Getting Started with Grad Slam

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WHAT IS GRAD SLAM?

Grad Slam is an annual contest to communicate research. It aims to make research accessible by providing emerging scientists and scholars with the skills to engage the public in their work.
Participants are scored on a scale of 1 to 5 in the following categories...

- **Clarity**: Did the speaker provide adequate background knowledge to make the talk and the importance of the project understandable?

- **Organization**: Did the presentation follow a clear and logical sequence?

- **Delivery**: Including pace, enthusiasm, confidence, body language, eye contact, and vocal range.
JUDGING CRITERIA
CONTINUED

• **Visuals:** If used, did the slides and/or props enhance the presentation and help to emphasize the primary points of the talk? Were the slides well designed, clear, legible, and concise?

• **Appropriateness:** Was the topic and its significance communicated in language appropriate to an intelligent, but non-specialist audience? (For example, did the speaker avoid or explain discipline-specific jargon?)
• **Intellectual Significance:** Did the speaker explain why her/his project matters? If the student presents on collaborative work, was the significance of the student’s unique contribution clearly specified?

• **Engagement:** To what extent did the talk speak to your intellectual curiosity? Did it make you want to learn more about the topic?
TOURNAMENT STRUCTURE
WHO COMPETES AND WHEN

ALL APPLICANTS

UC DAVIS QUALIFYING ROUNDS
February 13 and 14

UC DAVIS FINAL ROUND
April 7

UC CHAMPIONSHIP
Early May

UC DAVIS TOP TEN

UC DAVIS FINALIST
Graduate students currently enrolled in UC master's or doctoral graduate programs (including professional programs) are eligible to compete in Grad Slam.
I’VE DONE IT BEFORE. CAN I ENTER AGAIN?
Students who entered the contest or who were finalists in previous years are eligible to enter again; however, the winner is not eligible to enter again.

WHOSE RESEARCH IS IT, ANYWAY?
The research being presented must be related to your own graduate research at UC Davis. In cases of collaborative research, the presenter’s contribution to the project must be salient and clearly specified.
RULES & REGULATIONS
PRESENTATIONS AND VISUALS

• PowerPoint slides are allowed but optional; no Prezi or other presentation formats. No animation effects may be used.

• Maximum of 3 slides, exclusive of title slide to be generated by Graduate Studies.

• Embedded audio and/or video clips (including but not limited to .gif, .avi, .mp4, .mp3, and .wmv file types) are not permitted unless they are deemed indispensable to the communication of the research topic.

• Props are allowed, but need to be cleared by the program coordinators, require minimal set-up, and not produce a mess.
Timing will commence from the moment the student starts talking; points will be deducted from the final score as follows:

- 3:03-3:04: 1 point
- 3:05-3:06: 2 points
- 3:07-3:08: 3 points
- 3:09-3:10: 4 points
- 3:11-3:12: 5 points

Speakers will be cut off at 3:30 (total 15 point deduction).
During the Qualifying Round, a panel of two faculty members and one staff member will judge each preliminary round.
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WHY PARTICIPATE?
First Place: $2,500
Second Place: $1,500
Third Place: $750
People’s Choice: $500
BUT AT ITS CORE...
HEAR FROM A GRAD SLAM FINALIST

Fun Fact:
Maci was a UC Davis Grad Slam finalist in both 2017 and 2018.
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TELLING YOUR RESEARCH STORY
YOUR RESEARCH STORY
EXERCISE TO IDENTIFY KEY COMPONENTS

1. Complete the handout prompts
2. Pair and share where -
   • Partner listens for and shares their key takeaways from your story -
     • What did the partner find most engaging?
     • Was this the key message you plan to deliver?
     • What “hook” might you use to capture the audience’s imagination?
   • Switch partners
   • Regroup to debrief
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TIPS FOR SUCCESS
Feeling sick: How corn makes its own medicine

Campus
UC Davis

Field of Study
Plant Biology
1. How can I limit my presentation content so that my objectives, methods, results and conclusions can be seen with clarity and understanding?

2. How can I make my message more meaningful and memorable?

3. How will I relate my information to this specific audience?
Part One: Tell them what you’re going to tell them.

Part Two: Tell them.

Part Three: Tell them what you’ve told them.
The FUNnel model for science communication

1. Use examples that are interesting & relevant for the audience.
2. Talk about research
3. Return to examples used initially to introduce the science.
Imagine a news report about your research.
VISUALS

- White background
- Standard, legible font
- Clean, simple graphics and diagrams
- As little text as possible, maybe even none at all!
- Downy mildew resistant improved version of HHB 67;
- Released for cultivation in Haryana and Zone A of India as a replacement for the original HHB 67;
- High-tillering, extra-early maturity (64-65 days) and medium-tall plants (170-200 cm);
- Medium panicles (25 cm) of lanceo-conical shape with very small bristles and large seeds of slate gray color.
GENERAL TIPS
FOR SUCCESS

• Make the topic relevant to the audience
• Simplify your language and eliminate jargon
• Define and simplify terms
• Adopt a consistent style and format
• Judicious use of color, imagery and text
• The focus should be on you, not your slides
UC DAVIS GRAD SLAM

NEXT STEPS
• Watch more Grad Slam presentations on YouTube.

• Look into Science Says or Capitol Science Communicators.

• Attend GradPathways workshops.

• Refine your talk.

• **Apply for Grad Slam 2020 starting January 6.**
WHAT TO EXPECT
QUALIFYING ROUND

BEFORE THE COMPETITION
• Slides should be set to 4:3 aspect ratio in order to ensure proper display during your talk.
• Send your slides to knraley@ucdavis.edu. They will be pre-loaded onto a laptop.
• Please arrive at the venue at least 15 minutes before your scheduled presentation time to allow for check-in and other prep.

EQUIPMENT
All rooms will be equipped with a laptop, projector, slide advancer remote, laser pointer, and microphone
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