

Instructions to Authors

It is critical that you follow these guidelines for your paper to receive a favorable review and be published by the time the conference commences. This document contains common trends observed in prior conference iterations. They will help you create a successful submission that will efficiently navigate the review process.

Abstract

Do write a holistic abstract that stands alone. From [MDPI](#):

“The abstract should be a total of about 200 words maximum. The abstract should be a single paragraph and should follow the style of structured abstracts, but without headings: 1) Background: Place the question addressed in a broad context and highlight the purpose of the study; 2) Methods: Describe briefly the main methods or treatments applied..... 3) Results: Summarize the article's main findings; and 4) Conclusion: Indicate the main conclusions or interpretations. The abstract should be an objective representation of the article: it must not contain results which are not presented and substantiated in the main text and should not exaggerate the main conclusions.”¹

Organization

Do look at examples of previous year’s capstone conference best papers/best track winners:

Look at these examples for ***style, structure, format, and section length***. Note indentation, section length, figure placemen, labeling, etc. Beyond the merits of their content, winning papers also have a certain “look and feel”, and the more you can make your paper look like one, the more favorable the review. Examples:

- Carroll, Meaghan, José Jiménez, and María Padilla. "Creating an Effective Leadership and Development System for FINCA Costa Rica." *GDRKMCC-20* (2020). ([link](#))
- Ruben Arderi, Aaron Chough, Simon Kronschnabel, Melanie Rigoni, and Vikram Mittal, “Hyper-Enabled Operator: Situational Awareness as Armor”, *GDRKMCC-20* (2020) ([link](#))

Do not use the section lengths in the template to inform the lengths of your sections.

The paragraphs in the template are there for formatting, not substance or length.

Although every paper is unique, the following distribution is typical for a 6-page document:

- 1 page for title, authors, abstract, background
- 0.5 pages for lit review and contribution summary
- 1.5 pages for approach/method
- 2 pages for results/analysis
- 1 page for conclusion, future, bibliography

¹ [Proceedings | Instructions for Authors \(mdpi.com\)](#)

Format

Do Pay attention to font sizes, number and font sizes of blank lines between elements.

Do read the “fine-print” text contained in the template. The text in the template is not a placeholder – it explains requirements and expectations for indentation, captions, figures, etc. Please use it as a checklist to QC your submission.

Do Use the buttons on the MS Word Style ribbon:

The template is pre-loaded with the styles used in the conference proceedings. Instead of changing font faces, sizes, numbering, use the style panel to select from the approved style options.

The screenshot shows the Microsoft Word interface with the **Styles** ribbon selected. The ribbon displays various style options such as **Body Text**, **Capstone...**, **Emphasis**, **Figure Label**, **Heading L...**, **Heading L...**, **Normal**, **Strong**, **Subtitle**, **Table Label**, **Title**, and **No Spac...**. A callout box with a blue background and white text points to the **Heading 1** style in the ribbon, stating: "If you click here you can see this 'Heading 1'". The callout box also points to the **Heading 1** style in the **Styles** task pane on the right. The task pane shows a list of styles, including **Heading 1**, which is highlighted. The main document area shows a template with various sections, including a title page, a table of contents, and a table. The table is titled "Table 1. Correlations Among and Descriptive Statistics For Key Study Variables". The table has two columns: "Variable" and "Correlation". The table contains data for various variables, including "Age", "Gender", "Education", "Income", "Marital Status", "Employment Status", "Health Status", "Social Support", "Stress", "Anxiety", "Depression", "Life Satisfaction", and "Quality of Life". The table is formatted with a blue header and alternating row colors. The document also includes a section for "Equations" and a section for "Figures And Tables".

Do not paste in new styles into the Template.

If you paste in text from another source, such as your draft or notes, use *Paste>Special>Unformatted* so you do not pollute or alter the style. Then, use the style panel in the template to fix up the text.

Do Not use OneDrive or Google Docs to finalize your draft for submission. The exported styles in One Drive and Google Docs export features are not compatible. If you write the paper in a web-based word processor and assume you will export it just prior to submission, it will have major style flaws. If you want to use these tools for *collaboration*, write your paper there in section-based chunks that can be easily copied and pasted (special) into the template. Then allow time for assembly in the template inside MS Word.

