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Abstract Review Rubric

Institute for Advanced Teaching and Learning (IATL)
University of Warwick

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Introduction

Welcome to ICUR

Thank you for participating in our **Abstract Review Process**.

Whether you're a student or a member of staff, your perspective and your feedback will be a hugely valuable part of our submitters' ICUR experience.

We see the abstract review process as one of the important ways in which we support undergraduate researchers. Our process is designed – in conjunction with the IATL Method of abstract writing – as a collaborative process involving students and staff, and as a supportive and constructive learning experience. The feedback we – you – give submitters will help towards the long-term development of research and communication skills; and, in the short-term, it will help them to address the core pieces of information that we are asking for as part of a successful ICUR submission.

Each abstract will be reviewed by at least two reviewers.

Each abstract will be reviewed double-blind (so you will not know whose abstract you are reviewing; and the students will not know who is reviewing their abstract). If you do recognise an abstract you have been asked to review as describing a project of which you have been a member, or a supervisor, please tick the 'conflict of interest' box and the abstract will be reassigned.

Once again, thank you for participating in the review process, and for making an important contribution to the success of this special event. We are grateful for your time, energy, and commitment!

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The IATL Method (Abstracts)

At ICUR, students can choose from three forms of presentation:

SPOKEN

Spoken (Oral presentation of no more than 10 minutes, with or without visual aids such as slides. If students select this option and their work is accepted for presentation, they will be scheduled to present in one of our hybrid panels alongside a maximum of 3 other presenters from participating institutions.)

POSTER

Poster (Research poster which will be uploaded to Oxford Abstracts, alongside a short recorded video presentation to introduce the poster, and – if the submitter's institution is hosting an in-person event – printed out and displayed in an in-person event. Poster presenters are allocated a specific poster session during the event, during which they are expected to be online and available to answer audience questions.)

ALTERNATIVE

Alternative Format (If students feel that their research is best presented in a non-traditional format, we encourage them to think expansively about what this could look like. A performance? A board game? A virtual reality experience? Research and its dissemination can take many different forms, and we want to support students to explore this.)

Introduction to the Method

No matter the form of their presentation, ICUR applicants are required to follow our abstract process. We've asked students to include answers to four questions in their submission:

Why? What? So What? Now What?

We're doing this to support students: the questions are designed to get them to think about how they compose all of the required information into a coherent, compelling abstract. **As such, we ask that your review feedback accounts for how well the abstract addresses this information, as well as more general feedback about the style and presentation of the submission.**

The **title** of the abstract is also one of the aspects you are reviewing – is it accessible to an interdisciplinary audience, and does it correspond appropriately to the content of the paper?

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Introduction to the Method

Above all, it is absolutely essential that abstracts are written with an international, interdisciplinary audience in mind.

We encourage submitters to think about this from the beginning by asking them to frame their abstract for an audience comprising specialists and non-specialists – people who are interested and engaged, but who may be coming to the project from a different base level of knowledge in the area.

ICUR abstracts are assigned randomly. It is therefore very likely that, as a reviewer, you will be assigned abstracts from outside your specialism or area of interest – this is a very valuable perspective from which to provide feedback, as you will be able to assess whether an abstract is comprehensible to someone outside of the submitter's field or discipline, and whether they have been able to communicate its wider significance (whether that's a discipline-specific contribution, or a broader societal impact).

Summary

Abstracts for ICUR <u>must</u> be written in a way that is **accessible** and **interesting** for **interdisciplinary and international** audiences.

As part of the submission process, we ask students a series of four questions about their research - this helps them to construct an abstract that includes all the required information.

The submission process is designed to be supportive and constructive - we encourage positive feedback, as well as suggestions for improvement!

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How to Write an Abstract

Below, you will find the rubric with which students have been presented. These are the guidelines we provide to help them to decide what information they need to include in their abstract. As a reviewer, **your job is to assess the quality of their abstract based on how well it answers these questions**.

WHY?

Use this introductory section to describe the **context** for your project, where it **fits within existing academic literature** and **what research question/s it is addressing**.

What is **the gap in knowledge** that is filled by your project? **Why was it important that someone – you – completed this work?**

WHAT?

Use this section to tell the reader **what you did** and **how you did it**. Tell us what **materials you've examined**. Outline any **research tools** and/or **methods** you've used.

You should also report the **results of your research**. Did you answer your research question/s, or discover any incidental, but important, findings?

SO WHAT?

Use this section to **communicate** your **overall argument** and why this research is significant. **This is the 'aha!' moment**, when the reader comes to understand **the true value of your research**.

This can be a great opportunity to underline **interdisciplinary significance** in your work. Does it make a contribution to your field? Could it impact wider society?

NOW WHAT?

Use this concluding section to share the **potential future applications** of your research with the reader. Leave them in **no doubt of the relevance of your project**.

And if you're working on **future developments** in this area yourself – **now is the time to share that**.

STYLE AND PRESENTATION

The abstract should be **well-written and well-presented**, **in English**, and with sufficient attention paid to **grammar and punctuation**. It should not exceed 250 words.

