



AEL

AEL
Submission guidelines, copyright
criteria and publishing agreement



Australian Council for
Educational Leaders



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Educational Leaders

ACEL is a forward-thinking, relevant and responsive agent of change and innovation. As the premier provider of resources and experiences for educational leaders, ACEL's membership continues to expand with a growing network of 25,000 and over 5000 members actively connecting and participating in regular professional learning opportunities.

ACEL actively supports the development of leadership capabilities across Australia, with an extensive calendar of workshops, conferences and networking events, professional development programs, resources library and online bookshop, and a number of professional in-house publications.

ACEL cultivates a collaborative learning community of educational leaders by:

- Enhancing leadership capacity through delivery of high-quality programs, events and publications
- Elevating the standing of educational leadership by recognising excellence
- Representing, supporting and advocating for the education profession
- Sustaining strong state, national and international ACEL networks.

55%

of ACEL members
are principals or
institution heads

40%

are heads of
department, team
leaders or are in
senior teaching
positions

5%

are responsible
for business
management
or providers
of school
consultancy
services

ACEL

Authors are welcome to write on any of the AEL issue themes and may address any aspect of educational leadership and teaching practice.

AEL publishes three main categories of articles: general articles, success stories, and leadership challenges.

General Articles **(2000-2500 words)**

General articles can come from any level of education (e.g., early childhood, primary, secondary, tertiary) and can be of a theoretical, practical, or research-based nature.

Success Stories **(800-2000 words)**

Success stories can focus on school improvement, school development, and innovations in education and can be presented as case studies of leading or teaching excellence.

Leadership Challenge **(1000 - 1500 words)**

This category of article can include challenges faced by leaders at different levels (i.e., middle, senior, emerging) and from different contexts (ie., early childhood centres, schools, universities) as well as reflections on one's own leadership journey.



Submission Criteria

1. Quality and relevance

The content of the article should be current, relevant or topical, unique in focus, and high in quality

2. Appropriate length

Word length varies depending on the category of article

3. Accuracy

Articles need to be grammatically correct, punctuated and spelled accurately, single spaced, and use APA referencing.

AEI

Graphs, Figures & Tables

Images should be .jpg .eps or .png files and should be uploaded as separate files.

Tables should be Excel files and uploaded as separate files.

The source of the figure or table should be cited at the bottom of the figure or table.

Figures, graphs, and tables should be clearly identified by number, and clearly identified with the author's first name, e.g., Figure 1 Smith.jpg

Authors may need to gain permission to reproduce figures, graphs, charts and/or tables or lengthy excerpts of text.

Images are .jpg .eps or .png files and uploaded as separate files, NOT embedded in the manuscript.

Photographs and other .jpg or .png images must be uploaded as **high- resolution** files - 300 dpi [dots per inch] or higher. Low-resolution 72 dpi images as used on the internet are not suitable for reproduction in print.

300 dpi

Image is crisp and clear for print



72 dpi

Image is pixellated and unfit for print



All authors who contribute an article are required to include a photograph of themselves. This photo will be placed at the end of the article along with a short biography.

Bio photographs need to be of a high resolution, be of full colour, and include enough space around the subject's head for cropping.

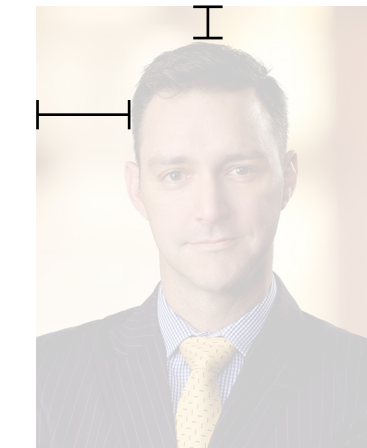


Image Supplied

High-quality full-colour image with enough space around subject's head for cropping.



Image Altered

Once image is approved it will then be converted into a black and white version for print.



