

Preparing and Presenting an Abstract for a Conference

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Land Acknowledgement

The University of Calgary, located in the heart of Southern Alberta, both acknowledges and pays tribute to the traditional territories of the peoples of Treaty 7, which includes the **Blackfoot Confederacy** comprised of the **Siksika**, the **Piikani**, and the **Kainai First Nations**, the **Tsuut'ina First Nation**, and the **Stoney Nakoda** including **Chiniki**, **Bearspaw**, and **Goodstoney First Nations**. The City of Calgary is also home to **Métis Nation of Alberta, Region III**.

The University of Calgary is situated on land Northwest of where the Bow River meets the Elbow River, a site traditionally known as “**Moh'kins'tsis**” to the Blackfoot, **Wîchîspa** to the Stoney Nakoda, and **Guts'ists'i** to the Tsuut'ina. On this land and in this place we strive to learn together, walk together, and grow together “in a good way.”

Moving from Acknowledgement to Action

- Land acknowledgements serve an important function in moving toward reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in Canada, but acknowledgement itself is not enough. How do we move beyond acknowledgement to being active participants in reconciliation?
- Scan the QR code for a list of additional resources and ways that you can support your own growth and contribution to reconciliation.



Grad Success Week, May 1-3, 2023

- Scan the QR code to visit the Grad Success Week website.
- There are a lot of really valuable sessions taking place throughout the week. Sign up for more sessions, engage in meaningful learning, and connect with fellow graduate students!



Agenda

I. Conferences

- Importance of conferences
- Types of conferences and other academic events
- Finding appropriate conferences

II. Funding

- Potential sources
- Funding applications

III. Abstracts

- Importance
- Format
- General tips & strategies

I. Conferences



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Importance of conferences

- Receiving feedback
- Networking
- Hearing about the latest research
- Improving your soft skills
- Adding experiences to your CV or resume

Types of academic events

Conferences

Symposiums

Academic Events

Workshops

Seminars

Conferences

- Largest of the four
- “Prestigious”
- Generally concurrent events/panels/sessions
- Poster presentations v. talks

Symposium

- Like conference in structure, but smaller
- Tend to focus on a single issue
- Usually shorter

Seminars

- Less formally structured
- Discussion
- Shorter
- Usually hosted by particular institutions / departments

Workshop

- Smaller and shorter
- Dedicated to one topic
- Specific purpose, action-oriented

Finding appropriate conferences

- Knowing when conferences will be held
 - Association memberships
 - Websites and newsletters
 - Mailing lists
 - Call for abstracts
 - Faculty members/supervisors
- Factors to consider
 - Size
 - Specialty
 - Location

