

ESH. checklist no. 1

how to write your abstract

An abstract is a short summary of the research (or of the part of the research) you intend to present at the conference. It is a self-contained and powerful statement that describes a larger work. If done well, it makes the reviewer (and the conference participants) want to learn more about your research – and you get invited to the conference!

The abstract should be in narrative form, not bullet points or outline form. Subheaders (e.g., Method:") are not needed, and may use up space unnecessarily. No references/bibliography should be included, although major scholars can be mentioned by name within the text.

What we expect to find in your abstract:

1) Motivation/problem statement: Why do we care about the problem and the results? What practical or theoretical gap is your research filling? What research question are you trying to solve? Why would IAMCR members be interested in learning more about your work? What is the main argument/thesis/claim? What is the scope of your work (national, transnational, a specific instance of a problem, a generalized approach)?

2) Methods/approach: How did you go about solving or making progress on the research question? What did you actually do to get your results? (e.g. interviews, surveys, panel data, participant observation...) What theoretical approach or form of analysis are you using? What literature do you draw upon?

3) Results/findings: What is your main argument or the answer to your research question? What did you find/learn? (For a work in progress, this section should revolve around expected argument/findings/hypotheses. Even if the work is still in progress, some discussion of the implications, if not findings, should be noted. These can be expectations rather than firm conclusions if necessary.)

4) Conclusions/implications: What are the larger implications of your findings, especially for the problem/gap identified in step 1? (e.g. theory development..) How does this work add to the body of knowledge on the topic?

Please respect always the maximum number of words you are assigned. Longer abstracts typically upset reviewers.

Be clear in formulating your sentences, and do a language check before submitting. Reviewers receive several dozens of abstracts, and an abstract that is unclear or contains language mistakes will be dismissed.

Work in progress are also very welcome. If you aim at presenting a work in progress, please clearly state so. Of course, the abstract of a work in progress will assign a different weight to each element of the abstract illustrated above. You could, for example, concentrate on your research *problematique*, and illustrate the challenges you are facing.

(Adapted from <http://research.berkeley.edu/ucday/abstract.html>)