



The IAABC Foundation Journal Style Guide

This guide is for authors and prospective authors of material for The IAABC Foundation Journal. All the material that goes into the journal will be edited to adhere to this style guide. We've created it to help make the submissions and editing process more transparent and give you some guidance about what we're looking for.

Journal mission statement

The IAABC Foundation Journal will benefit animal behavior professionals by elevating the standards of critical thought in animal training, behavior consulting, and sheltering, promoting peer education, and developing content that guides best practice for everyone working with non-human animals and their human caregivers.

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Who can submit?

Anyone can submit content to The IAABC Foundation Journal. You **do not have to be a member of IAABC**, certified by IAABC, or a member of any other professional organization to submit content. Your content will be reviewed anonymously and decisions will be made based on quality, not qualifications.

The submissions process

Send your articles by email to journal@iaabcfoundation.org and our managing editor will acknowledge receipt within 24 hours.

We accept all editable file formats, but Microsoft Word is preferred. Please do not send PDFs.

Attach full-res images to your submissions email as separate files. You can also include them in the main document, or indicate where you would like them to be placed with INSERT: [FILENAME OF IMAGE] in the text of your article.

If your submission includes video, send them using Google Drive, Dropbox, or as links to streaming sites (YouTube, Vimeo, etc.). Please make sure the links are Unlisted or Public, not Private.

In the submission email, you should also include:

- A cover letter with a summary of your article, if you haven't been in touch with us already
- A short paragraph of biography for us to run under the article if it is published,
- Your full name and relevant postnominals (letters after your name)
- Your ORCID identifier if you have one

Your piece will then be looked at by our content editing team, who will decide whether to send it through our peer review process, conditionally accept it, or decline to take it forward.

Peer review

The IAABC Journal is a peer reviewed publication. We have a group of volunteers from a variety of academic and professional backgrounds who provide anonymous feedback to help our editing team make acceptance decisions and give suggestions to prospective Journal authors.

As an industry journal, not all the content we receive is appropriate for peer review. Personal opinions, stories, and editorials, for example, are generally not required to be peer reviewed. Our content editing team determines whether a submission is put into peer review based on the following criteria:

- Use/interpretation of scientific data to draw conclusions
- Arguments based on learning theory, behavior science, ethology, genetics, or any other scientific basis
- Submission is a case study in behavior consulting

Peer reviewing is anonymous to both the author and reviewers; your submission will be stripped of identifying details for our reviewers, and authors are never given the names of individuals who have reviewed their work.

If you would like to join our peer review team, email us at journal@iaabcfoundation.org.

Content guidelines

Animal behavior is a large and diverse field, so we are open to content from many areas, such as:

- Training
- Welfare
- Enrichment
- Biology's influence on behavior
- Applied behavioral analysis
- Ethology
- The human-animal bond
- Interpersonal skills for humans
- Scientific literacy
- Critical animal studies and animal rights

We are looking for content covering all species of animal in any situation; this includes:

- Companion animals
- Working and service animals
- Sheltered animals and animals in foster care or long-term sanctuaries
- Feral and semi-feral animals, e.g. village dogs, farm cats
- Wild animals under captive management
- Laboratory animals

All contributions to IAABC continuing education, including submissions to our journal, must be based on current, scientifically valid principles and reflect our [Core Competencies](#) and [position on LIMA](#).

Target audience

Assume that you are writing for a keen amateur animal trainer – someone with a basic knowledge of the principles of learning theory, an understanding of the species you are writing about, and a commitment to the LIMA framework.

Keep explanations of basic concepts like what the quadrants are, and what the ABC model is to a maximum of a couple of sentences where appropriate. Consider using a hyperlink to point readers to an authoritative dictionary of psychological terms, such as the American Psychological Association's free online [Dictionary of Terms](#). As we are an international organization, bear in mind that English may not be the first language of every reader—try to limit technical terms and jargon where possible.

Complementary and alternative medicine

Currently, no meta-analysis or systematic review supports the use of any complementary therapy in behavior modification for companion animals. IAABC cannot, therefore, accept content promoting these products and techniques as an adjunct or alternative to behavior modification.

Although we recognize that personal beliefs and opinions on the efficacy of different types of alternative medicine may run contrary to this position, we can only accept the best evidence presented by the scientific community at this time. IAABC's position will change if the body of evidence changes.