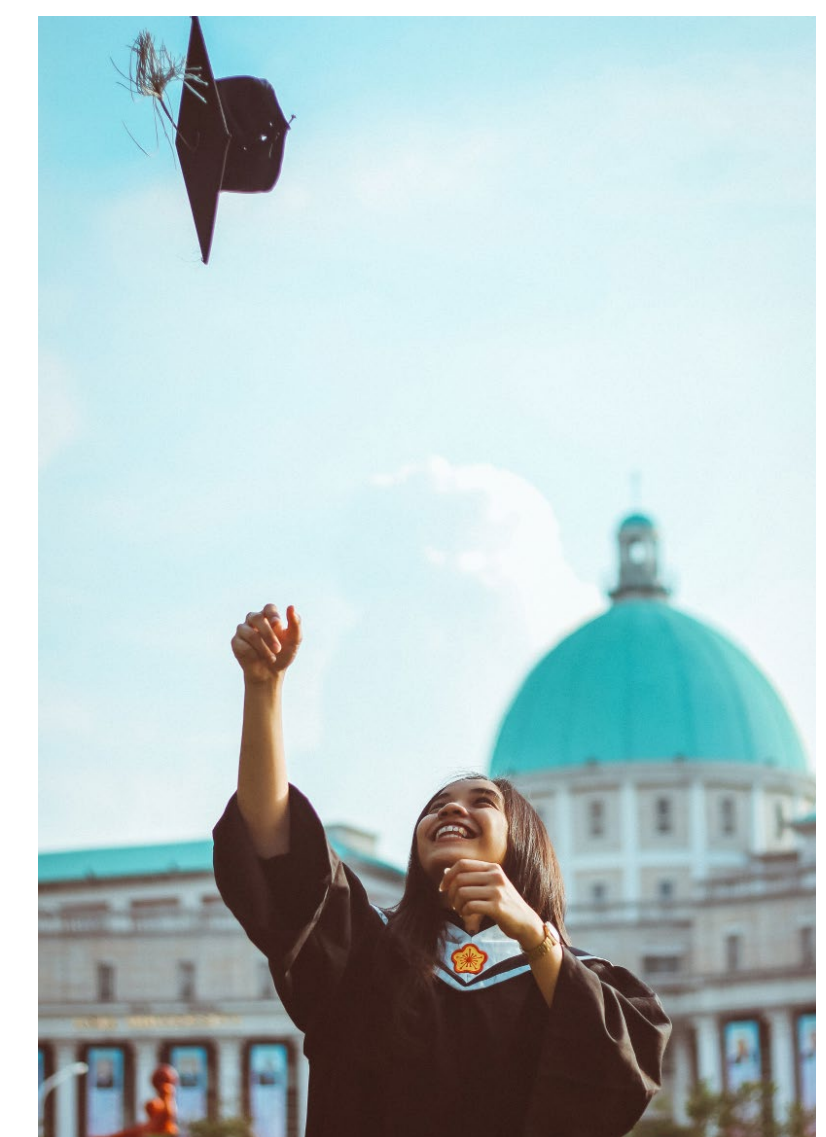
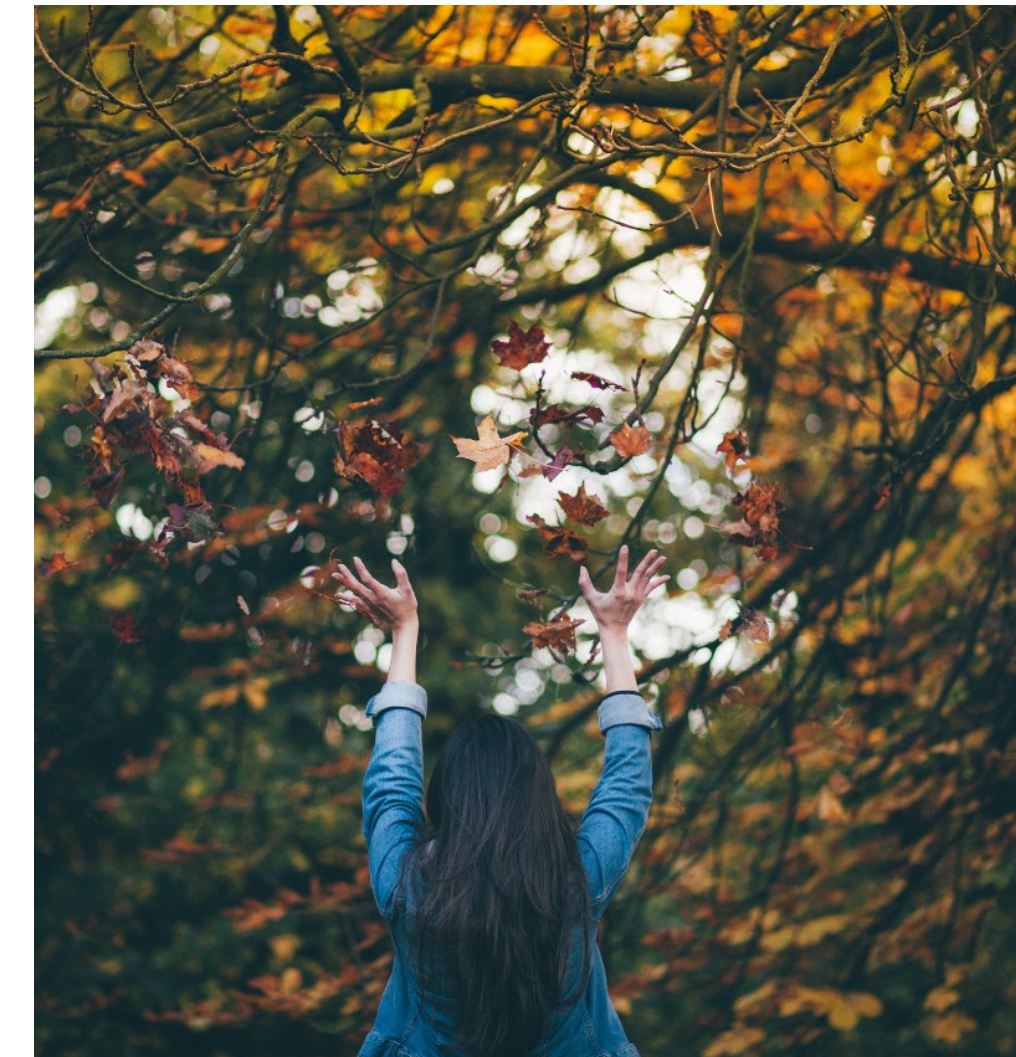
Final Image

