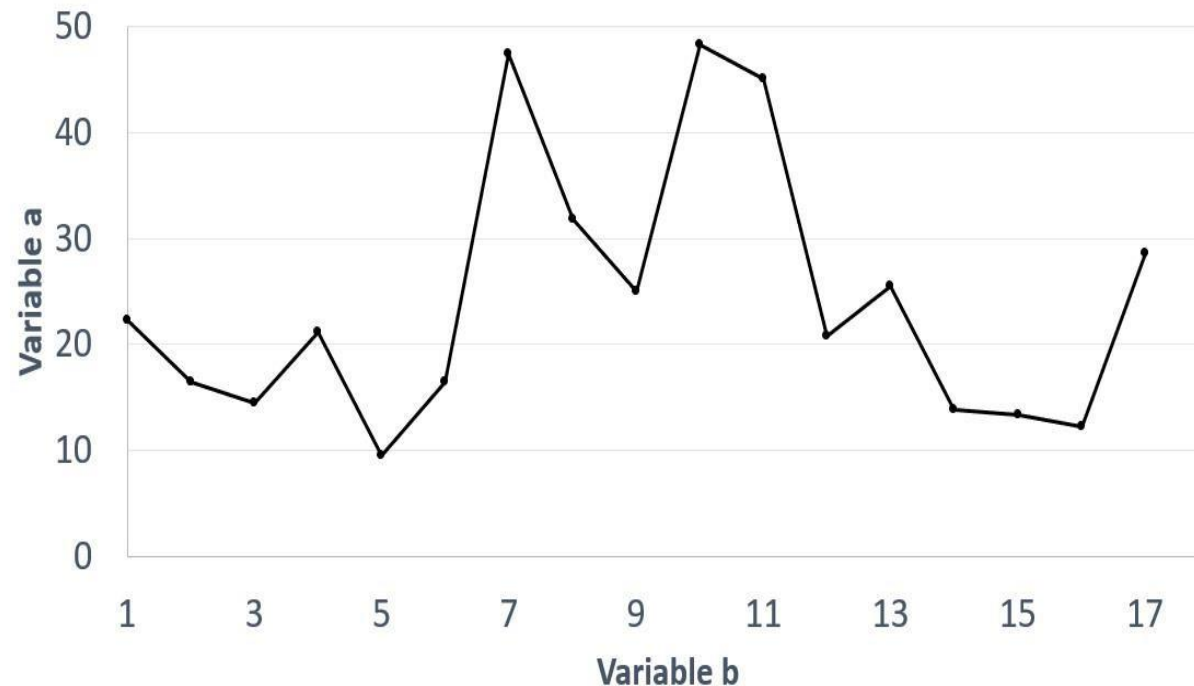
- State any theories or methodologies you used in your analysis
- Provide explanation of key aspects of theory
- Define any jargon/technical terminology you will be using

## Results and discussion (4-5 slides)

- Emphasize **key** results (tie to take-home)
  - Characteristics of participants / animal cohorts (optional)
  - Use relevant statistics
  - Use a mixture of text, tables, and figures
  - Link findings to study objectives

## Results and discussion

Descriptive title of the graph



- Text to emphasize key findings
- Key discussion point



## Arguments and analysis (4-5 slides)

- Create at least one slide for each of your main points
- Don't put too much information on a single slide
- Provide support/evidence for point
- Use examples
- Use quotations/excerpts of text
- Use relevant images

## Heading: Main point

- Supporting point 1
- Supporting point 2
- Supporting point 3

Relevant  
Image or  
Text Excerpt

## Contribution to Knowledge (1-2 slides)

- What did your research/analysis/study show?
- What new information does this add to your field?

## Conclusion (1-2 slides)

- Summarize main ideas of presentation
  - Emphasize “take home” message(s)
- Address “bigger picture” issues
  - Recommendations
  - Future studies – limit to specific questions raised during your study.

