

RPGA South Africa Submission Guidelines

Version 2

December 2002

Introduction

There are probably as many styles of laying out role - playing modules, as there are writers of modules. Over the years, submissions for the various games conventions have varied wildly in style and structure, often requiring much diligent work and editing on the part of organisers before they can be distributed as playable. Thus it is that the need arose for a consistent standard.

Several different standards for module layout have appeared over the years. The now defunct SAGA produced a workable standard some years ago, and recently RPGA SA has looked at the RPGA Europe submission standard as a guideline. It has become apparent, however, that a submission standard for South African modules has become a necessity. These submission guidelines, is an attempt to address that need. The guidelines are not system specific, and merely attempt to set a standard for the presentation of the modules submitted to and sanctioned by RPGA SA. They make no attempt to regulate content. However, the *WOTC Code of Ethics*, included in these guidelines, govern all material considered by RPGA SA. Writers wishing to include adult content or potentially sensitive material in their modules should bear this in mind when doing so, and should contact RPGA SA for advice.

Templates

A document template, which includes all the requirements outlined in this submission guideline, is available as a download from the RPGA SA page on the Games Emporium Website

<http://www.rpga.co.za>

The name of the file is "RPGA_SA.dot", it is an MS Word 97 document template and may be used by placing it in the \templates folder of the MSOffice folder. When a new document is opened, choose the "RPGA_SA.dot" document style.

Module Length

Module Length is to be kept to NOT MORE THAN 40 pages including maps, and handouts, excluding Character Sheets. The Character sheets are module independent and as such no templates are supplied. A module length of around 35 pages is preferable. The reason for this is that overly long modules require a lot of reading by the GMs. They have a lot to absorb in a short space of time, and it places undue stress on them to have to wade through 60+ pages of waffle. Remember, it has to be fun for them, too!

Linked Modules

If you are planning to write a series of linked modules, do not write them in such a way that players need to play exactly the same characters in each module in order for the story to work. The South African role - playing tournament environment is so loosely structured that players come and go and change their registrations from one session to another. You cannot count on the same pool of players for each of your linked modules, and this can cause serious organisational headaches as well as ruining the effect of your modules. If you must write linked modules, please endeavour to write them in such a way that the players can interchange characters without too much drama! If your artistic integrity demands that you absolutely must ignore this guideline, then please feel free to contact RPGA SA to discuss it.

Play Tests

Please try to organise an independent play test (design test) of your module before submitting it to RPGA SA. What this means is that you should give your module to a group for their GM to run without you actually playing or running the module. You should preferably sit in on the play test and take notes so that you can pick up any problems with the module.

Please note that you must include the names of your play testers with the module submission. Play testers may not, unfortunately, play for points at an RPGA SA sanctioned event in a module that they have play tested, as this would give them an unfair advantage. Be sure to make this clear to your prospective play testers.

GM Briefings

RPGA SA is attempting to do away with the traditional GM briefing before a module is run. In the past, module writers have often been unavailable to give the briefing, and any module that is run in a different part of the country will obviously not be able to have the writer in attendance. Therefore RPGA SA is encouraging its module writers to submit modules that are self - explanatory, and require no briefing. The intention is to give GMs modules that they can read and then run. These guidelines attempt to foster this, and it is hoped that module writers will bear this in mind when designing modules. It is therefore imperative when writing your module to be thorough, be clear and to pay attention to grammar and spelling!

Module Synopsis

Before submitting a module to RPGA SA, please send a synopsis of the module, which must contain the following:

1. Name of Module
2. System
3. Size of Group (How many players it is intended for)
4. Author
5. Author's Contact Details - (Telephone, email and surface mail addresses)
6. Name of Module
7. System
8. Date
9. Module Level - (Beginner/Intermediate/Advanced)
10. Module Nature -

<i>Problem Solving</i>	<i>(Little/Moderate/Lots)</i>
<i>Combat</i>	<i>(Little/Moderate/Lots)</i>
<i>Role-playing</i>	<i>(Little/Moderate/Lots)</i>
11. List of Player Characters
12. Story Outline

This synopsis

This synopsis allows the Module sanctioners a chance to look over adventures' plots. This outline should start with the basic background of the adventure (300-500 words), continue with a blow by blow synopsis of each encounter (no more than 100 words each), as well anything that you feel that the Games Masters needs to know about your adventure (300-500 words—use this area to point out potential problem spots with either continuity or content.). These are reviewed and sent back with either a flat approval, or an approval with either suggestions or requirements for change, or a rejection of the outline accompanied by explanations for that action. The approval or rejection of a plot will be returned to the Writer no later than 30 days after the report is submitted.

