**HCOL 185: Research Paper Template**

**Formatting specifications**

* Reasonable font (Times New Roman, Calibri, etc)
* 11–12 pt font
* 1–1.5 spacing
* Page numbers at bottom
* Word count guidelines – excluding references, abstract, and any appendices
  + Minimum word count: 2500, plus 500 words for each group member over 5
  + Maximum word count: minimum word count + 1500 words
  + That is, if you have a 5-person group, it’s 2500–4000 words; if you have a 7-person group, it’s 3500–5000 words
* Embed figures/table or place at end
* You can additional figures/images/etc in the appendix, but please avoid writing blocks of text in there!

*Feel free to format your paper how you like, so long as you follow the guidelines above (no need to follow this template)*

**Writing and style rubric guidelines**

The following elements will be assessed:

Writing style (4 points): Writing is clear and concise, avoiding wordy or run-on sentences. Tone is professional and neutral. Avoid use of passive voice.

Grammar (4 points): Few grammatical and typographical errors

Formatting and word count (4 points): Meets all specifications above

**DESCRIPTIVE PAPER TITLE HERE**

List of Authors

**Abstract**

* Here are 150–250 words that summarize your paper.

**Title and abstract rubric guidelines (2 points)**

Excellent (100%) Descriptive title, abstract that summarizes paper entirely (accurately and stands alone) within word count

Adequate (80%) Descriptive title, abstract that summarizes most of paper but may miss key results, or is above/below word count

Marginal (60%) Either title is not descriptive/present, or abstract only covers main topic of paper but not results

Poor (40%) Title is not descriptive/present or abstract is missing

1. **Introduction**

Key elements of the introduction

*(Adapted from* [*Keith Head*](https://blogs.ubc.ca/khead/research/research-advice/formula) *to reflect a shorter paper with a separate literature review)*

1. **Hook[[1]](#footnote-1):** Attract the reader’s interest by telling them that this paper relates to something interesting. What makes a topic interesting? Some combination of the following attributes makes Y something worth looking at. ***~1–2 paragraphs***

* Y matters: When Y rises or falls, people are hurt or helped.
* Y is puzzling: it defies easy explanation.
* Y is controversial: some argue one thing while other say another.
* Y is big (like the service sector) or common (like traffic jams).

Things to avoid:

* *The bait and switch*: promising an interesting topic but delivering something else, in particular, something boring.
* “*all my friends are doing it*”: presenting no other motivation for a topic than that other people have written papers on it.

1. **Question:** State your research question and tell the reader what this paper actually does. Think of this as the point in a trial where having detailed the crime, you now identify a perpetrator and promise to provide a persuasive case. The reader should have an idea of a clean research question that will have a more or less satisfactory answer by the end of the paper. ***~1 paragraph***
2. **Statement of key findings:** What is the answer to your question? Summarize it with enough detail that we would understand the key takeaways of your paper even if we stopped after the introduction. ***~1 paragraph***
3. **Contributions:** This is the value-added of your paper, likely 1–2 specific contributions. A big difference between it and the earlier “question” paragraph is that the contributions should make sense only in light of prior work (which you will discuss in more detail during the literature review) whereas the basic research question of the paper should be understandable simply in terms of knowing the topic (from the hook paragraph). It should be explicit how this paper contributes to our understanding of the economics of discrimination. ***~1–2 paragraphs***

Use of outside sources: You will need to cite outside sources in your hook (peer-reviewed or general), and antecedents (peer-reviewed). Your contributions will refer back to your antecedents.

Use at least **3 total outside sources, at least 2 of which are peer-reviewed, in the introduction.**

**Introduction rubric guidelines (6 points)**

Excellent (100%) Introduction includes all four elements as described, meets outside sources requirement (2 peer-reviewed, for 3 total). Introduction presents well-supported, cohesive narrative that motivates research question using sources and summarizes paper contributions

Adequate (80%) Introduction includes all four elements, meets outside sources requirement. Research question may not be well-motivated, or contributions are vague, limited, or not well connected to economics of discrimination

Marginal (60%) Up to 1 introduction element missing, or insufficient sources included. Limited connection across elements.

