

# MEMORANDUM

**To:** Dr. Leslie Seawright

**From:** Group 2: Emily Ames, Kelsey Benack, Makenna Cornelison, Olivia Fowler, and Kennie Knauth

**Subject:** ENG 771 Collaborative Writing Assignment

**Date:** December 8, 2022

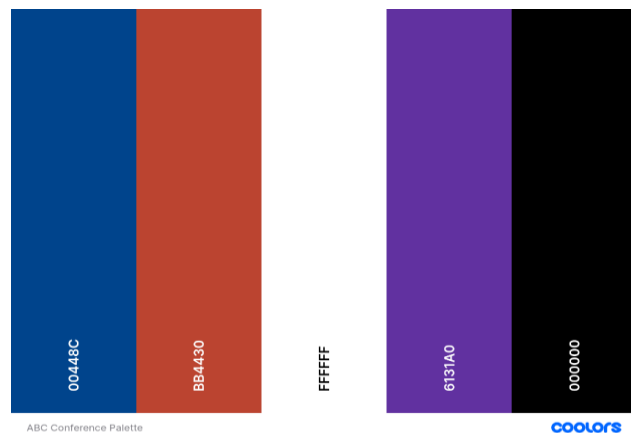
This memorandum is an explanation of the decisions we made when reviewing and recreating the submissions guidelines for the ABC 87th Annual International Conference. We divided this collaborative writing assignment into individual roles. Makenna enhanced the visual design of the guidelines; Emily made changes to the format; Kennie made structural changes; Kelsey made accessibility improvements; and Olivia edited for grammar and punctuation. Below, we outline how our individual and group decisions increased accessibility and made the document more aesthetically pleasing. Additionally, we project how this new version of the submission guidelines will better serve those who would like to submit a proposal to the conference.

## Visual Design: Makenna

I addressed the visual aspects of the document, including the addition of graphics and color, as well as edits to the text styles. The visual elements I chose were all very purposefully chosen to enhance the user experience of the document, for aesthetic appeal, for clarity of use, and for efficiency, not as filler.

To start, the graphics included were the addition of the ABC logo at the top, the **Submission Deadlines** table at the bottom, and a grey box to emphasize the permission for public abstract display. The inclusion of the logo, and its easy removal, allow for this document alone to be printed or downloaded without confusion of its source. The submission deadlines were organized into a clean table for clarity, as the original list was difficult to read. The grey box, again, was used for emphasis and to draw the eye.

Another change was the inclusion of color, and in some cases, the replacing of another color. The color palette for this document is displayed to the right (see **Figure 1**). I sourced the blue (#0044BC) that is used for the title and first level headings directly from the ABC logo. I used a lighter shade of that color for the second level headings to create a visual hierarchy. I also used this method to source the purple (#6131A0), but never incorporated that color in the document itself, as it often became overly distracting. The orange (#BB4430) was chosen to denote hyperlinks, as it is a complementary color to the blue and purple, contrasted well against the white background and black body text. It also allowed us to avoid the overuse of the blue or the distraction of the purple. The black and white were straight forward, with the grey of the box and table being a mix of the two for contrast and extra visual interest.



**Figure 1:** Color Palette Used for Document

The final element changed was the text styles. All fonts were kept within the easy-to-read Calibri family, though I did vary the sizing to keep the hierarchy clear, as I did with the color. I felt that with the

decision to include color, I had to forfeit anything more complicated than a simple sans-serif font to keep the document from becoming very busy.

The inclusion of these elements not only provide more visual interest to draw the user's attention, but also help to subtly guide the user through the document, with the top and bottom graphics bracketing the text as a clear starting and stopping point. They also add clarity and break up the monotony of the document.

### Format: Emily

I worked on the overall format of the document by focusing on the bolded, italicized, and underlined text. Initially, there was a significant amount of unnecessary underlining. After reviewing the document, I concluded that the amount of underlining could be decreased, and other formatting could be increased to call out certain text. In general, I created a set of rules that I followed throughout the document. The rules are as follows:

- When a hyperlink is presented, the text is to be italicized, bolded, and the font color changed to burnt orange (ex. [ABC Membership Page](#)). This brings focus to the link and draws readers' attention if they are skimming the document. It is important to address these hyperlinks as they are important direct links to other locations on the ABC Conference website.
- When a specific website location is present but is not contained in a hyperlink, the text is to be bolded (ex. **My Presentations**). The bolding of this text alerts readers of areas within the website where they may find important information. The presence of this bolding indicates to readers that they should remember this information.
- When a submission type is presented, the text is to be bolded (ex. **My Favorite Assignment**). This is similar formatting to the website locations. Since this is key information for the user, I felt it important to draw extra attention to it.
- When a title or role is presented, the text is to be bolded (ex. **Organization Member**). To distinguish roles and clarify that the person registering must identify as an **Organization Member** or **Organization Guest**, I felt that bolding this text would bring the necessary attention to this section of the document.

Using the above rules, I maintained consistency in applying formatting throughout the document. This way, there is no unnecessary bolding, italicization, or underlining that could potentially confuse the reader.

### Structure: Kennie

I reviewed the document for structural issues. In particular, I focused on reorganizing content in a more concise and clear way. To do this, I created new sections and lists. First, I created the **Submission Checklist** out of information originally found under **Conference Participation**. I made this checklist its own section to separate and emphasize crucial elements users need to consider before submitting. Originally, the **Conference Participation** content seemed too dense, and I wanted users to be able to quickly find and comprehend information. The **Submission Checklist** section and list solved this problem.