Module Layout and Structure

Modules submitted to RPGA SA should adhere to the following structure.

Please use the headings as given below (except for the title page and where otherwise instructed).

The following numbering should not be used in your final submission and is given as a section numbering for the purposes of this guideline.

1. Title Page

- 1.1. Name of Module
- 1.2. System
- 1.3. Size of Group
- 1.4. Author

2. Module Information

- 2.1. Name of Module
- 2.2. System
- 2.3. Revision Number
- 2.4. Date
- 2.5. Acknowledgements
- 2.6. List of play testers
- 2.7. Module Level (Beginner/Intermediate/Advanced)
- 2.8. Module Nature
 - Problem Solving (Little/Moderate/Lots)
 - Combat (Little/Moderate/Lots)
 - Role-playing (Little/Moderate/Lots)

3. Module Overview

- 3.1. Contents
- 3.2. List of handouts
- 3.3. List of maps
- 3.4. List of NPCs
- 3.5. List of Monsters (NO stats here)
- 3.6. Setting Synopsis
- 3.7. List of Player Characters
- 3.8. Story synopsis for the GM
- 3.9. Flowchart (if relevant)
- 3.10. Suggested time required for each section
- 3.11. Designer's Notes

4. Module Body

- 4.1. Players' Introduction
- 4.2. Encounter/Scene Title/Number
- 4.3. Players' Epilogue

5. Module Appendices

- 5.1. Extra NPC Information
- 5.2. Extra Setting Information
- 5.3. Extra Monster Information
- 5.4. Glossary
- 5.5. Maps
- 5.6. Handouts

6. Players' Character Sheets

Font

The font used throughout the module is Arial, which has been chosen for its readability. The body text (normal writing) used throughout the module is 10pt.

Headers and Footers

Each page except the front page must include a header and footer. Most word processors will allow you to set these up once - off, so you won't have to keep doing it.

The header must be 10pt, bold, aligned right. It must have a bottom border the width of the page. In it appears the module name.

The footer must be 10pt, bold, aligned centre. It must have a top border the width of the page.

In it appear the words "RPGA SA" (on the left) and the page number (on the right). Space it out with tabs so that these two items appear at bottom left and bottom right on the page.

Abbreviations and Terminology

Please use the standard official terminology and abbreviations for the system you are writing for, as used in the standard published reference works for that system.

A detailed explanation of the structure and layout now follows:

1. Title Page

This is fairly self - explanatory. Replace the headings with the relevant information. All text on this page is centred, and sized as indicated.

- | | | |
|------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1.1. | <i>Name of Module</i> | |
| | The title of your masterpiece. | <u>24pt, bold</u> |
| 1.2. | <i>System</i> | |
| | The Game System - AD&D/Vampire/etc. | <u>16pt, bold</u> |
| 1.3. | <i>Size of Group</i> | |
| | How many players it is intended for | <u>16pt, bold</u> |
| 1.4. | <i>Author</i> | |
| | Your name | <u>14pt, bold</u> |

2. Module Information

Each of the following headings is 12pt, bold.

The body text of each subsection is 10pt.

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| 2.1. | <i>Name of Module</i> | |
| | State the module name again | |
| 2.2. | <i>System</i> | |
| | Which game system it is written for. | |
| 2.3. | <i>Revision Number</i> | |
| | Which version you have submitted (if any) | |
| 2.4. | <i>Date</i> | |
| | The date on which it was finished. | |
| 2.5. | <i>Acknowledgements</i> | |
| | A list of all your sources, including copyright acknowledgements of the game system publishers (e.g. AD&D is a registered trademark of WOTC Inc., Vampire is copyright White Wolf, etc.) Any books or people who inspired you might be mentioned here. | |

- 2.6. *List of play testers*
The full names of all those who play tested your module.
- 2.7. *Module Level* (Beginner/Intermediate/Advanced)
Delete whichever is not applicable.
- 2.8. *Module Nature*
- | | |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| Problem Solving | (Little/Moderate/Lots) |
| Combat | (Little/Moderate/Lots) |
| Role-playing | (Little/Moderate/Lots) |
- Delete whichever is not applicable in each category.

