

CONFERENCE PREPARATION WORKSHOP

TRANSCRIPT of the Free Zoom Event

NASC Australia X Tele's Angels



Slide 1 - Title

Slide 2 - Welcome notes and acknowledgement of country (Ginger)

- Hello everyone and welcome to the NASC X Tele's Angels Conference Preparation Workshop. Before we begin, I would like to thank Tele's Angels for their work on bring the present seminar to life.
- I would also like to acknowledge the country on which I am currently working. That is the Gadigal land of the Eora Nation, whose cultures and customs have - and continue to - nurture this land since the dreamtime. I extend my respect to elders past, present and emerging, and acknowledge my privilege of the use of this land for the purpose of learning.
- I invite you all to send us the name of the land from which you're joining us in the chat!

Slide 3: Notice of recording (Ginger)

- I would also like to alert everyone that this session will be recorded and automated captioning will be enabled via zoom. If you or a colleague would like access to either, please contact us on nascenquiries@gmail.com.

Slide 4: Agenda (Ginger)

- This seminar comprises four sections:
 1. How to write an abstract
 2. How to 'convert' your work into a poster/conference paper
 3. Tips and tricks for engaging with the conference environment
 4. NASC overview and Q&A

Slide 5 - Who is Tele's - Hannah

Tele's Angels is a free peer mentoring program for history and archaeology students. We are based at Macquarie University and offer seminars, workshops, careers info sessions, group mentoring and 1:1 mentoring consultations. We can be reached via our email address: telesangels@gmail.com or follow us on socials! FB, Insta + twitter @telesangels

Introductions:

Hannah: My name is Hannah, I am co-coordinating with Evie Tele's Angels Mentoring. I completed my bachelor of ancient history and a master of research at Macquarie University. I am researching approaches to bodily differences and disabilities in the ancient world. I also teach archaeology at Macquarie University.

Sarah: I'm Sarah and I'm a senior mentor for Tele's Angels. Like Hannah, I also did a bachelor of ancient history and a master of research at Macquarie. For my Mres I looked at evidence of dental therapy or dentistry in ancient Egypt and my broader research interests include disease, health and medicine in the ancient world.

(Hannah read out) Acknowledgments: Tele's Team:

- Shannon Collis, a recent graduate of the Macquarie Master of Research Program for assisting the development and visualization of materials for this workshop.
- Other senior Tele's mentors: Ewan Coopy in the initial planning phase for this workshop.

Slide 6 - Writing an Abstract (Sarah)

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You can think of abstracts as being like movie trailers for your essay or conference presentation. They are usually between 200-300 words and highlight the main points of your research. When a conference puts out a call for papers, which is a call for potential presenters, they'll ask you to send in an abstract. The conference team will decide whether they want you to come and give a talk based on the abstract you submit.

You can be a bit more creative with abstracts for conferences and presentations than you can with essays, you're trying to draw the interest of both the conference organisers and people who will attend, so that they come and listen to the whole talk. So a top tip is to have fun with it and try to make it interesting and attention-grabbing.

Hannah is going to talk more about how to turn your research essays into conference papers and posters, but writing an abstract is a really good first step in figuring out what you want to talk about. You can use it as a plan to guide you through your presentation.

Slide 7 - Writing an Abstract (Sarah)

Things to address in an abstract:

- **Aims/objectives:** what are you trying to do or achieve with your research? What questions are you trying to answer? Are you filling gaps in the historical record or discussing a new viewpoint?
- **Materials/Methods:** what evidence are you studying? A single ancient text, a group of artefacts, human remains, etc.? What culture and time period are they from? If you have a specific method that is important to your research you can briefly mention that.
- **Findings/Results:** What did you conclude in your research, linking back to your research question? If your research is a work in progress - what do you expect to find and why? (It's okay if the results actually turn out differently - you can talk about these at your next conference!)
- **Significance:** why are your findings or conclusions important? Do they contradict or support existing beliefs? If you don't have findings yet - what do you think your research will 'bring to the table'?

You don't necessarily have to address all of these things for a conference abstract, but when you're starting out this is a good plan to follow - if you include these things it makes it clear to your audience exactly what you will be talking about.

You can look online for conference programs, these usually contain all of the abstracts for the talks so you can see what a range of different abstracts look like. Twitter is really good for finding those. The Master of Research program at Macquarie also has the Research Frontiers 2 conference which publishes the abstract booklet online.



Slide 8 - How to convert your work for a conference paper - Sarah

If your abstract is accepted by the conference organisers, you'll be invited to give a paper. A conference paper is just the talk or presentation that you give and this is like a more informal spoken version of an essay. The time will vary depending on the given conference but they are usually between 10-20 minutes - make sure you check the requirements.

