

## PURSUIT

### STYLE AND PROCESS GUIDE: ACADEMICS, COMMS AND FACULTIES

**PITCHING A STORY:** The easiest way to pitch a story to *Pursuit* is through our Staff Hub portal: <https://staff.unimelb.edu.au/marketing-communications/communication-media-pursuit/pursuit/submit-a-story>. Once you submit a pitch, it will automatically come through to the *Pursuit* team as well as the communications and media leads in your Faculty. This means everyone is across your pitch and can help support you. Alternatively, you can contact your Faculty's media or communications advisor, who have experience in the process, to pitch over to us if you're unsure.

**BRING YOUR STORY TO LIFE:** Always be thinking about supporting media that can be used to illustrate your story - pictures, graphics, videos or podcasts. It can be anything from iPhone videos and pictures to professionally produced material. Something that might seem 'every day' to you – photos of field work, slides from a microscope or an audio recording from space – can help your audience engage with your story. It can also become a standalone post on social media. For videos and photos, *Pursuit* uses **landscape** (or horizontal, if you're using your phone turn it sideways) pictures, usually higher than 2MB in quality.

We also have an editorial agreement under which we purchase licenced news agency photos at our expense (which **cannot be used for other purposes, like marketing or internal comms**). Please bear that in mind if you have specific photo requests. Sadly, they're not free.

**LENGTH:** The usual length of a *Pursuit* article sits at about 800 words which is an ideal length for our mobile audience to read your article in full. However, it also depends on the type of article and whether the story needs to be told in a longer format. We will discuss this with you at the time the article is commissioned.

**TYPE OF STORY:** We publish several different ways to tell a story: an [article](#), a [Q&A](#) article, a [listicle](#), a [Go Figure](#) (an explanatory article answering a specific question), an [Under the Microscope](#) (focusing on a person), a [slideshow](#) (a picture driven story), a [podcast](#) or a [video](#). How we best tell a story and on what platform depends on the content itself, and the decision will be made in consultation with you.

**LANGUAGE:** The language we use in a *Pursuit* article is intelligent, but also accessible. Avoid complex terminology when it's not relevant – many of your readers will be intellectually curious, but their knowledge of your subject will still be minimal. *Pursuit* articles are not academic papers, they are a 'news feature' version of your paper. So, when you're writing, we ask you to avoid industry-specific jargon and acronyms, and instead approach writing as though you're explaining your expertise to a smart friend over coffee.

**FORMAT:** In academic papers, it's usual to 'show your working' before outlining your findings – writing for *Pursuit* is almost the opposite approach. If you think about the 'headline' of your work, that's what goes first; it's the hook that gets our readers interested and it *usually* sits at the top of the article or at least in the first three paragraphs (there are exceptions). The rest of the article follows from there: *How did you find this? What did the research involve? Who helped? What were the challenges? How could it be applied in the real world? Who's it going to help? Why is this being discovered now? What's its relevance? Who else did you work with? What happens next?*

**HEADLINES:** Headlines are a key part of the story – they're the 'hook' that gets the reader in. *Pursuit*'s format is a **short** headline (unlike academic papers, it doesn't need to include everything your research found. A good exercise is to try and get it down to five or six words). However, we also include a sub-

headline which is about two to three lines long. Our headlines and sub-headlines travel together on Google as a searchable 'unit', so you can include any extra information and key words in your sub-headline.

**PARAGRAPHS:** The bulk of *Pursuit's* audience now reads us on mobile, so our paragraphs are much shorter than you're probably used to. As part of the sub-editing process, we'll often re-format your article to shorter sentences and paragraphs to suit the formatting on mobile devices.

**TONE:** *Pursuit* has been praised as the one of the "[schmickest](#)" content hubs online – what singled us out was that "...the University of Melbourne gets that it is impolite to talk too much about yourself". How we talk about ourselves is important. Aim for a positive rather than triumphal tone.

