

Writing Conference Abstracts: Tips for Success

*Elizabeth Ness, MS, BSN, RN, CRN-BC
Director, Office of Education and Compliance
Center for Cancer Research, NCI, NIH*



2

Objectives

- Discuss types of abstracts for professional meetings/conferences
- Describe the key elements of an abstract
- List steps in developing and preparing an abstract
- Describe the IACRN 2024 conference abstract submission process

3

Have you submitted an abstract to a conference?

- Yes
- No

4

Conference Abstract

Provides first impression of your work and attracts attendees to your session

Conveys the significance of your work

Gives a self-contained summary of completed work

5

What Do You Include?

- What you did?
- Why you did it?
- How you did it?
- When and where you did it?
- What you found?
- What it means?

6

Types of Abstracts

- Clinical
- Research
- Evidence Based
- Quality Improvement
- Management
- Education

Abstract Presentation Formats

- Oral (range 10-30 minutes)
- Poster

7

Abstract Content

- Title
- Brief introduction/background
- Explanation of why the topic is important in your practice
- Statement about what the gap is in the research/education/practice/etc.
- Your research/project question(s)/aim(s)
 - Research methods and approach
- Your key message
- A summary of your key findings.
- Implications

8

Getting Started

- Determine employer's processes
 - ***Secure employer's support***
- Identify conference
- Read the directions carefully and often
- Understand the format, length and content expected
- Identify key team members and invite to meeting
 - Seek a mentor who has experience writing abstracts

9

Selecting a Topic

- Group brainstorming sessions
- New research or clinical guidelines
- Topics that highlight your area of expertise
- Topics that are relevant to conference attendees
- Subjects that apply to current practice challenges or workplace concerns
- Narrowing your topic to focus on key information that will fit in the time allotted

10

Assembling Your Team

Authors

- Who do you feel are the key people to include on the abstract?
- Discuss with the potential authors their roles?
- How many will the conference accept per submission? Per conference?

Authors MUST

- Be committed to the project and dissemination effort
- Be responsible for reviewing/revising drafts
- Understand the timelines/deadlines
- Coordinate communication and review within their own department if collaborating

11

Determine Authorship

- Lead author
 - Primary contributor
 - Project manager
 - Will serve as liaison with conference planners
 - Presenting author
- All authors participate in writing, review, and final approval
 - List names alphabetically
 - List a sponsor/mentor last
- Each author participates sufficiently to take public responsibility for portions of the abstract

12

Set Timeline

- Work backwards from deadline – late abstracts are not accepted
- Plan to submit at least one week prior to due date
- Allow time for organizational review, if applicable
- Allow time for working meetings and revisions within your team

13

Conference Abstract Instructions

- Review the guidelines carefully!!!
- Pay close attention to technical aspects including:
 - Deadlines
 - Format
 - Font type and size
 - Word count
 - Use of headings
- If abstract examples are provided, be sure to review them

14

Title Selection

- Your title is your HOOK!
- Start thinking of title from the beginning
- Brainstorm key words
- Limit title to ≤ 12 words
- Don't finalize until the end
- Your title should:
 - Accurately describe what you are trying to convey
 - Include key elements describing the content
 - Start with most the important words
- Title is deciding factor on whether someone will read your abstract and want to attend your presentation
- **KEEP IT SIMPLE!**

15

Writing Tips

- Spell out terms the first time, then abbreviate
- Include one thought per sentence, avoid run-ons
- Eliminate unnecessary words, THAT you don't need
- Grammar 101:
 - Subject verb agreement
 - Verb tense consistency
 - Punctuation
 - Spelling
- Use active voice – avoid passive voice
- Write in third person
- Avoid using employer's name
- Many drafts will be needed!

