



MATHEMATICS EDUCATION
RESEARCH GROUP
OF AUSTRALASIA

MERGA Annual Conference Papers: Style and Format Specification

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MERGA Annual Conference Papers: Style and Format Specifications

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

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

In future, all papers for presentation at MERGA's annual conferences will be submitted electronically. Accepted papers will 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 submitted papers if the final product is to 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 papers; 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 conference papers 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.

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 which 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)

For ease of reference, bibliographic details of MERGA, AAMT, MAV, and PME conference proceedings from 1990 are given in the Appendix.

Formatting Specifications and Instructions

All papers 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”. All styles to be used for formatting conference papers have a name which begins with **CONF** (and are shown in this document in **bold** type). Specific **CONF** styles are defined for the different parts of a manuscript: body text, various types of headings, footnotes, and so on.

Styles enable you to format text in one step without having to format font, paragraph, and so on separately. It is not necessary for you to set up the **CONF** styles: They are attached to this document.¹ In order to achieve uniformity of appearance, it is essential that authors use the attached **CONF** styles and no others.

The following steps assume that you have already written a paper in the standard MERGA style and are satisfied with its content. You are now ready to bring it into the standard MERGA annual conference format.

¹ If you are interested in the definitions of the various CONF styles, you can print them out as follows: First select Print in the File menu; then select Styles under Print What?

Step 1: Initial Editing

Open your file and carry out these initial editorial steps:

- If you have written text with carriage returns (shown by a paragraph sign ¶ when you display non-printing characters) at the end of each line, delete them all. Use a carriage return only to separate paragraphs.
- Delete any blank lines (e.g., before or after paragraphs or headings).
- Delete any page breaks.
- 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.
- If you have used endnotes, change them to footnotes.
- If you have typed your tables after the references, move them to a place in the text near to where they are referred to.
- If you have put any diagrams at the end of the manuscript, move them to a place in the text near to where they are referred to. If any diagrams are in hard copy, replace them by electronic versions (e.g., by scanning them) and embed them in the text. If you have typed figure captions on a separate page, move them below the corresponding figure.

Step 2: Preparing to Format Your Manuscript

Next, you need to copy your manuscript into a file which 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—possibly including the year of the conference for which your paper is intended. (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 manuscript 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 manuscript text into it. (Click on Paste in the Edit menu.)

You now have a copy of your manuscript file with all the **CONF** styles available. This is the file which, after editing, you will submit to the conference editorial committee.

Step 3: 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.

Notice that, even when using styles, it is occasionally necessary to adjust the spacing before or after a paragraph “by hand”. It may also be necessary to change the first-line indentation. To do either of these, use the Paragraph command in the Format menu.

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 paper. 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. For three or four authors, use a 2 × 2 table and merge the two cells in the second row if necessary. Applying the **CONFAuthor** styles will then centre the author details within each cell.

Underline the name of the author who will be presenting the paper at the conference.

Abstract. Every paper should begin with a one-paragraph abstract of not more than 80 words. This paragraph should *not* have any heading, nor should the paragraph immediately following it. Format the abstract using **CONFAbstract**.

Normal text. Normal text paragraphs are formatted using **CONFNormalText**. If a paragraph following a displayed quotation or list continues the sense of the paragraph immediately preceding the quotation or list, change the first-line indentation of this paragraph to 0 cm.

Headings. Three levels of heading may be used in conference papers:

1. Apply **CONFHeading1** to Level 1 headings (such as Rationale, Method, Results, Discussion, Acknowledgments, and References). In these headings, capitalise all major words (verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and any other words of four or more letters), including both parts of hyphenated words. Delete any heading such as Introduction between the abstract and the beginning of the main text.

2. Apply **CONFHeading2** to Level 2 headings, and capitalise all major words. If such a heading immediately follows a Level 1 heading, reduce space before to 0 pt.
3. The third level is the paragraph heading. This consists of the first words of a normal text paragraph, ending with a full stop, and with only the first word and any proper nouns capitalised. To format a Level 3 heading, set the heading in italics and apply **CONFHeading3** to the whole paragraph.

Displayed quotations. Quotations of more than 40 characters should be set as displayed text, without quotation marks. To illustrate this, we quote from Mitchelmore and Owens (1999):

Display quotations of 40 words or more, and do not use quotation marks [3.34]. Place the page reference (together with the source citation, if not given in the body of the text) in parentheses after the last character in the quotation, with no full stop following it [3.39]. (p. 1)

To achieve this format, apply **CONFQuote** to the quoted text.

Lists. Lists may be either numbered or bulleted. To format such a list, delete existing numbers or bullets and apply **CONFNumbers** or **CONFBullets** to all paragraphs. Then change the space before the first item and after the last item of the list to 6 pt.

