



## Guidelines for abstract review and selection

### General information

Every year the ESCAIDE conference programme is built around abstracts that undergo an independent peer review process to assess the quality and public health relevance of each submission. This is a fundamental step in ensuring the scientific quality and rigour of the work presented at the conference, made possible through the large number of ESCAIDE reviewers who guide abstract selection, and the ESCAIDE Scientific Committee who oversees the process.

When reviewing an abstract for ESCAIDE, reviewers should assess its alignment with the conference goals, which include sharing scientific knowledge and experience in infectious disease epidemiology, public health microbiology, and related fields.

The conference relies on reviewers' expertise and judgment to select the best abstracts for presentation. However, it is important to recognize that abstracts can vary widely in terms of content, scope, and potential impact. Table 1 provides a framework for assessment that should be applied in an adaptive way to acknowledge this diversity. Reviewers should apply the evaluation criteria flexibly, considering the specific context and purpose of each abstract, and provide constructive feedback that is relevant and actionable. By following these criteria, each abstract can be evaluated appropriately, regardless of its content, scope, or potential impact.

[About the Conference \(escaide.eu\)](https://escaide.eu)

### Review process

#### *Login to the ESCAIDE abstract management system as a reviewer*

To review an abstract, you must have been invited by the organisers and be registered in the ESCAIDE abstract management system as a reviewer. Once you log in, you will see the abstracts allocated to you.

#### *Review abstracts*

Each abstract is reviewed by three independent scientific experts, with expertise matched to the submission track. Reviewers assess whether each criterion applies to the abstract. A 'yes' answer is equivalent to a score of 1, and a 'no' corresponds to a 0 score. Each criterion can be scored with a minimum total of 'no score' and a maximum total of 3 points. All criteria are evenly weighted, and a 0 score on any criterion leads to an automatic decision of 'reject'. Table 1 shows the evaluation criteria that reviewers use to score each abstract.

**Table 1** Evaluation criteria for reviewing an abstract

Evaluation criteria for reviewing an abstract
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Background: Rationale of the study (no score, 1, 2 or 3)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Does the study rationale cover the <u>underlined</u> public health issue(s)?</li><li>• Is key existing knowledge presented to set the stage for the study?</li><li>• Are the objective(s) of the study stated clearly?</li></ul></li></ol>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>2. Methods: Appropriateness of methods (no score, 1, 2 or 3)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Are critical terms and definitions clearly explained?</li><li>• Are the methods appropriate for the study?</li></ul></li></ol>

Evaluation criteria for reviewing an abstract	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Are the methods described sufficiently, avoiding undefined terms and unnecessary jargon?</i></li> </ul>
3.	Results: Presentation of the results (no score, 1, 2 or 3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Are the results summarised adequately?</i></li> <li>• <i>Is the analysis (descriptive as well as statistical) of the data appropriate?</i></li> <li>• <i>Are the data sufficient and presented in a way that allows the reader to reach a conclusion?</i></li> </ul>
4.	Conclusion: Conclusions and interpretations of results (no score, 1, 2 or 3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Are the conclusions justified, based on the results presented?</i></li> <li>• <i>Do the conclusions answer the issue and objectives stated in the rationale and background?</i></li> <li>• <i>Are the results and their interpretation discussed in the context of existing scientific knowledge?</i></li> </ul>
5.	Action: Recommended intervention and estimation of public health impact (no score, 1, 2 or 3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Are specific public health actions recommended or reported as undertaken?</i></li> <li>• <i>Are the actions/recommendations/control measures practical and derived directly from the results presented?</i></li> <li>• <i>Does the study provide clear evidence of its potential or actual public health impact?</i></li> </ul>
6.	Overall clarity of the abstract (no score, 1, 2 or 3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Are appropriate and simple terms used to describe the methods and discuss the results?</i></li> <li>• <i>Is the writing clear and concise?</i></li> <li>• <i>Is there a logical sequence and cohesiveness among all abstract sections?</i></li> </ul>
7.	Public health significance (no score, 1, 2 or 3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Does the study, in both its topic and its results, have a clear application to improving public health, and is this application obvious to the reader, without the need for complex explanation or extrapolation?</i></li> <li>• <i>Is the study sufficiently sound (including clarity and strength of results) to serve as a basis for taking public health action?</i></li> <li>• <i>Do the data solve an immediate problem, or build on existing knowledge (rather than simply repeat what is already known)?</i></li> </ul>