# Acknowledgements (less than 20 seconds)

- Recognise people involved
  - Pictures rather than a long list of names
- Thank your audience

## 2. Creating Effective Slides

## Slide design

- Keep design simple
- Limit amount of material on each slide
- Limit supporting evidence strongest examples
- Use visual aids instead of text wherever possible
- Simplify graphs, charts & diagrams when possible

What is the most important aspect of the talk?

**You!**

# Effective slides need to consider

- Use of colour
- Use of text
- Slide design
- Use of backgrounds
- Use of Images
- Use of Quotations
- Presenting results: tables and figures
- When and how to incorporate animation



## Use of colour

### Do:

- Maximize contrast between  
and background
- If not using black use neutral  
dark colors the main text
- Maintain a consistent color  
scheme throughout the  
presentation

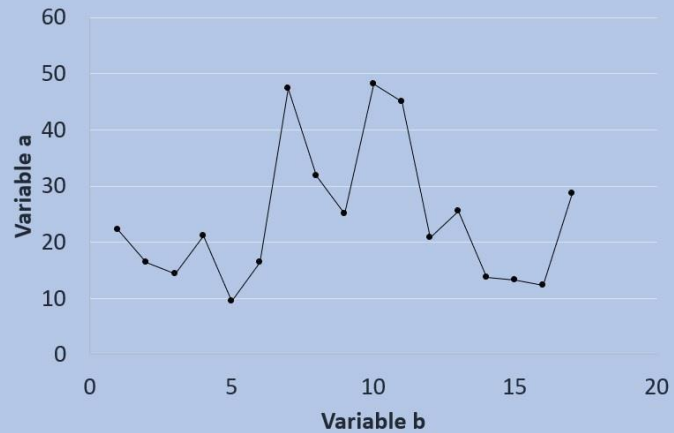
### Do NOT:

- Use white/light letters on  
a light background  
e.g. like this!
- Use clashing colour  
mixtures  
e.g. like this!
- Use too many colours  
e.g. like this!

# Use of colour

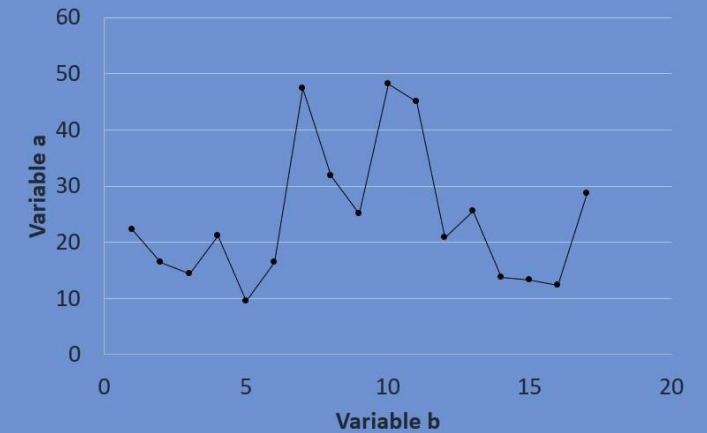
**Your screen**

Experiment 1  
result



**Projector screen**

Experiment 1  
result



## Use of text

- Be concise
- Keep points manageable
- Make sure text is clearly formatted
- Emphasize key words

## Use of text

- Ensure text is large enough to be read
  - Minimum font size: 24 pt.
- Fonts to use:
  - Arial
  - Calibri
- Fonts not to use:
  - Algerian
  - Chiller
  - *Whatever this one is*

# Example slide: Use of text

- Example 1. Use of text
- Example 2. Use of text
- Example 3. Use of text
- Example 4. Use of text
- Example 5. Use of text

VS

- Example 1. Use of text Example 2. Use of text Example 3. Use of text Example 4. Use of text
- Example 5. Use of text Example 6. Use of text Example 7. Use of text Example 8. Use of text Example 9. Use of text Example 10. Use of text Example 11. Use of text
- Example 12. Use of text Example 13. Use of text Example 14. Use of text Example 15. Use of text



- Definite mistake
  - Distracts the audience.







**Example slide:  
Use of Background**





# **Use of Background Title Slide**

**Maybe even add a subtitle**



- Does it take attention away from you/your presentation?
- Is it more difficult to read?