Figures. Each figure must be referred to in the text and must have a caption below it, as shown in Figure 1. Set the identifier, such as “Figure 1”, in italics followed by a full stop. In the caption itself, capitalise only the first word and proper nouns, and end with a full stop. For captions extending over two lines, split the text according to the sense and to avoid unbalanced line lengths. Avoid captions longer than two lines, moving text as necessary into the body of the article. Format the figure using **CONFFigure** and the caption using **CONFFigureCaption**.

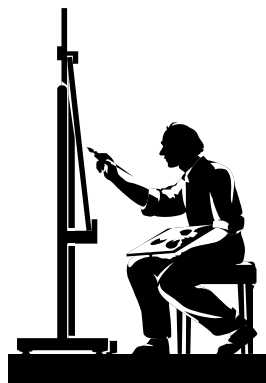


Figure 1. Artist at work creating this figure.

Tables. A table title is set in two paragraphs: an identifier such as “Table 1” in the first paragraph and text indicating the content of the table in the second paragraph. In both paragraphs, all significant words are capitalised and there is no full stop at the end. Format the first paragraph with **CONFTable1** and the second paragraph with **CONFTable2**. Each table must be referred to in the text.

Set the table itself using the Table command. The design of a table can be rather complicated, but the following points summarise the main guidelines. See the *APA Manual* 3.62-3.74 for more detailed advice on layout.

- Use no vertical rules, and use only three horizontal rules across the full width of the table: above and below the column heads and below the last line of the table. These three rules should extend across the full width of normal text. Use shorter rules to indicate the extent of heads spanning two or more columns. All rules should be $\frac{3}{4}$ pt.
- Format all paragraphs in the table (including the headings) using **CONFTableText**. Then change the space before the paragraphs immediately below each rule at the top of the table to 3 pt. If it is necessary for clarity to introduce line spaces to separate sections of the table, increase space after appropriate paragraphs to 12 pt.
- Left-align all columns of text, including the column heads; but use tabs to align the decimal points in columns of numbers, and centre the corresponding column heads.
- For tables of numerical data, use regular font for any subheadings within the body of the table. For tables containing mostly text and/or diagrams, use italic font.

Format table footnotes using **CONFTableFoot**. Give footnotes in the following order:

1. A general note starting with the word *Note*.—all in one paragraph and ending with a full stop.
2. Specific footnotes, indicated by superscript lower case letters—one paragraph for each footnote and ending with a full stop.
3. Significance levels, represented by various numbers of asterisks. The maximum number of asterisks should be equal to the number of different significance levels given in that table. Indicate multiple significance levels on one line, separated by a full stop and five blank spaces (e.g., “* $p < 0.01$. ** $p < 0.001$.”)

Text footnotes. Format all text footnotes using **CONFFootnote**. Do not use endnotes. Avoid footnotes to the title or an author’s name; set all such notes as acknowledgments in a separate paragraph at the end of the main text. Number footnotes consecutively 1, 2, 3, ... throughout the text, and ensure that the footnote number comes *after* any punctuation mark.

Acknowledgments. Include all acknowledgments in a separate paragraph headed Acknowledgments just before the reference list. Format the heading with **CONFHeading1** and the text with **CONFNormalText**.

Reference list. Format all entries in the reference list using **CONFReference**. Use non-breaking spaces to avoid separating authors’ initials from their surname.

Step 4: Final Adjustments

There are now a few final steps before the paper 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.
- Use Print Preview in the File menu to check that there are no large spaces before your tables or figures and that no table is split across two pages. If either of these problems occurs, move tables and/or figures to a different position until the spaces

are minimised. Note that tables and figures must always fit between two paragraphs; it may be necessary to split a long paragraph into two shorter ones in order to obtain a good fit.

- A conference paper may not be more than 8 pages long. If your formatted manuscript has more than 8 pages, edit it accordingly. Then check again that there are no large spaces before tables or figures.
- Check that all works cited in the text are listed in the references, and *vice versa*.
- Use the SpellChecker to check all spelling.

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

Submitting Conference Papers

Manuscripts of papers 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 paper to be reviewed, you need to have registered for the conference and sent any other required documentation (including information listed in the author checklist http://www.merga.net.au/conferences/conference/Author_checklist.htm

You are required to submit an blind version of your paper as well as the full, final version. To create the blind version that maintains the pagination, follow the following procedure:

- Create a copy of the paper and save it under a different name.
- Turn on the “overtyping” mode.
- Overtyping every letter in every occurrence of each author’s name and institution (in the title, in the text, and in the references) with a space.
- Turn off the “overtyping” mode.

