



## 2026 Virtual Abstract Competition Submission Rules & Presentation Guidelines

The Southern Medical Association's Virtual Abstract Competition provides medical students, residents, and fellows from across the country with the opportunity to compete for the chance to present their work at the Association's Annual Scientific Assembly. This virtual event serves as a preliminary round, with selected presentations advancing to in-person presentations at SMA's Annual Scientific Assembly.

## Eligibility

SMA's virtual abstract competition is open to any medical students, residents, and fellows of all specialties from all over the country.

## Submission Guidelines

- Do not include author names, organizations or other identifying information in the title or body of the abstract.
- Do not include title, authors, or references in the body of the abstract.
- Generic names should be used for medical devices, procedures, and drugs. If a trade name must be used, include trade names from multiple companies as a comparison rather than a single company's trade name.
- An abstract is ineligible for consideration if it reports work that has been accepted for publication as a manuscript (eg, full-length article, brief report, case report, concise communication or letter to the editor) prior to the SMA submission deadline, UNLESS written permission has been given from the entity that first published the work and is submitted to SMA (abstracts@sma.org) on or before the abstract submission deadline.
- Abstracts that appear as more than one version of a single study will not be considered (eg, dual submissions of the same study with slightly differing titles).
- Formatting of Abstract
  - Clinical Science Submission – Organize as Follows:
    - Background/Purpose
    - Goals
    - Methods/Design
    - Results/Findings
    - Conclusions/Implication
  - Case Presentation – Organize as Follows:
    - Introduction
    - Case Presentation (include history, physical exam, differential diagnosis, tests, treatment, therapeutic options, progress and outcome)
    - Final Diagnosis
    - Management/Outcome
  - Work-in Progress (WiP)
    - Work in Progress - open problems, new application challenges/visionary ideas.
    - Provide a detailed description of the idea or project, including an introduction, and outline of the main goals and objectives.
    - Future directions and challenges for the project.
    - How the work contributes to the bigger picture.

- Must be actively involved in the development of ideas, and/or the planning and execution of the project.
- As some abstracts are awarded CME credit, content prepared or presented by an employee or agent of an Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME)-defined ineligible company (eg, pharmaceutical or device company) will be closely reviewed and a determination made as to whether or not it will be accepted for any type of presentation. .
- By submitting an abstract, , each participant agrees to be bound by the rules and guidelines set forth by the SMA..

## REQUIREMENTS AND RULES:

All Presentations:

- All registration, participation confirmation, and presentation review upload deadlines must be met. No exceptions will be made.
- All presentation requirements (eg, word limits, formatting guidelines) must be met. No exceptions will be made.
- Presenters are strongly encouraged to utilize bullet points to encourage discussion with the attendees.
- Presenters are asked to have their cameras on while presenting.
- QR Codes are not permitted in oral slide presentations.
- No advertisement, corporate logo, trade name or a product-group message allowed.

## Registration Fees and Expenses

All entrants are required to register and pay the appropriate fee by the deadline.

Those presenting at the Assembly are responsible for arranging travel and hotel accommodations.

## ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENTS

For those who make the top 16, additional information will be requested as your presentation will be accredited for Continuing Medical Education (CME) at the Assembly. Failure to provide this information within the designated timeframe will disqualify you from presenting at the Assembly.

## ABSTRACT CATEGORIES

- Cardiovascular Diseases
- Chronic Diseases
- Environmental Impact on Patient Health
- Infectious Diseases
- Inflammatory Disorders and Autoinflammatory Diseases
- Mental Health
- Metabolic Diseases
- Neurodegenerative Disorders
- Pain Management
- Palliative Medicine
- Critical Care
- Gastrointestinal Disorders

- Surgery or Surgical Specialties (including acute trauma surgery and general surgery)
- Sports Medicine

## RESEARCH DESIGN

Case Report -The patient's history, examination, treatment, therapeutic options, progress and outcome. Include the literature review of similar cases and how this case is similar or how it is different, rationale for decisions that were made and lessons from the case.

Clinical Research - Patient-oriented research conducted with human subjects (or on material of human origin such as tissues, specimens and cognitive phenomena) for which the investigator directly interacts with human subjects. This area of research includes: mechanisms of human disease; therapeutic interventions; clinical trials; development of new technologies; analysis of existing datasets; epidemiologic and behavioral studies; outcomes research and health services research.

Work-in Progress (WiP) - Summary of speculative breakthroughs, open problems, new application challenges, visionary ideas, on-going research and preliminary studies of recent achievements. The future directions and challenges for the project and how the work contributes to the bigger research. Student/resident applicant(s) must be actively involved in the development of the idea, and/or the planning and execution of the project.

The following areas of research/designs will not be accepted:

Narrative reviews and Systematic reviews

Study protocols

Research in areas not previously specified.

