



MATHEMATICS EDUCATION
RESEARCH GROUP
OF AUSTRALASIA

***MERGA Annual Conference
Submissions:
Style and Format Specification for
Short Communications,
Round Table Presentations,
and Posters***

Last adapted, 2002

Introduction to Styles and Formats	1
MERGA Publications Style	1
The Most Crucial Elements of APA style	2
Modifications of APA Style for MERGA Usage	2
Formatting Specifications and Instructions	4
Step 1: Writing the abstract	4
Step 2: Initial Editing	4
Step 3: Preparing to Format Your Abstract	5
Step 4: Formatting your Manuscript	5
Step 5: Final Adjustments	6
Submitting Abstracts	6
References	6

MERGA Annual Conference Submissions: Style and Format Specifications

Michael Mitchelmore
Macquarie University
<mike.mitchelmore@mq.edu.au>

Kay Owens
University of Western Sydney
<k.owens@uws.edu.au>

Judith A. Mousley¹
Deakin University
<j.mousley@deakin.edu.au>

All abstracts for presentation at MERGA's annual conferences are submitted electronically. Accepted abstracts are then be published in the conference Proceedings, printing directly from the submitted files. Since no editing is possible at this stage, it is necessary to impose strict specifications on abstracts so that the final product will have a professional appearance.

Introduction to Styles and Formats

The appearance of a document depends on *style* and *format*:

- *Style* refers to the way words and symbols are used, irrespective of how they are laid out on the printed page.
- *Format* refers to the way words and symbols are laid out on the printed page, irrespective of whether they make sense or not.

Both are specified in this document, which has three purposes:

- to reiterate MERGA's standard style specifications;
- to specify a uniform format for annual conference abstracts; and
- to provide instructions on how to achieve this format with the minimum of effort.

It is itself prepared according to these style and format specifications and, in its electronic form, contains all the necessary formatting tools.

MERGA Publications Style

MERGA abstracts should follow the standard MERGA publications style (Mitchelmore & Owens, 1999). For authors' convenience, this style is reproduced below.

MERGA style follows "APA style" as specified in Chapters 1-3 and Paragraphs 4.11-4.13 of the *APA Manual (Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 1994)* and supplemented by the latest recommendations for referencing electronic documents (available at www.apa.org/journals/webref.html), but with minor modifications for Australasian usage. Below, the most crucial elements of APA style are summarised and the modifications for MERGA publications listed in detail.

¹ The whole of this advice was written with regard to Research Reports by Mike and Kay, as Mitchelmore and Owens (2001), *MERGA Annual Conference Papers: Style and Format Specifications*. It was adapted for Abstracts by Judy.

The Most Crucial Elements of APA style

Authors should read Chapters 1 and 2 of the *APA Manual* for valuable advice on the content and organisation of a manuscript and the expression of ideas. Editorial style is specified in detail in Chapter 3 of that *Manual* and these specifications should be strictly followed. The following guidelines would avoid some of the most common errors. (References are to sections of the *APA Manual*.)

- Spell out words like “and”, “for example”, and so on—except when they occur within parentheses (then use “&”, “e.g.”, etc.). Always follow “e.g.” and “i.e.” with a comma [3.24]. Also, use “&” instead of “and” in the reference list [3.111].
- Leave only a *single* blank space after each punctuation mark (exception: internal full stops in abbreviations like “e.g.”) [4.11].
- Text omitted in a quotation is always shown by three dots (full stops not separated by spaces). The three dots should be separated by a single blank space from the following and preceding text (which might be a full stop) [3.38].
- If using footnotes, type the footnote number after any punctuation mark except a dash [4.20].
- Use double quotation marks for quotes in text, except for quotes within quotes [3.36]. Use italics (not quotation marks) for technical terms at their first definition and for foreign words [3.19].
- Note the different way of citing a range of page numbers in the reference list for chapters in a book (e.g., “*This book* (pp. 32-49)”) and articles in a journal (e.g., “*This Journal*, 58, 253-258”) [3.110].
- Pay particular attention to the other specifications for listing references. Most variations are included among the 75 examples given in the *APA Manual* [Appendix 3-A]. The reference list in the present document contains examples of the most common references: to books (Mitchelmore & Owens, 1999), chapters in books (Truran & Truran, 1998), and journal articles (Sullivan, Warren, & White, 2000).
- For electronic documents, follow a similar format as for printed material and indicate when and from where it was retrieved. (See, for example, Bishop, FitzSimons, & Seah, 1999).
- Check that all works cited in the text appear in the reference list, and vice versa [3.104].