You can take any essay in which you've answered a specific question and easily convert it into a conference talk by following the plan you set out in your abstract, like we just discussed. If you've written any essays for assignments where you have particularly enjoyed the topic - that would be a great place to start. Apart from being spoken rather than written, the main difference between a conference talk and an essay is that you will usually be presenting to a more general audience with a broad range of expertise - so it's important to include background information about the context of your topic.

Following the structure of your abstract you should include:

- **Introduction:** acknowledgement of country (when on zoom, acknowledge where you're talking from), introduce yourself and the title of your talk
- Next you would either explain your **research aims/questions** OR provide some **background information** first - you should cover both of these things in your talk but the order will depend on your topic - see what flows best
- **Background information** includes important contextual information which your audience needs to know in order to understand your topic - e.g. if you are studying changes in leadership roles in ancient Egypt you would need to briefly explain the political system in Egypt first.
- **Materials and methods:** your evidence and how you study it (this section can be a brief description) - a great place for images!
- **Findings/Results:** What did you find out? This is the most important part of the talk because this is what people came to learn about! This is another good place for images or some simple tables if that's what your topic requires
- **Significance:** Why are your findings important? Did your research bring up other questions that could be investigated and answered in the future? This is a good way to wrap up your talk.
- Often conferences have a set theme - if your research relates to the theme you can conclude your talk by relating your findings back to this. But don't worry if your research doesn't fit within the theme - a lot of conferences will also accept papers that don't relate to it.
- You don't need to read through them but include your references in the final slides

Slide 9 - How to convert your work for a conference paper - Sarah - you can pass to me if you need a break

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Conference Talk Aids and Visuals

For the accompanying slides a lot of people use powerpoint - canva is also a good option and a little bit more creative.

- Try to use images or icons where you can and play around with the colour and design of the slides to make them more attention grabbing and visually engaging - make sure you reference images
- Keep text minimal as you want the audience to listen to what you are saying, not reading chunks of text on slides - include your key points, dot-point form and bolding keywords are good techniques
- A good rule of thumb is roughly 1 slide per 2 minutes. If you're doing a 20 minute presentation aim for about 10 slides, excluding title slide and references. However this will depend on your topic, for example if you have a lot of archaeological evidence you will probably have a lot of images and a few more slides. Just make sure you're not flicking through slides too quickly - this can be a bit distracting for the audience.
- From an accessibility perspective, font size should be 26pt+ for headings, 18-24pt for text and 16-18pt for captions.

Slide 10 - How to convert your work for a conference paper - Sarah

Tips for Presenting

The best tip we can give is to practice with your slides and time yourself so you'll be prepared on the day. This way you can figure out if you tend to speak more slowly or quickly and adjust the length of your talk as needed beforehand. You can also figure out what works best for you in terms of having a full transcript, a few key talking points or no notes at all. If you do have a full transcript make sure you interact with your slides and don't read straight from the page - it can be hard especially over zoom but practice is key here in getting your confidence up.

The last thing is, if you stumble over some words or lose your place it's okay - in our experience people hardly notice these things and it's completely natural, even lecturers mess up sometimes - just keep going!

Slide 11 How to convert your work for a conference Poster - Hannah slide- Shannon

Many of the steps for converting your work for a conference have already been addressed above. So I'll focus more on what poster presentations are and how you can make a great conference poster.

What is a poster presentation?

A poster presentation is a way to communicate your research on a topic in a concise and short format which is also visual. They usually induce a poster and then a very short talk or presentation, often 2-5 mins. Think similar to an infographic, they contain a lot of information presented in a visual manner with a combination of text, figures and images.

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Most posters are A0 in size, although you should always check if there is a different size requirement for your conference.

- Check whether you need to have a printed copy of your poster. You can print posters at places like officeworks or use a printing service. For NASC your posters are online. So you won't need to pay for printing.

What are they for?

Poster presentations are a great way to develop your skills in communication. They particularly practise perceptive and concise communication - a great skill for any workplace. You demonstrate through a poster that you can analyse and evaluate information and then creatively and concisely synthesise your ideas to show your understanding of a topic or the findings of your research.

Slide 12 How to convert your work for a conference Poster - Hannah

What's in a poster?

