

2026 Formatting Guidelines for the Preparation of Contributions to the ISLS Conferences

Author Name, Institution, Email
Author Name 2, Institution 2, Email 2
(if same institution, you may put all authors separated by commas,
then put on new line “email_1, email_2, email_3” in order of authorship,
then put institution on the bottom line)
(Last Updated: 9/10/2025)

Abstract: Place one 12-pt. blank line before the abstract. Use style “Abstract,” Times or Times New Roman, 10-pt., for your abstract. Indent the abstract 1.27 cm (0.5 inches) from the right and left margins of the paper. All text should be single-spaced. “Full justify” all text (straight margins on both left and right sides). Paper abstracts are 150 words; poster abstracts are 75 words.

This document is a set of guidelines; there is also a Microsoft Word template

The following guidelines are for papers submitted to either conference supported by the International Society of the Learning Sciences (ISLS): the International Conference of the Learning Sciences (ICLS) and Computer Supported Collaborative Learning (CSCL). These formatting guidelines are intended to create papers that are easily readable and create a consistent look throughout the proceedings. There is also a Microsoft Word Template, called “ISLS-Conference-Template-[year]” which includes pre-set styles for formatting your submission properly. The template is in the form of a two-page exemplar poster submission and contains examples of all the major formatting issues and styles. Note that the instructions for the author list concern accepted papers and that the initial submission should be **blinded for review** – with the exception of symposia that are not blinded. **Symposium authors** need to carefully read the special guidelines for them in this guidelines document as the template does not demonstrate those issues.

Using the guidelines and template

It is easiest to format your document properly if you start with a copy of the template, remove its contents and type your submission into it from scratch using the preset styles in it to format each element of your text. However, realistically, this is not how most of us work. Often we are cutting and pasting text from prior work and editing it. Or we’ve already drafted the paper before we look at the template. Or we’ve constructed the paper on-line with our co-authors using a tool like google docs. And THEN we try to format it properly. The result tends to be a confusing mish-mash of styles within the document and sometimes perplexing results when styles of the same name (but different formatting) are pasted into your document. You have three options for cleaning up such formatting.

Format line-by-line: Not recommended

Select each line/paragraph and format it according to the guidelines using the “Format->Font” and “Format->Paragraph” tools and/or the buttons and such on your ruler. This process is slow, time-consuming and makes it easy to miss things. It’s also really tough on your editor, as any fixes must also be made line-by-line.

Redefine the styles in your paper to meet the guidelines

This process can work just fine. You may run into some difficulty if at times you wrote your body text using the “Normal” style and at other times you used the “Body Text” style and yet at other times the style is some webtool defined style. This technique is hardest to use when you have a mish-mash of styles from lots of different prior documents.

Retype all your text into a blank template using the predefined styles

Sounds tedious, but in the end it is probably the simplest way to go. It is certainly the technique that will make the editor's job the easiest. Alternatively, consider pasting your text "without formatting". With this strategy, you copy and paste sections of the paper at a time. You first copy a portion of your text from your original document. Then, you switch over to the ISLS template and decide where the text needs to be placed. You click in that area of the template and then paste your text without formatting. To paste without formatting, you use Cmd+Shift+V on Mac. The text then appears in the template in the correct formatting.

Document formatting page type is A4

All ISLS conferences use an A4 document format.

Margins are 2.54 cm (1 inch) right and left; 3.175 cm (1.25 inches) top and bottom

All ISLS conferences use 2.54 cm (1 inch) margins on left and right and 3.175 cm (1.25 inches) margins on top and bottom. The larger margin size on top and bottom is to enable North American printers (which typically use U.S. Letter sized paper) to print the proceedings without cutting off either the header or footer of the document.

Document outline

For all submissions (other than symposia) the following basic outline should be used. See the section titled "Formatting symposia" for symposia specific guidelines.

