



## MedPhys Slam: Instructions and tips for MedPhys Slam Participants

### What is MedPhys Slam?

MedPhys Slam, a science communication competition similar to three-minute thesis, aims to highlight and improve emerging medical physicists' communication with non-specialists.

The rules are simple but challenging. Contestants have three minutes to present their research using no more than three PowerPoint slides. They are evaluated on their ability to convey their research and its significance to a lay audience.

The MedPhys Slam competition is open to all Student, Junior, and Resident members of AAPM or COMP. A preliminary round of competition takes place at local AAPM Chapter meetings throughout the year (COMP and international contestants will submit video presentations), and winners of the chapter competitions compete in the final competition organized by STSC at the 2026 AAPM Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C.

### How do I Enter?

Contact your local AAPM chapter to inquire about a preliminary competition. If your chapter is hosting a virtual meeting, they are encouraged to host a virtual MedPhys Slam competition. Virtual preliminary competitions may be hosted live, where each participant shares their screen and delivers their presentation. Or your chapter may be hosting a pre-recorded virtual competition, which requires you to submit a video presentation.

If you are a COMP member or an international applicant, your preliminary competition will be hosted virtually. Additionally, if your AAPM chapter is not hosting a preliminary competition, you may submit to the international 'non-chapter' competition. You may submit your pre-recorded presentation to the following google forms:

- COMP: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSflJ8H\\_nsNzzCwJ4watStwSPV2YWqWYmr\\_tkw\\_vaFtf1d\\_J6YA/viewform?usp=dialog](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSflJ8H_nsNzzCwJ4watStwSPV2YWqWYmr_tkw_vaFtf1d_J6YA/viewform?usp=dialog)
- International 'non-chapter': <https://forms.gle/Ntz2S8qZh4CopBwG8>

### Presentation Rules:

- Visuals
  - PowerPoint slides allowed but optional; no Prezi or other presentation formats
  - Maximum of 3 slides, not including title slide
  - Slide material cannot be created by a professional
  - No embedded audio and/or video clips
  - No gifs, animations, or slide transitions
- No additional props are permitted, including but not limited to notes, laser pointers, costumes, musical instruments, and laboratory equipment.
- The presenter's contribution to the project must be salient and clearly specified
- Presentations must be given in English. Spoken word presentations (e.g. poems, rap, or song) are not permitted.
- For in person presentations, presenters must remain on stage for the duration of their presentation.
- Timing will commence from the moment the contestant starts talking. Three (3) minutes are permitted.

### Additional Rules for Video Submission:

In addition to the judging criteria and general rules outlined for AAPM chapters, the following additional rules apply to video submissions:

- The video itself may be longer than 3 minutes. The presentation is considered to have commenced when the presenter starts their presentation through movement or speech. Presentations are limited to 3 minutes, and any presentations exceeding 3 minutes will be disqualified.
- The 3-minute audio must be continuous (no edits or breaks).
- Presenters should have a title slide that shows their name, institution, and talk title.



- No additional electronic media or props are permitted within the video recording.

Videos must meet the following criteria:

- Filmed on the horizontal.
- Filmed from a static position.
- Filmed from one camera angle.

### **Tips for Recording a Video Presentation:**

There are many options for recording yourself presenting. Below are some suggestions and YouTube tutorials.

- Create a **picture-in-picture** presentation. In this approach, your video (webcam) is overlaid on top of your slides. This effect can be accomplished with several software programs.
  - Zoom: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gk711FJB35s>
  - MacIntosh QuickTime player: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mLyPrblmPp4>
- **Insert your slides into your video.** In this approach, your video (webcam) will appear full screen. For each slide transition, the slide will take over the screen for a short period of time, while your voice continues in the background.
  - Windows Movie Maker: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AQx2-SixhNA>
- Record yourself delivering a **traditional presentation**, where you are sitting/standing next to a monitor/screen displaying your slides.

### **Tips for Filming at Home:**

There are three factors to consider when selecting your location to ensure you are producing the best video possible: Light, sound and background:

- **Light:** Dark environments impact the overall quality of your video because cameras do not perform well in dim lighting. Ensuring you are well-lit guarantees the camera, and therefore your audience, can see you clearly. Look for a room in your home that has lots of natural light, if available. If you are using light from a window, ensure you are facing towards the window so light falls on you directly.
- **Sound:** When filming video at home, ensure you choose a very quiet environment where you have as much control over the sound as possible.
- **Background:** Aim for a background completely free of visual distractions.