Poor (40%) More than two elements missing, or introduction does not motivate question or use appropriate outside sources.

1. **Background and Literature Review**

If there is key background the reader needs to know, this will be in here. Additionally, it helps the reader (1) understand the literature to which you are contributing and (2) understand *how* your paper fits into this literature.

Key elements of the literature review and background

* Literature review clearly situates paper in the economics of discrimination
* At least **eight** peer-reviewed sources from academic journals referenced. *These can be the same as those in the introduction.* At least two of the eight should be from a [top-200 economics journal.](https://ideas.repec.org/top/top.journals.all.html)
* Organized by theme rather than by paper, and paper synthesizes the findings of papers for each theme.
* Connection between this paper and existing literature is explicitly stated.
* Avoids unnecessary paper description or long direct quotations

Literature review example

See this example from [Calvi and Keskar (2022)](https://economics.yale.edu/sites/default/files/tildowry-calvi_2022_ada-ns.pdf):

*Key highlights:*

* *1st paragraph with a key topic sentence that summarizes the finding! (not the case in 2nd paragraph)*
* *Explicitly ties in own paper methods to existing literature*
* *Provides only relevant detail from cited papers. (i.e., you don’t need to describe/summarize each paper completely)*

Previous work has shown that insufficient transfers from the bride’s family may increase women’s likelihood of being abused after marriage. Bloch and Rao (2002) build a non-cooperative bargaining model between two families, where violence is used by the groom’s family to extract resources from the bride’s family after marriage. Based on an original dataset from three villages in the state of Karnataka, they show that lower dowries are associated with an increase in domestic violence and that women are more likely to be abused when their natal family is wealthier. Using data from a village in South India, Srinivasan and Bedi (2007) also show that larger dowries reduce post-marital violence by increasing the economic resources of the marital household and enhancing the social status of the groom and his family. Differently from these studies, we develop a framework to include gains from marriage and their intra-household allocation between a husband and a wife, social stigma against separation, and parental investment in the human capital of future brides. We then test our model predictions using plausibly exogenous changes in dowry payments and data from a large, nationally representative survey. The broad coverage of the survey allows us to explore heterogeneity along several dimensions.

Previous studies have analyzed the consequences of dowries on economic and social outcomes, focusing on women’s well-being. Borker et al. (2017), for instance, develop a model of assortative matching with caste-endogamous marriage markets, in which sex selection and dowry payments arise endogenously. Studying parental responses to shocks in the world gold price, Bhalotra et al. (2020a) establish a link between dowry payments and sex-selective abortion, female infanticide, and parental underinvestment in daughters, while Menon (2020) finds that a higher price of gold at the time of marriage increases the likelihood of domestic violence. Corno et al. (2020) show that Indian parents delay their daughters’ marriage as a strategy to cope with income volatility and avoid the payment of a dowry, at least in the short-run. Closest to our empirical application is Alfano (2017), who exploits the 1985-1986 amendments to the Dowry Prohibition Act to document a positive association between dowry payments and son preference

**Literature review rubric guidelines (6 points)**

Excellent (100%) Important literature discussed and linked to topic, following key elements above. At least eight peer-review articles discussed, including two top-200 economics papers

Adequate (80%) Important literature discussed, and key elements addressed. Synthesis is weak and/or literature not linked to paper explicitly. Some articles may not be directly relevant. At least eight peer-review articles discussed, including two top-200 economics papers

Marginal (60%) Insufficient information to understand how paper fits into literature, because of inadequate synthesis, poor article choice, or misunderstanding of articles. Up to 1–2 missing articles.

Poor (40%) More than 2 articles short of requirement and/or literature review does not include the key items above.

