

## Considerations for the Publications of Committees

*Prior to drafting the publication, it would be helpful to consider the following:*

1. Is the purpose clear?
2. Is it relevant and makes a meaningful contribution to actuarial literature?
3. Does this fulfill a need for FMAs?
4. Is there a risk of it being perceived as promotional or defensive?
5. Are there sensitive issues involved in addressing this topic (e.g., political or national concerns)?

*After a publication has been drafted, it would be helpful to consider the following:*

6. Is the presentation clear and concise in accordance with the Readability Guidelines (see below)?
7. Is the content consistent with the vision, mission and values of the IAA, the expertise of the authoring committee, and other IAA publications on the same or similar subject?
8. Does the scope and tone reflect integrity, objectivity and professionalism?
9. Is it clear who the intended audience is?
10. Is it actuarial in nature and grounded in actuarial science and principles?

### **Guidelines for Readable Papers**

Papers written by IAA Committees are intended for a broad audience of readers. While, the papers are presented in English, many readers are non-native English speakers. In order to enhance the value of the papers for all readers, it is important that papers be prepared in a manner that is understandable and readable for the entire audience.

Readability is the ease with which a reader can understand a written text. The readability of a text depends on its content and presentation. Higher readability eases reading effort and speed for any reader. It is especially important for those who are not fully at ease with the language in which

the text is written. Raising the readability of a text to a higher level can make the difference between success and failure of its communication goals.

Below are some suggestions to authors of papers for enhancing readability:

1. *Structure the content in a way that is logical and easy to understand.* While it is easier to place thoughts in the paper as they occur to the author, a significant amount of additional work may be required to organize the thoughts such that they are logical and easy to understand. In particular, authors should consider adopting the standard format of:
  - *Executive Summary*
  - *Discussion*
  - *Conclusion*
  - *Appendices (if any)*
2. *Focus on the issues that are relevant.* The purpose of the paper is to convey thoughts about a specific set of topics. Discussion of tangential issues should be deferred to additional papers.
3. *Express matters simply ("Write what you mean and mean what you write").* Direct and straightforward communication is encouraged.
4. *Use short sentences.* The length of sentences should be scrutinized by the author. Consideration should be given to using multiple sentences when multiple concepts are contained in a sentence. Excessive adjectives, adverbs or supporting phrases should be avoided.
5. *Break down complicated issues into easier-to-follow sub-issues.* Authors should consider limiting each paragraph to one major topic and 4-5 sentences. Clear paragraph headings often aid the reader in understanding the topic of the paragraph. Also, consider utilizing bullet points when a number of items are being listed.
6. *Avoid culturally restricted sayings (e.g., hitting something "for a six/for a home run").* Consideration should be given to the international nature of the intended audience. Words and phrases that are culture-dependent or which may not translate well into another language are discouraged.
7. *Use appendices for detailed material.* Tables of data and supporting lists of items should be considered for appendices to allow the body of the paper to be clear and crisp. Authors should not bog the reader down in details that are not entirely important to the subject.
8. *Minimize use of abbreviations.* Abbreviations, technical phrases, jargon, etc. should be defined clearly and at the first instance at which they occur. Consideration should be given to excluding phrases and jargon that do not add significantly to the content of the paper.
9. *Make the text enjoyable and informative to read.* Authors should consider that the reader may be generally knowledgeable, but not specifically knowledgeable about this topic. A useful approach is to begin with information that people understand before delving more deeply into newer concepts.