

CAMJ Seminar Guidelines for Students

Introduction

It is not easy to be able to stand and speak in a room full of highly intellectual people who are going to be listening to your every word, waiting to give you verbal and written feedback on the presentation that you are about to deliver to them. It is not easy at all. But if there is one thing that makes this process easier over time, it is practice. By practicing the skill to give an efficient and eloquent presentation, one can not only get better at presenting to an audience but also, in some cases, begin to actually enjoy the experience. The CAMJ Seminar is your opportunity to be able to practice this oft-neglected skill so that you may learn to confidently communicate your exceptional ideas to the world.

The main purpose of the CAMJ Seminars is two-fold. Firstly, it is an opportunity for the presenter to be able to practice their presentation skills. The seminar can be used as a tool to prepare for an upcoming thesis defence, or a conference presentation, or it can be used to improve on your general presentation skills. It is the place where you can take some risks to experiment with your presentation style. Remember, the most memorable presentations are usually the ones that are the most engaging and the most entertaining. So use the seminar to learn the skills to make your presentations engaging and entertaining. As graduate students, we are all here to learn and to improve on the skills we already have. The CAMJ Seminar should be just another tool in your arsenal that helps you become a better storyteller and in the process, a better researcher.

Secondly, the CAMJ Seminar is intended to be a 'By the Students, for the Students' style seminar. This means that the presentations are intended for other graduate students, who are not necessarily an expert in your field of study but they are a part of the process that provides you with encouragement by recognizing the parts of your presentation that were done well, and by providing feedback on how to improve in areas that need improvement. Furthermore, you can use the seminar to ask your colleagues to give their feedback and share their ideas on how to move past any roadblocks that you may be stuck at in your research. By sharing your problems, you may come across a suggestion that helps you find a solution that you wouldn't have been able to find otherwise. The people in CAMJ are its best resource – make sure to use it.

CAMJ Seminars are not a tool to report your work to your professors; you meet with your professors to discuss your findings on a one on one basis. Think of the CAMJ seminar as a way to help other students get some background on your field of study, and then include a few slides at the end to report your individual work on it. For example, if you are presenting a specific type of welding, consider reporting on the method of welding, how it works, and some common applications of it.

General Guidelines

- Presentations should be **15-20 minutes long** with a short (5-10 minutes) question period after
- It would help to declare at the start of your presentation what the purpose of your presentation is; i.e. “I plan to use this seminar as practice for my thesis defense.” Or “I want to use this presentation to practice my presentation skills.” This way the audience can provide you with feedback that is catered directly to you.
 - In some rare cases, the seminar may be used as an update presentation to industry sponsors. This should also be made clear at the start of the presentation so the rest of the audience does not feel alienated.
- The audience is predominantly graduate students, so keep the content of your presentation as generic and easy to understand as possible.
- Keep your audience engaged; including real world applications definitely helps with that.
- **Do not aim to present perfect data.** Report your mistakes, or improvements you made; this helps newer students understand the experimental design process.
- Your topic does not have to directly relate to your research. You can present on your lessons learned on various aspects of graduate studies. For example, submitting your first paper, writing your first review paper, imaging methods, testing methods, experimental design, etc.

Deliverables/ Checklist

- **Presentation Abstract must be sent to the CAMJ Coordinator one week before your presentation.** The coordinator is the person responsible for sending out the schedule each term.
- **Presentation (.ppt) file must be sent to the presentation coordinator after you present.** This is because all CAMJ presentations are kept on a drive only accessible by CAMJ professors.

Helpful Links

- If there are any questions or concerns, feel free to speak with the CAMJ Coordinator for the term (Shehryar Khan)
- Waterloo PowerPoint templates
 - <https://uwaterloo.ca/brand/resources/presentations>
- Tips for academic style presentations
 - <https://hub.wiley.com/community/exchanges/discover/blog/2018/03/08/6-tips-for-giving-a-fabulous-academic-presentation>