1. Title
2. Abstract
3. Body of submission (using heading levels 1, 2 and 3 as necessary)
4. Endnotes (if needed)
5. References
6. Acknowledgements (if needed)

Do not include headers or footers in your document

The header and footer space in your document must be blank except the ISLS logo image that has been set by the template so that the proceedings header/footer may be placed there.

Submission length

Submission length limits are not negotiable. Your submission must be within the page limits for its type. It may be shorter than the limit, but no longer. The page limits do not include references. Check the submission instruction page on the conference website for details on the length of each submission type. Fitting all your thoughts into a page limit is hard. If your paper is too long, cut some of the text or use more concise language. Do *not* attempt to make things fit by playing with formatting or reducing line spacing. The editor will fix the formatting, which will likely put you over length. You'll then receive a request to fix the paper.

Submission anonymity

Please refer to the table below regarding whether your submission needs to be blinded.

Table 1
Submission Types, Whether they Need to be Blinded

Submission Type	Blinded?
Long Papers	Yes
Short Papers	Yes



Posters	Yes
Practice-Oriented Papers (ICLS Only)	Yes
Symposia or Structured Poster Symposia	No
Hybrid Symposia and Structured Poster Symposia	No
Interactive Tools and Demos	No
Workshops and Tutorials	No

Do not include page numbers in your document

While it is useful to have page numbers *while writing* (especially with a co-author), make certain to remove them before submitting your paper. Page numbers will be added to your submission based on where it is in the proceedings.

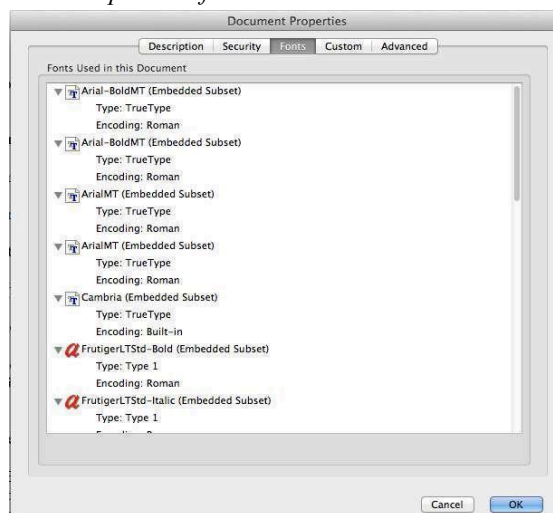
Submit your paper in both PDF and Microsoft Word format

The production editor will most likely do clean-up in Microsoft Word. If your file needs editing and you do not submit a Microsoft Word version, the editor will need to send the file back to you for edits. Sometimes, if the version of Microsoft Word you use is sufficiently different from that of the editor, you may still receive the request to make the edits yourself.

Embed all your fonts in your PDF file

Embedding fonts ensures that all the fonts used in your file print out properly regardless of the font library of the computer and printer used to print your paper. You can check whether your PDF file is formatted properly by opening it in Adobe Reader, selecting “Properties” from the “File” menu, then on the “Fonts” tab in the dialog box and reviewing the font descriptions for your submission. They should all have “(Embedded)” or “(Embedded Subset)” after the font name. (See Figure 1.)

Figure 1
Font Properties of a PDF File



Fonts in general (Times New Roman for the body; Arial for headlines)

The body font for ISLS conference submissions is Times New Roman. It is used for the body text, table and figure labels and table contents. The headline font is Arial. It is used for the submission title and headings. To the extent possible, please only use these two fonts in your submission, including in figures and equations.

Emphasis (Use italics)

In general, italics (rather than bold or underline) should be used for emphasis in your text when needed.

Sentence spacing

Use only one space between sentences.

Do not include "mailto" hyperlinks or any other hyperlinks in your submission

Remove all the "mailto" links from email addresses, and all other hyperlinks from your submission.

