



Australian  
Music  
Therapy  
Association

## AJMT Author Instructions

**Editor: Imogen N. Clark**

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Available: <https://www.austmta.org.au/content/instructions-authors>

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### 1. General guidelines

The journal publishes articles which will further the research and practice of music therapists. Before submitting to AJMT, please read articles in previous volumes to acquaint yourself with the content of the journal and the style of authorship. The requisite components of the manuscripts include:

- Manuscripts are accepted in English with Australian spelling and punctuation used consistently throughout. Please use the Macquarie Dictionary for confirmation
- The word limit for articles is typically 5000 – 6000 words for an original research article (exclusive of figures and references). Practice articles are usually 3000 – 4500 words. Manuscripts that greatly exceed the suggested limits will be critically reviewed with respect to length
- Abstracts of 200-250 words are required for all manuscripts submitted
- Each manuscript should have 3 to 6 keywords
- The referencing style is American Psychological Association Version 7 (APA7) in keeping with other music therapy publications
- Please ensure all ethics and consent processes for the inclusion of data about clients is included
- In writing your manuscript, you are encouraged to review relevant articles previously published in the Australian Journal of Music Therapy and, where you feel it is appropriate you may reference them. This will enhance context, coherence and continuity for our readers.
- Non-discriminatory language is mandatory for all manuscripts. Sexist or racist terms should not be used. Australian conventions will be used (editors will assist with this).

### 2. Genre Characteristics

The Journal publishes empirical, theoretical and practice-based articles, with different guidelines and expectations being associated with each.

- Research articles may include quantitative, qualitative and mixed methodology empirical studies, and systematic literature reviews or meta-analyses)
- Theoretical papers may propose novel theoretical concepts or provide a synthesis of theoretical perspectives from allied disciplines
- Practice articles describe and contextualise practice within the international literature

### 2.1 Research articles

As a general guide for all types of research, we urge authors to follow the IMRaD principle whenever relevant, or to explain otherwise. IMRaD (Introduction, Methods, Results [and] Discussion).

*Introduction:* Develop the focus of the investigation, review pertinent literature, and state the aim of the work.

*Method:* Locate the methodology within, or across paradigms (e.g. interpretivist, objectivist etc) and describe the method used in detail so that the author/s' relationship to the data is clarified either through transparency or calculation and readers are able to grasp exactly how the study was conducted.

*Results:* Present sufficient representative empirical material to provide adequate justification for the interpretations that will be drawn out in subsequent discussion.

*Discussion:* Discuss principles and relationships and point out exceptions. Show agreement or disagreement with relevant published research work. Discuss implications of the study findings for future research and/or practice.

*Conclusion:* Provide a distinct closing to the paper that summarises what the paper has

proposed, discussed and concluded and reinforces the significance of the work.

All research articles should convey a strong sense of audience “giving the reader the information they need in a logical sequence that anticipates their questions, thereby facilitating their ability to effectively and efficiently critique and interpret the information.”[1] All authors should aspire to achieve fluency and economy of expression and to follow established scholarly principles of orderly and clear presentation.

Please see the APA7 Publication Manual for a detailed explanation of the structures and expectations of articles using quantitative methodologies.

### 2.2 Theoretical articles

This genre includes papers that prioritise theoretical reflections as the focus of the article. This is most commonly achieved through: a) reviewing existing empirical and theoretical literature to present an integration of, or new perspective on existing theory; or, b) using data, previous literature, and expert perspectives to develop and propose original theory.

For example, literature reviews may make an original contribution to the music therapy discipline by integrating scholarly writing from the interdisciplinary literature and developing original perspectives on how this might influence music therapy practice. Literature reviews should be critical and comprehensive within the established focus for the article. They may incorporate case descriptions from music therapy practice to illustrate how theoretical perspectives influence our understanding of practice, however they should be concerned with existing literature in the main.

Original theoretical contributions may be grounded in data collected through research, be

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[1] Taken from Halstead, The writer's challenge: Credibility, argument and structure in public health writing: Public Health, Harvard University.

informed by prior theory, or may be an informed reflection on music therapy practice that is clearly located in an expert perspective. Original theoretical contributions are expected to include an elaborate rationale for the proposal of new ideas and make adequate reference to existing, contemporary theories – either within or beyond music therapy literature.

### 2.3 Practice articles

This genre includes case reports and reflections on music therapy methods that convey practice wisdom and local knowledge. In order to ensure that practice articles are scholarly, the following guidelines have been developed as a guide for new authors, or for those who are considering the development of an article that meets the expectations of this genre. These guidelines are used by reviewers in considering the article for publication, and are different to the expectations of research or theoretical articles. It is hoped that the development of this genre will encourage insightful and engaged music therapists to reflect on their work and to share their experience and knowledge about music therapy practice with our readership.