Typically, a poster should contain:

- a Title
- Make sure your Name(s) and affiliation are prominently displayed.
 - Must include your name, also put supervisor's if you are a team
 - Logo: such as MQ Logo or if you are working with other institutions or partners
- (sometimes) an abstract or summary with short introduction. This may include or be in addition to a background - that's any background information that an audience may need to understand your topic,
- aims and objectives,
- methodology,
- you may also wish to add a section on Significance and innovation of your research. This can go in your introduction or anywhere around your aims + methodology although it could also feature in your discussion,,
- Next are your results (also known as outcomes),
- discussion and conclusions.

Don't forget to add any References and acknowledgements (which can be in smaller font) as well as images and or figures (such as graphs and tables where appropriate): make sure these are high quality / density – has to print at good quality. Take note of copyrights, add any attributes and be aware what licenses are for each image.

For Content: the less text the better – it is difficult for people to stand at a poster and read an excessive amount of text.

Production: How to make a poster:

There are a number of software programs you can use to create the content of your poster such as:

- PowerPoint
- Canva

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- Infographic designer websites.
- Publisher
- Visio
- Adobe Illustrator
- Photoshop

Although look online for other options if you want.

Slide 13 How to convert your work for a conference Poster - Hannah

Tips for Poster Layout

Most posters are in portrait formatting. But you can use landscape. Decide which is going to work best for you and double check what the requirements are for the conference. Make sure you consider the reading path in your layout. For example English readers naturally start at the top left-hand corner of a page and continue right and down from there. If you want to use a circular pattern, the eye would start at the top of the circle and travel clockwise. You can further indicate the reading path by the placement of your text and graphics, or with graphics such as arrows. If your reading path is not clear or logical, your audience will not be able to follow your thinking. It is also important to leave some space on your poster blank. Without some space, your poster will appear crowded and overwhelming. You should consider leaving space around your images and text, so that they do not detract from each other.

For fonts:

- Be deliberate and careful with your font size and styles. Avoid using all capitals in the text and do not underline. These are harder to read in blocks of text. Be sure to also use an accessibility font style. Generally sans serif fonts are more accessible

Font size for your Title needs to be very large and legible from ~9 meters away. Consider a minimum of about 80pt (e.g. Arial bold). Other fonts might require a different font size. Titles should be centred, unless it exceeds three lines (if it does: use a smaller point size or shorten the title).

- Main headings/section headings – use at least 36pt (such as in Arial bold), preferably higher, for them to be legible. Bold or italic styles help to set off section heads and subtitles
- Body Text – use at least (equivalent) 20pt (Arial bold), preferably higher justified text. Anything smaller is difficult to read on a poster to be legible from 1/1.5 meters
- Captions – 18pt and see if you like them in italic.
- Maintain consistency by using the same text sizes and image width on all figures.

Other tips for Posters:

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- Use colour to enhance the reading experience:
- For your background choose a plain or lighted tinted colour. A good technique is to create paragraph size blocks with a light background to overlay on a darker poster background.
- Striking images and colourful charts/diagrams will help stimulate discussion and interaction
- Make sure you have a very good contrast to allow for accessibility of your content.
- Remember that while you're speaking to the poster, don't read directly from it. The poster is meant to have your main points and your presentation is where you expand upon them.

Slide 14 Tips and Tricks for Conferences - Dealing with Question times - Hannah

- Usually only 5-10 mins so you can be quite brief in your answers
- Think of some common questions beforehand, and prepare answers for them. It could be a useful place to find some unaddressed areas in your research - think of it like preparing for an interview
- An easy way to break down your answer to a question is to use the PEEL format. Provide a point, Explain why you think this, provide Evidence, and link back to your presentation or further research
- If you don't know the answer to a question that is totally okay - "that's a really good question/point - I hadn't considered that but I will definitely look into it" - you're not expected to know everything
- If you're unsure but still want to give questions a go you can say "I'm not a 100% percent sure but these are my thoughts on the matter at the moment..."
- If you don't understand a question at first don't be afraid to ask the person to expand or clarify
- Try to think of question time as friendly professional discussion time - people ask questions because they are interested in what you have to say, not to catch you out on not knowing something.

Slide 15 Tips and Tricks - Networking - Hannah

Conferences are a great way to network. When at a digital conference, like NASC is to make sure to be respectful both in private messaging and when speaking. Conference networking is a professional/semi-professional activity. You want to get to know other people - where and what are they studying, or what are their research interests? Think ahead of time an informal pitch for yourself that you can use in introductions: who are you, what and where are you studying? Do you have any research/topic or workplace interest (i.e. want to be a conservator or museum curator, development archaeologist etc). If you aren't sure - that's fine! Just say something you are learning and finding interesting.