### **Tips for Submitting your Presentation:**

Presentations may be accepted in various formats, depending on your chapter. The COMP chapter and international competition will be accepting presentation by uploading a video file to a google form. However, chapters hosting virtual competitions may opt to accept presentations that are submitted via an unlisted YouTube link. To submit using a unlisted youtube link, use the following steps:

1. Create a YouTube account if you do not already have one.
2. Log in to YouTube.
3. Click on **Upload** at the top of the page.
4. Before uploading, change the video privacy settings to **Unlisted** (<https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/157177>).
5. Select the video that you would like to upload.
6. Click "Share" to get the link for your video.
7. Provide your chapter with your video link.

### **Tips for developing your MedPhys Slam Presentation:**

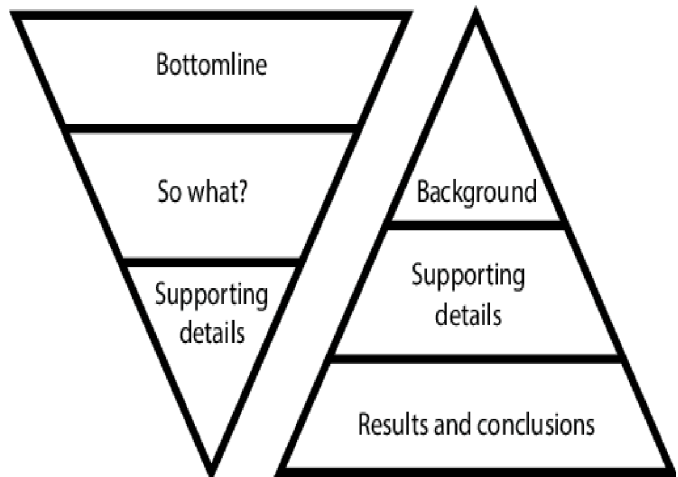
**Bottom line:** *Communicating with non-specialists (those not familiar with your work, scientists and nonscientists alike) is different from communicating with medical physicists*



**Communicating with scientists generally follows a pyramidal structure.** When you communicate your research at a conference, you're probably used to starting your talk with the clinical background and technical foundations of your project before moving on to methods, results, and conclusions. There's nothing wrong with this approach, except when you're conversing with non-specialists.

**Communication with non-specialists follows an "inverted pyramid" style.** In MedPhys Slam and similar communication venues, begin with the "So What?" of your research to grab your audience's attention. This may be a clinical scenario; alternatively, it might be a reduction in cancer mortality or disability. Having established why your work is important, then, and only then, do you move on to reference the other aspects of the research (Problems, Solutions, Benefits) according to the audience's interests. For practice, try filling out the COMPASS Message Box (see below) before starting/refining your own Slam presentation. Tips for filling out the message box can be found at <https://bit.ly/33ltRYu>.

The inverted pyramid



Usual communication by scientists

Image from Figure 2 of "Geoscience on television: a review of science communication literature in the context of geosciences"

**What does this mean for MedPhys Slam?** Your audience is the judging panel. Find out as much about the judges as you can before you present. This will help frame and guide your presentation. Questions you might consider are: What is their profession? How much do they already know about science, physics, or the health issue you are trying to address?

## MESSAGE BOX

Audience: \_\_\_\_\_

**Looking for other SciComm (science communication) tips and resources?** The 3MT (three-minute thesis) competition that MedPhys Slam is based on has been around since 2008, so there are plenty of resources in this SciComm space alone for you to begin practicing and improving your SciComm skills. For example, check out 3MT (three-minute thesis) and SciComm resources, freely available online. Watch videos of successful 3MT presentations and take note of presenters' style, cadence, and slides:

- [Three-minute thesis youtube playlist](#)
- [UBC 2022 3MT Winner: Emilie Carpentier](#)
- [TMU 2016 3MT Winner: Michael Moore](#)
- [UVIC 2025 3MT Winner: Jade Fischer](#)
- [2019 MedPhys Slam competition](#)

