

Medical Education

GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS 2005-2006

Medical Education is an international, peer-reviewed, journal with distribution to readers in more than 80 countries. The journal seeks to enhance its position as the pre-eminent journal in the field of education for health care professionals and aims to publish material of the highest quality reflecting world wide or provocative issues and perspectives. The contents will be of interest to learners, teachers and researchers. It will potentially have a significant impact on scholarship in medical education and, ultimately, on the quality of health care. The journal welcomes papers on any aspect of medical education. The predominant emphasis in *Medical Education* is on work related to the education of doctors and medical students, and papers on interprofessional education are welcomed.

1. The journal's mission in education and research

Manuscripts and reviews submitted to *Medical Education* may be used for teaching and research purposes with potential authors and reviewers. Authors and reviewers may be asked from time to time to take part in surveys. Every effort will be made to protect confidentiality. Names will not be passed to third parties.

2. Submission of manuscripts

Manuscripts should be prepared in accordance with the *Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals* (see <http://www.icmje.org/> or *Medical Education* 1999; 33:66-78). All manuscripts are considered on the understanding that they have not been published previously in print or electronic format and that they are not under consideration by another publication or medium. *Medical Education* is committed to the Committee on Publication Ethics Code of Conduct.

Papers not correctly formatted will be returned to the authors for correction and resubmission. Manuscripts should be submitted online at <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/medicaleducation>. Full instructions and support are available on the site. A user ID and password can be obtained on the first visit. All parts of the manuscript must be available in an electronic format; those recommended are: generic rich text format (RTF) or Microsoft Word for text, and JPEG, GIF, TIFF, EPS, PNG, Microsoft PowerPoint or Excel for graphics. It is recommended that, where possible, figures are embedded into a single Microsoft Word document. However, identifying details must be uploaded in a separate document (see section 6, Preparation of Manuscripts, below). If you cannot submit online, please contact the Editorial Office (*Medical Education*, ITTC Building, Tamar Science Park, Davy Road, Plymouth PL6 8BX, UK email: med@mededuc.com).

3. Criteria for manuscripts

All manuscripts should meet the following criteria: the writing is clear and the information important and likely to be of interest to an international audience. For research papers, the study methods should be appropriate and the data valid; and for both discussion papers and research papers, the conclusions should be reasonable and supported by data or evidence. Papers are selected for peer review and publication on these criteria. We publish around 20% of manuscripts received each year. We welcome contributions from authors whose first language is not English, although it is recommended that before submitting your manuscript to the journal you ask a colleague familiar with written English to read it through.

4. Editorial and peer review

All submitted manuscripts are read initially by the editor. One or more associate editors may also be involved in early decision making. Papers with insufficient priority for publication are rejected at this stage - sometimes with advice about resubmission in a different category. Other manuscripts are sent to experts in the field for peer review. The review process is usually double-blinded so that authors' and reviewers' identities are not disclosed to either party. However, we encourage reviewers to sign their reviews in the interest of providing responsible feedback. Guidelines for reviewers are available on the journal's website, www.mededuc.com. We aim to give an initial decision within 12 weeks. All accepted manuscripts are edited according to the journal's style and returned to the author as page proofs for approval. Authors are responsible for all statements made in their work.

5. Categories of manuscript

Medical Education publishes original research papers, review articles, discussion papers, special feature pieces, short reports of research in progress or of educational innovation, commentaries, letters to the editor and book reviews. Specific guidelines are shown below:

Original Research: up to 3,000 words with a maximum of five tables or figures and 30 references using the Vancouver style; there must be a structured abstract of no more than 250 words plus sub-headings and an overview box of up to 100 words summarising the main messages of the paper under three headings, using bullet points where necessary: what is already known on this subject; what this study adds; suggestions for further research. The total text not including headings should not exceed 100 words. The paper will usually be organised using the Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion (IMRAD) structure. The context of the

work and your choice of methods used for analysis must be made clear in the text. Qualitative and quantitative research approaches are equally welcome.

Review articles: up to 3,000 words plus abstract and overview box with more freedom on the number of references.

Discussion papers: up to 3,000 words plus abstract and overview box with up to two tables/figures.

Short Reports: up to 1,000 words plus abstract and overview box with one table or figure; 5 references

Really Good Stuff: short structured reports of new ideas in medical education. 500 words plus structured sub-headings. No abstract, overview box, figures or tables. Four authors only. Detailed guidelines on this section are available on the journal website.

