

Guidelines for Preparing Abstracts (Knowledge Translation)

Why KT abstracts are important

Scientists must be able to convey ideas clearly and compellingly to a lay audience if they want their work to have an impact outside academia.

KT abstracts describe complex ideas and technical and scientific details in plain, everyday language that a non-expert can understand on first reading. Clear language does not “dumb down” scientific information, but expands the audience for your research by making the information accessible.

Guidelines for preparing KT abstracts

Keep it simple—a KT abstract should be written in an easy, readable style.

- Use sentences of 15-20 words maximum. Break text into short paragraphs for readability.
- Use [everyday words](#) in place of complex words (“show” not “indicate”).
- Minimize the use of [“jargon”](#) (*i.e.*, scientific or technical terms that may not be understood by a non-scientific audience). If you must use jargon, explain it using plain language or an analogy to make the concept more familiar to a non-scientific audience.
- Avoid acronyms. If you use an acronym, introduce it after the full terminology has been provided at first use.
- Write at a Grade 10 reading level. Ask a friend or family member who is not familiar with your research to read it and to identify the phrases and concepts that they do not understand.

Keep it lively

- Use the [“active” voice](#), which is direct, clear and concise.
- Minimize [“hidden” verbs](#), or verbs converted into nouns.

Before you begin writing your KT abstract:

1. Consider who your audience is and what does your audience need to know? Keep a focus on what the lay audience would understand and find useful in their own context.

2. In simple, plain language, write down the three (3) most important findings/messages from your study.
3. Rank or list the findings in order of importance to your audience.
4. Build your KT abstract as a research “story” around these messages. Your research story should have a logical flow from the non-expert’s point of view.

KT abstracts should include the following headings:

1. Title

- A short, catchy title that indicates what the research is about.

2. What is this research about?

- Highlight the purpose of the study—what problem does it set out to solve? Focus on the “so what?” relevance or benefits to your audience.
- Put your research into context—how does it fit into a bigger picture that the audience can relate to?

3. What did the researchers do?

- It is not necessary to describe every detail or every step of your methodology. Focus on the key points that will help your audience understand the research process.

4. What did the researchers find?

- Present your findings in narrative text—do not use technical diagrams or tables. If you have an image or graphic that is designed for a lay audience, you may include it.
- Explain the three (3) main findings from your study, backing them up with simple, clear evidence/data.

5. How can this research be used?

- Discuss the importance of your findings, not just in terms of their implications within the field, but in terms of their relevance to the lay audience. How do your results relate to people, communities, the economy, health, safety, and/or technology?
- Why is your research important and what’s next?

General guidelines

Abstracts may be submitted in English or French. KT abstracts will not be published in the *Allergy, Asthma & Clinical Immunology* journal.

Submissions that do not follow the abstract guidelines will be returned for revision, or not accepted.

Do not include intellectual property that has commercial potential unless it has been protected.

Abstracts must be 200 words or fewer, excluding references, and submitted in MSWord (not PDF).

Text

The abstract must be formatted as follows:

- Arial 11 point
- Single line spacing
- Left text justification
- Abbreviations should be used sparingly and be defined when first used
- Headings should appear in bold with no colon
- Hard returns at the end of headings and paragraphs only
- Greek and other special characters may be included
- The International System of Units (SI units) should be used throughout (however, *litre* and *molar* are permitted)

Abstract title

The abstract title must be bolded and in sentence case with no period at the end.

Authors

Authors must be listed as follows:

- First name, middle initial(s) if required, and surname with no period at the end
- First author underlined
- Author names separated with a comma
- Authors given a superscript number for each affiliation
John Smith^{1,2,3}, Susan B Jones², Bill Fisher³

Study groups must be listed in the *Acknowledgements* section.

The email address of the corresponding author must appear at the bottom of the affiliation list.

Affiliations

Affiliations must include department, institution, city and country. Where there are multiple affiliations, each affiliation must be listed as a separate paragraph. Each affiliation should appear in the order used for the author names, and show the appropriate superscript number.

¹Department, University, City, State, Zip Code, USA

² University, City, State, Postcode, UK

³Company, City, State, Postal Code, Canada

References

BioMed reference format must be used (see sample abstract – Appendix A).

Web-based references must be provided in full, including both the title of the site and the URL, in the following format:

Mouse Tumour Biology Database
[http://tumor.informatics.jax.org/cancer_links.html]

Citations to references must be in square brackets [1,2], and citations to figures (Figure 1) and tables (Table 1), must be in round brackets.

Acknowledgements

Brief acknowledgements may be included and should be placed after the *Conclusions* and before the *References* sections.

If the abstract is being presented on behalf of a study group, this information must be noted here, rather than in the author list.

Figures

Abstracts may include a maximum of one figure designed for a lay audience.

The figure must be:

- Cited in the text
- Supplied electronically in the body of the text at 300 dpi minimum
- Inserted as a single, composite file (not separate graphical units, even if it is made up of parts)
- Submitted without embedded hyperlinks

Figure title and legend must be formatted as part of the text file and not part of the graphical figure.

Poster Competition guidelines are subject to change with notification.

If you have any questions regarding the preparation of abstract submissions, please contact Leah Graystone, HQP and Events Coordinator, at leahgraystone@allergen-nce.ca.

Allergen's 2019 Conference KT Abstract CHECKLIST

Before submitting your KT abstract, review the following checklist:

- Have I kept sentences and paragraphs short?
- Have I used everyday words in place of complex words?
- Have I avoided using jargon or specialized words where possible? If I have used jargon or specialized words, have I explained them in plain language?
- Have I minimized my use of acronyms, and explained any that I used?
- Have I created a logical flow of information from the audience's point of view?
- Have I used the active rather than the passive voice?
- Have I used the strongest form of verbs and minimized the use of "hidden verbs"? ("conducted an investigation on", compared to "investigated")
- Have I focused on what the primary stakeholder audience needs to know about my research?
- Have I clearly explained the main findings of my study?
- Have I included the 'so what?' implications of my research?
- Have I given my abstract to a lay person who is unfamiliar with my work (e.g. friend, family member) to read?
- Have I read my abstract aloud to test for a smooth flow and a logical story?