

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING OF AN ABSTRACT FOR A RESEARCH ARTICLE/CONFERENCE PAPER

It is usually a good idea to write your abstract only after you have completed (written) and finalised the whole text body of the article or conference paper. That is not always possible as abstracts often need to be submitted to conference organisers months before presentation date. However, you should have a good idea of the content framework of a conference paper (as opposed to a completed article for submission to a journal) based on a research study completed upon which the conference paper to be based. So, to write an abstract specifically for a to-be-presented conference paper, you should be able to draft a comprehensive and reasonably detailed Abstract of such conference paper.

Accordingly start by drafting your conference paper Abstract with a summary that identifies the purpose, problem, methods, results and conclusion of your draft conference paper outline – since an Abstract is only a summary of the work you have already done, it is relatively easy to accomplish!

The required length/word count for the Abstract for the 2019 CRIMSA Conference is ±300 words only. Please do not exceed to any great extent this word count limitation.

NOTE: The whole Abstract is in **ONE/SINGLE** paragraph, not a series of paragraphs.

Writing of your abstract

The abstract of a conference paper is the first part of the paper that will be read by a reader/reviewer. Accordingly, the abstract sets the tone for the rest of the conference paper. It is therefore incumbent on you as the author(s) to ensure that the abstract is properly representative of the entire conference paper.

In brief an Abstract is simply a short, standalone summary/description of the contents of the conference paper that others (readers/researchers) can use as an overview. For this primary reason, the abstract must have some general qualities, namely:

1. The abstract is a condensed/concentrated overview (summary) of the rest of the paper's contents. Therefore, it should be sufficiently representative of the content information to be able to stand alone (i.e. in the Conference Abstract Booklet). In other words, it must be of sufficient and informative interest to the reader to make them want to listen to the conference presentation when done at the conference.
2. Accordingly, the Abstract must be as detailed and informative as possible – all within the allowed word length of the particular conference to which it is being submitted. This requires good precis (summary/synopsis/overview outline) writing skills.

So, your Abstract should contain as much information from each section of your research conference paper (for example: about your research findings/analyses/recommendations/conclusions). In other words, summarise the main points of fact as

contained in the body of the paper. However, the shortest sections (2-3 lines each should be devoted to the background/introduction of the focus of the paper and then a brief (another 2-3 lines) to the methods used to collect the research information. But remember, the research findings/results section is the most important part of the abstract and nothing should compromise its range and quality. This is because readers who peruse an abstract do so to learn about the findings of the study/research being reported in the body of the paper. The results section should therefore be the longest part of the abstract and should contain as much detail about the findings as word count permits. This section would then be followed by information from your conclusions' section. This last section of your Abstract should contain the most important 'take-home message' of your research study/information collected, expressed in a few precisely worded sentences. Usually, the finding(s)/results, as highlighted in the abstract, should relate to the primary research findings/outcomes. Thus, the conclusion section of the Abstract may contain three elements, namely:

- i) The primary take-home message;
- ii) The additional findings of importance/significance; and
- iii) The overall author's perspective (opinion) of the research done in terms of value/importance or implications/significance.

Despite its necessary brevity (short length) the final concluding section of the Abstract has the most impact on the average reader since readers generally trust the author and take the author(s) assertions at face value. For this reason, the conclusions should also be scrupulously honest; and authors should not claim more than their data/research information demonstrates.

What NOT to insert in the Abstract

1. Other author(s) research findings/recommendations/conclusions – only your own. This includes the exclusion of quotes from other authors (that might be in the body of the article) in the Abstract.
2. In-text references. The summarised information taken from the body of the paper will in the text be properly referenced per se, so there is no need to source reference such summarised information in the Abstract.
3. Tables or detailed statistics relating to findings.

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