Title formatting (14-pt., Arial Bold, centered, title case)

Titles must be centered in Arial 14-pt. bold. The style "Title" in the Template has those specifications. Title case must be used. Title case capitalizes the first word of the title and most other words in the title, except small ones like "and" or "the." Titles that use a colon must capitalize the first word after the colon. Please use a colon rather than a dash. Titles that use quotations must use title case for those quotations. For example:

"I Hate Using Style Sheets!" Trials and Tribulations of Conference Paper Authors

Author list (10-pt., Times New Roman regular, centered)

Initial submissions are blinded – with the exception of symposia that are not blinded. However, page limits do not change between initial and final submissions. Make certain you leave enough space in your paper to accommodate the author list in its final version.

There is a blank 14-pt. line between the title and the author list and a blank 10-pt. line after the author list. The author list should be centered and in 10-pt. Times New Roman. The style "Authors" in the Template has these specifications. Include the name, institution, and email address of each author. (Do not include physical addresses.) You have two options for formatting your author list. You may choose whichever of the two best fits the kind of author list you have.

Option 1: Each author on their own line

This format is best when the author list includes individuals from a lot of different institutions or the author order makes grouping authors by institution difficult. It is author, institution and email address each on one line, e.g.

Jane D. Apostrophe, School of Editorial Finesse, jdapostrophe@sef.edu
John D. Semicolon, School of Editorial Finesse, jdsemicolon@sef.edu
Julie D. Ampersand, Writers' University, jdampersand@writers.edu

Option 2: Authors organized by institution

This format is best when all the authors are in a single institution or easily grouped by institution. Names are on the first line. Email addresses (in the same order as the names) are on the second line. The institution is on the third line. If you choose to organize authors that come from more than one institution this way, please put a blank line 10-pt. Times New Roman line between the first institution name and the second set of author names. For example:

Jane D. Apostrophe, John D. Semicolon, Agnes Gradstudent, Jason Postdoc, and Alfred Paul Greybeard
jdapostrophe@sef.edu, jdsemicolon@sef.edu, agrad@gmail.com, jpostdoc@sef.edu, greybeard@sef.edu
School of Editorial Finesse

Julie D. Ampersand, Alister L. Parentheses, Rachel W. Umlat, and Sara Asterisk
jdampersand@writers.edu, alp@gmail.com, rumlat@writers.edu, asterisk@writers.edu
Writers University

Use the *publishing* name for yourself and your co-authors, not nicknames

Do not use nicknames or forget middle names or initials if you typically use them in publishing. For example, Alfred Paul Greybeard, should not be listed as Alfred P. Greybeard, Alfred Greybeard, nor Fred Greybeard. Be consistent about your name and that of your co-authors, both within your ISLS submissions themselves and in the author information you place into the conference submission system. If you are not certain of co-authors' preferences, ask them.

Further author formatting notes

1. The guidelines refer to the editing of accepted papers. When first submitting a paper, all names and addresses should be left out for the review.
2. Make certain the email addresses used are the ones you and your co-author(s) use for official correspondence.
3. Use the official name of your institution rather than nicknames or acronyms. You do not need to include a department name.
4. Use full email addresses. Do *not* use coding conventions to indicate similar email addresses, e.g. {jdapostrophe, jdsemicolon}@sef.edu.
5. Do *not* use superscripts to indicate institutions, e.g.,

Jane D. Apostrophe¹, John D. Semicolon¹, and Julie D. Ampersand²
¹School of Editorial Finesse, ²Writers' University

Abstract (10-pt. Times New Roman regular, 0.5" indent, full-justification)

The abstract is written in 10-pt. Times New Roman with full justification. It is indented a half-inch on both the left and right. There is a 10-pt. Times New Roman blank line before and after the abstract. The style "Abstract" in the Template is formatted with these specifications. The abstract should have the word "**Abstract:**" in bold with a colon after it at the beginning. It should be 150 words or less for papers, panels, symposia, workshops, tutorials and interactive events. It should be 75 words or less for posters and special events.

Leading quotations (centered, half-inch indent both sides, italics)

If you wish to open your submission with a quotation, it should be placed after the keywords, with a blank line (10-pt. Times New Roman) both before and after the quotation. It should be centered in 10-pt. Times New Roman, italic. Make sure to include the author and date in parentheses at the end. The style "Leading Quotation" in the Template is formatted according to these specifications.

