

Scholars Symposium Evaluation Form

Presenter(s): _____ Presentation #: _____

Format: Poster, Platform, Virtual

Type: Research, Creative/Performance

Judge: _____

The 0–4 Scale at a Glance

0: Novice – Not observable or fundamentally flawed.	1: Adv. Beginner – Present, but lacks depth, contains errors, or has major gaps or misunderstandings.	2: Competent – Solid and respectable. The “baseline” for a successful project.	3: Proficient – Meets all expectations for a high-level university student.	4: Mastered/Exemplary – Professional quality; could be presented at a national conference.
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Section A: Project Content & Rigor

How well did the student execute the scholarly project?

Criteria	0	1	2	3	4
1. Conceptual Foundation: Clear goal, research question, or creative intent. Contextualized within the field.	<input type="radio"/>				
2. Methodology/Process: Logical approach to the inquiry or creative process; demonstrates technical skills/rigor.	<input type="radio"/>				
3. Synthesis & Interpretation: Results, findings, or the “final piece” are clearly explained and connected to the goal.	<input type="radio"/>				
4. Supporting Media/Aids: Quality of visuals (poster) or presentation aids (slides/props); enhances the narrative.	<input type="radio"/>				

Section B: Oral Communication (General Education Goal 1)

Institutional Assessment—Please score based on verbal performance.

Criteria	0	1	2	3	4
1. Organization: structured intro/conclusion; clear transitions.	<input type="radio"/>				
2. Supporting Materials: Use of evidence, examples, or artistic references.	<input type="radio"/>				
3. Delivery: Confidence, vocal variety, eye contact, physical presence.	<input type="radio"/>				
4. Language: Choices are appropriate for a professional audience.	<input type="radio"/>				
5. Central Message: The “big idea” is clear, supported, and memorable.	<input type="radio"/>				

Professional Conference Candidate: Check here if you believe this student's work is of sufficient quality to represent the university at a regional/national-level professional conference.

Optional: Please place comments to the Symposium Committee on the back of this sheet.

Judge’s Scoring Guide: Quick Reference

Section A: Project Content & Rigor

Category	What to look for in a "4" (Mastered)
Conceptual Foundation	“Why”: Clearly identifies the intent or gap being filled. Connects the work to a larger field (e.g. historical context, scientific theory, or artistic tradition) in the field.
Methodology / Process	“How”: Demonstrates high technical skill and rigor. Whether it’s a lab protocol, a case study, or a creative technique, the process is logical and justified.
Synthesis / Interpretation	“So What?”: Doesn’t just show data or a finished piece; it interprets it. Shows how the outcome meets the original goal or answers the research question.
Supporting Media/Aids	Visuals: Professional-grade poster or slide design. Media is used to simplify complex ideas, not just to repeat what the speaker is saying.

Section B: Oral Communication

Category	What to look for in a "4" (Mastered)
1. Organization	The Narrative: Compelling introduction and strong wrap-up conclusion. Use of "signposting" (e.g., "First, I will discuss...") transitions between sections makes the flow effortless to follow.
2. Support Materials	The Evidence: Uses diverse “proof” (statistics, quotes, examples, or artistic references) that bolsters the presenter’s credibility and authority.
3. Delivery	Poise: Natural engagement. Eye contact (not reading), vocal variety, and physical presence that keeps the audience’s attention. Appears "polished and confident." Answers questions confidently (if applicable to the presentation format).
4. Language	Tone: Vocabulary is imaginative and professional. Avoids excessive jargon or explains it clearly for non-experts.
5. Central Message	The Takeway: The “Big Idea” is unmistakable and memorable. If you left the room, you could easily explain the point of the project to someone else.

The "Professional Conference Candidate" Selection

Purpose: To identify the top 5–10% of participants who demonstrate the readiness to represent our university on a regional or national stage.

When to check this box:

- **Exemplary Scores:** The student has achieved "4" (Mastered) ratings in most categories, particularly in *Conceptual Foundation* and *Delivery*.

- **Field Impact:** The work is not just a completed assignment; it makes a sophisticated contribution to the discipline or creative field.
- **Professional Poise:** The student handled the oral presentation or poster "pitch" with the confidence, authority, and polish of a professional in the field.
- **Ready to Export:** You would feel proud to have this specific student and this specific project represent our institution at a peer-reviewed regional or national conference.