## Annual Scientific Assembly

**If your presentation from the Virtual Abstract Competition is selected for presentation at our Annual Scientific Assembly. It will need to meet the following guidelines:**

**Oral Presentations:** Presenters must present in-person at the designated time. During the presentation, presenters will have **6 minutes for presentation and 1 minute for Q&A.** Presentations not to exceed more than 5 slides, including Title, Disclosures and References. Presenters exceeding the limit of slides will not be allowed to present. QR Codes are not permitted in oral slide presentations. No advertisement, corporate logo, trade name or a product-group message allowed.

**Example:** 1 Title slide + 3 presentation slides + 1 Reference slide = 5 TOTAL slides  
Presenters are strongly encouraged to utilize bullet points so as to encourage discussion with the attendees. Presenters are asked to have their cameras on while presenting.

### Conference Attendance and Presenter Expenses

The presenters of the top 16 accepted abstracts selected are required to register for the conference, and are fully responsible for all of their expenses related to the conference (e.g., registration, airfare, hotel, meals). Information regarding the location of the conference and hotel accommodations available will be made available on [sma.org](http://sma.org).

## All Competitions:

### Abstract Submission and Peer Review Guidelines

All submissions must include a written abstract of the presentation and are managed for compliance and consideration by SMA's Education Department. By submitting your abstract, you are agreeing to be available on the designated date and time to present the abstract, if accepted. Please do not submit your abstract if you do not intend to attend the conference in person or have already accepted another institution's invitation. The scheduled date/time of the live presentation is provided in advance.

Submission or acceptance of an abstract does not register you or ensure hotel accommodations for the meeting. All presenting authors are required to register, pay the appropriate registration fee, and are responsible for arranging travel and hotel accommodations. SMA does not have funds to assist with these expenses.

#### Abstract Title (limited to 20 words)

- Title should be brief, clearly indicating the nature of the presentation
- Include only commonly used acronyms
- Enter the title in the "title" field only and do not enter the title in the abstract body
- Use mixed case (do not use all caps OR all lower case) and do not put a period at the end of the title

#### Abstract Text (limited to 350 words)

- Use standard abbreviations
- Place special or unusual abbreviations in parentheses after the first time the full word appears
- Use numerals to indicate numbers, except when beginning sentences
- Do not reference any company/product brand names, use generic names
- Abstracts must not contain any advertising, trade names, or a product-group message
- Do not embed videos, animation, or sound when creating your presentation

#### Clinical Science Submission – Organize as Follows:

- Background/Purpose
- Goals
- Methods/Design
- Results/Findings
- Conclusions/Implication

#### Case Presentation – Organize as Follows:

- Introduction
- Case Presentation (include history, physical exam, differential diagnosis, tests, treatment, therapeutic options, progress and outcome)
- Literature review of similar cases/how case is similar or different
- Rationale for decisions made and lessons from the case
- Management/Outcome/and or Follow-up

### **Work-in Progress (WiP)**

- Work in Progress - open problems, new application challenges/visionary ideas.
- Provide a detailed description of the idea or project, including an introduction, and outline of the main goals and objectives.
- Future directions and challenges for the project.
- How the work contributes to the bigger picture.
- Must be actively involved in the development of ideas, and/or the planning and execution of the project.

### **Learning Objectives**

Provide 2-3 objectives (what the learner is expected to "know" or "do" at the conclusion). Objectives are not included in the abstract text limit of 350 words.

### **References and Resources**

If applicable:

- Provide a list of references that support the content
- Provide a list of additional reading of interest to the audience in reference to the topic

### **Additional Information Required as Part of the Submission**

To be eligible to present, presenting authors will be required to confirm agreement with the following affirmation statements at the time of submission:

- I confirm I had full access to all of the data in the study, and take responsibility for the integrity of the data and the accuracy of the data analysis, and approved the data for presentation.
- I confirm I made significant contributions to the study design, analysis or interpretation of results.

Any work with human or animal subjects reported in submitted abstracts must comply with the guiding principles for experimental procedures found in the Declaration of Helsinki of the World Medical Association.

### **Review and Notification/Abstract Review**

- Completed abstracts will be peer-reviewed.
- Incomplete abstracts cannot be processed and will not be reviewed.
- Abstract with incomplete contact information and details will not be reviewed
- To ensure the integrity of the review process, revisions to abstracts will not be accepted after the submission deadline – no exceptions.

### **Review Criteria**

Below are the items the reviewers will focus on when reviewing your abstract.

**Originality:** Is the content unique, interesting, or over-reported? Is the research design appropriate? Is the reader left with a clear indication of the importance of the study?

**Significance/Methodological Quality:** Is there a "can't miss" teaching point, or good review of a condition? Is the reader left with a clear indication of the importance of the research? Are the goals, methods, objectives, and results clearly stated or described?

