

Central Eurasian Studies Society (CESS)

Guidelines for Writing CESS Conference Paper Abstracts

The paper abstracts will be published at the time of the conference and therefore must be of publishable quality and must represent your paper well. They are also the primary basis upon which the program committee selects papers for inclusion in the program, and if you do not write a good abstract, the chances of your inclusion in the program are small, since we receive many more proposals than it is possible to accommodate in the program. For those who may be less familiar with conference paper abstracts, we offer the following as a guide.

An abstract is a very brief summary of key aspects of your paper. An abstract is *not* a description of the paper or an introduction to the paper. Your abstract should be 250 to 400 words (abstracts longer than 400 words may be rejected by the selection committee with no further consideration) and should include the following information:

The topic of your paper.

Your research method and/or sources.

Your *specific* argument and/or central findings so that anyone who reads the abstract will know what the results of your research are.

The relevance of your argument or findings to a larger body of scholarly literature.

Important:

Below is an example of a very good abstract from the 2001 CESS Annual Conference (submitted by Steven Duke; word count: 173 -- note that, at that time, the maximum word limit was 200):

This paper focuses on the development of schools for Tatars, Mordvinians, Ukrainians, and Germans in Saratov Province (Guberniia) from 1865 to 1895. These schools included two and three-class schools run by the Ministry of Education, confessional schools (Muslim, Orthodox, Catholic, and Lutheran), and locally supported public schools. I argue that this section of the Middle Volga region experienced a significant expansion in the number of schools available and the number of pupils attending those schools in the last few decades of the nineteenth century, although significant challenges remained to the expansion of literacy and educational opportunities for the non-Russian population. In contrast to standard interpretations, I argue that many communities were successful in exercising local initiative in their educational affairs; as a result, they experienced much more local autonomy than the Ministry of Education preferred. This paper is based on published materials, including a four-volume study by the Saratov Provincial Academic Archeographical Commission, and on archival materials from the Saratov State Historical Archive.