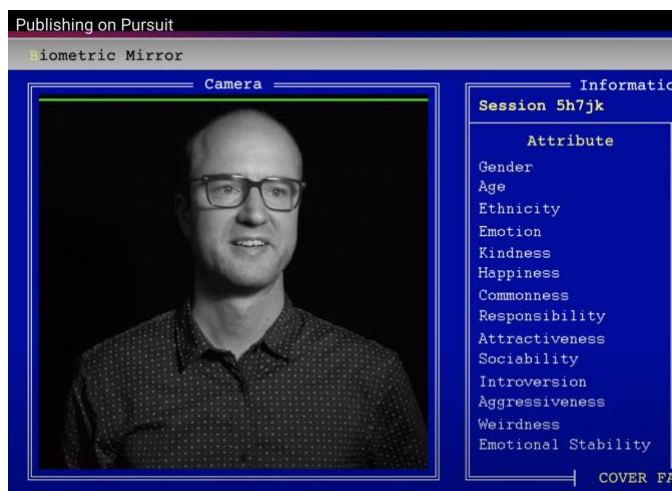
**STYLE:** We write in the present tense as it provides immediacy – "says" rather than "said", "is" rather than "was". We also don't use footnotes. If you're flagging some research, hyperlink to it within the article. And if it's your research, write in the first person. Please use an active voice rather than a passive voice.

**TIMELINESS:** While most of our articles are pitched over to us to time with your research being published, occasionally we'll approach academics to commission an article in their area of expertise to time with the news agenda (some of our [COVID-19 articles](#) were commissioned this way). These are usually quite a fast turnaround (often 24 hours in order to keep up with the news cycle). That said, most articles are pitches – but *Pursuit* won't publish original research articles that aren't already published in a journal and peer reviewed, or if it's an op-ed or working paper, outside your area of expertise.

**YOUR EXPERTISE:** *Pursuit* showcases the excellence of the University and the people who work here. It's first and foremost, a platform for reporting research news and developments, so always err on the side of including more rather than less science, background and original research in your story.

**OUR EXPERTISE:** Our team come from a journalistic background and we're here to help you get your story out there. We can help you write your article in the best possible way to reach a wide audience. Sometimes it will take a couple of drafts to get things right, but it's a collaborative process.

**IMPACT:** In terms of research, we're increasingly becoming aware the importance of the 'real-world' impact of your work in the mainstream. *Pursuit* can help with this, getting your research out there to a broad, lay, international audience beyond the University community. If you'd like to understand more about how we can help, we've put together a video of some of the academics we've worked with over the last couple of years to highlight the how *Pursuit* can reach those important audiences.



## THE PROCESS

Once you get your article draft over to us, it'll go through a sub-editing process to refine and polish it. We view this process as a collaborative one, bringing together your expertise in your area of research and ours as professional journalists. We usually work in a word document tracking any changes as we go so you can see exactly what's being changed. But we can go through several iterations before we get it absolutely right.

That said, nothing is published without your final approval, and sometimes, despite all the work that goes into an article, it may not be right for *Pursuit*. But we can work with you to find the best platform on which to publish your article.

Once we have the article right, we'll work within your commitments and our publishing schedule to confirm a publication time.

## MEDIA ENGAGEMENT:

We also try to get as many of our authors out on the media team's *Expert Alert* morning email, which goes out to a wide database of journalists domestically and internationally. Our articles are often picked up by the mainstream media for republication or interview from this alert, so we'll need to confirm your availability and comfort in dealing with any media enquiries. Media training is available through the central media team or your Faculty media advisors.

## CREATIVE COMMONS:

Pursuit operates under [Creative Commons Attribution-No Derivatives 3.0 Australia \(CC BY-ND 3.0 AU\)](#), so your article can be republished for free, online or in print with clear attribution. However, agency photos purchased under our restricted editorial licence are not included in this agreement.

## QUESTIONS OR QUERIES FOR THE PURSUIT TEAM?

If you'd like more information or want to chat through an idea, you can get in touch with the *Pursuit* team:

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