ACSME 2015 Structured Abstracts – Guide for Authors

The purpose of the structured abstract is to provide clear, detailed and consistently presented information to readers, giving all the important information relating to the article so that the reader can determine the relevance of the article. This will also be very useful to researchers and readers when searching databases of abstracts. Finally, a structured abstract will help authors to structure their articles to include all the relevant sections.

The structured abstract should be 300 to 500 words and fit on one A4 page using the accepted styles. You may use any combination of sub-headings to alert the reader to different sections. Different sub-headings will apply for different types of article (see examples below), and a template illustrating four example abstract types for some commonly encountered abstracts can be found here also.

Table 1: Components of structured abstracts (after Mosteller, Nave & Miech (2004) and Kelly & Yin (2007)).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggested sub-headings</th>
<th>Description of potential component</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Background and context</strong></td>
<td>Description of prior research on the subject and/or its intellectual content and/or policy context  The abstracted study’s niche, specialisation, narrower focus, or goal within the prior research context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose/objective/research questions/focus of study</strong></td>
<td>Description of what the research focused on and why. Claim or claims examined by the study (e.g., initial hypotheses can serve as claims).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Setting</strong></td>
<td>Specific description of where the research took place. Qualifiers and exceptions in choice of settings and possible implications for replication or other use of the research findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population/participants/subjects</strong></td>
<td>Description of the participants in the study: who (or what), how many, and key features. Qualifiers, exceptions, and other possible idiosyncrasies in the pool of participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intervention/program/practice</strong></td>
<td>Specific description of the intervention, including what it was, how it was administered, and its duration. Assurances or cautions regarding the fidelity of implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research design</strong></td>
<td>Description of the research design (e.g., qualitative case study, quasi-experiment, secondary analysis, analytic essay, randomized controlled field trial). Confidence in the findings likely to be associated with the choice of research designs and the stage of the research investigation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data collection and analysis</strong></td>
<td>Description of the plan for collecting and analyzing data, including description of data. Grounds, warrants, and other data collection or analysis shortfalls (e.g., incomplete data, low response rates).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Findings/results</strong></td>
<td>Description of main findings with specific details. Major objections and rebuttals (e.g., rival explanations).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conclusions/recommendations</strong></td>
<td>Description of conclusions and recommendations of authors on the basis of findings and overall study. Authors’ confidence in conclusions and recommendations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For further information on structured abstracts, please see:


**Tips for abstract writing and submission**

- **For work yet to be completed at the abstract due date:**
  The Conference organisers recognise that many authors may be in the midst of completing their projects abstract due date. In this case, please discuss your *anticipated* results and conclusions in the relevant sections of your abstract.

- **Tips for writing abstracts for conference papers:** See the bottom of the page found at http://www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/authors/guides/write/abstracts.htm?PHPSESSID=usqfpv487gbpt4vjo5koi71k6

- **General tips**
  - Submit your abstract on time.
  - Submit your abstract to a conference that is appropriate to your area of research.
  - Use the past tense, e.g. “Our research demonstrated…” when writing, as mixed tenses create confusion and reduce the quality and flow of your information.
  - Consider that you are writing for an audience who has limited knowledge of your research.
  - Ask a peer to critically review your final abstract before submission.
  - Remember that original research will impress your audience more than research that is simply interpreted as re-inventing the wheel.
  - Never be tempted to submit an abstract without results, as no study can ever be complete without results.
  - Stay within the word limit.
  - Finally, accept that your abstract may be rejected as most conferences have a planned program and limited places for the presentation of oral abstracts. To increase your chances, consider submitting your abstract for selection as a poster or an oral presentation, if that is an option.


---

**Some helpful references**