16

After You Hit Send

- Review process
 - Watch for receipt of submission
 - Timing of review varies by organization
 - Blinded reviews: authorship redacted
 - Abstracts are ranked for selections
- Notification
 - Timing
 - Acceptance
 - Denial should include suggestions for improvement or outline deficits
 - Debrief with team



17

Advancements in Clinical Research Nursing: Building Practice Excellence



18

IACRN Call for Abstracts

- Call for Podium or Poster via abstract submission via the Oxford system
 - NOTE: All posters will be printed and displayed at the conference venue.
- Categories of Abstracts
 - Leadership
 - Information Technology
 - Evolving Practice in Clinical Research Nursing
 - Clinical Inquiry (Evidence Based Practice, Quality Improvement, Original Research)
 - Professional Development / Education

19

General Information

- MAXIMUM word count (320) includes title and headings.
- DO NOT include author names, facility, or organization within the abstract
- Become familiar with the description of each type
- Choose category
- Use the headings associated with each category to highlight the sections of your abstract
 - Use Abstract Scoring Rubric as a guide to the headings
 - Do not submit your abstract formatted into one paragraph. Points are lost if the headings are not used.

Important Dates

- Submission open NOW
- Deadline: Wednesday, April 17, 2024
- Letters Sent: Week of May 15, 2024

Potential Topic Categories



22

Abstract Scoring

- Abstract Maximum word count = 320
 - INCLUDES headings
- Blinded review:
 - **Do not** include author names, facility, or organization in the actual abstract
- Abstract scoring:
 - Total of 50 points/abstract
 - Scored based on criteria specific to the type of abstract
 - Be sure to consider RELEVANCE to the CATEGORY when choosing your topic.

23

Leadership Rubric

Relevance/Title	Title clearly describes the content being presented, the scope of the project including the leadership question or problem, strategy to solve the problem, and the population. The topic aligns with the 2024 Conference Theme.
Background and Purpose/ Significance	Background provides a context for the project. The purpose clearly describes the landscape associated with the leadership project and provides an evaluation of the current evidence or gaps in the evidence for application to the project. Significance answers the question of “so what?”
Methods/Objectives	Methods clearly describes the question or issue and proposed leadership solutions to support CRN practice. Clearly explains how the evidence was evaluated, and If no evidence exists, describes the gaps in the literature. Objectives describes the goal or goals the author or team intends to implement or achieve.
Implementation/Results	Provides clear description of the gaps in evidence, how the plan to achieve the objectives was executed, and an evaluation of the entire process including the outcomes. What were the results of executing the plan to achieve the stated objectives?
Conclusions, Outcomes, and Implications for CRN Leadership and Future Research	Clearly articulates a synthesis of the results and how the evidence supports or does not support the translation of the results into practice. What implications do the recommendations and/ or outcomes demonstrate for clinical research nursing or for future research?

24

Information Technology (IT) Rubric

Relevance/Title	Title clearly describes the content being presented, the scope of the project including the IT question or problem, strategy to solve the problem, and the population. The topic aligns with the 2024 Conference Theme.
Background and Significance	Background identifies specific IT processes that are targeted to improve an area that is relevant to CRN practice. Discusses the utilization of evidence and evaluates the quality of evidence related to the IT process being described. Significance answers the question of “so what?”
Methods/Objectives	Describes the specific goal or goals the author or team intends to implement or achieve.
Implementation/Results	Provides a clear description of how the plan to achieve the objectives was executed including strategies for evaluation.
IT Outcomes, Implications for CRN Practice and Future Research	What were the results of executing the plan to achieve the stated objectives? What implications do the recommendations and/ or outcomes demonstrate for clinical research nursing or for future research?

25

Clinical Inquiry Rubric (EPB, QI, Original Research)

Relevance/Title	Title clearly describes the content being presented, the scope of the project including the EBP/QI/Original Research question or problem, strategy to solve the problem, and the population. The topic aligns with the 2024 Conference Theme.
Background and Significance	Background provides a context for the path leading the authors to determine a gap in knowledge leading to the Research Question(s). OR utilization of existing evidence to determine a solution to a problem or situation related to Clinical Research Nursing. Significance answers the "so what?"
Methods/Objectives	States the Research Question for the project and secondary aims that the author/study team are investigating OR Describes the review of literature to support the EBP intervention or QI project including objectives for the project.
Implementation/Results	States the research design, theoretical framework, study procedures used to gather data and statistical tests used to analyze quantitative data and/or those procedures appropriate for qualitative studies. OR Demonstrates utilization of EBP process and/ or QI process to meet stated objectives.
Conclusions, Outcomes, Implications for CRN Practice and Future Research	State the results of data analysis or literature review. Describe how well the research/ EBP/QI question was answered and summarizes the new knowledge that has been generated. Implications for nursing practice and for future research are presented in terms of impact and application for CRN practice.

