

WRITING A CONFERENCE PAPER

Explanation:

Writing a conference or symposium paper can be an intimidating and time consuming task. To start with, you are working up ideas for a paper that will end up as a presentation about your own research project, rather than simply reporting on an existing topic as you might in a regular oral presentation.

There are a few stages to writing a conference paper. First, you will need to come up with a title that is engaging as well as effective in conveying particular focus of your research.

Then you will be expected to write an abstract, a short summary of your conference paper in approximately 250-300 words. The abstract is expected, in most cases, to contain enough information for a conference organiser to judge the suitability of your research for their event. As such, conference organisers will expect to find information relating to: a description of the area of your research; an account of what you did, why you did it, and what the outcomes were; the relationship of your work to the academic field; relevance to the conference theme; and information of interest to the conference participants.

The conference paper itself will need to be well organized and carefully timed to fit the amount of time you will be given for the presentation (for example, 2500 words generally takes 20 minutes to present).

Learning activity:

Write the title for a conference paper. List the key terms that your paper relates to. Now, number these terms in logical progression, i.e. prioritise the core key terms, and identify the order in which secondary key terms are explored. Next, (re)construct versions of the title using no more than 10 words, and containing verbs/verbal phrases.

Other resources:

Preparing papers for conferences in the Social Sciences
Claremont Graduate University

<http://www.cgu.edu/PDFFiles/Writing%20Center/Writing%20Center%20Resources/Conf.%20Papers%20in%20Social%20Sciences.pdf>

By Ruth Walker, Learning Development, University of Wollongong.