

UC SANTA BARBARA
Graduate Division

Tips & Tricks for Creating a High-Quality Grad Slam Recording

Equipment, Framing, Lighting, Slides, Sound, Background & Filming

Tips for filming from home

Equipment



A laptop camera is recommended, especially for simultaneous recording of slides on a platform like Zoom.



A secondary option is to use a phone camera if you are comfortable editing together video and slides after your recording session. Remember that for your Grad Slam submission you must be viewable on screen the entire time in a single unedited take.



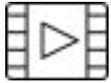
Students may also choose to set up their slides on an external screen that appears in view of their video recording. You can see examples of this setup in [two sample videos](#) from UC Merced competitors (videos shared with permission).screen the entire time in a single unedited take.

When finished and saving your video file, save it at the highest-quality and size available (ideally HD 1920x1080, or as close to that size as possible).



If you don't have a tripod, here are some simple solutions:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TTtJovKtujo>



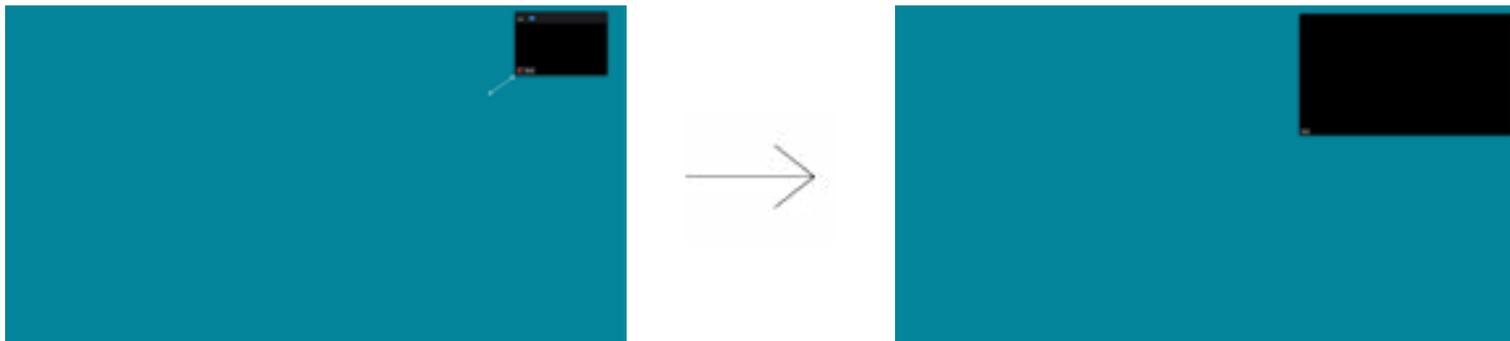
If you are using a webcam or phone separate from your slides, we suggest that you place your slides next to the camera so that you can see and advance them while you are presenting and looking at the webcam.

Platforms for Recording with Slides



We encourage you to create your recording on whatever platform you feel most comfortable using — whether that's Zoom, Panopto, etc.

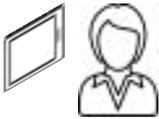
If you're using Zoom, you may opt to enlarge the video box. Once in screen sharing mode, simply select the corner of your video box and drag to the desired size. Make sure your video is not covering up any text or images on your PowerPoint slides. See these examples below:



For Panopto users

Instructional Development has put together extensive training resources [here](#).

Framing



Your camera should be the same height as your face, not below it.
Place the camera a little higher than eye level so you are not looking down.



If you are using Zoom and a laptop or desktop, you can put books underneath the computer to raise the height of the webcam.



Your face should be fully in the frame.
Do not let the frame cut off the top or bottom of your head.



Ideally, your eyes should be a little above center, with not too much space above and not too much space below your head.



Video yourself from at least the waist up with a wall behind you that is mostly uniform—doors and wallpaper are fine, but avoid windows, mirrors, or any light sources behind you.

It is also preferable to have no artwork in view, and your computer with your slides should be out of view. This will naturally be true if you are using a laptop webcam, with the slides on the laptop screen while the webcam is recording you.



You might consider filming yourself while standing up in order to replicate the feel of giving a live presentation in front of an audience.

Lighting



Try not to mix different light sources. If you are near a window and that is the primary light, turn off other nearby table lamps or desk lamps that are lighting your face, since the colors from each are different. (If they are in the background and not hitting you, that is ok.)

Sound



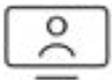
Eliminate noise: make sure you are in a quiet place without background noise of traffic, machines, television, other people, etc. Be sure to test your audio recording settings ahead of time to ensure that your voice is clearly audible when recorded

For the best sound, use small, wireless earbuds or ear-bud style headphones equipped with a microphone.



We do not recommend using large, headset style earphones/microphones.

Background



Make sure your background is tidy and not distracting.

If recording on Zoom, it is possible to use a virtual background. If you prefer to use one, make sure the image is appropriate to your message. UC Santa Barbara branded backgrounds are available [here](#).

Slide Design Tips



We encourage you to keep your slides simple with minimal text so that the focus remains on you and your talk.



You can find UCSB branded PowerPoint slide templates [here](#).

Be sure to organize the content of your slides so that your video inlay (the part of your screen that will be taken up by the video recording of you talking) does not cover up any information on your slide.

When combining colors on your slides, be sure to follow guidelines for accessibility so that your slides are legible. You can find UCSB's themed color palette with recommended color combinations [here](#) and you can check your design's color contrast ratio with [this useful tool](#).

For an archive of high-quality photographs, feel free to visit [UCSB's Digital Asset Library](#).



More tips and tricks for slide design can be found on [Madeleine Sorapure's slide design website](#).

Special Thanks



- Jessie Ward and Matt Perko, UCSB Office of Public Affairs and Communication
- UC Merced's Virtual Grad Slam Organizers

Have questions or need help?

Feel free to reach out to Dr. Shawn Warner at shawnwarner@ucsb.edu.