Written Presentation: Is the abstract well written with no grammatical or spelling errors? Were the submission guidelines followed? Is the content thorough, concise, and easy to follow without being too wordy?

## Acceptance Notification

- The email submitted with your abstract will be the email which SMA uses for ALL communications regarding the presentation, and if applicable, any communication regarding presentation at the Assembly.
- Presenting authors will be notified via email of acceptance or rejection of their abstract.

**Important:** The presenting author is the sole point of contact, and the only author who will receive notification from the SMA. It is the primary presenting author's responsibility to then notify all co-authors and/or co-presenters.

## Presenting Author Responsibilities

At the time of submission, the person submitting the abstract must identify who will be designated as the primary presenting author. ALL communications will be sent to the primary email submitted for the author. The primary presenting author will be the sole point of contact for information regarding the submission and is responsible for the following:

- Submitting the actual presentation by the scheduled due date for review.
- Ensuring each co-author/co-presenter is aware of the content of the abstract and that it supports its data. Failure to receive approval from each co-author will result in the abstract being disqualified.
- Ensuring each co-author/co-presenter is aware of the disclosure requirements.
- Adhering to the Abstract Disclosure Policy and obtaining disclosure information from all co-authors/co-presenters.
- Forwarding abstract acceptance/rejection notifications and ACCME and SMA policies to each co-author/co-presenter.
- Notifying each co-author/co-presenter of any changes to the program, as corresponded by the SMA, in a timely manner.
- Responding to inquiries, providing presentation information, and registering for the event on or before the designated deadlines.
- Presenting the abstract in the accepted format, at the appointed date and time. Note – Abstract presentation schedules cannot be changed to accommodate presenting author scheduling conflicts.
- Appointing a co-author (must be a medical student, resident, or fellow) to present the abstract in your absence if a schedule conflict is identified before the meeting, and providing all information related to your presentation (including deadlines) to the appointee.
- Complying with stipulated responsibilities ensures your presentation will be eligible for presentation.. .

## Policies: Disclosure, Conflict of Interest, Copyright, Photography/Videography

## Disclosure Policy

In accordance with ACCME requirements and SMA policy, abstracts selected for presentation must be free of commercial bias, and may not be prepared and/or presented by a commercial interest. SMA requires that educational materials that are part of a CME activity, such as slides, abstracts and handouts, do not contain any advertising, trade names, logos of any type or a product group message. Generic names may be referenced. Disclosures for all authors and coauthors must be listed. State "no financial relationships to disclose" if applicable.

## Activity Disclosure

1. All financial relationships with an ineligible company (companies producing, marketing, reselling, or distributing health care goods or services consumed by or used on patients) occurring over the past 24 months, and;
2. Any inclusion in a presentation of a commercial product with an unlabeled use or an investigational use not yet approved by the FDA.

**Disclosure to Learners** - SMA ensures that all attendees/participants of SMA CME activities are informed of financial relationships (or "no" relationship) disclosed by individuals who are in a position to control the content prior to the beginning of an activity either in print, verbally, or by multimedia display. Conflicts of interest, if any exist, will be mitigated prior to the activity.

## Resolution of Conflict of Interest (COI) Policy

Live CME: Speakers – All speakers' disclosure information, along with the provided content (slides, abstracts, etc.), will be reviewed by SMA's Education Department. If during this process a COI is identified, SMA Staff will provide direction to correct the conflict. Corrective measures will be documented in the activity file.

## Abstract Embargo and Permission Policies

Information/materials displayed and presented during this meeting are the property of SMA. Please contact [education@sma.org](mailto:education@sma.org) regarding the use of any content, prior to the meeting.

## Copyright Policy

This activity is a private event. Activities presented at the meeting are for the education of attendees as authorized by the Southern Medical Association. The information and materials displayed and presented during this meeting are the property of the SMA and the presenter and cannot be photographed, copied, photocopied, transformed to electronic format, reproduced, or distributed without written permission of the Southern Medical Association and the presenter. Any use of the program content for commercial purposes, which includes, but is not limited to oral presentations, poster presentations, audiovisual materials used by speakers, and program handouts without the written consent of the SMA is prohibited. This policy applies before, during and after the meeting. The names, insignias, logos and acronyms of the SMA are proprietary marks. Use of the names in any fashion, by any entity, for any purpose, is prohibited without the express written permission of the Southern Medical Association.

## Photographs and Video Recording Policy

When you participate in an SMA event, you are participating in an event where photography, video and audio recording may occur. By participating, you consent to interview(s), photography, audio recording, video recording and its/their release, publication, exhibition, or reproduction to be used for social media, webcasts, promotional purposes, telecasts, advertising, inclusion on websites, or for any other purpose(s) that SMA's Board, and/or staff representatives deems fit to use. You release SMA's Board of Directors, its officers and employees, and each and all persons involved from any liability connected with the taking, recording, digitizing, or publication of interviews, photographs, computer images, video and/or sound recordings.