Modifications of APA Style for MERGA Usage

The following modifications either amend APA style for Australasian usage or clarify and extend its application in MERGA publications. (References are again to the *APA Manual*.)

Spelling. Use Australasian academic English (not British or US English). The standard spelling reference is *The Macquarie Dictionary* (2nd Revision, 1987). In particular, spell words like “visualise” with the ending -ise, not -ize, and words like “centre” with the ending -re, not -er [cf. 3.10]. Before using a spell checker, ensure that you specify the language used in the document as English (AUS).

Punctuation. As in Australasian academic English, place periods and commas outside closing quotation marks, unless the text quoted ends with a period [cf. 3.36]. However, contrary to Australasian academic English, always insert a comma in lists of three or more items before the final “and” or “or” (e.g., “Bloggs, Bloggs, and Bloggs” and “1, 2, 3, or 4”) [3.02]. This usage provides consistency with the use of commas in references and often helps to make the meaning clear.

Use letters (a), (b), and so on to identify elements in more complex lists, separated by commas, colons, and semi-colons as appropriate [3.33].

A sentence following a colon should begin with a capital letter [3.04].

Numbers. Place a zero before the decimal point in all numbers less than 1 (e.g., “ $p < 0.05$ ”) [cf. 3.46].

Place names. Assume that Australian capital cities are well known to the reader, but other places not [cf. 3.106].

- Refer to Australian capital cities by name, without state or country. For all other Australian cities, state the name and the state or territory.
- Do not refer to Australasian suburbs. Instead, refer to the cities in which they lie (e.g., “Melbourne” not “Carlton, Victoria”).
- Refer to New Zealand cities by name and country.
- Spell out “New Zealand” and the names of Australian states in text, but abbreviate them in references. Use the following abbreviations:

New Zealand	NZ
Australian Capital Territory	ACT
New South Wales	NSW
Northern Territory	NT
Queensland	QLD
South Australia	SA
Tasmania	TAS
Victoria	VIC
Western Australia	WA

Notice the capital letters and the absence of a full stop.

- Refer to all US cities by name and state or territory, without country. Spell out “WA” as “Washington State, USA” if there is any danger of confusion with Western Australia.
- Refer to all other cities by name and country.

References to Conference Papers. The specifications for references to conference papers in the *APA Manual* (pp. 210-211) do not cover many of the conferences to which MERGA members frequently refer. The following instructions are designed to extend APA style to cover such conferences:

- Where the proceedings are published under a specific title, use this title as the main identifier and add an indication that the item consists of conference proceedings. Where no specific title is given, use the title “Proceedings of ...”. Capitalise only the first words of the titles and subtitles of conference proceedings, but capitalise

all words in the names of organisations and of conferences. Notice that, whereas an “International Congress on Mathematical Education” is the name of a conference, an “annual conference [of an organisation]” is not.

- Use abbreviations such as “16th” for “sixteenth” in the names of conferences.
- Whenever the body that organises the conference also publishes the proceedings, abbreviate the name of the organising body in the publisher information.
- Where the place of a conference is not otherwise identifiable, include this information in the conference title.

