

AESCULAPIUS / INHWE PROCEEDINGS

Understanding Submission Categories and the Path to Publication

A Guide for Authors

The Aesculapius / INHWE Proceedings brings together an unusually wide range of scholarly and practice-based contributions from the health professions education community. Completed research, early findings, program descriptions, educational innovations, and conceptual work all have a genuine place in these pages. This guide sets out the categories available for publication, what a strong submission in each category looks like, and how the review process connects every manuscript with its best path forward. It also answers the questions authors ask most often while preparing a revision.

1. Why the Proceedings Uses a Category System

Our aim is straightforward: to give as many good ideas as possible a genuine path into print, while keeping the Proceedings a credible, rigorous archival record that both INHWE and Aesculapius can stand behind. These two goals support each other. The INHWE community's value comes from the breadth of what it shares — completed studies, early-stage work, practice innovations, program descriptions, pilot data, and conceptual arguments all deserve a route to publication. A single narrow format would leave most of that contribution unpublished. At the same time, each category carries a standard of rigor suited to what it claims to be, so that everything in the Proceedings can be read with confidence.

The category system exists to match every submission with the format its content and stage of development already fit — so that strong, valuable work is published on terms that reflect what it actually is, rather than being held to a standard designed for a different kind of contribution.

2. Understanding a Category Recommendation

If your decision letter recommends a category other than the one you originally selected, here is what that means in practice:

- It is not a rejection. Most manuscripts recommended for a different category go on to be published successfully — a recommended category is a genuine, well-supported route to publication, not a consolation prize.
- It is not a judgment on the quality or value of your work. It simply means that a different category's standards are the ones your manuscript, as it stands, is best placed to meet — and that a good and appropriate category exists for it.
- The choice remains yours. Every decision letter sets out what a revision would involve under both your originally submitted category and the recommended category, and asks you to confirm which one you would like to pursue.
- Whichever category you choose, your revision should meet that category's criteria — the sections below describe exactly what that involves.

2.1 How to Use a Category Recommendation

A short, practical path from recommendation to revision:

1. Read the description of your recommended category in Section 3.
2. Compare it against your current manuscript to see what's already there and what could be strengthened.
3. Add or develop any elements that aren't yet fully addressed.

4. Revise the manuscript so it reads clearly as a single, well-matched category, rather than a blend of two.
5. Confirm your chosen category in your response to the editorial team.

3. The Publication Categories

Each category below reflects a different kind of valuable contribution. Use the descriptions to see which one best matches your work, and to understand what a strong submission in that category includes.

3.0 Short Paper and Extended Abstract

Short Paper

The core archival format of the Proceedings: a complete, standalone scholarly contribution. This is the format most authors select at submission, and it remains the right home for any manuscript with a complete, transparent methodology and reported findings.

A strong submission in this category typically includes:

- A clearly stated research question, aim, or objective
- A transparent, replicable methodology described in enough detail for a reader to evaluate it independently
- Findings supported by evidence — quantitative data, qualitative data, or documented outcomes
- Analysis that connects the evidence to the conclusions drawn
- A discussion of implications for health professions education or workforce practice
- A clear scholarly contribution that builds on what is already known in the field
- An ethics approval statement, or a clear explanation of why one is not required

A Short Paper is often better suited to another category in one of these situations:

1. The methodology currently has less operational detail than a Short Paper requires — Pilot Study, Work-in-Progress, or an Implementation/Practice Report is often the better fit.
2. The work is explicitly preliminary, exploratory, or a first implementation — Pilot Study or Work-in-Progress usually fits well.
3. The manuscript describes a program, initiative, or intervention without a formal research design — Implementation/Practice Report, Program Description, or Educational Innovation is typically the natural home.
4. The manuscript presents a theoretical argument or synthesis without original data — Conceptual/Perspective Paper is usually the strongest fit.
5. The work is fully empirical, with a defined research design and analysis — Research/Empirical Study often represents the more accurate and more formal category for work of this kind, reflecting its sophistication rather than any shortfall.