Note: This is a high bar. Not every "Good" or "Great" presentation is a candidate. Use this selection to highlight those rare students who have truly gone above and beyond.

Tips for Consistent Judging

- **The "Competent" Anchor:** Always start your mental evaluation at a **2 (Competent)**. A 2 represents solid, successful university-level work. Move to a 3 or 4 only when the student exceeds those standard expectations.
- **Ignore the "Charisma Bias":** Especially in the oral presentations, don't let a highly charming or polished delivery (Section B) automatically inflate the score for the actual research rigor or creative process (Section A). Score the "What" and the "How" as two independent achievements.
- **The "National Stage" Litmus Test:** When considering a **4 (Mastered)**, ask yourself: *"If I saw this exact presentation at a national professional conference, would it hold its own against work from other top institutions?"* If yes, they have earned the 4.
- **Adapt to the Format:**
 - **For Posters:** Look for the ability to synthesize complex data into a scannable visual and a "pitch" that respects the viewer's time.
 - **For Platform Presentations:** Look for a sustained narrative arc and the ability to maintain audience energy without relying solely on reading slides.
 - **For Virtual Presentations:** Look for a clear narrative and high-quality digital visuals. Since these are recorded without a live audience, evaluate the student's ability to project a professional, engaging presence through the camera without the benefit of real-time Q&A or audience feedback.
- **Consistency Over Time:** Your 8:00 AM evaluation should use the same standard as your 11:00 AM evaluation. Avoid "grading on a curve" as you see more presenters. Use the descriptors on the reference guide to "reset" your internal scale between every student.
- **No "In-Between" Scores:** Since we are using a 0–4 integer scale for data integrity, please do not use half-points (e.g., 2.5). Commit to the whole number that best describes the majority of the performance.

Special Technology Note for Virtual & Platform Presentations

Technical difficulties are a reality of modern scholarship. Please use the following guidelines to ensure students are judged on their performance, not their hardware:

- **Content Over Quality:** Do not penalize a student for "grainy" video or non-studio-quality audio, provided their message remains intelligible. Score them on the **substance** of their research and the **clarity** of their delivery.
- **The "Intelligibility" Threshold:** If technical glitches (e.g., severe audio lagging or pixelated slides) make it impossible to understand the "Central Message" or "Methodology," the score should reflect a lack of **Supporting Media** effectiveness. However, if the student clearly attempted to mitigate these issues, please use your best judgment to evaluate the underlying work.
- **Environment:** Students should be scored on their professional presence, not the aesthetics of their room. Look for their ability to maintain "virtual eye contact" (looking at the camera) and organize their digital space, regardless of the background.

Protocol: Identifying Scholars Symposium Award Winners

Step 1: Data Categorization

Once all paper rubrics are entered into the master spreadsheet, the students will be filtered into two distinct pools:

- **Undergraduate: Research / Creative**
- **Graduate: Research / Creative**

Step 2: The Ranking Calculation

Winners are determined by the **Grand Total** (Project Content & Rigor Score + Oral Communication Score).

- **Maximum Possible Score: 36 points (4 points across 9 criteria).**

Step 3: Tie-Breaking Logic

In the event of a tie in the Grand Total, the following hierarchy will be applied to determine the ranking:

- **Priority 1: (Section A Total).** We prioritize the quality of the work itself over the delivery. The student with the higher score in "Content & Rigor" wins the tie.
- **Priority 2: The "National Caliber" Consensus.** If still tied, the student with the highest number of "National Conference Candidate" checkbox from their judges wins.
- **Priority 3: Foundational Intent (Conceptual Foundation).** If still tied, the student who demonstrated the most meticulous or creative technical skill wins.
- **Priority 4: Mastery of Process (Methodology/Process).** If still tied, the student with the higher score specifically in the "Methodology/Process" category takes the higher rank.

Step 4: The "Final Jury" Review

If students remain tied after all four tie-breakers, the Symposium Planning Committee will convene for a Jury Deliberation. The Committee will review the tied students' project titles and, if necessary, consult the judges who evaluated those specific sessions.

Jury Guidelines:

- **Holistic Impact:** Which project demonstrated a more profound impact on its field or the community?
- **Challenge Level:** Did one student tackle a significantly more complex problem or technical artistic challenge?
- **Disciplinary Balance:** If multiple winners are from the same department, the committee may consider disciplinary diversity to represent the full breadth of the university's scholarship.