Evolving Practice in Clinical Research Nursing Rubric

Relevance/Title	Title clearly describes the content being presented, conveys the scope of the project including Clinical Research Nursing practice question or problem, strategy to solve the problem, and the population..The topic aligns with the 2024 Conference Theme.
Background and Significance	Background identifies specific projects that are targeted to improve an area that is relevant to CRN practice. Discusses the utilization of evidence, gaps in the literature, and evaluates the quality of evidence related to the project being described. Describes the current trends in the field that have shaped this project. Applies the IACRN Scope and Standards publication as a framework to inform the practice question. Significance answers the "so what?"
Methods/Objectives	Describes the specific goal or goals the author or team intends to implement or achieve. Articulates the timeliness of the project in the context of global CRN practice.
Implementation/Results	Provides a clear description of how the plan to achieve the objectives will be executed including strategies for evaluation.
Conclusions, Outcomes, Implications for CRN Practice and Future Research	What were the results of executing the plan to achieve the stated objectives? What implications do the recommendations and/ or outcomes demonstrate for clinical research nursing or for future research?

Professional Development and Education Rubric

Relevance/Title	The title of the abstract clearly describes the content being presented, conveys the scope of the project including professional development/ educational project, strategy to solve the problem, and the population. The topic aligns with the 2024 Conference Theme.
Background and Significance	Background identifies specific professional development/ education processes that are targeted to improve an area that is relevant to CRN practice. Discusses the utilization of evidence and evaluates the quality of evidence related to the professional development or education process being described. Significance answers the "so what?"
Methods/Objectives	Describes the specific goal or goals the author or team intends to implement or achieve.
Implementation/Results	Provides a clear description of how the plan to achieve the objectives was executed including strategies for evaluation.
Professional Development or Educational Outcome, Implications for CRN Practice and Future Research	What were the results of executing the plan to achieve the stated objectives? What implications do the recommendations and/ or outcomes demonstrate for clinical research nursing or for future research?

28

Other Conference Submissions

- Roundtable Discussions
- Workshops

29

Keys Concepts to a Winning Abstract

- **Follow the instructions!!!**
 - Limit your abstract to the word count
 - Adhere to the required format/sections
- Use short, clear sentences, one idea per sentence
- Check grammar, syntax and punctuation
- Check that scoring criteria have been met
- Keep your target audience in mind
- Edit, edit, edit

30

Selected References

- Drury, A., Pape, E., Dowling, M., Miguel, S., Fernández-Ortega, P., Papadopoulou, C., & Kotronoulas, G. (2023). How to Write a Comprehensive and Informative Research Abstract. *Seminars in oncology nursing*, 39(2), 151395. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.soncn.2023.151395>
- Gray B. (2020). Developing and writing a conference abstract. *International journal of orthopaedic and trauma nursing*, 36, 100721. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijotn.2019.100721>
- Newberry L. W. (2021). Tell your story: Tips for developing a successful conference abstract. *Nursing management*, 52(12), 9–11. <https://doi.org/10.1097/01.NUMA.0000800400.63210.71>

31

Questions

- IACRN conference website:
<https://www.iacrn.org/2024-Conference>



This year we are seeking submissions for:

- Podium & Printed Poster Presentations **Please note: All posters will be printed and displayed at the conference venue. We will not have electronic posters in 2024.*
- Roundtable Discussions
- Workshops

Important Deadlines:

Submissions Open: **Tuesday, February 27, 2024**
Submission Deadline: **Wednesday, April 17, 2024**
Letters Sent: **Week of May 15, 2024**

32

Brainstorming



33