Extended Abstract

A condensed report of a completed scholarly contribution — a complete piece of work presented briefly, rather than a preview of work still to come.

A strong submission in this category typically includes:

- The core elements of a Short Paper, condensed to a shorter length
- A clear statement of methodology, even in brief form
- Reported outcomes or findings
- A concise but substantive discussion of what the findings mean

An Extended Abstract describing work that is still underway is usually a stronger fit as a Pilot Study or Work-in-Progress / Early-Stage Study.

3.1 Group A — Fully Developed Scholarship

These categories suit work with a complete methodology and independently evaluable findings — the core of the Proceedings' archival record.

Research / Empirical Study (R/ES)

Formal empirical research that generates systematic, evaluable knowledge. This is often the right home for large-scale or methodologically sophisticated studies — moving here from Short Paper is usually a reflection of how developed the work is, not a step down.

A strong submission in this category typically includes:

- An explicit research question
- A clearly defined study design and an adequately sized, well-described sample
- Validated instruments or an established, clearly explained analytic method
- Full reporting of findings — statistics, effect sizes, or the qualitative equivalent
- Conclusions that align closely with the evidence presented
- An ethics statement

Research / Empirical Study covers several sub-types, distinguished by design:

Sub-type	What distinguishes it	What a strong submission shows
Qualitative (R/ES-Q)	Primary data from interviews, focus groups, or similar sources	Clear description of participants and data collection, an explained analytic process, and themes supported by illustrative quotations
Mixed Methods (R/ES-MM)	Integrated quantitative and qualitative components	Data collection and analysis explained for both strands, with a described integration strategy and findings reported from each
Mixed Methods Evaluation (R/ES-MME)	Evaluation of a program or intervention using both strands	Clearly specified evaluation measures and integrated findings
Scoping Review (R/ES-SR)	Structured mapping of literature on a defined topic	A documented search strategy, inclusion/exclusion criteria, and clearly reported mapping results
Systematic Review (R/ES-SYS)	Comprehensive, reproducible literature synthesis with quality appraisal	A reproducible search process, inclusion/exclusion criteria, a quality appraisal step, and synthesized findings
Narrative Review (R/ES-NR)	Structured but non-systematic synthesis of the literature	A clear organizing framework and implications drawn from the literature reviewed
Document Analysis (R/ES-DA)	Existing documents serve as the primary data source	A described document selection and analytic strategy, with findings grounded in the documents themselves
Historical-Policy Analysis (R/ES-HPA)	Analysis of developments in policy, systems, or practice over time	Use of documentary/archival sources and clear implications for policy or practice
Qualitative Case Study (R/ES-QCS)	In-depth investigation of a specific case, institution, or program	A clearly bounded case, described data sources, and a discussion of transferability and limitations

3.2 Group B — Innovation and Implementation Reports

These categories suit applied, practice-based, and programmatic work — where the contribution lies in what was built, implemented, or tried, more than in original data collection and analysis.

Implementation or Practice Report (IPR)

For manuscripts describing the implementation of a program, intervention, or initiative, together with what was learned along the way.

A strong submission in this category typically includes:

- A clear description of what was implemented, where, with whom, and over what period
- An honest account of the implementation process, including challenges and adaptations
- Some form of outcome or evaluation information, even if observational or qualitative
- A discussion of lessons learned and their implications for practice

How this differs from nearby categories: Does not require a formal research methodology, but does call for documented evidence of what happened when the initiative was put into practice — which is what sets it apart from a Program Description.

Program Description (PD)

For manuscripts documenting the design and rationale of an educational program, curriculum, or initiative.

A strong submission in this category typically includes:

- A clear statement of the program's goals and design rationale
- A description of the target population, setting, and scope
- An account of how the program was developed — theoretical framework, needs assessment, or stakeholder input
- Formative or preliminary evaluation, where available

How this differs from nearby categories: Centers on what was designed, rather than on implementation outcomes (Implementation or Practice Report) or on the novelty of the approach itself (Educational Innovation).