You have been fully informed of consent, waiver of liability, and release before participating in the SMA's Assembly.

## Definitions, Policies, Guidelines Related to Disclosure and Conflicts of Interest

New Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education  
The ACCME's new Standards were released in December 2020, replacing the Standards for Commercial Support. Please note the updates and changes related to disclosure outlined below.

## Identification and Mitigation of Relevant Financial Relationships of Planners, Faculty, and Others

### Disclosure Information

Disclosure information must be completed by Planners, Faculty, and all Others Who May Control Educational Content of an accredited activity. It is SMA's responsibility to determine which relationships are relevant. You must disclose all financial relationships that you have had in the past 24 months with ineligible companies (see definition below). For each financial relationship, you must provide the name of the ineligible company and the nature of the financial relationship(s). There is no minimum financial threshold; we ask that you disclose all financial relationships, regardless of the amount, with ineligible companies. You should disclose all financial relationships regardless of the potential relevance of each relationship to education. The requirement of disclosing for a spouse/guest has been removed. Ineligible companies are organizations that are not eligible for accreditation (formerly known as commercial interests). This new term is intended to clarify that eligibility for accreditation is not based on whether an organization is for-profit or nonprofit but is based on its primary mission and function.

Upon receipt of your disclosure information, SMA staff will:

1. Review your submitted disclosure information. Please note that owners or employees of ineligible companies will be excluded from participating as planners, speakers, authors, or faculty.
2. Determine whether your financial relationships with ineligible companies disclosed (if any), are relevant to the content of the education being planned. Financial

relationships are relevant if the following three conditions are met for the prospective person who will control content of the education:

- A financial relationship, in any amount, exists between the person in control of content and an ineligible company.
- The content of the education is related to the products of an ineligible company with whom the person has a financial relationship.
- The financial relationship existed during the past 24 months.
- Choose a mitigation strategy: For any person who has a relevant financial relationship, a strategy to mitigate (formerly known as "resolve") the conflict will be implemented by SMA staff before the person assumes their role. The following are examples of how the conflict may be mitigated.

## FAQs

**Question:** Who may submit and present an abstract?

**Answer:** Only medical students, residents, and fellows may submit and present abstracts.

**Question:** May I submit/include tables, figures, charts, or photographs/images with my submission?

**Answer:** At this time, we are not allowing tables, figures, charts or photographs along with the initial online abstract submission. Please describe the content within the text, and plan to incorporate images with your presentation, if it is accepted.

**Question:** May I submit/present my abstract elsewhere if accepted for presentation at an SMA meeting?

**Answer:** SMA's policy is that abstracts presented during SMA events can be submitted and/or presented elsewhere with permission from SMA. make sure to check with the organization and let them know that your abstract has been submitted elsewhere, and/or previously presented.

**Question:** May I submit an abstract that has been previously presented elsewhere?

**Answer:** An abstract is ineligible for consideration if it reports work that has been accepted for publication as a manuscript (e.g., full-length article, brief report, case report, concise communication or letter to the editor) prior to the SMA submission deadline, UNLESS written permission has been given from the entity that first published the work and the permission is submitted to SMA at [education@sma.org](mailto:education@sma.org) at the time of submission.

**Question:** I made an error on my submission. May I correct it?

**Answer:** At this time, after the submission deadline, no changes can be made. If before the deadline you realize there is an error, please email SMA staff: [education@sma.org](mailto:education@sma.org). Include the presenting author's name, and the abstract title. You may re-submit the abstract reflecting the necessary corrections of the abstract, in its entirety, as submitted before the deadline.

**Question:** Is there a word limit?

**Answer:** Yes. Please limit your abstract to 350 words (not including the title, authors, or learning objectives).

**Question:** Since submitting, I am now unable to present my abstract. May I designate a substitute?

**Answer:** Yes, as long as the person is listed as a co-author on the abstract; is a medical student, resident, or fellow; and agrees to present in the accepted format. Please email SMA Staff: [education@sma.org](mailto:education@sma.org), and include: Your name, the abstract title, and the designee's name and email address. The co-author will be required to register and pay the registration fee no later than 3 business days prior to the conference.

**Question:** How soon will I know if my abstract has been accepted?

**Answer:** Once the review process is completed, the presenter will receive notification via the email provided at the time of submission.

**Question:** Do I have to be an SMA member to submit?

**Answer:** No, but there are many benefits offered to members. Medical Students' membership fees are free, and Residents only pay \$100 per year.

**Question:** Who do I contact if I have any questions?

**Answer:** You may ask your questions by emailing [education@sma.org](mailto:education@sma.org).