Types of Writing Abstracts & Proposals

ABSTRACTS

WHAT IS AN ABSTRACT?

An abstract is a response to a call for papers. Abstracts function as both a summary of your paper and an advertisement of your work. In addition, they are an opportunity for you to determine your priorities or the main points you want to get across with the paper. Abstracts persuade the conference committee to accept your paper. You have to convince the committee that your research is unique and makes a valuable contribution to your field. Because conference review committees read your abstract and not your paper, it functions independently of the original paper.

PROPOSALS

WHAT IS A PROPOSAL?

A conference proposal responds to a call for presentations. Instead of summarizing a paper that has been written, a proposal gives the committee your idea for a presentation. Like an abstract, a proposal should be persuasive as well as informative. It needs to persuade the review committee that your presentation will benefit and interest attendees. Proposals should give information on the subject, purpose, and scope of your presentation. They are an opportunity for you to plan out what you want to say. Proposals should include details on what type of presentation you are planning, be it a panel discussion, PowerPoint presentation, or activity.

TIPS FOR WRITERS

As you write an abstract or proposal, remember to

- **Include a cover page.** Along with your abstract or proposal, include a page that lists your name, affiliation (i.e. UVSC student), date, title of your paper/ presentation, the purpose of your abstract/ proposal, and your full contact information.
- **Keep it consistent with the call for papers.** Make sure that you follow all of the guidelines given by the conference organizers in the call for papers/ proposals. Meeting the deadline and making sure the length and format meet the requirements are very important.
- **Apply it to the conference theme.** Your abstract/ proposal should address some aspect of the conference theme. Be audience-centered as you write. Your audience is a review committee that has promoted a conference with a specific subject. Show them how your paper/ presentation would enhance their discussion of that subject.
- **Maintain focus.** Do not add information that is not vital to understanding the full paper or that is not included in the paper/ presentation. Minor details or interesting anecdotes should be avoided.
- **Keep it self-contained.** The review committee may not read your paper or attend your presentation, so keep your abstract/ proposal independent of the original paper or any other work.
- **Be clear.** Abstracts and proposals should be coherent, logical, and easy-to-read. They should follow the conventions of high-quality writing.
- **Be accurate.** An abstract or proposal must reflect the actual intent and meaning of the original text.
- **Focus on your paper.** Allow your words to be the most important; do not focus too much on the work of others.
- **Choose an appropriate title.** The title needs to introduce your topic and be specific. Select a title that will be appealing to both the conference committee and the attendees.