



COMPREHENSIVE CARDIAC CARE

26th Annual SA Heart® Congress
CTICC, Cape Town
30 October - 1 November 2026

Abstract Submission & Review Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear, transparent, and fair process for managing abstract submissions and reviews for scientific events, conferences, or symposia. The policy ensures:

- Consistency in submission requirements
- An unbiased and equitable review process
- Clear governance around reviewer selection and responsibilities

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All authors submitting abstracts
- All reviewers evaluating submissions
- The Scientific or Organising Committee overseeing the review process

It covers the entire cycle from submission to final decision.

3. Abstract Submission Guidelines

3.1 Submission Requirements

Authors must submit abstracts through the designated online portal. All abstracts must include:

- Guidelines for abstract submission must be included on the website. Abstracts must be typed in clear, scientific English, single line spacing and the body of the text must not exceed 350 words. Avoid abbreviations unless widely accepted; define on first use.
- No institution or Author(s) identifying information in the abstract text to permit a blind review

The submitted abstract should contain the following information:

- Abstract title (the title of the abstract must not exceed 25 words)
- Name and list of author(s). The name of the presenting author must appear first in the list of authors
- Affiliations of author(s)



COMPREHENSIVE CARDIAC CARE

26th Annual SA Heart® Congress
CTICC, Cape Town
30 October - 1 November 2026

- Contact details of first author (telephone numbers, e-mail address, etc.)
- Preferred format of presentation (oral or poster)
- Keywords (3–5)
- Funding and conflict-of-interest disclosures
- Ethics approval number
- The format is as follows:
 - Introduction: should be brief and informative and state the aim of the study.
 - Methods: include description of subjects and research methodology.
 - Results: outline the findings of the study supported by statistics as appropriate.
 - Conclusion: provide summary and relevance of the main findings.

3.2 Abstracts which do not adhere to the specified format will not be published. Information pertaining to whether the material included in the author's abstract has been published or presented before should be included as well as their preferred presentation method (poster or oral) and the title of the abstract. No tables, images or graphs should be submitted.

Abstract books (SA Heart® Journal Congress issue) will be online open access free of charge. No printed copies will be made available.

3.3 Submission Deadlines

- Submission opens as per organising committee
- Submission closes: After 6 to 8 weeks
- Late submissions will only be accepted under exceptional circumstances and at the committee's discretion

3.4 Policy: Responsibility for Correct Abstract Formatting

1. Authors (Primary Responsibility)

Submitting authors are fully responsible for ensuring that abstracts adhere to all conference formatting requirements prior to submission. This includes structure, word limits, terminology, grammar, and any specified layout or file requirements.



COMPREHENSIVE CARDIAC CARE

26th Annual SA Heart® Congress
CTICC, Cape Town
30 October - 1 November 2026

2. Abstract Review Committee

The review committee will be responsible for evaluating abstracts for scientific merit and compliance with conference guidelines. Abstracts that do not meet formatting requirements may be rejected or returned to authors for revision. Committee members are not responsible for editing or rewriting abstracts.

Minimum Standards for Acceptance

An abstract should **not** be accepted if:

- Methods are fundamentally flawed.
- Results are absent or clearly incomplete (e.g., “results pending”).
- Conclusions are unsupported by the results.
- Language is unclear to the point of being uninterpretable.
- Ethical approvals or trial registrations are missing for required study types.

3. SA Heart Journal Editorial Office

Receives the final, raw data file from the PCO.

Liaises with the Congress Abstract Committee for clarification on any scientific or editorial discrepancies.

In conjunction with the Congress Abstract Committee, is responsible for the quality and accuracy of content prior to publication.

Provides the final print ready abstract to the PCO for final liaison and check with author

Double checks any alterations made/requested by author

Publishes abstracts in line with SA Heart® Journal guidelines and agreed timelines

Please note: When accepted abstracts are published in the journal, the journal’s editorial office may perform minor formatting standardization required for publication. This process does not include correcting scientific content or substantial rewriting.

4. Conference Submission Platform

The abstract submission system may enforce technical rules such as character limits and required fields. The PCO ensures that system settings reflect conference standards but does not edit submitted content.



COMPREHENSIVE CARDIAC CARE

26th Annual SA Heart® Congress
CTICC, Cape Town
30 October - 1 November 2026

4. Review Process Overview

4.1 Review Model

Double-Blind Review (recommended)

- Reviewers do not know the identity of authors
- Authors do not know the identity of reviewers
- Enhances fairness and reduces bias

5. Ensuring Fair and Unbiased Review

5.1 Conflict of Interest (COI) Policy

Reviewers must decline to review an abstract if they:

- Are collaborators or co-authors with any listed author
- Are from the same department or research group
- Have financial conflicts related to the content
- Supervise or are supervised by any author
- Have personal, professional, or competitive conflicts

Reviewers must complete a COI declaration before reviewing.

5.2 Scoring Criteria

All abstracts shall be scored using a standardised rubric:

- **Relevance to conference themes**
- **Scientific merit and methodological rigour**
- **Innovation or novelty**
- **Clarity of objectives, methods, and conclusions**
- **Potential impact on field**

Each criterion should be rated on a numerical scale (e.g., 1–5).

5.3 Fairness Measures

- Each abstract is reviewed by **at least 2 independent reviewers** if possible





COMPREHENSIVE CARDIAC CARE

26th Annual SA Heart® Congress
CTICC, Cape Town
30 October - 1 November 2026

- Discrepancies >2 points between reviewers require a third review.
- Abstracts are randomly assigned to avoid reviewer bias.
- Gender, institution, and country of author(s) must not influence outcomes.

6. Who Should Review Abstracts

6.1 Reviewer Qualifications

Reviewers must:

- Hold relevant subject expertise
- Have at least 2–5 years of research or clinical experience
- Have no COI with assigned abstracts
- Demonstrate ability to meet confidentiality and fairness requirements

6.2 Reviewer Selection

The Scientific Committee will appoint reviewers based on:

- Field-specific knowledge
- Prior reviewing experience
- Academic or clinical credentials
- Balanced representation (career stage, institution, geography)

6.3 Reviewer Responsibilities

Reviewers must:

- Evaluate abstracts objectively
- Adhere to deadlines
- Maintain confidentiality
- Provide constructive, clear feedback
- Declare any conflicts immediately



COMPREHENSIVE CARDIAC CARE

26th Annual SA Heart® Congress
CTICC, Cape Town
30 October - 1 November 2026

7. Decision-Making & Acceptance

7.1 Acceptance Categories

Depending on scores, abstracts may be:

- Accepted as oral presentations
- Accepted as poster presentations
- Conditionally accepted (revisions required)
- Rejected

7.2 Final Selection

The abstract Committee will:

- Review reviewer scores
- Resolve disputes
- Ensure diversity of topics, speakers, and institutions
- Finalise the conference programme
- Once abstracts have been reviewed and allocated to either oral or poster presentation, the decision is final and no SIG or presenter is allowed to change the format of submission.

8. Confidentiality

All abstract content, reviewer comments, and scoring are confidential. Reviewers must not:

- Contact authors
- Share abstracts externally
- Use information for personal gain

9. Appeals Process

Authors may appeal only if:

- There is evidence of procedural error
- A conflict of interest is discovered
- Reviewer comments demonstrate bias



COMPREHENSIVE CARDIAC CARE

26th Annual SA Heart® Congress
CTICC, Cape Town
30 October - 1 November 2026

Appeals must be submitted within 7 days of notification.

10. Policy Review

This policy shall be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure alignment with ethical standards and scientific community expectations.