# Use of images

- Is this relevant to the talk?
- Is it distracting?
- Is it impeding your text?



By BAUSCHRON - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0,  
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=88226710>

# Use of images

- Is this relevant to the talk?
- Is it distracting?
- Is it impeding your text?



## Use of images

- Is this relevant to the talk?
- Is it distracting?
- Is it impeding your text?



# Geographical data/images

- Clear references
  - Temporal
  - Spatial
- Use high resolution images



## Use of Quotations

- Is it difficult to follow
- Does it detract from what you are saying?

Here is a quotation. It is a very long quotation. But this is a  
necessary quotation, since it is a passage that my talk will be  
analyzing. Here is a quotation. It is a very long quotation. But  
this is a necessary quotation, since it is a passage that my talk  
will be analyzing. Here is a quotation. It is a very long  
quotation. But this is a necessary quotation, since it is a  
passage that my talk will be analyzing. Here is a quotation. It  
is a very long quotation. But this is a necessary quotation,  
since it is a passage that my talk will be analyzing. Here is a  
quotation. It is a very long quotation. But this is a necessary  
quotation, since it is a passage that my talk will be analyzing.  
Here is a quotation. It is a very long quotation. But this is a  
necessary quotation, since it is a passage that my talk will be  
analyzing. Here is a quotation. It is a very long quotation. But  
this is a necessary quotation, since it is a passage that my talk  
will be analyzing. Here is a quotation. It is a very long  
quotation. But this is a necessary quotation, since it is a  
passage that my talk will be analyzing. Here is a quotation. It  
is a very long quotation. But this is a necessary quotation,  
since it is a passage that my talk will be analyzing.



# Use of Quotations

- Point 1 about quotation
- Point 2 about quotation



## Quotation title and author/work information

Here is a quotation. It is a very long quotation. But this is a necessary quotation, since it is a passage that my talk will be analyzing. Here is the important part of the quotation. Here is a quotation. It is a very long quotation. But this is a necessary quotation, since it is a passage that my talk will be analyzing. Here is the important part of the quotation. Here is the important part of the quotation. Here is a quotation.... Here is a quotation. It is a very long quotation. But this is a necessary quotation, since it is a passage that my talk will be analyzing. Here is the important part of the quotation. Here is the important part of the quotation. Here is the important part of the quotation. Here is a quotation. It is a very long quotation. But this is a necessary quotation, since it is a passage that my talk will be analyzing. Here is a quotation. It is a very long quotation. But this is a necessary quotation, since it is a passage that my talk will be analyzing. Here is a quotation. It is a very long quotation. But this is a necessary quotation, since it is a passage that my talk will be analyzing.

# Heading

- Point 1 about quote section
- Point 2 about quote section
- Point 3 about quote section

..... Here is a quotation. It is a very long quotation. But this is a necessary quotation, since it is a passage that my talk will be analyzing. **Here is the important part of the quotation. Here is the important part of the quotation.** Here is a quotation....

## Presenting results: Tables and figures

- Title/caption = relate to the data
- Clear, easy to understand
- Highlight relevant information
- Relevant to the talk

Label A

Text text text shows that text text text text text text shows  
Text text text text text text text text text text text text  
text text. Text text text text text text text text text text text  
text shows text text text text text text text text text text text

Label B

Text text text shows that text text text. Text text text shows  
that text text text text text text text text text text text text  
Text text. Text text text text text text text text text text text  
text shows text text text. Text text text text text text text text  
text text.

Label A

Text text text shows that text text text. Text text text shows that text text text text text text shows that text text text Text text text shows that text text text Text text text **bolding shows that this text is important.** Text text text shows that text text text. Text text text shows that text text text.

Label B

Text text text shows that text text text. Text text text shows that text text text text text text shows that text text text Text text text. **Underlining shows that this text is also important but the rest of this text is not.** Text text text shows that text text text. Text text text shows that text text text. Text text text shows that text text text.



