



Team-Based
Learning™
Collaborative

How to Write a Research Abstract for the TBLC Annual Meeting

Tips for Success from the Scholarship Committee

These tips relate only to research abstracts, but some of the principles may apply to other forms of abstracts submitted for conference free orals and posters. A research abstract is a brief (<300 words) but accurate summary of a research project. The abstract is not only used in determining which research should be presented at a conference, but it also serves as an indicator for what your presentation or poster will cover/include. It helps the reader determine if your presentation or poster is worth their viewing. Abstracts for the Annual Conference must follow a specific format:

Title

- Make the title dynamic, directive and conclusive. For experimental research, using PICO (Population, Intervention, Comparator, Outcome) is helpful so that all variables are included. It may be beneficial to state the method in the title, but this is not compulsory, for example, 'Student learning via TBL provides personalised professional peer feedback: an exploration study'.

Your Name and Institution

- The first author is the principal researcher and presenting author, names of the team should follow. If the presenting author is not the primary author, please underline who will be presenting the team's work.

Abstract content

First and foremost, be guided by the submission instructions. Headings are allowed, and should follow standard paragraph formats to present your content in this order:

- Introduction/Problem/Background – rationale for study including importance of your study. Aim for 2-4 short sentences.
- Aim(s) should be clearly stated. Hypothesis can be included (if applicable). Aim for 1-2 short sentences.
- Methods – study design, sampling approach and size; context of study (e.g. discipline, PG, UG); what data/outcomes; how data were collected and analysed.

- Results – You must present results here. If quantitative, start with demographics and then findings. Use as many words as you can in this section. If qualitative, ensure themes are presented.
- Conclusion/s – must relate to the aim/hypothesis and be supported by the results. Teaching or learning implications/relevance should be included. No more than 2-3 short sentences.

Other formatting hints

- An abstract must be written in the past tense, stating what was done, tested or measured.
- It must contain sufficient detail to be a complete report in the published conference proceedings.
- All terms should be written in full, except terms such as TBL which is considered common language.
- Do not exceed word/character length. This will likely result in immediate rejection of your abstract.
- Do not make statements alluding to results or conclusions not presented in the abstract. For example, abstracts stating “*results will be discussed*”, “*will be described*” or “*will be presented*”, will be rejected by the reviewers. Definitive data and outcomes must be included in your abstract.

Common mistakes that diminish your success

- The abstract does not adhere to the instructions, e.g. word count, headings, abbreviations etc.
- For research abstracts, it does not describe actual research. You must present findings.
- Abstract is written about work to be done in the future. The abstract must be about completed research.
- The aims or hypothesis are unclear.
- The method is not clearly described.
- No results are reported and/or the sample size is not reported, if applicable.
- *Insufficient data to support the conclusion* is the most common reason that abstracts submitted for the annual meeting receive low scores and are not accepted.

BEFORE you submit

- Read the instructions to ensure your abstract complies with the guidelines.
- Proofread your work. Sometimes spelling, punctuation and format errors are easier to spot in hardcopy, so print it out to proofread it if that helps you.
- Seek agreement and consent for all co-authors in relation to the content and order of authors before submitting.
- These guidelines apply specifically to research abstracts and should be used to guide not dictate your submission. Good luck!
- ***Members of the TBLC Scholarship Committee are available to informally proofread your abstract and provide feedback if desired.***