1. **Data collection**

Key elements of the data collection section

*This is basically a formal write-up of all the data collection steps you wrote in your proposal/protocol. Imagine that you are talking someone through your process. If you made changes mid-stream, write those up too!*

1. Short overview of data collection process
2. Discussion of sampling frame (the part with real people) – how many people, how were they selected, etc.
3. Discussion of the correspondence part – what did you submit? What was varied between submissions, what was different
4. Randomization: how did you do it? What was the split?
5. Data collection: What results did you collect
6. Power calculation: What were your initial power calculations based on your initial assumptions? (ie, do not update!)

It should include two figures/tables:

1. A timeline
2. A distribution of your “treatments”

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | White | Black |
| Old | 200 (25%) | 200 (25%) |
| Young | 200 (25%) | 200 (25%) |

**Data collection rubric guidelines (6 points)**

Excellent (100%) Includes all key elements thoughtfully discussed, with timeline and treatment distribution table

Adequate (80%) All key elements included, but some key details missing. Or up to 1 element missing

Marginal (60%) 2 elements missing or many key details missing

Poor (40%) 3 or more elements missing

1. **Results**

Key elements of the results

*This is basically a formal write-up of all the data collection steps you wrote in your proposal/protocol. Imagine that you are talking someone through your process. If you made changes mid-stream, write those up too!*

* 1. Summarize overall response rates as well as disaggregated by groups
  2. Discuss hypothesis test(s) you are conducting and results
  3. Interpret your results. What do they mean? What do they tell us about the answer to your questions? How does it fit in with the literature you discussed earlier?
  4. Limitations: What are the limitations of this study?
     + You don’t need to bash your study here – just be honest and specific about potential challenges.
     + These could be limitations about how your realized study differed from the idealized study
     + They could also be limitations about how your study may not fully address the research question(s)

It should include at least two figures or tables that show your results. At least one should be a bar chart with confidence intervals **or** slope graph. I will assess them on the following criteria:

1. Figures/tables selected and implemented to illustrate and explain important empirical results
2. Easy to read and interpret accurately
3. Avoids unnecessary clutter and is aesthetically pleasing

**Results rubric guidelines (12 points)**

Excellent (100%) Includes all key elements thoughtfully discussed, with two figures/tables. Hypothesis test(s) conducted correctly. Evidence selected answers research question. Demonstrates critical thinking in interpretation and discussion of results

Adequate (80%) All key elements included, but some key details missing. Or results presented but with limited or occasionally inaccurate interpretation

Marginal (60%) 2 elements missing, many key details missing, or largely inaccurate interpretation of results

Poor (40%) 3 or more elements missing

**Data presentation rubric guidelines (6 points)**

Excellent (100%) Two or more figures or tables, at least one bar graph with CI or slope chart, that meet all three criteria above

Adequate (80%) Two or more figures or tables, at least one bar graph with CI or slope chart, that are well chosen but may be difficult to read and interpret or may be cluttered or not well formatted

Marginal (60%) Two or more figures or tables, but not well selected and/or no bar graph/slope chart, or figures/tables are misleading

Poor (40%) Fewer than two figures, or irrelevant figures and tables included or very difficult to interpret

*Optional: You may want to add a discussion section here. Or, you could integrate discussion into your results section. Your call*

1. **Conclusion**

*Key conclusion elements*

*There are lots of ways to do this, but we’re going to approach it via* [*Marc Bellamare’s*](https://marcfbellemare.com/wordpress/12060) *suggestions:*