#### 2.3.1 Overall Structure

In order for the article to be accessible to readers, it is important to have an overall structure that clarifies the purpose of the article. The use of headings and sub-headings are very useful for readers/reviewers and should be used to highlight the different sections of the text. The purpose of the article should be clearly stated in the abstract and the introduction, and referred to frequently within the text. The author's perspective on practice will usually be a part of this purpose.

#### 2.3.2 Orientation to Music Therapy

Because this genre values the author's perspective of their practice, it is important that this is made clear in the article. An important way of achieving this clarity in perspective is through the use of music therapy literature, and theories in particular. When writing the article,

describe what literature has influenced your thinking about this topic. Explain how your ideas match the existing literature or challenge it.

#### 2.3.3 The Literature

It is important to explain your practice with reference to current literature on music therapy. Current is usually understood to be material published in the last 10 years, unless it is considered to be seminal, and have lasting implications for the field. It is common to have at least 20 references to the literature in your article, but you should be selective, not exhaustive, in choosing studies to cite in your article and in deciding on the amount of detail to include. In general, the more relevant an article is to your study, the more space it deserves and the later in the Introduction it appears. You should identify what contemporary literature is the most relevant and use it as one way of explaining the context of your practice. If the reviewers are aware of material that you have not included, they will recommend that you include it when they ask you to do further work on the article.

#### 2.3.4 The organisational context

Because you are offering a perspective on music therapy practice, it is important that you outline the institution or community context that you work in so that the reader is able to understand the everyday influences on your thinking. Cultural context also has an influence on the way you present your work, whether this is related to a particular country, the cultural backgrounds of the people you work with, or the organisational culture that you work within. Reflecting on how this influences your thinking is important in offering your perspective.

#### 2.3.5 Description and Explanation of Practice

Descriptions of music therapy practice need to provide sufficient depth for the reader to be able to understand the experience. This may be through a single case study or through the description of a music therapy method that has been used with a range of people. In any case, it is important that the story is conveyed in a way

that clarifies your interpretation of how music therapy happened, and what it meant. It may be relevant to describe the music therapy experience in depth and then provide a separate explanation of what was interesting or meaningful about that experience for you, for the people involved, or for the reader. It is important to distinguish between personal beliefs about practice, and ideas that have developed from the literature in this section. Be clear about what are your opinions and what are the opinions of the other people involved. If this is not clear, the reviewers will provide you with suggestions about how to gain greater clarity in writing this section.

### 2.3.6 Conclusion

Provide a distinct closing to the paper that summarises what the paper has proposed, discussed and concluded. Your opinions should be restated and the most important points reiterated.

### 3. Submission

Please use the following steps in ensuring a blind review of your submission:

1. Delete all author names from the text. As needed in the text, replace the author's name with "the author".
2. Remove specific names of facilities, committees, government departments. Replace with an appropriate word such as [hospital name]. For instance, "This study was approved by the [hospital name] ethics Board."
3. With Microsoft Office documents, author identification should be removed from the properties for the file (see under File in Word), by clicking on the following, beginning with File on the main menu of the Microsoft application: File > Save As > Tools (or Options with a Mac) > Security > Remove personal information from file properties on save > Save.
4. With PDFs, the authors' names should also be removed from Document Properties found under File on Adobe Acrobat's main menu.

5. Please submit your manuscript as a Word document to the Editor of AJMT at [ajmt@austmta.org.au](mailto:ajmt@austmta.org.au)

### 4. Review Process

The editor first determines if the manuscript fits the purpose of the journal to further the research and practice of music therapists. Then the manuscript is sent to two reviewers. The reviewers will be music therapists registered with the Australian Music Therapy Association, or international experts who have knowledge about either the field of practice, the methods being described, or the orientation of the author.

The reviewers will provide feedback to the editor. This is a double-blind process. So all identifying elements must be removed from the manuscript before it is submitted. See No 3. above.

### 5. Copyright

You are required to sign over copyright to the Australian Journal of Music Therapy in order for your publication to go to press. This is a legal agreement between yourself as author and the Journal as publisher. As author, you agree that that you are the sole author/s of the article; that the article is original, unpublished and does not infringe upon any statutory copyright or upon any common law right, propriety right, or any other right whatsoever. In return, you are granted limited rights to use all or part of the article in future non-journal works of your own publication, such as lectures, book reviews and textbooks. Any extensions upon this need to be renegotiated through the editor of the journal.

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