I also created a **Membership and Guest Information** section. On the original website, this section was also grouped under **Conference Participation**. A user looking to specifically register to become a member or guest might get lost trying to find this information. Also, the website contained several bolded words and phrases among the **Conference Participation** section. Since bolding is used for emphasis, having too much of it can lead to it becoming valueless. These two problems were fixed by creating the **Membership and Guest Information** section. Having an easily identifiable section that explains how to register will help navigate users who are seeking this information. Also, I was able to draw attention to originally bolded words and phrases by placing them (in normal text) in this smaller and more digestible section.

In addition, I made a list of the potential workshop ideas to improve the ease of readability. Lastly, I went through the document and ensured all spacing was equal. This included adjusting spacing between headings and body paragraphs and erasing rogue double spaces. Overall, I think the inclusion of more lists, sections and consistent spacing will improve the flow, readability, and navigation of the website page.

### Accessibility: Kelsey

I reviewed the submission guidelines and made improvements to its accessibility features. When editing the document, I worked to increase readability and conciseness, properly format links, and implement Microsoft Word’s Styles Function for the headings.

Due to the lengthy, convoluted, and often redundant text of the original submission guidelines, one of my first strategies for increasing the document’s readability was to edit it for conciseness. By using the [Hemingway Editor](#) as a continuous test throughout the editing process, I watched how my changes compared to the original document. I primarily focused on eliminating unnecessary adverbs, changing passive voice to active voice, and simplifying wordy phrases. Ultimately, I increased the document’s readability by two grade levels, bringing it down from an 11<sup>th</sup> grade reading level to a 9<sup>th</sup> grade reading level. **Table 1** gives specific examples of changes I made when editing for conciseness.

Original Phrase or Sentence:	Edited Phrase or Sentence:
prior to	before
Proposals are reviewed and approved or declined based on all the submission details.	We review and approve or decline proposals based on all submission details.
Such individuals can be listed as co-authors.	Instead, list these individuals as co-authors.
expressly agreed	agreed
Approval notices will be sent to the submitter, any co-presenters and any co-authors near mid-July.	We will send approval notices to the submitter and any co-presenters or co-authors near mid-July.

*Table 2: Examples of Words and Phrases Edited for Conciseness*

To increase the accessibility of the various links in the submission guidelines, I edited each one to have an appropriate phrase anchoring it to the rest of the sentence or paragraph. If there were links that only listed the URL, I formatted the link to have display text. For example, I changed “<https://tinyurl.com/yaznm64k>” to “[ABC membership page](#).” Additionally, I eliminated phrases like “click here” and “find the steps here” to more descriptive phrases. Cleaning up the links significantly improved the aesthetics and accessibility of the document.

Lastly, I revised the document to be more easily navigable for users with visual impairments. While Kennie organized and separated the information under different heading sections, and Makenna worked with the color palette of the headings, I made sure each heading was correctly and consistently styled with Microsoft Word's Styles function. This feature allows visually impaired users to skim through the document in a way that is similar to how able-bodied people can. Ultimately, I think editing for conciseness, increasing readability, reformatting links, and including the Styles function significantly increased the accessibility of the submission guidelines.

### Grammar and Punctuation: Olivia

As my duties were perhaps the most straightforward, I edited our document for grammar, punctuation, clarity, and conciseness. This meant that my section overlapped with readability and structure multiple times. I read through and edited the document several times throughout our group process. My first priority was to ensure that sentences contained correct punctuation and were grammatically correct. My next edits concerned readability and how the document flowed from start to finish. I used the [Hemingway Editor](#) as well to double check my edits. I broke up wordy sentences, made changes to create smoother sentences, and suggested a few areas in which we could implement more bulleted lists for information that was too choppy to be left in a paragraph.

More specifically, I implemented the bulleted lists for the **Regular Presentation** and **Group Panel** subsections under **Session Types**, as I did not think that the information should be written in paragraph format. In the **Poster** subsection, there was a dense chunk of text, so I used bullets to break up the overview of posters. Additionally, there were multiple sections in which I broke up larger chunks of text by splitting up information between one or more lines.

As this is a document meant for prospective and current presenters for the ABC 87th Annual International Conference, my third full round of edits were in regard to the mindset of that audience. This translated to thinking more about language and how to refer to presenters.

Overall, I tried to make solid edits that were functional, but also tailored to the document. The goal was to accurately portray the information in a clear and concise way that gets ABC's information across without being buried in unnecessary verbiage. I believe that my edits improved the document because there are no distractions of punctuation and grammatical errors. Overall, the document is much more straightforward and reads much better now.

### Conclusion

As a team, we were able to achieve an attractive, accessible, and easy-to-use website page by working together efficiently. Even though we each had our own separate tasks to work on, we prioritized double-checking each other and collaborating throughout the process. Additionally, we met over Zoom a few times and frequently texted within our texting group chat to make sure that we were all on the same page. Ultimately, we feel confident in our transformation of the Submissions Guidelines for the ABC 87th Annual International Conference document, and it is our strong belief that this version of the submission guidelines will better serve those who are considering submitting a proposal to the conference than the original webpage.

If you have any questions or concerns about this project, please do not hesitate to contact any member of the ENG 771 Group 2 Team, whose email addresses are listed below:

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