



## Develop Your Quality Improvement (QI) Project Into

**An Abstract**

OR

**A Poster**

### What is an abstract?

An abstract is a brief written summary of your QI project. It provides an overview of your process and highlights the important points of your results.

Conferences typically call for abstracts to be:

- given in an oral presentation
- included in conference proceedings
- turned into a poster

### What is a poster?

A poster is a visual presentation of your QI project, usually prepared for exhibition at a conference.

An abstract can provide a good starting outline for your poster, but the poster should make good use of visual elements, and should not simply reproduce your abstract at poster size.

### Why should I submit an abstract?

An abstract allows you to:

- shed light on solutions to problems others may be having
- share your knowledge and experience so that others may benefit
- improve CV care
- get credit for your work

### Why should I submit a poster?

A poster provides all the same benefits as an abstract, with the added advantages of

- visually displaying your information for greater clarity
- networking and discussing your project with other attendees

## Tools

[Choosing an abstract topic](#)

[Outlining your content](#)

[Tips for the writing process](#)

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Use these steps to choose the right project for your abstract:

Review what QI projects you have completed in the past.

Ask questions like the following to evaluate your projects:

- Did you develop a unique educational approach to participant education?
- Did you implement an innovative approach to data documentation or collection?
- Were you able to demonstrate clear outcomes, changes, or improvement?
- Did you make any changes to your program?
- What did you do differently that improved quality at your institution?

Keep in mind the best project to choose is one that

- makes an original and important contribution to quality assessment and the improvement of cardiovascular care.
- has a clear conclusion substantiated by your data.
- contains significant information and lessons from which others in the field can learn and feasibly apply.



Include each of the following areas in your abstract.

Title

The title should clearly reflect the contents of your project and/or your conclusion statement.

Problem Statement or Scientific Question

Define the problem or scientific question your project investigated.

Background/Project Intent

Why did you do the project?

Use 2-3 sentences to ground the reader in your project and capture their interest.

- Why you did this project? What is the history of the project? What was your intent or goal for the project?
- You might also include external motivation, such as poor/outlier results on national measure, changes in payer reimbursement, reduced volumes, etc.

Methodology

How did you do the project?

Describe the steps of your work and provide a road map for your project.

- Explain your process in a way that makes the study reproducible.
  - What was unique? What did you do differently?
  - What were the tools, techniques, and strategies used?
- First write down each steps, then fill in detail, e.g.,
  - Formed multi-disciplinary committee to study ...
  - Studied population in NCDR registry ...
  - Developed plan to ...
  - Implemented plan to...

Results

What happened as a result of the project?

Summarize your results in 1-2 paragraphs.

- Present data that indicates your project made a difference by including
  - before and after results
  - data source, date ranges, n, % change
  - statistical measures (if you have them)
  - information in charts, graphs, and tables, if converting to a poster

Conclusion

What did you learn?

Use 2-3 sentences to discuss the implications of your project.

- Refer to the statement of intent and summarize your project.
- Explain how your project solves a problem and could benefit others.
- Discuss any reservations and future prospects.

Common Pitfalls to Avoid

- Not providing enough detail for reader comprehension, e.g., poor methodology or weak discussion section
- Including too much unrelated background or information
- Presenting inadequate results that do not support the conclusion
- Lack of originality in project topic, methodology, or outcomes



Writing a good abstract is a skill that takes practice.

Read other manuscripts and abstracts.

- Reading other manuscripts and abstracts can provide ideas and guidance to get started.
  - Check if the conference you’re submitting to posts previous abstract submissions.
  - Search on the web for articles with abstracts on the topic of your project or on other topics you’re familiar with.

Use writing skills resources.

- Check if the conference has a preferred style manual.
- Search online for free style references, and make use of the many spelling and grammar tools already built into Microsoft programs.
- A few generally applicable writing tips:
  - Use active voice instead of passive voice.  
e.g.: “We studied 15 patients with ARDs” is much better than “Fifteen patients with ARDs were studied.”
  - Always first define any initials.  
e.g. Registry Site Manager (RSM)
  - Write only one thought per sentence.
  - Eliminate unnecessary words.
  - Ensure that verb tenses are consistent and correct.

Ask others to review your drafts.

- Good sources of review include
  - a mentor or someone who has previously had posters and abstracts accepted.
  - physicians and researchers at your institution. They can provide detailed edits and insight into best practices.
  - members of your project team. They can fill in key points and catch gaps in your story.
  - someone outside the project. They can make sure those unfamiliar with your work can still follow your story line.
- Make sure to have someone review your draft after each round of revisions; fresh eyes are important on each draft.
- Remember to give reviewers a firm deadline by which you need feedback returned.

Practice!

- Like any form of writing, producing good abstracts takes experience and practice.
  - Don’t be afraid to ask for help.
  - Make use of all the resources available to you.
  - Remember, the more times you go through the process, the easier it will get.



## Designing Your Poster

A good poster should speak for itself and be able to attract attention in a crowded conference environment.

### Getting Started

Check to see if your institution had a standard template they use for poster submissions.

Decide on your poster size.

Consider

- maximum size allowed by the conference.
- maximum size your software can produce (e.g. PowerPoint maximum page size is 56" x 56").
- maximum size your printing service can produce.

Decide on your poster orientation.

- Check if the conference requires posters to be either vertical or horizontal.
- Consider which orientation allows for the best arrangement of your content.

