

Writing An Abstract

Abstracts, in their simplest form are summaries of presentations, posters, publications and research studies. Good abstracts are easy to read, clear and concise and will provide a glimpse of your work. Before you begin writing your abstract, take time to obtain, review and understand the elements of your proposed fellowship.

RPNAO Call for Fellowship Abstracts

Your abstract should be no more than 500 words in length, and describe an overview of the proposed fellowship. Elements to include in the abstract include;

- the clinical area of focus
- the identified gap(s) in clinical practice within the organization (it is helpful to describe how these were identified)
- the overall goal for the fellowship
- who will be involved, the type and location of learning experiences, and an overview of outcomes anticipated for the RPN, clients/patients/healthcare consumer and,
- brief background of the sponsor organization.

It is essential when developing the proposal that there are clear, identifiable, evidence-based links between the outlined outcomes which will improve the level of direct care at your sponsor organization. Including statistical information is required.

Some suggested subheadings include:

Purpose/aims/research question: Begin like this: “The purpose of this fellowship is to...” or “The question guiding this (study/project/ investigation) is...” or, “The aim of this (study/project/ investigation) is....” Three sentences *at most* should cover this.

Background: no more than 5 sentences, explaining why this approach is important/what and how it will add to care provided (at a local level – you; at a system level –within your organization or in other areas in the province) and the why your project matters.

Methods: if this is a research study, include the design, the setting, the sample, the measurement tools, and the analysis approach. If the abstract is for a project, include the setting, the composition of your team, the participants you worked with, your project intervention, and your evaluation strategy.

Anticipated Results: Here you state just the facts. If a research study, include anticipate final sample size and composition, demographics, primary results. If a project, what was done and what did the evaluation show.

Discussion: *Relate your results directly back to your purpose/aims /research question.* This is critical. How will you achieve your goals; identify any potential challenges and how you can approach them. What were the major limitations of the fellowship? (Every study/project has them, so don't leave this out).

Implications/Conclusions: This may be folded into the discussion section, but what are the practice/research/education implications of your study? Should nurses adopt this intervention? If more research is needed, what are the questions that should be addressed next?

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Some tips:

- Take note of any suggested “subheadings”, required font type and size; specific instructions related to length, number of words and any format rules.
- Include any references.
- Abstracts are expected to be a short summary—usually limited to one page of print or less.
- Proof read your work. Avoid grammatical errors and typos.
- Read your abstract out loud to yourself—how does it sound? Ask someone you trust and respect to read it and give you feedback.
- Double check any instructions or guidelines and confirm that your abstract reflects these specifications—recheck your margins, font, type size and word count if appropriate.
- Because your thinking may have evolved as you wrote the abstract, take time to be sure the entire abstract concisely evolves from your stated goal.