Undergraduate Research Program

Undergraduate Research Symposium

Abstract Writing Workshop

"I didn't have time to write a short letter, so I wrote a long one instead." - Mark Twain
What is an Abstract?

- A concise summary of a larger document or presentation
- Highlights major points covered in the work
- Makes it possible for readers to quickly determine the content of a work
Qualities of a Good Abstract

- A brief, well-developed paragraph that is coherent, concise, and able to stand alone

- Presents the work’s purpose, methods, results*, and conclusions (preferably in that order)

- Adds no new information, but simply offers a summary

- Adheres to the standards of the conference, journal, etc. (i.e., Context matters!)
In addition, your abstract should:

- Be understandable to a non-expert audience
- Consist of a 150-300 word paragraph
- *Not* include section headers, references, or footnotes
- Be approved by your mentor(s)
The Writing Process:

- Review your research notes and other relevant documents
- Draft a summary of your work
- Revise your rough draft
- Get feedback from your mentors
- Finalize your draft
- Get approval from your mentors
Writing your Abstract - suggested format

- State the research question and explain why it is interesting (1-3 sentences)
- State the hypothesis/hypotheses tested (1-2 sentences)
- Briefly describe the methods (1-3 sentences)
- Describe the results, or anticipated results (1-3 sentences)
- Explain the key implications or suggestions for further work. (1-2 sentences)
Revising your Abstract

- Minimize jargon, and remember to define key terms and **spell out any acronyms**
- Eliminate unnecessary words or sentences
- Avoid repeating information
- Use the past tense when describing what was done and use active voice where possible
- Stay within the word limit!
The Review Process

- Committee Review

- Feedback
  - Approved
  - Minor – URP revised
  - Minor – URP commented
  - Feedback appointment
Critical Dates & Final Thoughts

- **Deadline: February 24th**

- Utilize your friends, URP advisers, and mentors

- Check out past abstracts at: [exp.washington.edu/urp/symp/archives.html](http://exp.washington.edu/urp/symp/archives.html)

- *Abstracts get you noticed so put your best work out there!*