Take conferences as an opportunity to find like-minded people - who may end up as peers, colleagues, and hopefully friends! Get involved in any of the social activities the conference you are attending has to offer. Ginger will talk about NASC, but at other conferences common activities include morning/afternoon teas, drinks nights, workshops or keynote lectures, round table discussions. Many online conferences use a communication platform, such as slack, to engage with conference organisers, presenters and attendees. You might have a

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general channel for conference communication and then a social one! A common one for postgraduate conferences is a meme channel, trivia nights and social zoom rooms.

(Hannah read out) Acknowledgments: Tele's Team:

- Shannon Collis, a recent graduate of the Macquarie Master of Research Program for assisting the development and visualization of materials for this workshop.
- Other senior Tele's mentors: Ewan Coopy in the initial planning phase for this workshop.

Slide 16 - About NASC (Ginger)

- Since 1998, the National Archaeology Student Conference (NASC) has provided a supportive forum for undergraduate and graduate students to present and discuss their ideas and research.
- NASC encompassed all fields of archaeological inquiry, irrespective of geographical focus. The limit to our interests is effectively the limit of yours. For that reason, we seek to:
 - a. Promote the work of students working in vast areas of study
 - b. Generate broader interest in those areas
 - c. Connect you with other like-minded students and professionals
- "The conference for archaeology students by archaeology students". In line with this 'motto', our conference is about developing the skills you need to navigate this new archaeological landscape on which we find ourselves

Slide 17 - Our NASC (Ginger)

- Our conference will be wholly online - Zoom and Kumospace
- It's no secret that in recent years, we have - and are continuing to - experience enormous shifts in Australian tertiary education. That's why we are emphatic about maximising student engagement this year, and this encompasses several modes of engagement:
 - Continuation from previous years:
 1. Papers/posters: we wholeheartedly encourage young students to participate. Delivered over Zoom (20, 10 mins w additional question time
 - Benefits: development of your academic voice, networking with like-minded students and professionals, friendly and constructive sounding board for your ideas
 2. Simultaneous virtual networking space
 3. Social evening - although, in place of a conference dinner, we will be running online social events (unconfirmed - trivia?) in collaboration with ASMU
 - New Initiatives:
 1. The present workshop

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2. "Day Zero" which comprises four free online workshops, including: social media, archaeological drawing, archaeometry and peer-to-peer mentoring
3. NASC Online Launch: comprises a free online lecture series including interviews with precious NASC partners, current professional collaborators, our 2021 patron Bob Carr, and two guest speakers.
4. Informational seminars about interacting with the new and constantly evolving archaeological community in Australia. This includes keynotes by invited guests from AAA, several Australian Heritage Agencies and universities.

Slide 18 - How to get involved (Ginger)

- Submit Your Work: CFP closes 16th September

SUBMISSION CATEGORIES:

- **Long Research Presentation:** 20 minute presentation.
- **Short Research Presentation:** 10 minute presentation.
- **Posters:** Standard A0-size minimum 300DPI, color or black and white, portrait or landscape orientation. Each poster will be accompanied by a 2-5min presentation, summarising its content, as well as a short Q&A panel comprised of all our poster presenters.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS:

- **Research Presentations (long or short):** Title, abstract (max. 250 words).
- **Posters:** Please email us with a standard A0-size minimum 300DPI poster. It may be in color or black and white. It may also be oriented portrait or landscape.

ALL SUBMISSIONS MUST CONTAIN:

- Names of all presenters
- ONE suitable contact email address *and* phone number
- The name of your University (and Department or College)
- Degree/current level of study (eg Honours),
- The category to which you are submitting
- Register to attend:
 - Registrations open 30th August at 9am
 - Ticket price: \$25

Slide 22 - Where to find us (Ginger)

- **Instagram:** @nascaustralia
- **Facebook:** @nascaustralia
- **Twitter:** @nascaustralia
- **Website:** <https://www.nascaustralia.com>

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- Email: nascenquiries@gmail.com

Slide 23 - Q&A Session (Ginger)

- This section is open for attendees to ask questions pertaining to NASC

Slide X Wrap up & Thanks

Hannah: Thank you all for attending today. Just a reminder, this session was recorded so you can access this recording by email or message on social media to NASC.

To find out more or get in contact with us, we have our details on slide.

For Teles:

Gmail: telesangels@gmail.com or socials @telesangels
(add fb, twitter, insta)

For NASC:

- Instagram: @nascaustralia
- Facebook: @nascaustralia
- Twitter: @nascaustralia
- Website: <https://www.nascaustralia.com>
- Email: nascenquiries@gmail.com