FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

M4STER'S IN FOUR

Student Handbook

Master's in Four Finalists

Overview

The Master's in Four (Min4) competition highlights the research/creative endeavors conducted by master's students. Created by the Florida State University Graduate School, the competition provides students the opportunity to focus on their communication skills.

Min4 competitors explain their research/creative endeavors in four minutes, using four slides, for a general audience.

Why Compete?

Most master's degrees require research or a creative project. The ability to articulate the significance of your research/creative endeavor is essential. The Master's in Four competition provides you the opportunity to:

Communicate your master's research or creative endeavor clearly to the FSU community and beyond;

Present your research or creative endeavor for a general audience;

Promote your academic and professional skills;

Network with other master's students.

Creation of Master's in Four

The first Min4 competition was held at FSU in April,2019, with 28 master's students competing in the Preliminary Rounds. Twelve students moved forward to the Min4 Finals where five were named winners (two were tied). FSU's Office of University Communications designed the Master's in Four logo.

Min4 Prizes

Monetary prizes and subsequent recognition are important incentives for master's students entering the Min4 competition.

A breakdown of prize structure is listed below:

1st
2nd
3rd
People's Choice

Rules

A master's student with at least 18 hours of graduate coursework earned toward the degree;

Four-minute time limit;

A maximum of four static slides;

A solo, non-technical, oral description of the student's research or creative endeavor;

No props, notes, or costumes are allowed.

Judging Criteria

Opening, Introduction, Body, Audience, Presenter's Personal Interest

Did the opening capture the audience's attention?

Did the introduction establish the importance of the research or creative work?

Was the body of the presentation well-organized, with supporting evidence?

Was the presentation designed for a general

audience?

Did the presenter project a strong personal interest in the research or creative work?

Conclusions, Delivery & Slides

Did the conclusion summarize the main points, and was consistent with the presentation's opening statements?

Was the delivery well-prepared and confident?

Did the presenter maintain eye contact with the audience?

Did the slides follow a logical order and enhance the presentation?

Overall Presentation

Was the presentation memorable, providing the audience a lasting impression and a desire to know more?

Equipment

For the competition's final event, the FSU Graduate School will provide a four-minute timer and a monitor showing the slides and visible for students while they are presenting. The timer will be displayed on a laptop or a tablet that will be in the student's line of vision along with the slide monitor. A clicker to advance the slides will be provided.

Planning

- Plan for a general audience
- Explain your research for a general audience.
- Avoid academic language and jargon
- Define any terms you use
- Stress the importance of your research/creative endeavor
- Convey enthusiasm
- Maintain eye contact.

Tell a story

Consider crafting your Min4 like a personal story (beginning, middle, and end). It is difficult to compress your research into a four-minute presentation. Try dividing your presentation into sections with your slides. Write an opener to catch the audience's attention; deliver your sections, and end with a compact summary that stresses the importance of your research/creative endeavor.

Have goals for your presentation

What key points do you want your audience to remember about your presentation? Your goal is for the audience to take with them an understanding of your research and its importance.

What to avoid

This presentation is not an academic paper. Use words and sentences appropriate for a general audience. Try not to look at your slides on the screen behind you.

Practice

Proof your Min4 presentation by reading it aloud, to yourself and to an audience of friends and family. This allows you to receive critical feedback. Ask your audience what were the key take-away points of your research. Time yourself. Revise; practice aloud; practice without notes; and project your voice emphasizing significant points. Practice using a clicker so that you know when to advance each slide.

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Slides

Your slides are like the backdrop or scenery of a stage play. Remember the following:

Four-minute time limit;

A maximum of four slides with no animation, embedded video, or audio;

A clicker will be provided for you to advance the slides.

Tips: Keep it simple

Less is better

Limit the images, graphs and text. The audience should listen instead of reading your slides.
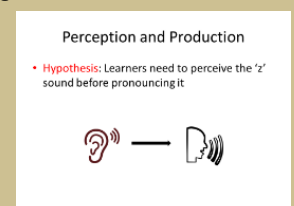

Slides that complement your presentation

You want your audience to understand the importance of your research. Use each slide to be like a chapter or theme in your research story. Use your research images instead of generic Internet images on your slides.

Formatting

- Avoid color-blind combinations (red and green, blue and yellow)
- Limit of three colors for background and text
- Reduce amount of text
- Font: 16 – 24 pt
- Readable charts and data

Preparation

Your voice

- Project your voice

- Avoid rushing

- Pause at key points

Your Body language

- Use a confident stance

- Make eye contact

- Face the audience without looking at your slides behind you.

Practice

- Practice aloud and before a mirror.
- Record and listen to your presentation. The more you practice, the more relaxed and confident you will feel.

Dress

- Dress as you would for a job interview.

Examples

- A number of presentation examples may be found at gradworld.fsu.edu by clicking on the Min4 icon.

Virtual Competition

Rules

Presenters are allowed a maximum of 4 minutes for their presentation. Exceeding this time limit will result in disqualification.

Judges will begin timer when the presenter begins speaking. Title slides are not counted as a part of the presentation time limit unless you read them aloud. Please do not read the content of the presentation slide if you do not want this time added to your presentation time limit.

Video submissions must meet the following criteria for consideration:

- Begin with a Master's in Four title slide (you will be provided a template)
- Be filmed horizontally
- Be filmed with plain/solid background
- Be filmed from a single camera angle
- Contain a maximum of 4 slides (slides may be displayed in upper right corner of the screen or upper left corner.)

A maximum of four static slides are permitted in the presentation, slides may be displayed all at once on the screen (no animated slide transitions, videos) or one at a time.

The four-minute video must be continuous, no audio or visual breaks/edits.

No props (including note cards) are permitted.

No additional sound effects or videos files are permitted in the recording.

Video links must be submitted to the event coordinator by the submission deadline. Files sent in any other format will not be accepted.

Finalists will have to option to upload a new video file or keep their current presentation entry for judging.

Video Recording

We will host a workshop to provide tips and more information concerning video recording, editing and submission. If you are unable to attend the workshop please visit https://gradschool.fsu.edu/mi4 to view a recording of the video.

The FSU Canvas Support Center has created a guide for video recording. Access video here: Best Practices for Student Video Production (iMovie and Movie Maker)

Video Editing

We recommend using Kapwing (https://www.kapwing.com) or Openshot (https://www.openshot.org/) to edit your videos but you may use any editing software that you are familiar with.

The Openshot user guide may be found at https://www.openshot.org/user-guide/

Instruction for Kapwing may be found at https://www.kapwing.com/resources/how-to-edit-videos-with-kapwing/

Video Submission

Videos should be uploaded to Vimeo and the link submitted to the event coordinator.

Visit https://vimeo.com/ to create your own personal account.

In your video description please include:

- Your Name
- Master's in Four 2021
- Presentation Title

Settings:

- Make sure "people can add to collections" is on
- Adjust privacy setting to allow anyone to view the video.

Master's in Four Prize Winners

Information

If you have any questions about Min4
please contact the FSU Graduate School or
(850) 644-3501
[Min4 Webpage](#)