

The British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences
Guidelines on Preparing Abstracts
BASES – Promoting Excellence in Sport and Exercise Sciences

An abstract should be viewed as a mini-version of your paper. It should contain a brief summary of each of the main sections of a full paper. When writing an abstract, examine each word carefully. A common fault of abstract-writing is the inclusion of extraneous detail. If you can explain your work and *key* findings in fewer words, then do so.

The abstract should be written in the past tense because it refers to work done. There are normally seven key sections that characterise a good abstract.

- *The title.* This should be concise and reflect the work being described. Only the first keyword begins with a capital letter, unless a proper noun.
- *Background.* The authors need to present the theoretical and/or empirical framework on which the study builds or to which it is related.
- *The purpose.* All research should have a purpose. The purpose should outline the principal objectives and scope of the study. For a quantitative research design that tests a specific hypothesis, it might be: “Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of A on B”. It should be emphasised that the authors are encouraged to state the purpose of the work concisely and if the purpose was exploratory, then this should be stated.
- *The methods.* The methods describe how data were collected so that a different researcher could repeat the research. There should be a statement indicating that ethical approval was granted.
- *Results.* Authors must provide a clear explanation of their results and are encouraged to use the most appropriate format to do this. Quantitative researchers should report actual *P* values (e.g., $P = 0.068$) and effect sizes. The number of decimal places a *P*-value is reported to depends on the statistical analysis undertaken and to reflect the precision of measurement. Thus an author could report *P*-values to 2 and 3 decimal places in the same abstract, but in different analyses. There is no need for the adjectives "significant" or "non-significant". Means are either greater, less or no-different and similarly, variables either are or are not related. Qualitative researchers are encouraged to use themes and /or quotations to illustrate their findings.
- *Discussion.* Authors must discuss the relevance of their findings in relation to existing knowledge. This could be theory, research, and/or practice.
- *Conclusion.* This should be prefaced, “The results suggest that . . .” and then go on to say something like “A enhances/has an adverse influence on/has no effect on B . . . “ and then a concluding phrase should state the implications. Authors are encouraged to provide clear recommendations on the value of their work.

Written by Prof Edward Winter and Dr Claire Hitchings on behalf of BASES

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