Refer to the reference list at the end of this document for examples of how to cite the following types of conference papers:

- Papers in proceedings published under a specific title (Galbraith, Haines, & Pemberton, 1999)
- Papers in proceedings published without specific title (Forgasz & Leder, 1998)
- Papers in proceedings published electronically (Bishop, FitzSimons, & Seah, 1999)
- Unpublished papers (Davey & Pegg, 1991; Outhred, Farrell, & Cotter, 1996)
- Unpublished papers available from ERIC (Mitchelmore & White, 1995)

Formatting Specifications and Instructions

All abstracts are to be prepared using Microsoft Word in either Windows or Macintosh format. The following is written for Windows and may have to be adapted for Macintosh.

The following specifications are stated in terms of Word “styles”. Styles enable you to format text in one step without having to format font, paragraph, and so on separately. Styles to be used for formatting conference abstracts have a name that begins with **CONF** (and are shown in this document in **bold type**). It is not necessary for you to set up the **CONF** styles: They are attached to this document. In order to achieve uniformity of appearance, it is essential that authors use the attached **CONF** styles and no others.

Step 1: Writing the abstract

Word lengths for abstracts are (a) Short Communications: 80-100 words; and (b) Round Table Presentations: 200-250 words, (c) Posters: 100 words. The abstract may have several paragraphs, but no subheadings should be used. References should be listed as for Research Papers. Reference words are not counted in the word limit, but no abstract (with references) should exceed one page in length.

Step 2: Initial Editing

Open your file and carry out these initial editorial steps:

- Delete any blank lines (e.g., before or after paragraphs or headings).
- Delete any tabs (shown by an arrow → when you display non-printing characters), except where used within table cells.
- Delete any headers and footers (including page numbers).
- Check that all inverted commas (single and double) are “smart” (as opposed to “straight”). If you have any straight inverted commas, first click on Autocorrect in the Tools menu and check Change ‘Straight Quotes’ to ‘Smart’ Quotes. Then click on Replace in the Edit menu, type ‘ (a single inverted comma) in Find What and

Replace With, and click on Replace All. Then type " (a double inverted comma) in Find What and Replace With, and click Replace All again. All inverted commas should then be converted to smart ones.

- If you have used **bold** or underlined characters for emphasis, or underlined book and journal titles in the reference list, change them to *italics*.
- If you have typed two spaces between sentences, change this to one space. To ensure that you find all such occurrences, click on Replace in the Edit menu, type two spaces in Find What and one space in Replace With, and click on Replace All.
- Incorporate any endnotes or footnotes into the abstract.

Step 3: Preparing to Format Your Abstract

Next, you need to copy your abstract into a file that has all the **CONF** styles available. To do this, proceed as follows:

1. Make a copy of the file containing this document (SPEC.DOC), giving the copy some distinctive name. (Open this file and then use Save As in the File menu to save it under a different name. Or use your File Manager.)
2. Open the new file and delete the entire text. (Click on Select All in the Edit menu, and then press Delete.)
3. Open your abstract file and copy the entire text to the clipboard. (Click on Select All in the Edit menu, then click on Copy in the Edit menu.)
4. Return to the new file and paste your abstract into it. (Click on Paste in the Edit menu.)

You now have a copy of your abstract file with the **CONF** styles available. This is the file that, after editing, you will submit to the conference editorial committee. Name your file with your surname and the initials of the type of presentation, e.g. Mouley_SC.doc, Mouley_RT.doc, or Mouley_P.doc

Step 4: Formatting your Manuscript

You are now ready to format each paragraph of your manuscript using the appropriate **CONF** style. The general procedure for applying a style is as follows:

1. First select the text to be formatted. This should be a whole number of paragraphs. If you select more than one paragraph, the same style will be applied to all of them.
2. Then click on the downward arrow next to the Style menu (usually to be found on the top left of the screen), and click on the required **CONF** style. The selected text will be automatically formatted.

Each item of your manuscript is to be formatted as described below. If you are in any doubt as to the interpretation of the instructions, examine the formatting of the corresponding paragraphs of this document.

Title. Apply **CONFTitle** to format the title of your abstract. If the title runs onto two lines, use a line break (SHIFT-ENTER) to even up the two lines or to make a more sensible break. Do *not* use a carriage return (ENTER) for this purpose.

