

**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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