

Short Guidelines for an Oral Presentation

Version 6*

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Many practical projects that are of the University of Twente Electrical Engineering curriculum, require a final oral presentation (sometimes an intermediate presentation is also given). This document summarizes a few important issues regarding these presentations.

The oral presentation of a *final project* (“afstudeeropdracht”) should last ± 35 minutes followed by some 10 minutes of discussion. During the discussion the audience has the opportunity to ask you some questions on your talk. Sometimes, it might be interesting to invite the audience to the laboratory after the discussion and give there a demonstration of your work. The oral presentations related to shorter projects in the curriculum should not last longer than 30 minutes including discussion.

Even when your report could be a good starting point for the structure of your talk, you will often need to think very carefully on structuring your talk. You have to find a good balance between the theory necessary to understand the topic, the problem formulation, your own contribution to the solution, the results and the conclusions. Concentrate on the main lines and avoid very technical issues (e.g. do not provide the derivation of a complex formula; when somebody shows interest, he/she can consult your report.). Often you have to skip issues that you consider very important, simply because you cannot tell everything in a limited time.

As far as the people in the audience are concerned, you can assume that they know as much as you knew before you started your project. So, the audience is a technical one and the presentation tests your ability to address such an audience. Although they are always welcome to attend, the presentation is not meant to explain the topic of your work to relatives and friends without a background in electrical engineering (you are, however, strongly encouraged to do the latter at other occasions). You have to help the audience to concentrate on your words. It is therefore recommended to put the structure of your talk on the blackboard and repeatedly show how you are advancing.

Do not put too much information on an overhead sheet. Do not choose letters that are too small (at least 18 pt. when using a text processor; in handwritten sheets, use 1 cm for the text height and the same distance to separate lines). Use keywords rather than full sentences (mere reading of your sheets results

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in a dull presentation). Use a separate sheet of paper on which you write down the information that you should give but is not on the sheet. A rough indication of the talking time per sheet is 3 minutes (but it might be 1 or 5 minutes as well). Put a clear *page number* on each of your sheets; this makes it easier for the audience to refer to a specific sheet during the questions that follow your presentation.

Rehearse at home to be more familiar with the talk. The more often you rehearse the more comfortable you will feel. However, do not learn your complete speech by heart. Normally, one or two days before the oral presentation, you can also rehearse once in the presence of your supervisor (Dutch: “proefpraatje”). Make use of this opportunity.

It is also recommended to attend oral presentations of other students. You can learn both from their strong and weak points. Besides, the contents of the presentation itself are often worth knowing!