Heading structure

There are three heading levels defined for an ISLS paper. All headings are alone on their own line, with a blank line before, but none after. All are left-justified, and use "sentence case" (first word capitalized). If there is a colon in the heading, the first word after the colon is capitalized. A first level heading is the style "Heading 1" in the Template. It is 12-pt. Arial bold, with a 12-pt. leading white space. A second level heading is the style "Heading 2" in the Template. It is 12-pt. Arial with a 10-pt. leading white space. A third level heading is the style "Heading 3" in the Template. It is 10-pt. Arial underlined, with a 10-pt. leading white space. (See examples below.) **Heading level 1 (12-pt. Arial bold, first word capitalized, left-justified)**

Heading level 2 (12-pt. Arial regular, first word capitalized, left-justified)

Heading level 3 (10-pt. Arial underlined, first word capitalized, left-justified)

Tables (centered, title is 10-pt. Times New Roman italicized, left-justified aligned with tables)

Table titles are in 10-pt. Times New Roman italicized and left-justified aligned with the tables. The “Caption” style in the Template follows these specifications. The table title should include the word “Table” followed by a number, then start the title in the next line. The table title should be used for the table name only. (See Table 1 above for an example.) If needed, any explanations for the table should be added below the table.

The table should be centered. Text in the table cells may be either 9-pt. or 10-pt. Times New Roman. Any smaller is difficult to read. Titles of table cells may be in either Times New Roman or in Arial. You may use either bold or underlining to set them off.

If using a table for creating a list of definitions, you may choose to make it an invisible table, with no borders. Tables used in this way should be ½” indented from the left. Text inside should use full justification. There should be a 3-pt. space before and after each term to provide similar spacing as for a list. For example:

Term 1	definition, definition, definition, definition, definition, definition, definition, definition
Term 2	definition, definition, definition, definition, definition, definition, definition, definition

Figures (Centered, title 10-pt. Times New Roman italicized, left-justified aligned with tables)

Figures are centered. There is a 10-pt. Times New Roman space before the figure and no space between the figure and its title. The figure should be alone on a line and the wrap-style used should be “in-line with text”. See Figure 3 for an example.

The figure title is in 10-pt. Times New Roman. The word “Figure” and the number which follows are both bold. The figure title is placed in a new line and italicized. Figure captions should be short and used for the figure name only. They should not be a paragraph long. If needed, any explanations for the figure should be added below the figure.

Figure 3
Centered Figure Using “In-Line with Text” Wrap-Style



Figure 4

Animals We Love Include the Elephant (a), the Lion (b) and the Gorilla (c)



(a)

(b)

(c)

Multiple images may be used in a single figure. The caption for that figure then needs two lines, one to label each image and another to label the figure. Try to keep the images at the same height. See Figure 4 for an example.

Images may also be used in a figure that is vertically oriented (Figure 5). In this case, inserting the figure label, title, and images within a textbox supports formatting. Text wrapping of the textbox should be set to the “square” setting to allow the text to be distributed within the available space without overlapping the image. This can be particularly helpful for narrower images with either a single image (such as Figure 3) or multiple images (such as Figures 4 and 5).

The centered and justified placement is preferred, though authors can determine when the vertically aligned is beneficial.

Figure 5

Multiple species of rhinoceros are also beloved animals.

(a) Black Rhino

(b) White Rhino

Extended quotations (10-pt. Times New Roman, indented 1.27 cm (0.5 inches) left and right)

Quotations of more than four lines placed in their own paragraph. There is a blank 10-pt. space before and after this paragraph. The paragraph uses 10-pt. Times New Roman font, full-justification and is indented a half-inch on both the right and left.

Erudite and profound insight, written with astounding clarity and eloquent turns of phrase
 blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah,
 blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah,
 blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah,
 blah, blah, blah (Greybeard, Insightful & Wizwoman, 2007).