Word count

Our limits on word count are flexible. Here are some general guidelines based on existing content:

Articles

These can include: descriptions of cases, programs, or classes; enquiries into the nature or significance of concepts in behavior consulting; “state of the art” reviews of a technique or protocol; essays on science and ethics. They typically run between about **2000 and 4000 words**. Articles can include diagrams, photos and videos where appropriate.

Video guides

Demonstrations of a particular technique, explanations of a particular setup for enrichment or training that consist of one or more videos with some description. These tend to run between around **1000 and 2500 words**.

Case studies

A complete description of everything that goes into a case study is in the section below. They tend to run longer, around **3000-6500 words**.

Interviews

Previous interview write-ups have run between **1500-3000 words**; this includes quotes and supplementary materials from the interviewer.

Case studies

If you're submitting a case study, there are some elements we'd like you to include as part of the write-up:

- Background details about the animal—their species, breed, and age.
- Details of the animal's living situation where relevant—whether there are other animals or people in the house, and their ages. If a client has requested they remain anonymous, please provide a pseudonym and make sure to omit details that would make it easy for others to recognize the people involved.
- Behavioral history for the animal—what was going on before you were involved? Do you know anything of the animal's early life?
- Details of the event(s) that caused you to get involved with the case.
- Any relevant medical history. A list of any medications, special diets, nutraceuticals or supplements the animal is on, as well as who prescribed/suggested them and when.

- Your assessment of the behavior problems and your plan to address them.
- What happened in each session—what your goals were and what happened; whether you needed to change your plans. Video is preferred but not required.
- Any data you keep, either raw or in graphical form, that we can use to illustrate the progress the animal and client have made.
- If there has been a conclusion, how was it reached?

You are welcome to use case studies that you submitted as part of your successful application for IAABC certification. Anyone working professionally in behavior cases is welcome to submit a case study – you do not have to be a member of IAABC for your submission to be considered.

Referencing published works

Include full references to all the published papers you draw from in your articles, and the full link to all websites you mention. If you use direct quotes from personal correspondences—emails, phone calls or face-to-face— please say when and how you corresponded with the source.

Sample reference format:

Nagasawa, M. et. al (2014) The behavioral and endocrinological development of stress response in dogs. *Developmental Psychology* 56:4, p.726-733.

Include a link to the material if you have one; we recommend the [WorldCat](#) website for finding books, and [CrossRef](#) for finding journal articles.

As a general rule, give as much detail as you can about where you got your information, even if it seems excessive. We may not include these details in the final published piece, but we need them for the fact-checking part of the editing process.

Linking to other content

If you want to include links to online content outside the journal, for example to a blog or a dictionary, make sure include the full text of the link. Bear in mind that not all sources are created equal and we may ask you to find a more authoritative source as part of the editing process.

Plagiarism

We have a zero-tolerance approach to [plagiarism](#), which is defined as the copying of an existing work without attribution to the original author. If you quote something that has been published elsewhere, make it clear where the quote starts and ends, whom you are quoting, and where you found it.

We encourage all authors to submit **original and unique** works to our journal because our readers expect it. Very rarely, we will accept reprints under certain circumstances. If you want to submit an article that appears in whole or in part elsewhere—even as a personal blog post—please make sure that you own the copyright, and that you make it clear to us where and when the original article was published. This includes pictures and videos. We cannot accept articles that have already been published in large journals in print or online, or that are in a current issue of a print or online magazine. If you don't declare that parts, or the entirety, of your work exists elsewhere and we find out, we will not print the article.

Biographies

All authors who contribute to the journal will be asked to write a short biography to be included with their articles. The biography must be no longer than three sentences maximum, or 300 characters—whichever is shortest—and may include a link to a personal or business website or email address.

Language guidelines

Our journal generally follows the Associated Press style guide. We do have some differences, which are listed below.

Abbreviations

As English is not the first language of some of our members, please spell out all the acronyms and abbreviations you use the first time you use them in your article. The only exception to this is qualifications—the letters after people's names, like CDBC, PhD, or CPDT-KA.

Capitalization

The titles of articles should be in title case. We can help you think of a title if you're struggling!

Headings should be in sentence case.

