

## Instructions for Authors

### Mission

Publications of the IFMSA publish analysis, review articles and informed commentaries on subjects of the following fields: medical education, public health, exchanges of medical students, reproductive health, refugees and peace, natural and human-caused diseases and large-scale abuses of human rights.

### Guidelines for authors

You are already on the right track by having shown the enthusiasm to get involved in the Publications of the IFMSA and by looking at these guidelines to assist you write your article!

The best way to start is to inquire yourself why you want to write something for a publication of the IFMSA. Do you have a message you wish to spread to your colleagues across the globe? Do you think that it is important and that it will interest them? If so, which publication of the IFMSA is the right place for your article?

If you can satisfy yourself with the answers to these questions then the next step is to write your article for the appropriate publication of the IFMSA. Medical Student International (MSI), e-VAGUS and the Annual Reports are the three official publications of the IFMSA. Each of them has its own characteristics and scopes. Below are the guidelines for the articles published in the publications of the IFMSA and the characteristics and the scopes of each one of them.

### General Advice for Authors

If you are still unsure about the subject you want to write about, or feel like you need more advice, contact the editors at: [publications@ifmsa.org](mailto:publications@ifmsa.org) or by telephone.

Look at past issues of MSI, e-VAGUS, or Annual Reports of past years (they can be found in our archive on [www.ifmsa.org/publications](http://www.ifmsa.org/publications)) to get an idea of the style of writing we tend to publish. Remember that publications of the IFMSA are for a broad international readership of general interest medical students. Therefore try to keep it right, give detail but do not get too technical. Moreover articles have to be concise, using as less of IFMSA "jargon" as possible, and in unavoidable cases, it will need afterwards a short explanation or spell out of initials. An one page article normally not to exceed 850 words; two-page articles not to exceed 1700 words.

In any case, articles must include the following parts:

#### Subtopic

It is a one-line sentence, before the main title, it may be connected to the Title, but it should not end by any punctuation sign: all headlines are independent sentences regarding punctuation grammar rules.

#### Headings

It is the main sentence of the article. It will condition if your reader keeps the interest in continuing reading or not. The shorter and more concise the heading is, the better. In some cases, you will have to use 2 lines for a title, but it should not become a rule. Headings, as well as all other titles should be typed in normal case, i.e.: capital letters are only giving more work to the editors, since they will have to re-type them.

#### Subtitles

Subtitles are intended to "break monotony" in a continuous text. They may indicate different sections in a given article. If the writer does not propose some of them, the editors will put them themselves.

As a thumb rule: subtitles must never be prior to the first two body texts paragraphs. Subtitles do not end by a full stop either; they may go in two lines, but on single line is better.

#### Punctuation rules

"," ";" ":" and ":" are attached to the last word before and leave a single space after the next word. Example: "The requirements to participate a refugee project are: being a medical student within the clinical period, having enough language skills, etc." Dots ("...") should not be abused. Dash ("-") is attached to the word it follows -thus, this way.

No layout, please!!

Submitted texts should absolutely not include any kind of layout. Only plain text please. No different font sizes, or font typefaces. Publications of the IFMSA have their own styles. We demand from writers to put all their energy on the text contents, and save all their energies for that. If they do otherwise, they will make editors to lose their own energy in re-styling the articles. Use of tabulators (tabs) is also considered as an attempt of editing layout, so you better don't do it!! The same applies for text already put in columns with your word processor. Be aware that the text you edit with your word processor will be imported to a different software program, so most of your "additions" to the text will be lost or simply create troubles for a proper homogeneous layout; be also aware that there are many different writers for the magazine, and every one will try their best layout... their own different way. You have an editor responsible for that, so let us insist not to get into someone else's job. Only changes to the plain text that we could accept is the use of italics and bold texts on the body text. Never use them on titles, subtitles or entries.

#### Abbreviations

The use of standard, widely recognized abbreviations, units and acronyms is acceptable; the first usage of any abbreviation should be preceded by the full word or name for which it stands.

## References

Only published and accessible references may be listed as references, such as books, articles, chapters, theses, accepted manuscripts and the like. Use standard abbreviations of journal names as established by the National Library of the USA. Journal Citations: List all authors when six or fewer; when seven or more, list the first three and add et al: Abraham HL, Von Kaenan WE. Medical problems of survivors of nuclear war: infection and the spread of communicable diseases. *N Engl J Med* 1981;305:1221-1332

Book Citations: List all authors and editors, when six or fewer; list only first three when seven or more, and add et al: Guyton A. *Human Physiology and Mechanisms of Disease*, W. B. Saunders Company, 1982

## Additional texts

These include: photo footers, photo credits, signature and contact addresses. All additional texts should be in the end of the article text file that you provide the editor.

