

Research Checklist

The purpose of this checklist is to assist with the research process. For any logistical requirements or deadlines pertaining to the conference, contact your mentor or the HTCC director, Professor Adams.

Checklist:

- **Identify a topic of research.** Choose something both original and interesting to you. You may find that many interesting topics are too broad to research and present. Narrow it down. Try to be more specific about what aspect of your topic you want to research.
- **Choose a Mentor.** Approach a professor or other faculty mentor that you feel has a good understanding of your topic. He or she will be able to guide you as you conduct your research and point out ways in which to strengthen your research quality.
- **Study Existing Materials.** Most likely someone else has had the same questions you have about a specific topic. Try to find their materials and what answers they found. Even if your question has already been answered, you may find that the answers lead to more questions that you could research.
- **Choose a Method of Research.** Which subject you choose will determine the method of research you can perform. Regardless of topic, you will probably be able to review any existing literature on your topic that could help to give you more insight into the best way to conduct your research. Methods of research could include scientific experiments, sociological surveys, analysis of existing data, and even interviews. All of these methods will give you data that you can quantify and use to support your hypothesis.
- **Conduct Your Research.** Be thorough. If you are performing an experiment, make sure your results can be repeated several times. If you are conducting a survey, ensure you get a good response rate. If you are conducting interviews, try to make the questions as unbiased as possible. The reliability of your data will be examined and judges will want to know exactly how you got your results.
- **Work with Mentor to Analyze Results.** Your mentor will be able to help you to fine tune your research and prepare your results. You will do most of the work, of course, but your mentor can provide experienced insights into ways that you can improve your presentation and data gathering process.
- **Keep Studying Your Topic.** Be sure to have an intimate understanding of your research results. Even if you are making a presentation poster, be prepared to answer any possible questions you could be asked. You are the expert on your research so study it to ensure you have the confidence of an expert.