

# Guidelines for submitting an abstract for the 2024 BLS Annual Conference

7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> October 2024 at Chester Racecourse

These guidelines are intended to help you submit a clear, concise, and successful abstract for oral or poster presentation at the BLS Annual Conference.

Please also read the companion document: [Top Tips for Submitting an Abstract for the Annual Conference](https://www.thebls.com/documents-library/top-tips-for-submitting-an-abstract). This is available at <https://www.thebls.com/documents-library/top-tips-for-submitting-an-abstract>

## Before you begin...

Please note the following conditions of abstract submission and presentation at the BLS Annual Conference 2024:

- Abstracts are required for all oral and poster presentations and are anonymously peer-reviewed by the BLS Scientific Committee (BLS SC).
- Only abstracts submitted via the online submission form (Oxford Abstracts) are eligible for review. This will open on **Friday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2024**.
- Abstracts must be submitted by **noon Friday 31st May 2024**. Abstracts submitted after this date will not be accepted.
- When you are submitting the abstract, if you are unsure about who will be registering for the conference and presenting the work then we suggest you submit the abstract with several named authors; the presenting author does not need to be the first named author. For further information on authorship and acknowledgments please refer to Underwood E (2024) The Who, What and Where of Authorship and Acknowledgements when submitting for publication News & Views: Winter 2024 Issue132, pp 23 available at: <https://thebls.com/documents-library>
- Abstracts must be submitted in English.
- Abstracts can be submitted for oral presentation or poster presentation. Posters will be made available **two weeks** before the event for maximum exposure, and it is hoped we will be able to allow you a designated time slot during a break or lunch on the Scientific Committee stand, to give delegates the opportunity to ask questions/generate discussion about your presentation at the event face to face - details to be confirmed.
- Accepted abstracts may be published in the conference programme, other conference literature, on the BLS website and on the Whova app. By submitting an abstract you consent to give the BLS permission to publish your abstract.
- It will be a requirement to use the Conference Whova App on which you will need to set up your own profile, be an active user and engage with delegates. Poster submitters will also be required to upload their own poster to the App by **Friday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2024 at the latest**.

## Presenting author and registration

1. The **presenting** author must register as a participant for the full conference by **Friday 12<sup>th</sup> July, 2024**.
2. The BLS reserves the right to exclude any abstract from the BLS conference that is not followed by registration by the **presenting** author by **Friday 12<sup>th</sup> July, 2024**.
3. Withdrawal of an abstract can only be made by email to both [science@thebls.com](mailto:science@thebls.com) and [admin@thebls.com](mailto:admin@thebls.com). Failure to register will not be regarded as an automatic withdrawal of your abstract.

## Summary of Key Dates:

Friday 5 <sup>th</sup> April 2024	Oxford Abstracts open for submission
Friday 31st May 2024 (noon)	Deadline for abstract submission
Friday 28 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	Notification of decision on abstract
Friday 12 <sup>th</sup> July 2024	Presenting author must accept their offer and be registered as participant for the BLS Annual Conference
Friday 20 <sup>th</sup> September 2024	Posters to be uploaded to the Whova App
Monday 7 <sup>th</sup> – Wednesday 9 <sup>th</sup> October 2024	BLS Annual Conference 2024

## Why submit an abstract?

Oral and poster presentations by healthcare professionals is a key element in the exchange of good practice at the BLS conference. It provides an opportunity to bring work to the attention of a wider audience, enhancing the prestige of the presenter and is evidence of continuing professional development. Submitting a well-constructed abstract is the key to this opportunity – good work can be missed when submissions are rushed or poorly constructed.

## How and when to submit an abstract?

All abstracts must be submitted by **noon Friday 31st May 2024** using the Oxford Abstract system found on this link: <https://app.oxfordabstracts.com/stages/38720/submitter>

You will need to create a login in and complete all of the fields, supplying the requested details about yourself, your co-authors and your presentation. As well as your abstract, you will need to supply a short biography for the main author (and for the presenting author if this is different). Make sure you are on the 2024 conference submission page.

**NB: Do not leave line spaces between paragraphs as this may prevent the abstract from being uploaded successfully.**

## Allow sufficient time!

Please make sure to allow sufficient time to write and to submit your abstract. It can take some time to prepare your submission and to upload it.

## What can I submit?

Abstracts for oral and poster presentations may be submitted on the following:

- Research studies (including, but not limited to, clinical, observational, behavioural and genetic studies, and methodologies including quantitative and qualitative)
- Literature reviews / systematic reviews
- Clinical audits
- Case reports/study
- Service development initiatives (including user involvement)
- Educational initiatives.

## Abstract Format

The maximum word limit for an abstract is **250 words** excluding the title. Please note that the Oxford Abstract system will not accept abstracts that exceed the word limit.

### Title

The title should be succinct and clearly specify the type of study (e.g. randomised control trial, case report/study, service development evaluation, systematic review, etc). It should also address, where relevant:

- Population
- Intervention
- Comparator / control (where applicable)
- Outcome.

### Abstract

Please use the relevant headings as detailed below when setting out your abstract and ensure all required information is included. These headings are part of the word count.