The title should reflect the project accurately and contain key words (but should not be technically dense or alienating). **The abstract must be accessible to an international and interdisciplinary audience**, with minimal use of subject-specific jargon and careful choice of vocabulary.

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How to Review an Abstract

As an ICUR reviewer, you will read your assigned abstracts and see how well you think they respond to the questions and review rubric above.

1

You will decide whether the information included within the abstract **in response to each key question** (Why? What? So What? Now What?) is Excellent, Satisfactory, Needs Improvement, or Not Addressed. This will give four pieces of generic feedback: e.g. "Why? - *Excellent*; What? - *Satisfactory*; So What? - *Needs Improvement*; Now what? - *Not Addressed*."

Excellent	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement	Not Addressed
Includes all key information and communicates this to an exemplary standard. No adjustments are needed for this part of the abstract to be presented at a conference, as it is accessible and clear to specialist and non-specialist audiences already.	Includes key information and communicates this to a standard appropriate for presentation at a research conference. Some minor improvements might help with clarity or accessibility, but ultimately this part of the abstract would be fine to present as is.	Does not include all the key information; *or* includes the key information, but with lack of thought for clarity, accessibility, or legibility. Specific advice regarding improvements and edits should be provided here.	Does not include any of the information required by one key question (for example, if the submitter has not identified any future implications or "Now What?" in their abstract).

2

You will also decide whether the overall Style and Presentation of the abstract is Excellent, Satisfactory, or Needs Improvement.

Excellent	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement
Written with exemplary clarity and attention to detail. The abstract is cogently and compellingly written, and accessible to an interdisciplinary audience of both specialists and non-specialists alike.	Generally clear and legible, with demonstrable effort to make the content accessible to an interdisciplinary audience. There may be some areas in which minor improvements might be helpful; but the abstract is well-written enough without these improvements.	Unclear, vague, or otherwise poorly written. Might use a lot of subject-specific terminology without explanation, or be too technically dense for non-specialists. Might be issues with grammar and punctuation, or with overall narrative style. Improvements would be necessary for this abstract to attain a standard high enough for acceptance.

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3

When you have decided on a quality level for each of these areas, you will decide on an overall outcome for the abstract*****. The possible outcomes are **Accept**, **Revise and Resubmit**, or **Reject**. All submitters are given the opportunity to revise their abstract ahead of the conference programme publication – but revisions are mandatory for students who receive a Revise and Resubmit outcome, so you <u>must</u> provide guidance on these.

4

In addition to the graded elements of the abstract, we ask you to provide **tailored individual feedback** for each abstract. You can do this by filling out the feedback box entitled **Comments to Submitter**, or by providing **inline comments** (annotating the abstract).

*Deciding on an Outcome

In the first instance, <u>an abstract should **only** receive a **Reject** outcome if it is problematic in terms of content, or if it is demonstrably not a research project</u>. If you are unsure about this, please flag it to the team in the **Comments to the ICUR Team** section of the form, or by email to **ICUR@warwick.ac.uk**.

An abstract should receive a **Revise and Resubmit** outcome if two or more criteria are marked as either **Needs Improvement** or **Not Addressed**.

PLEASE NOTE - *If you recommend a Revise and Resubmit outcome, it is **essential** for you to provide **specific feedback** on where (and how) the abstract can be improved.*

<u>If an abstract is marked as **Needs Improvement** or **Not Addressed** in only one area</u>, you should use your judgment to decide on the significance of the omission. For example, if you have reviewed an abstract as "Satisfactory" in response to the four key questions, but "Needs Improvement" in response to Style and Presentation, it is likely that this would need to be a Revise and Resubmit; but if you have reviewed an abstract as "Excellent" in all areas except "Not Addressed" in response to "Now What?", you might wish to make this an Accept outcome overall (and highlight some recommended adjustments in the **Comments to Submitter** section of the form).

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Key Takeaways for Reviewers

*The ICUR Abstract Review process is **supportive** and **constructive**.*

Please consider the tone of your comments and ensure that criticisms are delivered in a way that will be effective and encouraging for the author. Don't forget to highlight what they have done well!

*You are assessing the **abstract** – the way the research is communicated – **not the research** itself.*

You are not expected to comment on the validity, accuracy, or methodology of the research or its results in your comments. If you have any concerns (for example, with research ethics/ethical approval, methodology, etc) please highlight them in your Comments to the ICUR Team.

Interdisciplinary communication is key.

And again, you're evaluating the **communication** of the research, not the research itself. For this reason, it doesn't matter if you're an expert in the field, or if you've never come across the subject before in your life! Your abstracts for review will be assigned randomly, not based on your area of expertise or interest. We are interested in your thoughts on the dissemination, narration, and communication of the project, and encourage you to have confidence in your own judgment!

Tailored individual feedback is the cornerstone of the ICUR abstract review.

Please ensure that you provide **at least two sentences of feedback** for each abstract (**minimum 30-50 words**). This will be the most helpful part of the review for student development (and the most encouraging if you tell them where they have succeeded!)