

Ten tips for submitting your manuscript

These tips have been developed by the Editorial Board of the Australian Social Work journal

Writing for an academic journal has specific requirements. It is not the same as writing a report, an essay or a newsletter article.

1. First and most importantly, in order for your article to be accepted for review, it is essential that you pay close attention to the *Instructions for Authors* including word length, referencing and formatting requirements. These are summarized at <http://www.aasw.asn.au/publications/journal> and available on the back page of the journal and on the journal webpage <http://www.tandfonline.com/action/authorSubmission?journalCode=rsw20&page=instructions>
2. Manuscripts must be prepared according to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA). The APA manual is not just about referencing. It gives guidance about naming and formatting tables, using acronyms, numerals, italics, inverted commas, hypens, ellipsis (...), the slash (/) and many, many other aspects of style and format.
3. In order for your paper to be accepted for review, the presentation of your manuscript must be correct *in every detail* (editors and reviewers should not have to correct your spelling, grammar, punctuation or referencing).
4. There is information about writing an abstract in the *Instructions for Authors*. There are also guidelines on abstracts in the APA manual. There should be no citations in an abstract. Do not say the article 'will discuss the findings' or 'outline practice implications' – instead, tell us briefly what the findings or practice implications are. The abstract is a stand-alone item and is very significant for purposes of indexing your published article and facilitating its availability to other researchers with interests in your area. It does not substitute for the introductory paragraph of the article.
5. Organise your paper with headings and sub-headings. The APA manual provides guidance on headings, which should be used to effectively organise the ideas within a study. Headings provide signposts to help the reader track the unfolding of your argument.
6. Paragraphs are for grouping ideas together. Therefore, paragraphs should contain a minimum of three sentences.
7. Construct and label your tables according to APA guidelines. Each table and figure must be provided on a separate page and included after the references at the end of the manuscript. In the text, you indicate where you would like the table placed (for example: 'Table 1 here'). Do not copy and paste output (such as tables) directly from statistical programs into your manuscript, but rather use the results from the output files to construct your tables as specified by the APA manual.
8. It is not necessary to tell the reader 'this is part of my PhD', just set out where, when and how the research was conducted, as for any other study. If the article is from your PhD, ask your supervisor to read it before you submit it.
9. Capital (or upper case) letters are used to start sentences, for personal names, place names, names of nationalities and races, names of organisations, in headings, and a few other things. Do not over-capitalise. Refer to the APA manual when in doubt. Do not use capitals for social work, strengths perspective, child protection, or mental health, except when you are starting a sentence, in which case only the first word would be in capitals ('Social work has a long history').
10. Proofread. Once, twice, three times even! Then ask a colleague to proofread the final manuscript before you submit it, even when you think it is perfect. There's almost always something you have missed.