The impact on clinical practice of a presentation is key in improving patient care and translating research into practice. Please therefore include a brief statement of the impact on practice in both the abstract and the subsequent presentation.

References are not necessary in the abstract, but if used will be included in the word count (however, references should be included in the final oral or poster presentation).

#### 1. Research Study

- Introduction including ethical approval
- Aims
- Method
- Results (whether interim or final) should be summarised in the abstract. It is not acceptable to say that results will be disclosed in the final presentation

- Conclusions must address what the study adds to existing knowledge including impact on practice.

## **2. Literature review or systematic review**

- Background
- Aim
- Method- this should address search method with inclusion /exclusion criteria
- Result
- Conclusions this should include critical analysis of the method and results including impact on practice.

## **3. Clinical Audit**

- Introduction
- Aims
- Standards being audited
- Method
- Results
- Conclusions this must address how the audit relates to any changes in practice or revision of standards and the impact on practice of conducting this audit.

## **4. Case(s) Report/Study**

- Describe original/rare case(s)
- Reason for report
- Case(s) description which must confirm that consent was obtained
- Discussion should compare with previous reports and address implications for practice.

## **5. Service Development Evaluation**

- Aims
- Description • Evaluation including include key recommendation(s) and impact on practice.

## **6. Educational Initiative Evaluation**

- Introduction
- Aims
- Rationale
- Description
- Evaluation should include key outcome/impact and impact on practice.

## **Anonymity**

The BLS Scientific Committee follows an anonymous scholarly peer-review process. To preserve anonymity, please ensure that you do not include any identifying information in

the abstract. You should exclude from the abstract items such as name of author, country or institution. These can be included in the full presentation, as this will not be anonymised.

You will, however, input these details into the Oxford Abstract submission form. This is separate to the abstract and will not be seen by the review team.

## Declaration of interests

A conflict of interest exists when professional judgement concerning a primary interest (such as patients' welfare or the validity of research) may be influenced by a secondary interest (such as financial gain or personal rivalry). It may arise when an author has a financial or other interest that may influence, probably without their knowing, their interpretation of their results or those of others.

The audience should be told whether the work they are seeing has been influenced in any way by other factors, such as direct funding of their work or provision of supplies (e.g. hosiery or equipment), or indirect assistance such as sponsorship of conference place or educational session. This helps the audience to decide whether the findings and conclusions are likely to be biased in any way.

## Where to make the declaration of interests

When submitting your abstract to the Oxford Abstract system, you are required to make a declaration of interests online where there may be any potential conflict. The declaration is included as part of the submission form. Please note that:

- The declaration of interests should not be referred to in the abstract itself;
- The BLSSC asks that all presenters make an explicit declaration of interests in their oral or poster presentation.

Where it is subsequently discovered that a conflict exists which has not been declared, the BLS SC reserves the right to reject the submitted abstract.

To find out more about declaration of interests, please read:

Hughes, A (2019) *"To tell or not to tell...?" Declaration of interests in scientific publication and presentation*. News & Views: Winter 2019 Issue 112, pp 23-24 available at: <https://thebls.com/documents-library/news-views-winter-2019>

## How are the abstracts judged and when will I be informed of the outcome?

Following the anonymous peer review process by the BLS SC, all applicants will be notified of the decision regarding their abstract by **28<sup>th</sup> June 2024**. If you are not successful, this time the Scientific Committee will provide you with feedback **on request** and hope you will resubmit next year.

Please read and follow the guidance provided in the document [Top Tips for Submitting an Abstract for the Annual Conference](#) which also includes guidance on how to construct a title. This document details what the Scientific Committee are looking for when reviewing an abstract and how it will be judged.

If you have any questions relating to your abstract, please do not hesitate to ask for advice from the Scientific Committee by contacting the Chair Emma Underwood at [science@thebls.com](mailto:science@thebls.com)

## Final points

1. On submission of an abstract you and/or your co-authors are agreeing to attend the BLS Annual conference and present your oral or poster presentation at whatever time is scheduled within the conference programme. Should your abstract be accepted, the presenting author is expected to register to attend the BLS Annual conference.
2. The BLS SC will decide on the appropriate format (poster or oral), date and time of presentation, and time allotted to each presentation, based on the nature of the abstract and its content.
3. All abstracts may be reproduced in the Conference Programme or other Conference literature and submission of an abstract constitutes consent for publication.

## Extra reasons for submitting an abstract... win a prize!

Prizes will be awarded for Oral and Poster presentations submitted by BLS Members in the following categories:

- Best novice poster presentation
- Best overall poster presentation
- Best novice oral presentation
- Best overall oral presentation.

“Novice” means that the presenter has no previous experience of presenting any poster or oral (as relevant to their submission) at **any** conference in the UK or abroad.

This year’s prizes, *subject to confirmation*, comprise a signed certificate and a voucher entitling each winner to a 12-month subscription to a journal of their choice in the MA Healthcare (MAH) Ltd portfolio.

The BLS Scientific Committee will decide the winners according to formal judging criteria and their decision is final. Please note that scores for abstracts now form part of the final presentation score when judged at conference.

These awards will be presented at a virtual awards ceremony on **5<sup>th</sup> November 2024**.