Image placed in circle for final version displayed in the journal.

Images used to support articles will need to follow the image guidelines for quality.

Any personal images used within an article must have full approval from individuals involved.

Authors will need to gain permission to reproduce images (such as maps, illustrations, photographs, or other visual data) not owned by the author of the article.





Original Data and Plagiarism

The Editorial Committee has the right to examine the raw data on which the results of a submitted article are based.

All books and other sources for the article need to be referenced appropriately. Failure to appropriately reference may result in an accusation of plagiarism which is considered as literary theft.

Authorship

The order of authorship should be a joint decision of the co-authors. All persons designated as authors should qualify for authorship. Each should have participated sufficiently in the work to take public responsibility for the content.

The Journal uses APA seventh edition for referencing and uses English (AU) spelling. All references should be listed in alphabetical order, by year.

Some examples are below:

In Text

A recent study (Seeley et al., 2011) concluded that ...

The cyclical process (Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Dick, 2000; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988) suggests ...

Books & Journals

Lumby, J. (2001). *Who cares? The changing health care system*. Allen & Unwin.

Weinstock, R., Leong, G. B., & Silva, J. A. (2003). Defining forensic psychiatry: Roles and responsibilities. In R. Rosner (Ed.), *Principles and practices for forensic psychiatry* (2nd ed., pp. 7-13). CRC Press.

McCauley, S. M., & Christiansen, M. H. (2019). Language learning as language use: A cross-linguistic model of child language development. *Psychological Review*, 126(1) 1-51. <https://doi.org/10.1037/rev0000126>

Online articles

Bustillos, M. (2013, March 19). On video games and storytelling: An interview with Tom Bissell. *The New Yorker*. <https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/on-video-games-and-storytelling-an-interview-with-tom-bissell>

Webpage

World Health Organization. (2018, March). Questions and answers on immunization and vaccine safety. <https://www.who.int/features/qa/84/en/>

AI

Anthropic. (2026). Claude (Sonnet 4.5). [Large Language Model]. <https://claude.ai/new>

Quotations

All direct quotes should be in double inverted commas and require **page numbers** e.g.

People make “sweeping inferences and judgements from body language” (Cuddy, 2012, p. 30)

Where there is no page number, use **section and/or paragraph** e.g.

“Leadership is not for the faint hearted; it requires strength and resilience” (Smith, 2018, Leadership section, para. 3)

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) use has expanded exponentially, and many journals have stipulated guidelines for its appropriate use, particularly that of large language models. It is essential that authors who submit articles to the Australian Educational Leader be transparent and disclose if, what, and how they have used these tools.

AEL strives to provide quality-assured, interesting and timely content to readers. For this reason, the editors want to see writers' specific experiences, expertise, and challenges. We recognise and support the principles outlined in the Australian Framework for Generative AI in Schools, particularly transparency and accountability.

In general, the use of AI is acceptable in some limited circumstances but must not form the basis of your submission nor make up substantive amounts of submitted content, including images.

What is not appropriate.

- The generation of a literature review or chunks of content by AI tools, as the author needs to be responsible and accountable for the accuracy of the work.
- The reporting of results pertaining to research, as the author needs to be responsible for the creation and interpretation of the work. AI particularly must not be used for the analysis of personal data or human research due to the risk to privacy.
- The presentation/misrepresentation of AI generated content as human-created content constitutes plagiarism.