II. Funding



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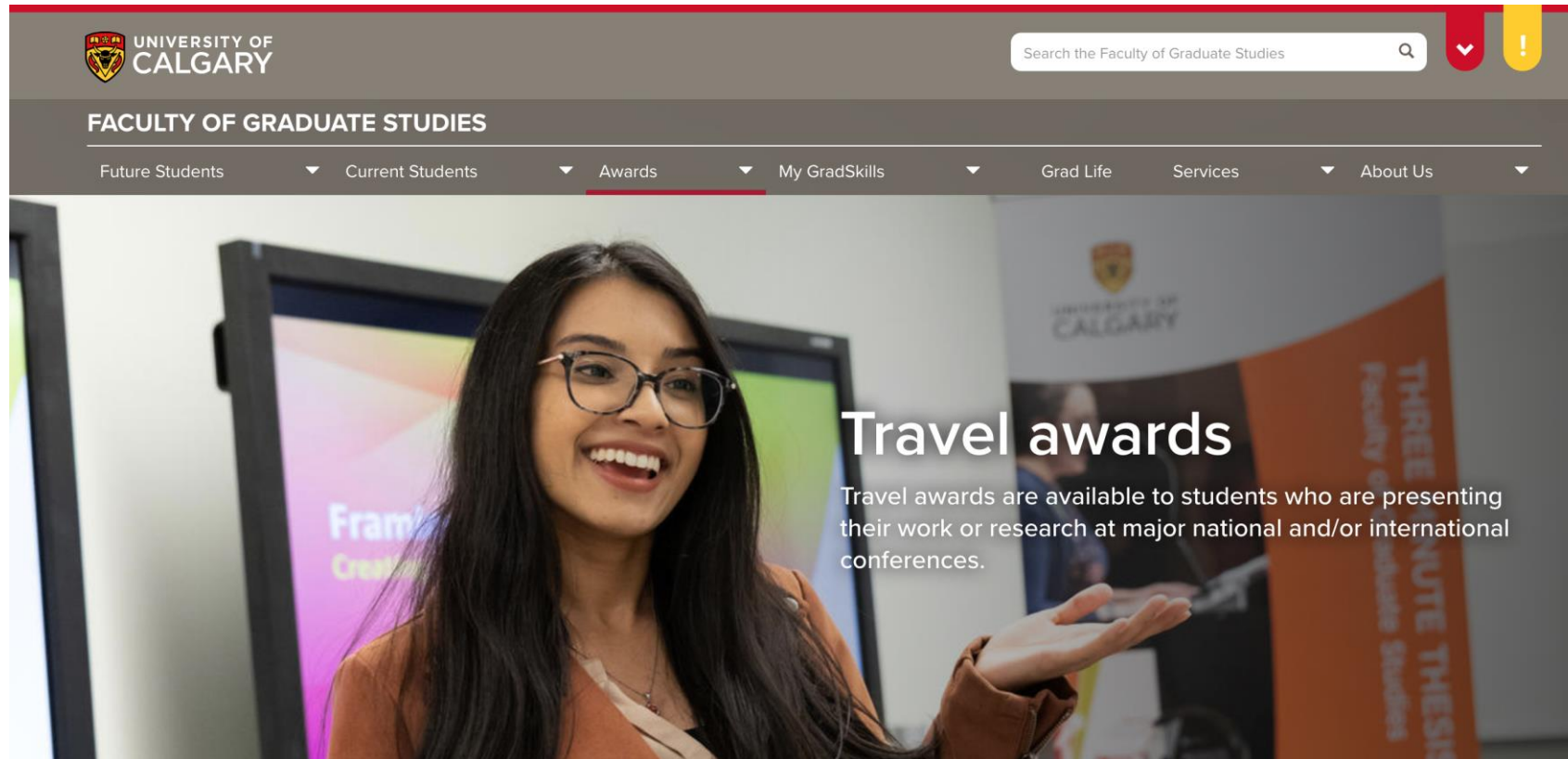
Potential sources, continued

- Internal/local
 - Faculty, department head, etc.
- Professional societies
- Conference itself
- Funding yourself

Potential sources

- Internal/local

<https://grad.ucalgary.ca/awards/award-opportunities/travel-awards>



Funding applications

- Ensure applications are complete and organized
- Include a cover letter, and consider other first impressions
- Show your excellence/enthusiasm
- Communicate your knowledge of the conference
- Answer how the award will help you
- Discuss if you have an accepted abstract
- Consider a budget

III. Abstracts



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Importance

- Call for abstracts
- Sometimes a year in advance
- Poster presentation v. “talk”
- Purposes:
 - Summarize
 - Sell
- Perspective: make them *need* you

Abstract format: Sciences

- *(Topic)*
- Title
- Background & motivation
- Problem
- Purpose & solution
- Methods
- Results
- Conclusion
- *(Learning objectives)*

Abstract format: Arts and Humanities

- Tend to be Descriptive
- Primary Questions:
 - Why did you choose this project?
 - What did you do/How did you do it?
 - What are your findings? and how?
 - What do your findings mean?/What is the larger significance?
- An abstract is a promise:
 - If your abstract is accepted you must be able to produce a paper That is within the acceptable range of variance to the claims you made in the abstract

Adapted from “Five Steps to a Brilliant Abstract” by Dr. Jo Koster, Winthrop University
<http://curartsandhumanities.org/resources/how-to-write-an-abstract/>

Abstract format: Arts and Humanities

Format

- Eye catching title
- Context sentence(s)
 - often framed as a problem
- Introduction of the argument paper will make
- Identify theoretical/methodological framework
 - Helps to situates your ideas within larger debates in the discipline
- Conclusions

Remember:
Push the narrative
forward through natural
progression.