Do Use MS Word on a Laptop. It is recommended that one person build the submitted draft on a laptop, using MS Word and the template with approved styles.

Writing Style

Do keep language formal. Write the paper for an academic audience. Make your prose clear, concise, and respectful. Use facts and details vs. opinions, assumptions, and conjecture. Remove emotion and humor. Your paper should read like an encyclopedia entry and not sound like you are explaining it to your friends over lunch or writing it on social media.

Do coalesce around one writing style. Every author has their own style of writing, which can create awkward transitions and overall disharmony when combined in a paper. An experienced reviewer can easily detect that a paper is a hurried amalgamation of multiple works. This is often perceived as a lack of holistic integration in the work and can hurt your review. Select *one* person on the author team to do a deep edit on the paper after everything is combined. Allow this person the discretion and time to rewrite any prose to ensure it speaks with one voice.

Do not use slang or clichés. Avoid slang, clichés and colloquial language. Avoid superlatives and stilted language.

Images & Figures

Do use high quality images. Use the highest quality images of figures that allow the reader to zoom in and see details.

Do Enter figures as “in line with text” and centered.

Do combine images, table and charts to make better use of spacing around of images. It is often necessary to shrink images in your paper to make page count. This will result in a single image on a line with a lot of empty space to the left and right. Example:

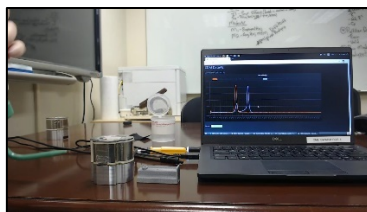


Figure 1: The MK87 Experiment Setup

If possible, add/combine images, charts, and tables in this “dead space” on the left and right of the image to make better use of the space. These can be other images/tables you were using in the paper in the same section, or additional results and analysis. An invisible MS Word Table is very handy to combine images in this fashion:

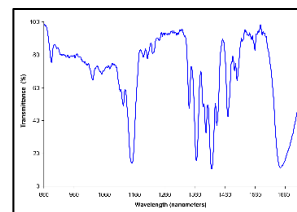
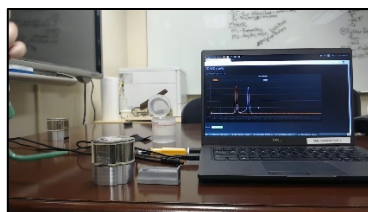
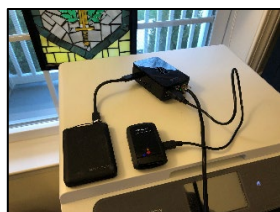


Figure 2 : MK87 Proof of concept (left), experiment setup (center), and initial results (right)

Do introduce the figure in the text before or very near their placement. Prepare the reader for the image before or as they encounter it in their reading. This means the text introducing and describing an image (and cross referencing it by number) should appear before the image, or very near it, when read left to right top to bottom.

Do use descriptive and comprehensive captions for tables and figures. Number the figure with a short, descriptive caption to aid the reader who may be skimming the document before reading in total.

References

Do follow the instructions in the template for formatting APA “hanging indent” style references

Do use a reference source manager. It is strongly recommended you use the MS Word > References > “Manage Sources” feature to ensure consistency in your sources. Other options include Zotero and Mendeley.

Do not include the Web URL in a reference unless it is wholly a web-based publication:

- Yes: Blogs, web-based news, sponsor/vendor webpages & documentation, imagery
- No: Books, Magazines, Technical Manuals, Regulations, Journals, Conference Proceedings

Do not use a search engine URL as a hyperlink in your references. If you do need to reference a web-resource, click through the search engine results and copy the home link at the source. Search engine results are not persistent links.

Finally: Your submission is a final, conference-ready document, *not a draft*. There is not enough time in the conference timeline for iteration. Therefore, we are counting on you to submit a professional, complete submission to streamline the process. Thank you!