Author details. Use three lines for each author:

1. First and last name (no middle initial)—apply **CONFAuthor1**.

2. Affiliation (only the name of the university or other institution, no department)—apply **CONFAuthor2**.
3. E-mail address, enclosed in pointy brackets (< ... >)—apply **CONFAuthor3**.

For two authors, place each author's details in a cell of a 1 × 2 table. Applying the **CONFAuthor** styles will then centre the author details within each cell.

Underline the name of the author(s) who will be presenting the communication at the conference.

Normal text. Normal text paragraphs in your abstract are formatted using **CONFNormalText**.

Headings. No headings are used, except for References. Apply **CONFHeading1 to this word**.

Tables and Figures. It is unusual, but acceptable, to include tables or figures or acknowledgements in MERGA abstracts. If you do, please check the instructions for authors of research papers.

Step 5: Final Adjustments

There are now a few final steps before the abstracts can be submitted.

- Apply **CONFSubscript** to all subscripts and **CONFSuperscript** to all superscripts (including footnote numbers and letters).
- Underline all internet references.
- Check that the application of styles has not changed italics to regular font, or symbols to normal text font.
- Check that all works cited in the text are listed in the references, and *vice versa*.
- Use the SpellChecker to check spelling a grammar checker to check grammar, and a colleague to proofread your abstract.

Finally, when you are sure that your abstract is in its finished form, save your file as a Word document.

Submitting Abstracts

Abstracts for the annual conference are to be sent as e-mail attachments to the Conference Secretariat (see <http://www.merga.net.au/conferences.htm>). They must be *received* by the due date. For your abstract to be accepted by the editorial team, you need to have registered for the conference and sent any other required documentation (including information listed in the author checklist).

References

- Bishop, A., FitzSimons, G., & Seah, G. W. T. (1999). Values in mathematics education: Making values teaching explicit in the mathematics classroom. *Proceedings of the 1999 annual conference of the Australian Association for Research in Education, Melbourne*. Retrieved 28 November 2000 from the World Wide Web: <http://www.aare.edu.au/99pap/bis99188.htm>
- Davey, G., & Pegg, J. (1991, July). *Angles on angles: Students' perceptions*. Paper presented at the 15th annual conference of the Mathematics Education Research Group of Australasia, Perth.
- Forgasz, H. J., & Leder, G. C. (1998). Affective dimensions and tertiary mathematics students. In A. Olivier & K. Newstead (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 22nd annual conference of the International Group for the Psychology of Mathematics Education* (Vol. 2, pp. 296-303. Stellenbosch, South Africa: PME.

- Galbraith, P., Haines, C., & Pemberton, M. (1999). A tale of two cities: When mathematics, computers, and students meet. In J. M. Truran & K. M. Truran (Eds.), *Making the difference* (Proceedings of the 22nd annual conference of the Mathematics Education Research Group of Australasia, Adelaide, pp. 215-222). Sydney: MERGA.
- Mitchelmore, M. C., & Owens, K. (1999). *MERGA publications guide*. Sydney: Mathematics Education Research Group of Australasia.
- Mitchelmore, M. C., & White, P. (1995, April). *Development of the angle concept by abstraction from situated knowledge*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 416 066)
- Outhred L., Farrell, J., & Cotter, K. (1996, July). *How well do student teachers integrate science and mathematics concepts? A pilot study*. Paper presented to Working Group 1 at the 8th International Congress on Mathematical Education, Seville, Spain.
- Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (4th ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Sullivan, P., Warren, E., & White, P. (2000). Students' responses to content specific open-ended mathematical tasks. *Mathematics Education Research Journal*, 12, 2-16.
- Truran, J., & Truran, K. (1998). Using clinical interviews in qualitative research. In J. A. Malone, B. Atweh, & J. R. Northfield (Eds.), *Research and supervisions in mathematics and science education* (pp. 41-63). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.