AHME | ASSOCIATION FOR HOSPITAL MEDICAL EDUCATION

Poster Symposium
Best Practices

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Create an Outstanding Abstract

Abstract Key Characteristics

Read and Follow Submission Guidelines Carefully

- Word count: Stay within the word limits (600 words maximum)
- Abstract Submission Instructions: Please see the “Poster Symposium: Abstract Submission Instructions” for complete submission details.
- Format: Use the appropriate structure

1. Research Abstract: Introduction, Methods, Results, AND Discussion (IMRaD)

OR

2. Innovation Abstract: Needs Assessment/Problem Statement, Intervention/Innovation Description, Implementation, Outcomes/Evaluation, Reflections/Next Steps

Abstract Structure

Research Abstracts--use the IMRaD Format

1. **Introduction**
   - Brief context and rationale (1–2 sentences)
   - Identify the knowledge or practice gap (i.e., How does this add to what is already known?)
   - Clearly state the aim of the project or research question
   - Use action verbs (e.g., "to evaluate," "to implement," "to compare")
2. **Methods**
   - Summarize the setting, population, study design, and data collection/analysis
   - Keep it concise; focus on essentials details of how and what you did

3. **Results**
   - Highlight key findings
   - Use specific numbers or trends—avoid abstracts that use vague statements like “results will be discussed” as these abstracts receive lower scores and risk not being accepted.

PRO TIP: If you do not have data or the data is limited, consider submitting an Innovations Abstract instead.

4. **Discussion**
   - Interpret the results
   - Address **Implications for Medical Education** and next steps

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Innovations Abstracts

1. **Needs Assessment/Problem Statement**
   - Describe the need or problem being addressed
2. **Intervention/Innovation Description**
   - Describe the intervention concisely (what, who, how, where)
   - Emphasize the Novelty or Adaptation from existing practices
3. **Implementation**
   - Explain the rollout, resources you used, or logistics
4. **Outcomes/Evaluation**
   - Include learner feedback, outcome metrics, or lessons learned
   - If formal data are limited, describe process outcomes or next evaluation steps
5. **Reflection/Next Steps**
   - Share what worked, what did not work, and how others might replicate or improve on your work

Writing Tips

- **Clarity:** Use plain language; define technical terms
- **Precision:** Avoid filler words; every sentence should add value
- **Active voice:** Improves clarity and readability
- **Avoid jargon and acronyms** unless widely recognized
- **Proofread carefully** for grammar, typos, and clarity

Common Pitfalls to Avoid

- Submitting incomplete or vague abstracts
- Using passive voice excessively or overloading with background
- Not proofreading for clarity
- Including no results/outcomes or stating “results pending”

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Create an Outstanding Poster

1. **Create a Clear Purpose and Message**
   - **Well-defined message:** The title and introduction should clearly communicate the focus of the work (innovation, research, curriculum, quality improvement; and include the specific topic: program coordinator development, special reviews, annual program reviews, finances)
   - **Conclusion:** One key takeaway or conclusion should be clear even to a casual viewer
2. **Follow a Logical Structure**
   - **Follow Standard sections**
     - **Research Poster:** Introduction/Background, Objectives, Methods, Results, Conclusion
     - **Innovations Poster:** Needs Assessment/Problem Statement, Intervention/Innovation Description, Implementation, Outcomes/Evaluation, Reflections/Next Steps (lessons learned)
   - **Use headers** to guide the viewer through the content
3. **Make the Poster Visually Appealing and Readability**
   - **Use Large, legible fonts:** Here are some suggested font sizes
     - Title ≥ 72 pt, headings 36-48 pt, body text 30-36 pt (Text should not be smaller than 24 pt font)
     - **Remember a poster is a visual display.**
       - Viewers should be able to stand 6 feet away and understand the message
   - **Include white space**
     - Avoid clutter; use white space to separate sections
     - Using bullets rather than complete sentences will increase white space
   - **Graphics**
     - Posters are a visual medium. Include pictures, figures, graphs, tables, flowcharts, images, and timelines
     - Be sure to clearly label and provide legends for all graphics