### General Tips

**Overall**  
Make your poster noticeable and approachable.

- Check that title/subject line is readable from 10 feet away.
- Center a statement, photograph, or diagram to create a focal point.
- Organize sections in a clear, logical flow from introduction to conclusion.
- Include blank space between each section and image.
- Include acknowledgments, your name, and your institutional affiliation.

**Text**  
Keep it concise.

- Focus on major findings—do not try to include everything you know.
- Use bulleted lists instead of paragraphs where possible.
- Text should be concise enough to be read in less than 10 minutes.
- Font size should be readable from several feet away.

**Graphs and Figures**  
Present graphics that are self-explanatory.

- Include a title or caption with each figure. Include data labels in graphs.
- Check that all titles and labels are in a font readable from several feet away.
- Provide proper attribution for each image. This depends on whether they are in the public domain, copyrighted, for purchase, etc.

**Color and Background**  
Use it for a purpose.

- Use color to highlight key points, associate like information, and outline and separate different sections. Do not let color compete with, distract from, or overwhelm your information.
- Keep background colors solid and muted. Avoid overly bright colors or graphics.

See [Resources Section](#) for more detailed design tips, poster examples, and templates.



To help attract viewers and conversation, think of your poster as an “open house” for your project.

- To attract traffic, bring a bowl of wrapped candy and place it next to your poster.
- Wear a nametag that links you to your poster.
- Bring handouts that summarize the poster. These allow viewers to take the main points with them.
- Provide contact information for follow-up questions, potential funders, etc.



**Get approvals.**

- Each author should review the final submission before it is sent.
- Some conferences may require each author of an abstract/poster to fill out a disclosure form.

**Review and follow submission guidelines.**

- Review conference guidelines for formatting requirements and submission instructions. These guidelines should be available on the conference’s website, and will likely include
  - important dates and deadlines for submission
  - steps for submitting the abstract/poster online
  - review and acceptance process once a work is submitted
  - formatting guidelines, including: word count, poster size, font size and type, listing authors and references, use of symbols and trademarks, file size and image resolution, etc.
  - contact information for any questions or assistance

**Conduct a final round of review**

- Once your submission is finalized, conduct a last review for errors and compliance with the submission guidelines. If your institution has a marketing department, they often specialize in this type of review.

**Submit!**

**Conferences to Consider For Submission**

<p><b>NCDR</b> ACC National Cardiovascular Data Registry</p>	<p><a href="https://www.ncdr.com/webncdr/home/annualconference">https://www.ncdr.com/webncdr/home/annualconference</a></p>
<p><b>QCOR</b> American Heart Association Quality of Care and Outcomes Research</p>	<p><a href="https://my.americanheart.org/professional/Sessions/QCOR/QCOR_UCM_316906_SubHomePage.jsp">https://my.americanheart.org/professional/Sessions/QCOR/QCOR_UCM_316906_SubHomePage.jsp</a></p>
<p><b>AHRQ</b> Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality</p>	<p><a href="http://www.ahrq.gov/news/events/conference/index.html">http://www.ahrq.gov/news/events/conference/index.html</a></p>
<p><b>IHI</b> Institute for Healthcare Improvement</p>	<p><a href="http://www.ihl.org/education/conferences/Pages/default.aspx">http://www.ihl.org/education/conferences/Pages/default.aspx</a></p>
<p><b>NAHQ</b> National Association for Healthcare Quality</p>	<p><a href="http://www.nahq.org/annualconference/2014/ccindex14.html">http://www.nahq.org/annualconference/2014/ccindex14.html</a></p>



## Main References

### “How to Develop and Submit NCDR Poster Abstract”

American College of Cardiology: Fine, S.; Kordish, C.; Miller, T.; Verschelden, K.; Casey, P.E.

<http://www.ncdr.com/WebNCDR/docs/default-source/ncdr.14/writing-an-abstract-for-ncdr-annual-conference.pdf?sfvrsn=2>

### “Effective Poster Design for Academic Conferences”

Louisiana State University: Eggart, M.L

<http://www.ga.lsu.edu/Effective%20Poster%20Design%20for%20Academic%20Conferences.pdf>

## Additional Resources

### Abstract and Poster Design Examples

See companion PowerPoint deck.

### Abstract Help

- Summer Institute on Evidence-Based Practice Award-Winning Abstracts and Posters: University of Texas
- How To Write A Quality Abstract For Publication or Presentation: Unite for Sight
- How to write a good abstract for a scientific paper or conference presentation: Indian Journal of Psychiatry

<http://www.acestar.uthscsa.edu/2013AbstractsWinnersList.asp>

<http://www.uniteforsight.org/global-health-university/abstracts-research>

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3136027/>

### Poster Design Help

- Past Poster Titles accepted to National Cardiovascular Data Registry Conference (NCDR)
- Posters accepted to 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Institute for Healthcare Improvement Conference: IHI
- Better Posters: A Resource for improving poster presentations
- How to Create a Research Poster: Poster Basics (NYU)
- Preparing and Presenting Effective Research Posters: Indian Journal of Psychiatry

<https://cvquality.acc.org/docs/default-source/ncdr/Annual-Conference/n1766-ncdr-17---poster-listing-handout-3.pdf?sfvrsn=0>

<http://www.ihi.org/education/IHIOpenSchool/resources/Pages/Posterboards/default.aspx>

<http://betterposters.blogspot.com/>

<http://guides.nyu.edu/c.php?g=276826&p=1846154s>

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1955747/>

### Poster Templates

- Free poster templates, design and printing help

<http://www.posterpresentations.com/index.html>