Cues

Cues not commands or requests. Be specific if necessary; verbal cues; visual cues; tactile cues.

Keep the names of cues lowercase—you don't need to capitalize the names of cued behaviors, like "I asked the dog to perform a Sit". If a behavior is being called something that's not obvious, use double quotes:

I asked the dog to perform a "station"

Explain what the quoted word means the first time it is used.

I asked the dog to perform a "station" (lying on a mat)

Focus on behavior

Wherever possible, focus on describing the behavior of the animals you are discussing instead of their emotional state. For example:

Instead of: “The dog was shut down.”

You could say: “The dog walked slowly with a tucked tail and dropped head, not making eye contact or responding to any environmental stimuli.”

Instead of: “The parrot became jealous.”

You could say: “The parrot moved his body in between myself and Monica and screamed.”

This is especially important when describing dominance, submission, and power dynamics. Don't say “the puppy submitted” or “the female is usually the dominant one” without a detailed, operationalized description of what led you to draw that conclusion.

Spelling and punctuation

- Follow AP style, except for the use of serial commas. Serial commas should be used where appropriate, as in, “To My Parents, Ayn Rand, and God”
- You can use British, Canadian, or American English spellings, but be consistent throughout your submission.

Inclusive language

- The IAABC is a diverse organization, and we want our journal to reflect this. To that end, we encourage authors to avoid gendered phrasing, like “Every dog has his day,” or phrasing with an accidental racist, ableist, or heteronormative bias.
- Use of the third-person plural pronoun they is more appropriate than *s/he* or *him* or *her*. Don't automatically use *he* when referring to an animal. Use *they*, unless you know the sex of the animal in question.
- Do not use mental health terminology unless you're discussing an actual mental health diagnosis. For example, OCD is not appropriate shorthand for “enjoys being organized”, and psychotic should never be used in place of “irrational.” This includes diagnosed personality disorders such as narcissism and sociopathy.

Names of breeds

- Use *pitbull type mix* if you're identifying a dog that resembles an American pit bull terrier, (or Staffie mix if you're writing about a location where pit bull mixes are banned). If you're referring to the registered breeds, use American pit bull terrier, Staffordshire bull terrier, etc.
- Dog breed names should be lowercase unless derived from a proper noun, e.g., Labrador retriever; German shorthaired pointer; Samoyed; Rottweiler; Jack Russell terrier; Siamese cat. Follow [Merriam-Webster](#) if in doubt.
- Do not use nicknames for breeds, such as *doxie*, *BSH*, *doodle* or *pibble*. If you are making multiple references to a breed with several names, like Doberman pinscher, you can shorten to one word after the first usage.

Animals and people

Dogs are a *who* if they are being talked about specifically, as in, “I had a dog who would not quit.” If they’re being talked about generally, they’re a *that* as in, “feral cats that aren’t friendly.” As a rule, if you could substitute “Rover” in the sentence, use *who*. If not, use *that*.

Avoid using *pet parents*, *furkids*, *fids*, or similar terms. *Pet owner* or *guardian* is preferable. Use *caregiver* only if you’re talking about animals in a shelter or otherwise homeless.

Males and females should only be used when talking about animals; humans are people.

As a general rule, use gender-neutral language at all times (like *people* instead of *men and women*; *they* instead of *he or she*) unless a specific gender is a relevant piece of information for your topic (like “the dog displayed aggression only towards older men”).

Typesetting and file formats

It’s not important how you typeset your article—use any size font, of any type you choose. We won’t be able to keep any of the formatting.

Try to avoid using footnotes to explain material; if possible, add the explanation into the main text. See Referencing Published Works in this guide for how to add references to your article.

Feedback

We’re always open to questions and comments, and we hope that you will be too. Our website has a comments section that will be open to the public, and if we receive any emails regarding your submission, we’ll forward them to you.

We’ll also be working hard to spread the word about the journal on social media, and we’d love your help in sharing our content!

Comments and questions

The IAABC Editing Team is:

Tiro Miller – Managing Editor – journal@iaabcfoundation.org

Adrienne Hovey – Copy Editor

Erin Jones – Content Editor: Behavior

Valerie Pollard – Content Editor: Equine

We will try our best to answer any questions you have about the submissions and editing process, and help you turn your ideas into published content.