   - **Be consistent in formatting**
     - Use uniform fonts, alignment, and spacing across sections
     - Sans Serif fonts are recommended for posters, as they are clean and legible from a distance (i.e., Arial, Tahoma, Calibri)
   - Try to use no more than 2 font styles; one for headings and the other for text

4. **Make your Poster Engaging**
   - **Include concise content:**
     - Use bullet points instead of complete sentences and paragraphs
     - Minimize jargon
   - **Add a QR code or links:** Supplement your poster with resources (e.g., video demo, templates, educational tools).
   - **Provide Resources:** Consider creating a handout

5. **Scholarly Rigor**
   - **Outcome Data:**
     - Research posters should include measurable results, even if preliminary
     - Innovation posters should include feedback, outcome metrics, or lessons learned
   - **Results Tips:**
     - Limit your results to 3-5 major points—less is more
     - Try to find a way to visually present your data rather than describing in sentences
   - **Conclusion Tips:**
     - Focus on interpretation and application rather than the data
     - Answer the "So What?"—clearly state why your findings matter
     - Connect back to the objectives of your project
   - **Limitations and Implications:** Include insight and transparency about the work's impact and applicability or next steps

6. **Printing Your Poster**
   - The total size of your poster may not exceed 3' by 4' (36" by 48").
   - We suggest printing posters on fabric with grommets in the top corners because this format is easy to transport and attach to the poster board. However, fabric and grommets are not required, and presenters may use the poster material and format they prefer.

7. **Presenter Preparedness**
   - **Engaged presenter:** At least one co-author should be available during the actual poster session to summarize the poster (in 2-3 minutes) and answer questions
   - **Elevator pitch:**
     - The 2–3-minute presentation should be a brief, compelling summary designed to draw in viewers
     - Practice your presentation prior to the Institute and get feedback from colleagues

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How to Cite Your AHME Abstract

Your abstract was presented at the 2026 AHME Institute and is publicly available on the AHME website. Below are instructions using the AMA Manual of style format for how to cite your abstract. These instructions apply to poster abstracts that were presented at the 2026 AHME Institute and were subsequently published in the AHME Poster Symposium Compendium.

Citation Format

Author(s). Title of abstract. Abstract presented at: Name of Conference; Month Day-Day, Year; City, State. Accessed Month Day, Year. URL

Instructions

- **Authors:** List authors in the same order as they appear on the abstract. Enter each author's **last name followed by initials**, with no periods or spaces between initials. Do not include academic degrees or professional credentials. Separate authors with commas. If there are more than 6 authors, list the first 3 followed by et al.

Example: Smith AB, Jones CD, Brown E.

- **Abstract title:** Enter the complete title using sentence-style capitalization. Capitalize the first word, the first word after a colon, and proper nouns or abbreviations that ordinarily require capitalization. Do not use quotation marks or italics.

- **Conference:** Following the abstract title, enter Abstract presented at: 2026 AHME Institute.

- **Conference dates:** Include the month, inclusive dates, and year.

- **Location:** Include the city and 2-letter state abbreviation for an in-person US conference.

- **Access date:** Include the date you accessed the abstract on the AHME website.

- **URL:** Provide the direct URL for the abstract or AHME abstract collection whenever possible.

Example

The first abstract in the AHME Poster Symposium Compendium found on the AHME website would be formatted:

Marks KE, Gohre B, Conlon K, Kapetanos A. Cross country collaboration: The other CCC in graduate medical education. Abstract presented at: 2026 AHME Institute; April 29-May 1, 2026; Reno NV. Accessed September 14, 2026. **https://ahme.org/wp-content/uploads/AHME-Poster-Symposium-2026-Abstract-Compendium-Linked.pdf.**