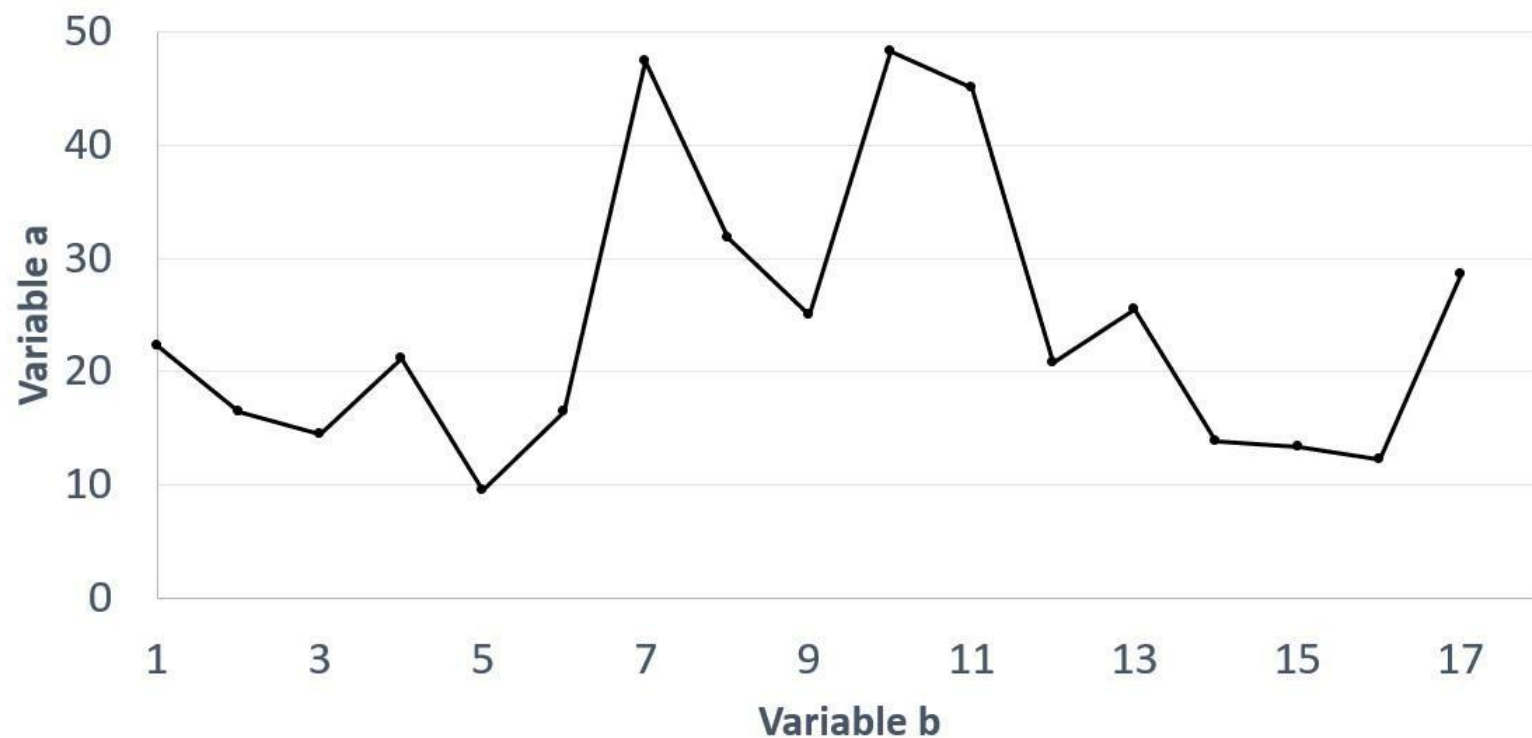
## Descriptive title of the table

A	B	C	D
0	1	2	6
0	1	2	5
0	1	2	4
0	1	2	3
0	1	2	2
0	1	2	1

Order data so it makes sense to the audience

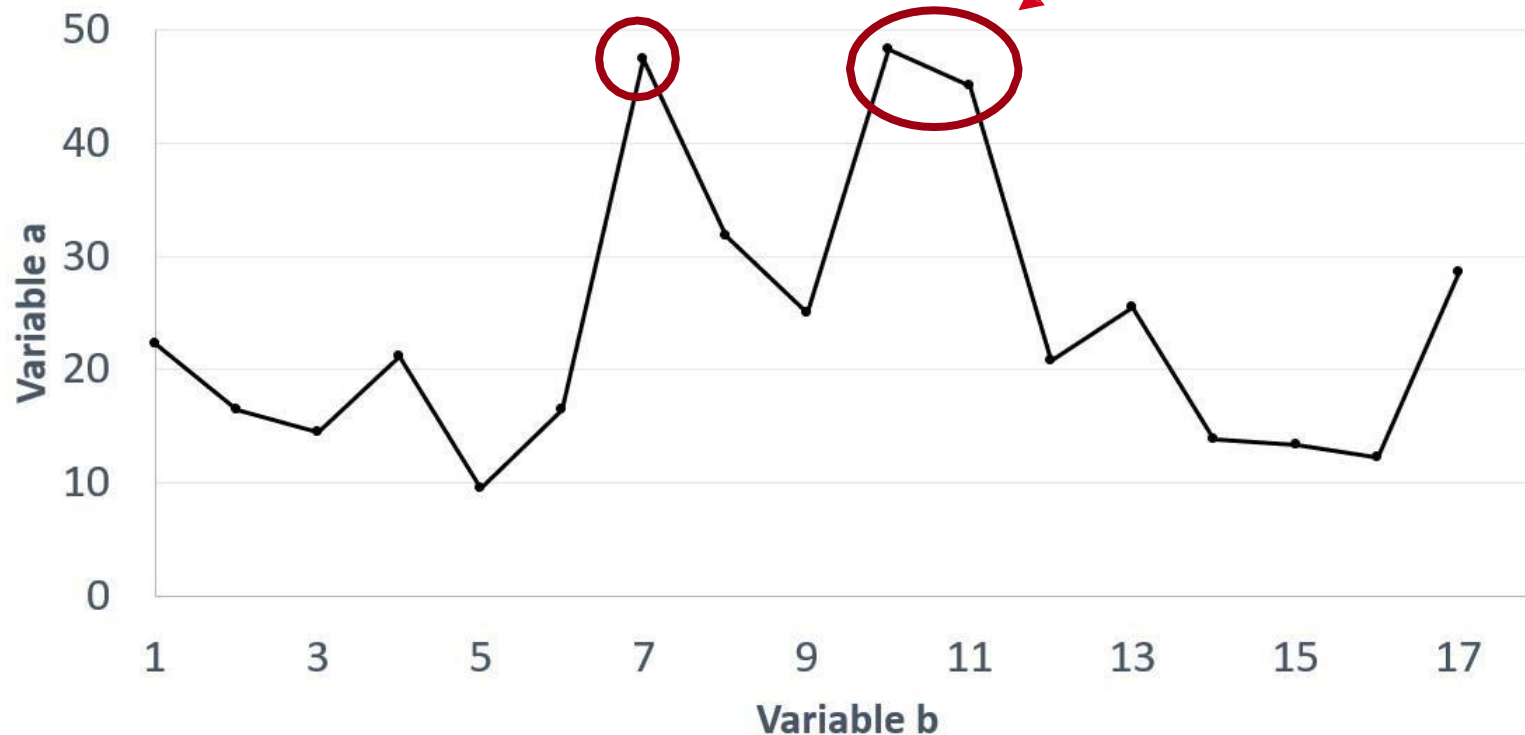
Highlight important sections

Descriptive title of the graph



Highlight important trends or other important information


Descriptive title of the graph



This shows something

Highlight important  
trends or other  
important  
information

## When can/should you use animations?

- To show specific sequence of events
  - E.g. reactions
- To help pace the delivery of information
- To help your audience focus on one point/piece of information at a time
- To draw attention to specific points 

## Just remember...

- You will need to keep track of the number of animations you use
- Do not use distracting or time consuming animations
- Sometimes less is more