1. *Summary*. You’ve surely heard that when writing a research paper, “tell them what you’re going to tell them, tell them what you want to tell them, and tell them what you just told them.” This part is obviously tedious–you have just spent 40-some pages telling them–but it needs to be there, and it needs to be different enough from the abstract and the introduction. Note that I didn’t say it needs to say something new; it just needs to be different enough. If possible, tell a story.
2. *Limitations*. Some people like to have a “Limitations” section at the end of their results section; I like to have that myself. But the conclusion should also emphasize the limitations of your approach.
3. *Implications for Policy*. Presumably, your work has some sort of implication for how policy is made in the real world. This will not always be the case–some papers make a purely technical point, or a point that is only ancillary when it comes to making other policy-related points–but I would guess that since you are reading this blog, there is a high likelihood that what you are working on has some policy implications. Discuss what those implications are, but don’t make claims that are not supported by your results, and try to assess the cost of what you propose in comparison to its benefits. You can do so somewhat imperfectly (if I were a betting man, I would bet that this is where the phrase “back-of-the-envelope calculation” comes up the most often in economics papers), since the point of your work was presumably about only one side of that equation–usually the benefits of something, sometimes its costs, but rarely both. In two or three sentences, can you identify the clear winners and losers of a given policy implications? Its political feasibility? How easy or hard it would be to implement?
4. *Implications for Future Research*. Finally, your work is not perfect. Your theoretical contribution could be generalized, or broadened by relaxing certain assumptions. Your empirical contribution could probably benefit from better causal identification for better internal validity. Even with a randomized controlled trial (RCT) with perfect compliance, you might want to run the same RCT in additional locations for external validity. If you are writing a follow-up paper, this is a good place to set the stage for it.

You should make sure you include these above **four elements** in your conclusion

**Conclusion guidelines (6 points)**

Excellent (100%) Includes all four key elements thoughtfully discussed. Summary hits on key points of paper, and potential policy implications are thought through carefully without speculation.

Adequate (80%) All four elements included, but some key elements missing or vauge, such as policy implications that are far beyond what your research suggests, or a vague/incomplete summary of key findings

Marginal (60%) 1–2 key elements missing or very incomplete

Poor (40%) 3 or more elements missing or very incomplete

1. **References**

Include full bibliographic citations for all references you use.

* Chicago or APA style
* Alphabetize and check for consistent formatting.

**References guidelines (6 points)**

Excellent (100%) All sources cited, following Chicago and APA style, free of typos or formatting inconsistencies

Adequate (80%) All sources cited, following Chicago and APA style, some typos and/or formatting inconsistencies

Marginal (60%) All sources cited without use of standard style

Poor (40%) All sources cited without use of standard style and without sufficient information to identify sources, and/or multiple sources missing

1. **Appendices**

* Include images/text of your sample submissions/scripts
* Optionally, you can also include additional figures or tables that you think are useful but not essential to your paper.

**Appendix guidelines (6 points)**

Excellent (100%) Sample submissions/scripts complete and included

Adequate (80%) Sample submissions/scripts included, but some minor elements missing

Marginal (60%) Sample submissions/scripts included, but some major elements missing

Poor (40%) Sample submissions/scripts included, but most major elements missing

**Final elements (not in paper)**

The following items are also in the grading rubric and will be based on your personal reflection and my overall assessment and observations

**Experiment well-executed (18 points)**

Excellent (100%) Team shows creativity and initiative in implementing the research project, both identifying and responding effectively to challenges as they arise

Adequate (80%) Team is able to implement the research project close to how it was designed with some successful adjustments, with success responding to most challenges

Marginal (60%) Team carries out most of the intended research project but struggles to identify potential challenges or to develop effective solutions

Poor (40%) Team is unable to carry out intended research aims or respond to challenges as they arise

**Personal reflection (6 points)**

Excellent (100%) Personal reflection meets criteria and shows thoughtful, critical thinking about own project involvement and learnings

Adequate (80%) Personal reflection meets stated criteria with some reflection on own project involvement and learning

Marginal (60%) Either some criteria not met or limited/no reflection on own contributions and learning

Poor (40%) Multiple criteria not met

**Individual contribution (12 points)**

Excellent (100%) Group member made high-quality, timely contributions, communicated well with others, took on leading and supporting roles as appropriate

Adequate (80%) Group member often generally high-quality, timely contributions but not consistently, and/or challenges arose with communication and providing proper leadership/support

Marginal (60%) Group member contributions were often low quality or not timely, or serious challenges with communication or providing proper leadership/support arose

Poor (40%) Group member contributions were insufficient, very late, or required additional team effort to adapt them; participation may have created barriers to successful team progress

1. Hook, question, antecedents, and value-added from [Keith Head](https://blogs.ubc.ca/khead/research/research-advice/formula) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)