What is appropriate.

- An AI tool can be used to edit an article; for example, the use of standard tools available to support authors and editorial aids native to programs (e.g., spellcheck). *Editing* is different from the *creation* of content. Authors need to ensure the originality of the work.
- An AI tool can be used to generate an image such as a model, but this use must be declared and referenced appropriately (see below).
- For transparency, where AI is used to edit your work such as checking grammar authors need to declare this use via an AI declaration and in the reference list. For example, where Grammarly was used generally, an *AI Declaration* might be:

Grammarly (2026) was used to check punctuation and spelling. No AI generated text is used in this article.

Reference list

Grammarly. (2026). Grammarly [Large Language Model].
<https://www.grammarly.com/grammar-check>

- The analysis of an AI output; for example, an article discussing the merits and pitfalls of generating AI reports may have analysed examples of AI-generated reports as part of its content.

Use and Referencing of Generative Artificial Intelligence Tools

If Large Language Models (LLM) are used, what are some referencing protocols?

- It is necessary for the author to describe which AI tool was used and how it was used. This can be done in the methods section of a research-based paper or in another section of the paper, such as the introduction. The following example comes from McAdoo et al. (2025):

When prompted with “Is the left brain right brain divide real or a metaphor?” the ChatGPT-generated text indicated that although the two brain hemispheres are somewhat specialized, “the notation that people can be characterized as ‘left-brained’ or ‘right-brained’ is considered to be an oversimplification and a popular myth” (OpenAI, 2023).

- Any use of AI must be assessed by the user for issues of accuracy, bias, ethics, and privacy.
- An example of how to reference ChatGPT that comes from McAdoo et al. (2025) is below:

Reference

OpenAI. (2025). ChatGPT (March 14 version) [Large language model]. <https://chat.openai.com/chat>

- An example of citing and referencing prompts in AI comes from McAdoo et al. (2025):

I provided the following prompt to Gemini (Google, 2025): “Please create an image of students in a classroom studying grammar concepts.” After reviewing the initial image created, I refined the images by adding more detail, asking Gemini to include more racial and ethnic diversity in the student population and specifying the age range should be adolescents.

- The reference you create would be for the chat, not the prompt(s). The AEL Editorial Board reserves the right to request seeing your prompts.

I think I have a genuine use of AI that falls outside these guidelines. What should I do?

For prospective authors who would like some suggestions regarding an idea they have for an article and/or feedback on a draft including use of AI, we can connect you to one of the members of the AEL Editorial Board. If this is you, please send an email to: publications@acel.org.au identifying your ideas and the type of support you are seeking.

Writers working in schools/vocational institutions are encouraged to check the National Copyright Unit for any updates about AI and Copyright: <https://smartcopying.edu.au/?s=ai>

McAdoo, T., Denny, S., & Lee, C. (2025, September 9).

Reference formats. APA style bog. <https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/cite-generative-ai-references>

The title page should provide the following information:

- The title of the paper.
- Names of the authors (first and second names, organisation and position, and titles, e.g., Dr, Professor)
- Footnotes and endnotes tend not to be used. Acknowledgements, sources of funding, etc, should be included at the end of the text
- APA 7th edition is used for referencing
- A short biography (2-3 sentences) for each author identifying current position or work should be included.



While not a formal peer review journal, each article received is assessed carefully for scholarly quality, relevance, and topicality by the Editorial Committee. Committee members receive “blind” copies of articles to review, with references to authors and biographies omitted.

Articles will be returned for rewriting and resubmission if the guidelines (particularly quality and relevance) are not fulfilled.

There are three categories of decision:

Accept

The article will be published after sub-editing.

Accept with revisions

The article will be returned to the author to make some changes before the article can be published.

Decline

The Editorial Committee explains to the author why the article has not been accepted for publication.

Following acceptance of a paper, the manuscript will be edited to comply with house style and typeset. The Editorial Committee reserves the right to edit the copy submitted.

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By submitting your article, you agree that ACEL may edit the manuscript as it sees fit. If ACEL makes a request for assistance, you will provide ACEL with such assistance in editing the manuscript as is reasonable, by responding in a timely way, and certainly within seven (7) days of any such request being made.

If any queries have arisen during the editorial process, the author will receive a copy of the article and a query list. These are sent by email as pdf or Word documents.

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Before submitting, the author should thoroughly check authors' names, data in tables, any mathematics and the accuracy of references.

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