Guidelines for effective PowerPoint slide design and effective presentations

- Use an outline approach for slide content; no complete sentences; follow rules of 6s on majority of slides (6 lines/slide, 6 words/line)
- Include topic/presentation title and name on title slide
- Use the OABC organizational structure (Opening gets attention, Agenda previews content and structure, Body develops main points, Conclusion summarizes presentation)
- Find a way to capture audience interest and attention in opening
- Introduce main points of your presentation early, often on slide 2 or 3 (agenda slide)
- Ask for questions on the second to last slide (if appropriate)
- Summarize on last slide: restate main points identified on agenda slide; allows presenter control at the end and last word
- Use informative title on each slide
- Choose fonts well—use sans serif fonts (like Tahoma, the font used in this document); avoid serif fonts (like Times New Roman)
- Use contrasting colors for slide background and text; dark background with light text or light background with dark text, without being distracting
- Have a visual theme but avoid relying exclusively on templates (customize templates as appropriate)
- Make font size for slide titles large enough/easy to read, for example 42-48 pt. font
- Make font size for text in body of slide large enough/easy to read but smaller than slide title font size, for example 28-32 pt. font
- Format slide titles by capitalizing first letter of significant words (This is Title Case)
- Format text in body of slides with left justified; capitalize only first letter of first word in each line and proper nouns (This is sentence case)
- Use bullets or numbers for lists in body of slides – used effectively; provides hierarchy or sequence to content; use same style bullet(s) consistently
- Use animation appropriately and for emphasis only, if used at all
- Use common, non-distracting transitions, and limit the number used in a single presentation.
- Rely on visuals, when possible, not text; use high quality graphics not clip art
- Use slides as a means to tell a story, when appropriate
- Design appropriate charts/infographics to share data
- Check and double check to avoid spelling errors
- Do not let the tool (PowerPoint) rule your presentation
- Avoid using the PowerPoint as a teleprompter; address the audience not the screen
- Practice, practice, practice so you know the material without using notes or note cards