

Table 3, Developing and organising content

| Heading | Activities | Content |
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| What triggered the project (Introduction) | Was this inspired by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue arising from practice/patient interaction • Evidence from audit of practice • Controversy in the literature • Unanswered research question • Need to evaluate whether a service had improved | Provide general context and discuss the scale and scope of the issue so that the reader can appreciate the nature of the problem and understand the relevance to their practice or profession. If the subject has an international perspective, make this evident and include sources from other countries to stress this. Identify any conflicts and tensions within the literature and or in practice. |
| What is known about the topic (Background/Literature review) | Articulate clearly and simply what is known and understood about the topic | First discuss existing published work so that you can explain what is known about the subject, before presenting what is 'unknown on the topic' and the key unanswered questions in the area. The content of the background section should be framed to justify the aim of your paper and/or the research question and therefore the research design adopted, so that the reader can get a sense of the novelty of your ideas/work. |
| What did I do? (Methods) | This might be one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of the literature to explore a specific issue, for example by evaluating the evidence around non-pharmacological techniques for atrial fibrillation • An audit or service evaluation designed and conducted to assess change against agreed standards. • A trial, designed to evaluate a nurse led intervention against standard care. | Provide clear and concise details on the approach that you applied to address the aim of your paper or the research question posed in any study undertaken. Whether this is a service improvement/evaluation project, a systematic literature review, a national survey or a qualitative study, report the processes you employed in detail so that there is an audit trail of your approach. This should include securing favourable ethical review, where appropriate. The |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A qualitative study designed and conducted to understand more about the experiences of women discharged with heart failure. | content here is focused, but it should provide sufficient information for the reader to understand the methods used. |
| What did I uncover (Results/Findings) | Reporting the results either numerically or in word format. | Whether you are reporting numerical or textual data, avoid making judgements or analysing, this should be confined to the discussion. The word allowance may vary depending on whether the paper reports from a quantitative or qualitative study, so check this. The use of figures or tables is a helpful way of summarising data simply and visually. |
| What does it add and mean (Discussion/Implications) | You distil/synthesise the evidence discussed and present the implications for practice, research, education or policy. | Begin with specific issues and progress to wider implications. The section should begin by revising the aims and present the extent to which these have been achieved. There should be a review of the results or findings compared to previous studies in the area (as outlined earlier) and assessing how these confirm, challenge or refute existing evidence. If there are striking differences with other studies, you must try and explain this. Provide an assessment of the implications for the profession and also acknowledge the limitations in a clear and transparent manner. Your recommendations for the future should be balanced, appropriate and focused. Refer to results and findings to make your point but avoid repeating these. |
| Conclusion | Summary | Provide a concise conclusion, pulling together the key issues and key take away messages. |

Table 2, Setting activities, word count and timetabling writing plan

Weeks

| Activity | Approximate Word count | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
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| Write Background | 200-250 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Write Literature review | 400-500 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Write Methods | 300 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Write Results (Quantitative) (tables/figures) | 300 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Findings (Qualitative) (textual quotations) | 600-900 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Write Discussion (include limitations, implications and recommendations) | 800-900 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Write Conclusion | 100 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Proof read/edit | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Quantitative paper 2000 words

Qualitative paper 3000+ words

(actual word counts will vary from journal to journal; you should check the guidance for authors for your preferred journal before you start to plan)

