

Abstract Guidelines for Papers

How to write an Abstract for a Conference Paper

An Abstract is a short document that is intended to capture the interest of a potential reader of your paper. Thus in a sense it is a marketing document for your full paper. If the Abstract is poorly written or if it is boring then it will not encourage a potential reader to spend the time reading your work.

Thus the first rule of Abstract writing is that it should engage the reader by telling him or her what your paper is about and why they should read it. Although strictly not part of your Abstract, the title of the proposed paper is also important. Short attention-catching titles are the most effective. However, it is also important, for a conference paper, to ensure that the title describes the subject you are writing about. You should limit the length of the title to no more than 12 words.

With regards the body of the Abstract you need to make a clear statement of the topic of your paper and your research question. You need to say how your research was/is being undertaken. For example, is it empirical or theoretical? Is it quantitative or qualitative? Perhaps it follows the critical research method. What value are your findings and to whom will they be of use?

The Abstract should then briefly describe the work to be discussed in your paper and also give a concise summary of the findings. Finally your Abstract should not include diagrams and in general references are not required in the Abstract.

The marketing of your proposed paper needs to be done within the word limit of 300 - 350 words.

Keywords and Key Phrases

Although not part of the Abstract as such, most journals and conferences now expect authors to provide key words at the same time as the Abstract. Key words or phrases are used by Internet search engines to locate the paper. Somewhere between 5 and 10 Key Words are normally required and they should be the words which most closely reflect the content of the paper.

12 points used in the Selection Process

During the abstract selection process the following 12 points are used as a guide. We strongly recommend that you ensure your abstract satisfies these points.

1. Does the abstract capture the interest of a potential reader of the paper?
2. Is the abstract well written in terms of language, grammar, etc.?
3. Does the abstract engage the reader by telling him or her what the paper is about and why they should read it?
4. Does the abstract title describe the subject being written about?
5. Does the abstract make a clear statement of the topic of the paper and the research question?
6. Does the abstract say how the research was/is being undertaken?
7. Does the abstract indicate the value of the findings and to whom will they be of use?
8. Does the abstract describe the work to be discussed in the paper?
9. Does the abstract give a concise summary of the findings?
10. Does the abstract conform to the word limit of 300 words?
11. Does the abstract have between 5 and 10 keywords or phrases that closely reflect the content of the paper?
12. Should the abstract be accepted?
13. Authors who do not follow these guidelines are more likely to have their work rejected.