Checklist: Designing a Slide Presentation

☐ You have carefully identified your target audience and determined: What message do you want them to understand? What do they already know? What do the need to know to understand your presentation?

☐ Your talk describes a scientific story with a beginning, middle, and end

☐ Your title slide sets the tone for the rest of your talk and prepares your audience for what they are about to hear

☐ The beginning of your talk conveys a rationale for why your subject matter is interesting and important

☐ Your introduction progresses from general scientific background information to a specific hypothesis or goal

☐ You clearly define your hypothesis or goal so that your audience knows exactly what your study attempted to achieve

☐ You have prepared for inevitable shifts in attention during your talk by predicting moments in which people are likely to break concentration and deliberately employing methods of regaining attention

☐ (For talks longer than 15-20 min) You have broken up a long presentation of data into more manageable segments

☐ One to three take-home messages are deliberately emphasized so they become especially memorable

☐ The end of your presentation progresses from specific details to a broader scientific context and conclusion

☐ You have acknowledged the individuals and funding agencies who contributed to your work

☐ You have a summary diagram you can show while answering audience questions

☐ All visual elements in your presentation are designed for a specific reason and not for useless decoration

☐ Text is optimized so it is visible from the back of the presentation venue

☐ Text on slides is kept to an absolute minimum

☐ Your presentation has a consistent color scheme that enhances your scientific content

☐ All slide titles are used to make a specific point or conclusion

☐ Charts and tables are optimized for a slide presentation and only one figure is placed on each slide

☐ The layout of each slide is optimized for clarity and to enhance communication of your scientific content

☐ Slide animations and transitions are used to enhance your message, not add meaningless distraction

☐ Your presentation is completely free of errors, typos, and grammatical mistakes