Transcripts

Exactly how you format transcript data depends upon the kind of data you have. General guidelines are provided here, but you will need to adjust them based on your data and use transcription coding conventions typical to the work you do.

You may use either hanging indents or an invisible table to display your transcript data. You could also choose to use a regular table. If you do so, follow the formatting guidelines for a table. Unless you have a specific need for a uniformly spaced font, use 10-pt. Times New Roman. Indent the transcript ½” on both the left and right. Put a blank 10-pt. line before and after the transcript segment. Place a 3-pt. space before and after each line of the transcript. The style “Transcript” in the Submission Template follows these specifications with enough of a hanging indent to support most names. You may adjust the hanging indent to fit your speaker notation needs. The following example uses the “Transcript” style and a hanging indent to format transcript data:

Student 1: Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. Blah,
 blah, blah, blah, blah.



Acknowledgements / Acknowledgement & Authorship Statements

Acknowledgement sections generally include both thanks to individuals and communities who supported the work but did not earn authorship on the submitted paper as well as disclosure of financial support (e.g., external grants, internal seeds grants). Some authorship teams may choose to add to this section additional information about contributions to the work. By including a statement of contributions, authorship teams clarify the nature and extent of the contributions of the individual authors in a way that listing authors may not. Although statements of contributions are not required, they can be helpful to ensure attribution of credit especially in an interdisciplinary community like the learning sciences, where norms from different fields about authorship order may conflict.

Appendices: Avoid if possible; if necessary place at end; use Heading 1 for title

Avoid appendices unless absolutely necessary. Place an appendix at the end of your paper, after references, on a new page. Note that appendices do count toward paper length, Use a first level heading for the title of the appendix, that is, 12-pt. Arial Bold, left-justified. For example:

Appendix A: Special guidelines for symposia

Symposia are odd. They are a single submission that takes up an entire session at the conference. While authors may structure symposia in all kinds of creative ways, the majority of them look like a highly coherent paper or poster session. As a result, symposia write-ups often have sub-sections associated with each paper, poster, or presentation being made and each of those sub-sections have particular authors associated with them. Symposia may also have chairs or organizers and discussants.

Authorship for the symposium as a whole

We ask that you include *all* the authors, organizers and discussants in the author list below the symposium's title. Please indicate those who have special roles with that role in parentheses after their name. You may wish to place a blank line between the organizers/authors and the discussant (if you have one). For example:

Jane D. Apostrophe (co-chair), School of Editorial Finesse, jdapostrophe@sef.edu

John D. Semicolon (co-chair), School of Editorial Finesse, jdsemicolon@sef.edu

Julie D. Ampersand, Writers' University, jdampersand@writers.edu

Alfred Paul Greybeard, School of Editorial Finesse, greybeard@sef.edu

Alister L. Parentheses, Writers University, alp@gmail.com

Rachel W. Umlat, Writers University, rumlat@writers.edu

Agnes Gradstudent, School of Editorial Finesse, agrad@gmail.com,

Jason Postdoc, School of Editorial Finesse, jpostdoc@sef.edu,

John P. Brilliant (discussant), Excellent University, jpbrilliant@excellent.edu

Titles and authorship for individual presentations

Titles for individual papers, posters or presentations should use a first level heading ("Heading 1" in the Template) and sentence case. Authors for that presentation should be listed right below the heading in 10-pt. Times New Roman font. Their names alone are sufficient, but you may include their institution if you wish. Make certain the name used for the individual paper, poster or presentation matches that used at the top of the submission. For example, Alfred Paul Greybeard should *not* be listed as Alfred P. Greybeard, Alfred Greybeard, nor Fred Greybeard. Follow the author names by a blank line and then begin using the style "Body Text" (no indent) for the summary of that piece. For example:

The light at the end of the tunnel: High school students talk about graduation

Jane D. Apostrophe and Alfred Paul Greybeard, School of Editorial Finesse