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Abstract format

- *(Topic)*
- Title
- Background & motivation
- Problem
- Purpose & solution
- Methods
- Results
- Conclusion
- *(Learning objectives)*

- Add to discussion on the topic of the conference
- Define a limited scope
- Clarify for yourself what you will address
- Know your audience— address the conference themes
- Make it clear and interesting — not comprehensive

Title

- Most valuable part of the abstract
- Grab reader's attention & develop interest
- State the topic clearly
- Make it 12 words or less (including subtitles)

e.g.:

“An Examination of the Hegemonic Masculine Stratification of *hebontes* in Xenophon's *Lacedaemonion Politeia*”

Vs.

“Hegemonic Masculinity in Xenophon's *Spartan Constitution*”

Background & motivation

- Tell readers why they should care
- Address:
 - The background/context
 - The importance
 - The difficulty of the area
 - The current state of knowledge

Problem/Argument

- State the specific problem you are addressing or trying to solve
- Clearly state the topic/argument you will be making
- Remember: move the narrative forward
 - What is the background you provided on the topic lacking?
 - Identify gaps in current research

Purpose & solution

- Illustrate the purpose of your study
- Remember: move the narrative forward
 - How does what you're doing address the problem?
- Help the conference decide to include your work
 - How does your study fit into their particular focus/themes/call for papers?

Methods

- Summarize your methodology
- Outline any theories you employ
- Situate yourself within scholarly discussions on the topic
- Show the findings will be rigorous
- Remember: move the narrative forward
 - What approach did you take toward solving the problem?
 - How did you organize the study and research?
- Help the conference decide to include your work
 - How does your method fit into their particular focus/themes/call for papers?

Results

- Describe the findings and trends
- Consider describing if you expected those results

Conclusions

- Interpret your results
- Are the results general, specific?
- Remember: move the narrative forward
 - Point to the bigger picture
 - What is the larger significance of your findings?

Learning objectives/Keywords

- Optional
 - Call for papers will usually outline abstract requirements
- Point-form and direct (for objectives)
- Include three to five points/keywords

Writing tips

- Be concise
- Avoid jargon
 - Use only the technical terminology necessary for accuracy
- Engage concepts in plain English
- Use limited references — only for context
- Do not discuss research in future tense
 - If it *is* future research, be tactful

General tips and strategies

- Outline first, then form sentences
- Know the conference & keep your focus
- Tailor your abstract
- Adhere to style requirements
- Use example abstracts as a guide
- Edit & revise
- Select keywords wisely
- Submit early and often

Learning Objectives

- Classify appropriate academic conferences
- Identify ways to finance their conference travel
- Create abstracts and presentations that are accessible, relevant and interesting

Thank you for attending

Grad Success Week:

Preparing and Presenting an Abstract for a Conference

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Grad Success Week feedback May 1st

- Thank you for attending Grad Success Week!
- Please scan the QR code and fill out a short survey using the link in the chat telling us about your experience. We will use the feedback you provide to continue to improve Grad Success Week in the future!



We appreciate your participation: Enter a draw to win prizes!

- Attend one session in each stream
- Ask your moderator / presenter to stamp your card
- Drop your card off at the front desk at the SSC or Let it Grow Event or email it to success@ucalgary.ca
- What if I attended a session online?
 - No problem, write the session on the card and once we confirm your attendance, we will enter you into the draw!

Questions?