My Story: up to 2,000 words plus abstract of up to 200 words; 10 references.

Commentaries: up to 1,000 words and no more than 10 references; up to 5 short 'pull-out' quotations should be supplied. No abstract or overview box.

Letters to the Editor: up to 400 words.

6. Preparation of manuscripts

Three separate documents should be prepared. A checklist to assist in the preparation of the manuscript for submission is available by clicking 'instructions and forms' on

<http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/medicaleducation>

(1) The anonymous manuscript

All manuscripts should be anonymised before submission to *Medical Education*. **Authors must not identify themselves or their institution in the submitted main manuscript file(s) for review.** This includes making sure that neither the filename nor the footer/header contains the authors' names. We encourage the use of the active voice, short sentences and clear sub headings in the text. *Chambers Guide to Grammar and Usage* (1996) can give advice on matters of style. The manuscript should be double-spaced with a wide margin (at least 3 cm) on either side. All pages should be numbered. Do not use abbreviations. All scientific units should be expressed in SI units. Before submission please remove fields from automatic referencing programs and switch off change tracking. Please supply a word count.

Referencing should be set out in double spacing in the Vancouver style (using superscript numbers and listing full references at the end of the paper in the order in which they appear in the text). Authors are advised to consult the *Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals* (see <http://www.icmje.org/> or *Medical Education* 1999; 33:66-78) for details of the Vancouver reference style.

Authors should restrict *titles* to 15 words or fewer, and the editor reserves the right to edit titles. The *main text* should start on a separate page and sections within the text should be appropriately sub-headed. Spelling should conform to the *New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*. Both numbers and percentages should be given (not percentages alone) when relevant. Where *statistical methods* are used in analysis their use should be explained in the setting of the study and a footnote or appendix given if the method is particularly unusual or complex. For authors using *qualitative methods* an extended methodology section that includes a consideration of the strengths and weaknesses of the approach used should be included.

Keep a copy of the original manuscript for reference. An email acknowledgement of receipt will be sent by the journal. Any material sent to the Editorial Office will not be returned.

We reserve the right to copy edit papers to house style before final publication, but substantive changes will be the responsibility of the authors.

(2) The identifying document (template available at <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/medicaleducation>)

A separate identifying document marked 'not for review' should be uploaded with the anonymous manuscript, giving the following information:

- (1) The full address, institution and contact details of the corresponding author
- (2) The names of all authors and details of the contribution each made to the work described in the paper
- (3) Details of any funding
- (4) Details of any acknowledgements
- (5) A statement indicating whether ethical approval was sought for the research described. Ethical approval is required for all manuscripts describing research on human subjects. The work must comply with the Declaration of Helsinki (1964) and authors must confirm, where appropriate, that informed consent was given.
- (6) Details of any potential conflict of interest. A conflict of interest exists when professional judgement concerning a primary interest (such as patients' welfare or the validity of research) may be influenced by secondary interests (personal matters such as financial gain, personal relationships or professional rivalry).

(3) The copyright assignment form.

A copyright assignment form (available from 'instructions and forms' on

<http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/medicaleducation>) must be downloaded, completed and signed by all

contributing authors and sent by fax and post to the Editorial Office at the time of electronic submission. **We cannot accept submissions without this document.**

7. Proofs

Proofs will be sent to the corresponding author via e-mail as an Acrobat PDF file. Your e-mail server must be able to accept attachments up to 4MB in size. Acrobat reader is required to read these proofs and it can be downloaded free of charge from www.adobe.com/prodindex/acrobat/main.html. This will enable the proof to be opened, read on screen and printed out for any corrections to be made. Authors are required to provide corrections promptly; if you are going to be out of email contact for an extended period, please supply us with the contact details of someone who can attend to the proofs in your absence.

8. Fast tracking and Online Early

A **fast tracking system** is in place for selected manuscripts. Papers of particular importance or topicality will receive priority when being scheduled for publication. Accepted and published papers may be used for publicity and public relations purposes.

Corrected proofs of all papers accepted for publication will be placed on the Blackwell Publishing website (<http://www.blackwell-synergy.com>) some weeks in advance of publication in the paper journal using the **Online Early** facility. Subscribers will be able to access these papers and to respond to and cite them before they are published in the paper journal. The papers published through Online Early in this way will be indistinguishable from the paper version, apart from their lack of page ranges, but the version appearing in the paper journal will be the final archived version. Once the paper is published in paper format, it will be removed from Online Early and will reappear on Blackwell Synergy as part of the online journal.