## Photo footers

Photo footers should be suggested always that you have specific pictures provided with your article. They should not exceed 14 words. Punctuation rules apply to photo footers, therefore, they always end with a full stop.

## Signature

It indicates the author(s) of the article. It ought to indicate the medical school at which the author studies and the nationality of the author(s) in brackets. For instance: "Wigs Bateman, Technical University of Munich (Germany). If he/she holds a position within IFMSA or any National/Local Committee, the position should appear on a second line of the signature. For example: Pat Major, University of Michigan (USA)

National Public Health Officer of the IFMSA- USA

## Contact addresses

They should go at the very end, indicating mail address and possible home pages

## Saving your article

Usually, you will write your article with the word processor that you frequently use, but it will have to be exported after by the editor to the magazine layout. You have to bear in mind that some of the file formats cannot be exported, so IFMSA came to a "software consensus" in order to make exchange of files the easiest possible.

## Check spelling!

The editors receive some 30 different article contributions for each magazine, so it is kind of complicated and heterogeneous bulk of information. The easier you make it for them, the more they will concentrate on other things, like doing a nice layout, etc. We do not expect to have Shakespeare's style of writing, but you should be at least a little careful in grammar and spelling/typing mistakes. The publications of the IFMSA use as standard dictionary the "UK Medical English", so, it is advisable that you use the "UK English" dictionary in your word processor whenever possible. Otherwise, any English dictionary is better than nothing.

## Save it as...

So, you will have your written article ready, and now you will click on the "Save as.." file menu option and use the following format: Word 2000 or 1997 for Windows. If you use any other file format or your word processor is not able to convert into any of the recommended ones, you will have to contact the editors in advance to find out if your file will be readable.

## Look for viruses!!

Before sending your article, do a virus scan on the article text

file with a reliable (i.e.: less than 3 months old) virus scanner in a reliable computer. An editor's computer crash may mean not only the loss of 3 weeks work, but even more the loss of important information and files.

Now it is ready to be sent, together with the other materials attached to the article.

## Visual Aids

MSI, e-VAGUS and the Annual Reports of the IFMSA are very visual publications, and an image is worth a thousand words. Therefore, your article will not be completed without an image.

## Charts

Charts done with a spreadsheet or database (like Excel or FileMaker) need to be done in grayscale, in order to be sure they will display properly in a possible black and white publication. Standard format for charts can be produced by most software programs and saved with the \*.cht extension. If there is more than one chart in your article, you will have to number them and refer to them on your body text indicating the number in brackets. E.g.: "(see chart 3)". Charts need either to have a title, explaining their contents, or a short explanation given as photo footer, or both.

## Tables

Most word processors allow production of quite powerful tables, but this is not easily exportable to the desktop publisher later. Therefore, we recommend you to include tables in a different file or at the end of the article. If there is more than one table in your article, you will have to number them and refer to them on your body text indicating the number in brackets. E.g.: "(see table 5)". Tables need either to have a title, explaining their contents, or a short explanation given as a photo footer, or both.

## Pictures

Pictures are the most powerful and commonly used visual aid for the publications of the IFMSA. Original shots need to be of good quality in resolution, light, focus, etc. We advice to provide the editors with electronic version of colour pictures. Pictures will be filed to be used in future in other IFMSA publications. Please follow the following guidelines concerning the recommended size and file types of photographs in order to confirm that your photos are printable!

Size: For a standard paper copy (10x15 cm.) you will have to set your scanner resolution for an average of 200-300 DPIs (dots per inch); if you propose your picture to be on the cover, resolution should be the maximum your scanner allows. Resolution of pictures sent to be e-published in e-VAGUS ought to be 50-100 DPIs.

File types: Standard file format and the golden standard of the publications of the IFMSA is the Tagged Information File Format (TIFF). This is the most recommended file type.

If you plan to send it to the editors by e-mail, in order to make transmission faster, we advice you to use a file type with smaller sizes, like GIF or JPEG. Pay special attention in this case to the resolution (DPIs) you use, and make it bigger, to ensure that your photo will display correctly. Please refer to the last section of "articles" to learn about how to credit a photo and proposing footers.

**© Portions of MSI, e-VAGUS, Annual Reports may be reproduced for non-political, and non profit purposes mentioning the source provided. NOTICE: Every care has been taken in the preparation of these articles. Nevertheless, errors cannot always be avoided. The IFMSA cannot accept any responsibility for any liability. The opinions expressed in the publications of the IFMSA are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the IFMSA.**