

Checklist: Prepare for Your Presentation Interview



A presentation interview gives you something a resume can't: the chance to show a hiring team how you think, how you organize information, and how you explain it to the people who need it. For a CRA, that is a preview of the job itself.

The candidates who stand out in a presentation interview aren't always the most polished speakers. They are the ones who confirmed what the hiring team wanted, prepared with care, and stayed composed during the questions. We created this checklist to walk you through every step; from the first questions you ask to the thank-you note you send afterward.

Our article, [Presentation Interview Tips for CRAs](#), explains why hiring teams use this format and how it works in your favor.

Whatever you do, don't open PowerPoint...Yet

Work through each section in order. The answers you gather in the first section shape every slide you build.

Confirm the Requirements	Tips and Insights
Ask before you build.	Ask the recruiter or hiring manager: • Who will be in the room, and what are their roles? • How long is the presentation, and how much time is set aside for questions? • Will it be virtual or in person, and on which platform? • Should I send my slides ahead of time, and by what deadline? • Is there a template, a slide limit, or a required format? • What does a successful presentation look like to the panel? Why? The most avoidable mistake in a presentation interview is building the wrong presentation. Asking these questions shows the same diligence you bring to a site: confirm the requirements before you act. When craresources represents you, your recruiter or interview scheduler can help you get these answers.
Research Your Audience	Tips and Insights
Study the company.	Review the company website, recent press releases, and its pipeline. Note anything the panel is likely to care about.
Search ClinicalTrials.gov.	Look up the sponsor to see its active studies, phases, and therapeutic areas. Why? Examples drawn from the therapeutic areas the company works in will land far better than generic ones.
Learn about the panel.	When you know who will attend, review their LinkedIn profiles so you understand their roles and what matters to them.
Fact-check and credit your sources.	Confirm every figure you use and credit the source on the slide. The hiring team is evaluating your research as closely as your delivery.
Protect Confidential Information	Tips and Insights
Remove every confidential detail.	Remove sponsor, compound, and site names from current or past studies, along with protocol details and study data that aren't public. The reality: your confidentiality agreements still apply in an interview.

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Label hypothetical examples.	Use de-identified or hypothetical examples, and label them on the slide (for example, <i>Hypothetical Phase II oncology study</i>). Why? Handling confidential information correctly is proof of your judgment before you ever say a word about it.
Build the Presentation	Tips and Insights
Open with your main point.	Tell the panel in the first minute what you will show them.
Use three supporting points and one clear takeaway.	Three points are easy for you to deliver and easy for the panel to remember. Close with a summary and one clear takeaway.
Keep the slides light.	Plan roughly one slide for every one to two minutes of speaking time. Keep slide text to short phrases, not paragraphs. Remember that the slides support you; you are the presentation .
Tell one SARB story.	Build one real, de-identified story into the middle of your presentation using Situation, Action, Result, Benefit. For example: • Situation: a site had a growing backlog of open queries ahead of an interim analysis. • Action: you met with the study coordinator, agreed on a weekly query resolution target, and escalated a staffing concern to the Clinical Trial Manager. • Result: the site resolved its open queries before the data cut. • Benefit: the sponsor kept its interim analysis on schedule.
Use AI as a tool, not a ghostwriter.	AI can help you brainstorm an outline or tighten your wording. But every word on every slide still needs to be yours to defend. Why? Because the Q&A shows the panel very quickly who built the presentation.
Practice Out Loud	Tips and Insights
Rehearse on a timer at least three times.	Rehearsing in your head isn't the same as rehearsing out loud. Adjust the length of your slide deck to accommodate the time. Aim to finish a little under your time limit so you never rush the ending.
Record yourself.	Watch the video back for pace, filler words, and eye contact.
Present to a test audience.	A colleague, a mentor, or a friend works well. Ask what they remember afterward and compare it to the points you meant to make.
Keep your notes short.	Glance at your notes when you need to. Just don't read your slides aloud.
Expect some nerves.	Chapman University's 2025 Survey of American Fears found that 33.7% of Americans are afraid or very afraid of public speaking. Nerves won't necessarily disqualify anyone. But preparation brings them down to a manageable level.

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Presentation Day	Tips and Insights
Virtual presentation.	• Test screen sharing on the hiring team's platform the day before. • Keep a PDF backup of your slides open. • Turn off notifications and close applications and browser tabs you don't need. • Set your camera at eye level and look into it when you make your key points. • Log in five to ten minutes early.
In-person presentation.	• Bring your file on a USB drive and email a copy to yourself as backup. • Ask ahead of time whether the panel would like printed copies. • Arrive early enough to test the equipment in the room.
Speak to the people, not the screen.	Slow down and let yourself pause between points.
Own the Q&A	Tips and Insights
Prepare for the questions you expect.	Write down five questions you expect the panel to ask, and practice your answers out loud.
Pause and confirm the question.	A two-second pause looks thoughtful, not unsure. Restate the question or ask a clarifying question so you answer what was actually asked.
Answer directly, then give one example.	Lead with the answer and support it with a brief, specific example.
Say so when you don't know.	Then explain how you would find the answer: <i>"I would confirm that against the protocol and the monitoring plan, and I would check with the Clinical Trial Manager before advising the site."</i> Why? For a CRA, an answer like that shows rigor, not weakness.
Treat a challenge as a conversation.	A panel member who pushes back may simply want to see how you would respond to a Principal Investigator who disagrees with a finding.
Follow Up	Tips and Insights
Send a thank-you note within 24 hours.	Send one to each panel member (unless you are working through a recruiter, in which case you will send to her). Reference a specific question or discussion point and offer to share your slides.
Talk with your recruiter.	When a craresources recruiter represents you, share how the presentation went so we can support you through the next step.

My last thought...

A presentation interview is your chance to stand out, to show a hiring team who you are, and to confirm the fit for yourself. An AI-generated ghost candidate can't research a company's pipeline, deliver a presentation live, and answer questions about it in real time. And fraudulent candidates can't stand up to a rigorous Q&A. When you do these things, you prove you are one of the real candidates hiring teams are searching for.

As always, let us know how we can help.