Educational Innovation (EI)

For manuscripts documenting a novel teaching approach, curriculum design, tool, technology, or method in health professions education.

A strong submission in this category typically includes:

- A clear description of the innovative element and how it differs from existing approaches
- The rationale for the innovation — the gap or need it addresses
- A description of how the innovation was developed and/or tried
- Evidence of feasibility, acceptability, or early outcomes — observational or experience-based evidence is entirely appropriate here

How this differs from nearby categories: Puts the novelty of the approach itself at the center, and does not require a formal research design — appropriate when insights are drawn from practice and experience rather than a designed evaluation.

Case Report / Case Series (CR/CS)

For a detailed account of one or more specific cases — a patient encounter, an institutional situation, or a single-site implementation — from which useful lessons can be drawn.

A strong submission in this category typically includes:

- A detailed, structured account of the case(s)

- A clear statement of why the case is of scholarly interest
- Analysis of what can be learned from it
- A discussion of generalizability and limitations

3.3 Group C — Preliminary and Developmental Work

These categories give real, valuable early-stage work a genuine route into print, ahead of a fuller archival contribution.

Pilot Study (PS)

A small-scale, exploratory study testing feasibility, or generating preliminary findings where little or no prior data exist. A Pilot Study includes actual findings — even preliminary ones — which is what sets it apart from Work-in-Progress.

A strong submission in this category typically includes:

- An explicit acknowledgment that the work is preliminary or exploratory
- A description of the pilot design, sample, and methods, even at small scale
- Reported pilot findings, even if descriptive or preliminary
- A clear statement of what the pilot was intended to test or demonstrate
- A discussion of implications for future, larger-scale research

This is often the right category when the sample is small, the work reflects a first implementation, or the authors themselves describe the design as exploratory.

Work-in-Progress / Early-Stage Study (WIP)

For research that is genuinely underway but not yet complete. Where a manuscript does not yet include reported results, this is usually the strongest and most accurate category.

A strong submission in this category typically includes:

- A clear statement of what stage the work has reached
- A description of the research design and objectives
- Preliminary data or early observations, where available
- A clear account of what remains to be done, and the expected next steps

This category fits naturally when a manuscript says that results will be shared or presented in due course, that a formal evaluation has not yet taken place, or that current observations are anecdotal rather than systematically collected.

Research Protocol (RP)

For manuscripts presenting the design of a planned or recently initiated study, where the design itself is the scholarly contribution.

A strong submission in this category typically includes:

- A fully developed study design, including rationale, objectives, methods, and analysis plan
- Ethical approval, or a statement that approval is pending
- A clear statement that data collection is planned or ongoing, rather than complete

Early Idea Dissemination (EID)

For genuinely early ideas, conceptual provocations, or emerging thinking that is not yet a full scholarly contribution but is well worth sharing with the community at this stage.

A strong submission in this category typically includes:

- A clear articulation of the idea or question being raised

- Some grounding in relevant literature or context
- A statement of why the idea is worth discussing now

3.4 Group D — Non-Empirical and Conceptual Work

Conceptual or Perspective Paper (CPP)

For manuscripts presenting a conceptual framework, argument, perspective, critique, or synthesis of ideas — original empirical data are not required.

A strong submission in this category typically includes:

- A clearly articulated thesis, argument, or perspective
- Engagement with the relevant existing literature
- A logically coherent and internally consistent argument
- A discussion of implications for practice, policy, education, or future research

This is often the strongest fit when a manuscript offers a synthesis or critique of existing ideas rather than new data, or when work originally framed as empirical does not, in fact, include original findings.

4. Recommended Length by Category

Two broad length guides apply across the categories above.

Length guide	Categories	Recommended range
Full, standalone contribution	Research/Empirical Study (all sub-types), Implementation or Practice Report, Program Description, Educational Innovation, Case Report/Case Series, Pilot Study, Conceptual/Perspective Paper	Approximately 1,000–2,000 words
Abbreviated contribution	Work-in-Progress / Early-Stage Study, Research Protocol, Early Idea Dissemination	Approximately 500–1,000 words

These figures describe a comfortable minimum, not a ceiling. If your revision needs more space to fully describe your methodology, your findings, or the evidence behind your conclusions, please use it — a complete, well-supported manuscript is always preferred over a shorter one that leaves out necessary detail. Word count should serve your content, not the other way around.

