

Guidelines for Molecular Medicine Seminar Presentation

The student should prepare a formal seminar approximately 40 minutes in length, such as would be presented at a formal meeting/conference or job interview. The seminar should tell a story- not be a reiteration of your aims as in the Thesis Proposal. It won't be a complete story, but there should be an appropriate introduction leading to the specific problem you are addressing, your hypothesis and how it was derived, your data and how it addresses the problem and the impact of your work on the field of study. The biggest problem is that when students are presenting their data it is not always clear how the data they have generated addresses their hypothesis and more importantly, how their studies fit in the broader context of the field and how the studies impact the field.

Suggested structure for your Molecular Medicine Seminar presentation:

Introduction

- Brief introduction about the field of research and its importance
- Identify the important question(s) in the field – that you sought to address
- Derive a hypothesis that you will test based on previous studies in the field and that address one of the important questions you described

Proceed to present your data

- Be sure to describe how you did your experiment, but keep the presentation of methods brief, limited and to the point. Describe what you found (result), and what you can infer from the result.
- Summarize how your data supports or refutes your hypothesis
- You may have to do this several times throughout the talk to bring different data sets together to show how they work together to build a model

Present a compelling model that summarizes your data

- You may want to present several smaller models as you go through your data and then a final model that brings the talk together

At the end, you may want to briefly outline your plans for future work or outstanding questions still to be addressed if time permits

Present your acknowledgments and be prepared to answer questions

General Advice:

- As you attend seminars outside of your field across campus, note how the seminar is structured. Especially take note of seminars that are well presented.
- Several days prior to giving the seminar, enlist your peers and mentor to review the seminar. You should also consider a reviewer who does not work in your area of expertise
- Less can be more. Keep the seminar to 40 min, but do not race through your slides to make a 90 min talk into a 40 min talk. Instead, cut or summarize where possible. A good rule of thumb is 45 sec to 1 min per slide
- If you are not going to explain something that appears on the slide, delete that part of the slide
- Don't use complicated models from review articles. If you want to use a model, delete what is not germane to your presentation.
- Done well, this seminar can serve as the basis for your Thesis Dissertation seminar.

Assessment:

Seminars are assessed by a Molecular Medicine Peer Review Panel and the Faculty Academic Services Specialist immediately after the seminar. Criteria for assessment include the clarity and appropriateness of the abstract and title, the clarity of the presentation in terms of background/Introduction, data presentation, summarization of findings, whether the data supports the conclusions/models. In addition, the quality of the slides in terms of readability, labeling, colors, etc.; and the presenters speaking style are evaluated. Suggestions for improvement of the seminar are discussed with the speaker.