3. Module Overview

This section of the module is intended as an overview for the GMs, so that they can check that they have everything they require, as well as giving them the big picture of the module in a nutshell. Very handy for a GM who is struggling to see everything in context.

Each of the following headings is 12pt, bold.
The body text of each subsection is 10pt.

- 3.1. *Contents*
A full list of contents for your module, including page numbers
- 3.2. *List of handouts*
A complete list of all the player handouts in the module
- 3.3. *List of maps*
A complete list of all the maps in the module.
- 3.4. *List of NPCs*
A short paragraph on each of the major Non Player Characters, giving their personality, major characteristics or abilities, and any special items they may have in their possession.
- 3.5. *List of Monsters*
Provide a list of the monsters or creatures in the module. (NO stats here - these must appear with the monster in the body of the module)
- 3.6. *Setting Synopsis*
A brief overview of your module setting (you cannot assume that everyone knows your setting just because you do!).
- 3.7. *List of Player Characters*
A short paragraph on each of the player characters, similar to those for the major NPCs.
- 3.8. *Story synopsis for the GM*
A brief summary of the plot, and any history relevant to it. Keep it short, but informative. Half a page length is more than enough.
- 3.9. *Flowchart* (if relevant)
If your module is structured so that its flow may easily be represented on a flowchart, then include one, showing any shortcuts that a GM may take if pressed for time.
- 3.10. *Suggested time required for each section*
A brief breakdown showing the suggested time that a party should be given to play through each encounter or scene in the module.
- 3.11. *Designer's Notes*
Any hints or notes that you, as the module designer, may wish to give to the GMs about to run your game.

4. Module Body

This section of the module contains the plot, monsters, NPC's, encounters, skill checks and all the body that makes up the playable part of any role - playing module. This section should form the bulk of the module.

This entire section must be formatted as two columns, spaced 1cm apart. This is designed to make the playable part readily identifiable, visually, for the GMs.

Please place any text that is to be read to the players in boxes, in italics.

Please place all game mechanics, monster/NPC statistics or notes to the GM in boxes, with 10% grey shading (no italics).

Each of the following headings is 12pt, bold.

The body text of each subsection is 10pt.

4.1. *Players' Introduction*

An introduction or opening scene in which the players may find their feet in the module is highly desirable. This is where that scene belongs - at the beginning. Don't leave your players feeling like they are being launched into the module without knowing who, why or what. You don't have to include this subsection, but we strongly recommend that you do!

4.2. *Encounter/Scene Title/Number*

Please place each separate scene or encounter on a new page, with its title or number at the top. Note the above requirements for text read to players and all game mechanics.

4.3. *Players' Epilogue*

Try not to leave your players hanging without an adequate resolution to their adventure. A well - worded epilogue in which the story is wound up is a fine way to end your module.

5. Module Appendices

5.1. *Extra NPC Information*

Any extra background about the aims, motivation or history of any or all of the NPC's can be placed here. This should be information that can add to the flavour of the game, but is not essential to the running of it. A novice GM or a GM pressed for time should not need to refer to this section.

5.2. *Extra Setting Information*

This should contain extra background information about the history of the setting, its politics, sociology, etc. Once again, it is information that might enrich the game, but is not strictly speaking necessary in order to run it effectively.

5.3. *Extra Monster Information*

Detailed information about a particular monster or creature should be placed here, and not in the Main Body of the module. The Main Body should contain that which is relevant to running the monster in the game (stats, brief description, play notes). If you really do need to put a highly detailed monster description into the body, then rather put the bare minimum there, and reference it to further information in this section (stating page number, section and subsection).

5.4. *Glossary*

This should be a list of any terms and names that might be unique to your module or confusing to the players and GM.

5.5. *Maps*

All the maps required in the module must be placed here. If they refer to a particular encounter or scene, then they must be referenced in that encounter or scene (stating title and page number). All the maps must have a title, for purposes of referencing from the Main Body.

5.6. *Handouts*

All player handouts must be placed here. They must have a title for purposes of referencing from the Main Body of the module. The dramatically appropriate moment for a handout to be given to the players must be indicated in the relevant encounter or scene, following the guideline for games mechanics and notes to the GM (i.e. placed in a 10% grey shaded box).