# 3. Presentation Skills



## When writing/preparing the talk

- Ensure your presentation fits with the conference/panels theme
- Use simple sentence structure
  - Write short, easy to follow sentences
  - Avoid complex or run on sentences
  - Write in the active voice for a more engaging presentation
- Limit number of examples for each argument
- Use examples to illustrate abstract concepts
- Create clear & logical development of argument: provide interim summaries
- Answer the “why should the audience care” question

## Preparing Presentation Talking points

- “Off the Cuff” (extemporaneous presentation style)
  - Prepare presentation slides without any additional notes
  - Maximum engagement with audience
  - Easy to get tripped up/off topic/lost
  - Only recommended if you are an accomplished public speaker

## Preparing presentation talking points

- Prepared script for presentation
  - Write out entire script of talk to read at presentation
  - Include slide prompts in script
  - Least engagement with audience
  - Easiest format for timing
  - Easiest format for dealing with anxiety
  - Recommended to become familiar enough with script that you aren't simply reading throughout the presentation

## Preparing presentation talking points

- Prepared notes/talking points
  - Prepare notes for each slide
  - Point form
  - Outline of what you intend to say
  - Speaking prompts
  - Allows for audience engagement/flexibility
  - Still possible to get off track
  - Can create pacing issues

## Timing

- 20 min presentation = 10 – 15 slides
- Give yourself 1 min – 2 min per slide
- Err on the side of caution
  - It is better to be under-time than over-time
  - You don't want to rush
- Use power-point timer or other timer to keep track of your progress
- Save “buffer” time for audience questions
- Do multiple timed practice sessions

## Speaking/Presenting skills

- Speak slowly
- Speak clearly, annunciate your words
- Engage/Make eye contact with the audience
- Practice the coordination of your speech and visuals/animations
- Avoid filler words “um”, “uh”, etc.
- Speak with enthusiasm
- Use personal pronouns



## Practicing

- Practice practice practice!
- Look for opportunities to present within your department before the conference (department seminars, graduate student groups, etc.)
- Reach out to friends/family/colleagues for feedback
- Make an appointment with SSC writing tutors for practice & feedback
- Remember to breathe!

## Preparing for the question period

- Ask for feedback from supervisor/colleagues
- Try to anticipate audience questions & prepare answers in advance
- Use “sand-bagging” techniques
  - Deliberately leave out non-essential information
  - Acknowledge alternate interpretations/point out possible objections
  - Point out limitations in the scope of your study
- Don’t be afraid to admit that you don’t know something
- Take notes during Q & A and thank the audience for their feedback

- UC Riverside Graduate Writing Center, “Writing a Conference Paper in the Humanities”. <https://gwc.ucr.edu/sites/g/files/rcwecm1891/files/2019-01/Writing-a-Conference-Paper-in-the-Humanities.pdf>
- **European Conference on the Social Sciences (ECSS) Presentation Guide.** <https://ecss.iafor.org/presentation-guide/>
- UTS Postgraduate Resources, “Create a Conference Presentation”. <https://www.uts.edu.au/current-students/support/helps/self-help-resources/postgraduate-resources/create-conference-presentations>

- Thank you for attending Grad Success Week!
- Please scan the QR code and fill out a short survey using the link in the chat telling us about your experience. We will use the feedback you provide to continue to improve Grad Success Week in the future!



We appreciate your participation: Enter a draw to win prizes!

- Attend one session in each stream
- Ask your moderator / presenter to stamp your card
- Drop your card off at the front desk at the SSC or Let it Grow Event or email it to [success@ucalgary.ca](mailto:success@ucalgary.ca)
- What if I attended a session online?
  - No problem, write the session on the card and once we confirm your attendance, we will enter you into the draw!

# ATTEND AND WIN

Name

UCalgary Email

Do you want to win prizes for attending Grad Success Week events? In order to enter the draw, you must attend at least one session in each stream. Make sure to write the name of the session and get a stamp at the session below. Once you've filled in all three categories, enter for your chance to win great prizes!

## WRITING

TITLE OF SESSION:

## RESEARCH

TITLE OF SESSION:

## WELLNESS

TITLE OF SESSION:

STAMP  
HERE

STAMP  
HERE

STAMP  
HERE



# Questions?