



Note: This guide was originally developed for Innovation@work presenters, 2021. The information has been amended to suit generic Abstract writing requirements. Abstracts intended for specific journals and conferences should, where provided, adhere to the guidelines set out by those journals/organisers.

Abstract Writing Information Guide



What is an abstract?

An abstract is a concise summary of a work, such as a quality improvement project, literature review, research project or thesis. It is approximately 250-300 words in length. The abstract provides a written overview of your topic and informs readers on what they can expect of your presentation or paper.

Why write an abstract?

Abstracts are written for *selection*, allowing reviewers to decide which submissions to include in a conference or journal, and readers to decide which conference presentations to attend or which articles to read. They are also used for *indexing*, where inclusion of key terms assists searching through research databases.

What is included in a conference abstract?

All abstracts tend to be made up of six key components whether they are intended for a conference or journal submission. These are:

1. Title
Preferably 12 words or less. The title should adequately describe the topic. Provocative quotes can be great, but if readers left guessing they may lose interest and move on.
2. Topic/reason for writing
Why is the topic important? What was the motivation behind it? How is the topic of interest to your audience?
3. The problem or scope of the project
What was the problem that the work looked at/attempted to solve? You might consider including if it was a well-known problem that was approached in a new or innovative way or support the need for the



work undertaken broadly with statistics (that can be delved into further in the paper or presentation).

4. Study design/Approach/Methodology

How did you go about solving the problem? Did you use a tool/survey? What kind of evidence did you use/look for?

5. Results or predictions

Depending on the work undertaken, you might make a prediction of the outcome OR what you hope to achieve OR state (briefly) your findings with data that support your results.

6. Conclusion/Implications

Round off the abstract. How/why did the outcomes of your work make a difference? Perhaps the outcome did not make a difference (that's important information too), what was learned from the process?

What makes a good abstract?

Quite simply, drafting, editing, getting feedback, and drafting again. Fitting all the above into 250-300 words is not without its challenges. Be concise, but also be aware of a common trap. Avoid writing sentences that resemble dot points and rely on readers to 'fill the gaps' for themselves. Sometimes the links between sentences seem obvious to author(s) because of how immersed they are in their work. To make sure your work is clear have someone else read your draft. Does it make sense to them? Did they have to ask you lots of questions to understand it? Were there any errors?

Can I write more than the stated word count?

The short answer here is no. If 250-300 words is stated anything greater than 300 words will not be accepted.



References

McCurry, D 2018, How to write an abstract for a conference, Accessed 22 June, 2021, from:
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