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>
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- 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.
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- Sullivan, P., Warren, E., & White, P. (2000). Students responses to content specific open-ended mathematical tasks. *Mathematics Education Research Journal*, 12, 2-16.
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Appendix: Bibliographic Details of Selected Conference Proceedings

Table 1
MERGA Annual Conferences

No.	Date	Title	Editors	Place
13	1990	-	-	Hobart
14	1991	-	-	Perth
15	1992	Space: The first and final frontier	B. Southwell, B. Perry, & K. Owens	Sydney
16	1993	Contexts in mathematics education	B. Atweh, C. Kanes, M. Carss, & G. Booker	Brisbane
17	1994	Challenges in mathematics education: Constraints on construction	G. Bell, B. Wright, N. Leeson, & J. Geake	Lismore, NSW
18	1995	Galtha	B. Atweh & S. Flavel	Darwin
19	1996	Technology in mathematics education	P. C. Clarkson	Melbourne
20	1997	People in mathematics education	F. Biddulph & K. Carr	Rotorua, NZ
21	1998	Teaching mathematics in new times	C. Kanes, M. Goos, & E. Warren	Gold Coast, QLD
22	1999	Making the difference	J. M. Truran & K. M. Truran	Adelaide
23	2000	Mathematics education beyond 2000	J. Bana	Fremantle
24	2001	Numeracy and beyond	J. Bobis, B. Perry, & M. Mitchelmore	Sydney
25	2002	Mathematics Education in the South Pacific	K. Irwin & M. Thomas	Auckland
26	2003	Mathematics Education Research: Innovation, Networking, Opportunity	L. Bragg, C. Campbell, & G. Herbert	Geelong

Note. MERGA conference proceedings up to 1998 were published by MERGA at the place where the conference was held. From 1999, proceedings are published by MERGA at Sydney.

Table 2
AAMT Biennial Conferences

No.	Date	Title	Editors
13	1990	Mathematical turning points: Strategies for the 1990s	K. Milton & H. McCann
14	1993	New horizons, new challenges	T. Herrington
15	1995	FLAIR: Forging links and integrating resources	A. Richards
16	1997	Mathematics: Creating the future	N. Scott & H. Hollingsworth
17	1999	Mathematics: The next millennium	K. Baldwin & J. Roberts
18	2001	Mathematics: Shaping Australia	B. Lee

Note. AAMT conference proceedings are published by AAMT at Adelaide.

Table 3
MAV Annual Conferences

No.	Date	Title	Editors
27	1990	Whither mathematics?	K. Clements
28	1991	Mathematics: IDEAS	J. O'Reilly & S. Wettenhall
29	1992	Mathematics: Meeting the challenge	M. Horne & M. Supple
30	1993	Mathematics: Of primary importance	J. Mousley & M. Rice
31	1994	Mathematics without limits	C. Beesey & D. Rasmussen
32	1995	Celebrating mathematics	J. Wakefield & L. Velardi
33	1996	Mathematics: Making connections	H. Forgasz, T. Jones, G. Leder, J. Lynch, K. Maguire, & C. Pearn
34	1997	Mathematics: Imagine the possibilities	D. Clarke, P. Clarkson, D. Gronn, M. Horne, L. Lowe, M. Mackinley, & A. McDonough
35	1998	Mathematics: Exploring all angles	J. Gough & J. Mousley
36	1999	Mathematics: Across the ages	N. Scott, D. Tynan, B. McCrae, G. Asp, H. Chick, J. Dowsey, J. McIntosh, & K. Stacey
37	2000	Mathematics: Shaping the future	J. Wakefield

Note. MAV conference proceedings are published by MAV at Melbourne.

Table 4
PME Annual Conferences

No.	Date	Editors	Place
14	1990	G. Booker, P. Cobb, & T. de Mendicuti	Oaxtepec, Mexico
15	1991	F. Furinghetti	Assisi, Italy
16	1992	W. Geeslin & K. Graham	Durham, NH
17	1993	I. Hirabayashi, N. Nohda, K. Shigematsu, & F.-L. Lin	Tsukuba, Japan
18	1994	J. P. da Ponte & J. F. Matos	Lisbon, Portugal
19	1995	L. Meira & D. Carraher	Recife, Brazil
20	1996	L. Puig & A. Gutiérrez	Valencia, Spain
21	1997	E. Pehkonen	Lahti, Finland
22	1998	A. Olivier & K. Newstead	Stellenbosch, S. Africa
23	1999	O. Zaslavsky	Haifa, Israel
24	2000	T. Nakahara & M. Koyama	Hiroshima, Japan
25	2001	M. van den Heuvel-Panhuizen	Utrecht, The Netherlands

Note. PME conference proceedings are published by PME at the place where the conference is held.