5. Principles We Apply Consistently

A few consistent principles sit behind every category recommendation. Knowing them can help you decide which category fits your work, and how to strengthen your revision.

5.1 Findings Are Often the Clearest Signal of Fit

What a manuscript's findings look like at the time of submission is often the single clearest indicator of which category fits best:

What the findings look like	Category that often fits well
No results yet, or results still to come	Work-in-Progress / Early-Stage Study
Preliminary findings from a small-scale or first implementation	Pilot Study
Informal insights drawn from practice or educator experience	Educational Innovation
Full, complete empirical findings with a defined design	Research/Empirical Study or Short Paper

For manuscripts submitted as Short Papers, the absence of reported findings is one of the most common reasons a different category — usually Work-in-Progress — turns out to be the better fit.

5.2 Describing Your Method, Not Just Naming It

Naming a well-known method — thematic analysis, mixed methods, factor analysis, a named coding framework, focus groups — is a good start, but reviewers look for a description of how it was actually applied: how data were collected, how categories or themes were developed, and how conclusions were reached. A few added sentences on process are often all it takes to strengthen this part of a manuscript considerably.

5.3 Keeping Conclusions in Step with Your Evidence

The strongest manuscripts scale their conclusions to match their evidence — a small or exploratory study supports modest, carefully bounded conclusions, while broader claims call for correspondingly broader evidence. Where a manuscript's conclusions reach further than its data, gently narrowing the claims (rather than removing them) is usually the most effective revision.

5.4 Including an Ethics Statement

Nearly every category expects a short statement of ethical approval, or a brief explanation of why formal approval was not required for the work described. This is one of the easiest elements to add and one of the most consistently requested.

6. Publication and Presentation Are Separate

The categories, criteria, and revision requests described in this guide apply to publication in the Aesculapius / INHWE Proceedings. They do not apply to your conference presentation.

You are welcome to present your work at INHWE exactly as planned. The category and revision process concerns only whether, and in what form, your written manuscript is subsequently published in the archival Proceedings — a separate step that follows your presentation, rather than a condition of it.

7. Questions Authors Often Ask

7.1 Is there an example I can look at, or a previous issue I can refer to?

The category descriptions in Section 3 set out exactly what a strong submission includes, and most authors find this sufficient to structure a revision. Unfortunately, we cannot provide examples at this time.

7.2 What is expected for an Educational Innovation submission, and how long should it be?

Section 3.2 sets out what a strong Educational Innovation submission includes: a description of the innovation and its novelty, the gap it addresses, how it was developed or tried, and evidence of feasibility, acceptability, or early outcomes. As a full, standalone contribution, it fits the 1,000–2,000 word guide in Section 4 — treated as a comfortable minimum rather than a limit. There is no fixed heading structure required; organizing the revision under clear headings such as background, description of the innovation, development process, and outcomes works well.

7.3 Are these revisions for my presentation, or for the published version — over and above the presentation?

For the published version only, as set out in Section 6. Your presentation at INHWE is unaffected.

7.4 My letter says my submission does not currently meet criteria — what does that mean for me?

It means this particular manuscript needs more substantial revision than the current cycle's timeline allows, not that the underlying work lacks value. We warmly encourage a thorough revision and a resubmission to a future cycle, and we would be glad to see it — and any future work — come back to us when it is ready.

8. In Closing

We appreciate the scholarly effort and dedication that goes into every submission to the Aesculapius / INHWE Proceedings. Wherever your manuscript lands within this category system, we see it as a genuine and valued contribution to the field, and we look forward to supporting it through to publication — and to receiving your future work in the cycles ahead.

Sincerely,
The Editorial Team
Aesculapius / INHWE Proceedings