6. Players' Character Sheets

Please use the appropriate character sheets for the system that you are writing for. Include a picture of the character, if you wish. A page of character background information, history and aims may accompany each character, but please avoid 5 or 6 page character sheets. If the system you are writing for uses spells, psionics or other special abilities that involve long descriptions of their effects, then please do not include these descriptions (e.g. spells) in the character sheets unless they do not appear in the standard reference works for the system.

WOTC Code of Ethics

WOTC, Inc., as a publisher of books, games, and game-related products, recognizes the social responsibilities that a company such as WOTC must assume. WOTC has developed this CODE OF ETHICS for use in maintaining good taste, while providing beneficial products within all of its publishing and licensing endeavors.

In developing each of its products, WOTC strives to achieve peak entertainment value by providing consumers with a tool for developing social interaction skills and problem-solving capabilities by fostering group cooperation and the desire to learn. Every WOTC product is designed to be enjoyed and is not intended to present a style of living for the players of WOTC games.

To this end, the company has pledged itself to conscientiously adhere to the following principles:

WOTC Corporate STANDARDS FOR CONTENT

PURPOSE:

WOTC has established this set of corporate standards for creating excellence in all areas of its business--whether manufactured or licensed products, promotions, marketing or services. Taken as a whole, these standards represent a tool for directing the creation of WOTC products, promotions and services so as to provide consistency in quality and content and to avoid offending target markets.

Spirit of these Standards:

WOTC's maintenance of product, promotion, and service quality as well as its concern for their content, involves three areas:

- Provide guidance to writers, copywriters, artists, editors, graphic designers, and marketing personnel on staff without needlessly constricting creativity.
- Provide employees and freelance workers/services with guidance in regards to WOTC's standards for quality and content.
- Provide assurances that content is an important consideration in the development of any WOTC product.
- To achieve these ends WOTC, first and foremost, relies on the talents and judgments of in-house writers, copywriters, artists, graphic designers, marketing personnel, and managers to oversee and control the contents of WOTC products.

Disclaimer:

In addition to adhering to these Content Standards, WOTC requests that all WOTC products add the following statement to their legal page. "This product is a work of fiction; any similarities to actual people, organizations, places, or events is purely coincidental."

Court of Resort (How to Use These Standards):

It is every WOTC staff member's responsibility to maintain the standards set forth in this list. If a member becomes aware of a possible breach of this code, it is his or her responsibility to alert his superior. The manager, when in doubt, should consult with other members of his product group (if a breach of the product line standards) or his peers (if a possible breach of these base standards).

1. Good versus Evil --

Insofar as WOTC products, promotions, and services portray the conflict between good and evil, such portrayals should encourage the ultimate triumph of good over evil. Though dramatic purposes may require that evil prevail over good for a time, the ultimate victory of good over evil is a desirable goal.

Game products should assume that the player characters are good and should never support evil as a preferred lifestyle.

2. Profanity --

The gratuitous use of profanity and symbols considered vulgar by contemporary standards of a product's target market is not acceptable unless integral to a character or story.

3. Dramatic Horror, Violence and Gore --

The use of dramatic horror is acceptable in product development. However, scenes depicting excessively graphic gore are not acceptable.

4. Sexual Themes --

Sexual situations--including abuse and pornography--will not appear graphically in art or text for salacious purposes.

5. Nudity --

When depicting the human form--or creatures who possess humaniform features--gratuitous nudity, the depiction of genitalia, bare female nipples, and sexual or bathroom activity is not acceptable. WOTC encourages the depiction of the full range of humaniforms from heroic fantasy heroes to variations of average men, women, and children. While human sensuality and sexuality may appear in WOTC product, it should not be the focus--nor should it create disrespect for the human form. In short, WOTC will not use sex to sell; WOTC prefers to focus on marketing characters, moods, and stories.

6. Prejudice --

WOTC celebrates diversity. Our products should not depict existing minorities, nationalities, social castes, religious groups, gender, lifestyle preferences, or people with disabilities should not be depicted as a group to be inferior to any other group.

7. Religion and Mythology --

Current, real world religions and religious groups and/or practices will not be portrayed in any way that promotes disrespect for these religions or their participants. All religions and religious practices in products are purely fictional. The company does not endorse or promote any specific religion or religious practice.

8. Addictions --

Addictions of any kind should not be presented as glamorous or entertaining pastimes. Addiction or the encouragement of addiction should be shown as a dangerous habit with harmful effects.