

# Student scholarship/ research symposium

## Tips for students

Carrying out a research project can be a daunting prospect and presenting your research to a room full of people maybe even more so! This advice should help.

### Choosing your research question

**Think** about what topics have grabbed your interest during your course. You will spend a lot of time on this research and don't want to get bored in week 3!

**Read** journal articles in the area you choose and think about what contribution your research will make to the existing research.

**Consider** your level of expertise and the resources available to you. Keep the scope of your research focused so that you can analyse findings thoroughly.

### Selecting and using appropriate research methods

**The** methods you use to collect your evidence are as important as the evidence itself if people are to believe your research is 'reliable' and 'valid'.

**Be** realistic though; while it might seem more thorough to interview 30 people than 5, is this achievable?

**Think** about the sort of data different methods generate. It needs to be useful (as in contribute to answering your research question) and you must be able to analyse it.

**Allow** plenty of time to gather the data - if you are sending out a survey or doing interviews, remember that people can be unreliable!

### Analysing findings and writing the report

**By** the time you get to this stage most of the hard work has been done. You now need to analyse and evaluate what you have discovered.

**Organise** your data in a way that you can use for analysis, summarise it as simply as you can, and pull out what appears significant in relation to your original question.

**Are** you surprised by what your findings tell you? Don't be tempted to try to twist them to meet your original hypothesis!

**Plan** your report: have you been given a set structure to follow? If not, read some published research to get an idea of how it is structured (and of the style of academic writing).

**Think** about forming a writing group with some of your peers. It can help to have someone read your drafts (and you to read theirs).

### Presenting at the symposium

**Think** about how long your presentation should be and then plan it by giving an overview of your methodology, selecting the most significant and interesting findings, and explaining the contribution of your study to the existing body of research.

**Rehearse** lots - this will mean you stick to the time limit, are more confident, and are familiar with what you are going to say meaning you don't have to read from notes or slides.

**Think** about the sort of questions you might be asked and plan your responses.

**Take** a few deep breaths, speak loudly and clearly and remember you are the expert on your research.