### Authors' disclosure of data published

As a principle, ESCAIDE abstracts should contain original material that is not yet in the public domain. If an abstract is based on work already published, the author is responsible for disclosing that information and providing a link to the publication. The reviewers and Scientific Committee will decide whether the abstract retains public health value for the ESCAIDE audience and should be accepted or not.

### Final decisions

Reviewers should recommend whether a study should be presented as an 'oral' or 'poster' presentation based on the most suitable format. However, due to limited 'oral' presentation spots, some abstracts may be accepted as 'posters' even if most reviewers suggested an 'oral' presentation. This applies to abstracts that scored below the threshold for an 'oral' presentation.

### Comments to authors

Providing feedback on the abstract you are assigned is crucial to help the authors improve their work. Comments can point out strengths and weaknesses in the study, highlight areas for improvement, and suggest potential avenues for further research. This feedback is essential for the authors to enhance their study's quality and to make it more impactful for the ESCAIDE audience.

## Selection process

The whole review process is overseen by the ESCAIDE Scientific Committee. The Committee assures that the criteria applied to select abstracts enhance the overall scientific quality of the conference by setting a limit of abstracts (*or threshold for inclusion*) that can be accepted into the Conference programme. This threshold is decided by the Scientific Committee based on the overall quality and range of topics, but is ultimately determined by the Conference programme capacity. To ensure a fair and transparent abstract review and selection, a well-defined decision process is applied, as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2. Abstract review and selection processes**

Steps	Decisions
<b>1. Reviewer triplet</b>	Three reviewers will evaluate each abstract and assign a decision of either oral presentation, poster presentation, or rejection. The majority decision is the final decision (e.g. 2 reviewers accept as oral = oral, 2 rejections = rejection).
<b>2. Author's preference</b>	If the author has requested a poster presentation, this request will be respected, and the abstract cannot be considered for oral presentation.
<b>3. Threshold for inclusion</b>	The conference programme capacity can only accept a certain number of abstracts. The mean reviewer scores will be used to rank all accepted abstracts, and the highest scoring abstracts with a consensus decision of 'oral' will be accepted as oral presentations. The remaining abstracts above the capacity threshold will be awarded poster presentations. All other abstracts will be excluded from the conference.
<b>4. Scoring</b>	If the reviewers have divergent opinions (e.g., 1 reviewer accepts as oral, 1 as a poster, and 1 rejects), scoring will be used to guide selection based on the threshold for inclusion. The Scientific Committee will provide further review and final selection, as shown in Decision 5.
<b>5. Scientific Committee final decision</b>	The Scientific Committee oversees the process to verify fairness and will provide further review in cases where the selection algorithm cannot be applied, or where further judgement and a final decision is needed. For example, where there is divergence of reviewers' decisions and scores on a specific abstract (within-reviewer variance); divergence of scores between different reviewers that could result in a biased selection of certain topics/abstracts (between-reviewer variance); incomplete triplet reviews resulting in uncertain scoring and acceptance decision; and where an additional and definitive review is needed.
<b>6. Communication of results</b>	Once the process is completed, the final allocation decisions for the abstracts are collated and each abstract author is informed of the final decision via e-mail.

Table 3 illustrates the algorithm applied to each abstract to determine its selection based on the programme capacity, using an example based on a threshold for oral presentations of 16 and above, for posters the threshold is 13-15, and for rejected below 13.

**Table 2. Abstract selection algorithm based on programme capacity**

Abstract	Author preference	Reviewer Preference and Scores (O=Oral, P=Poster, R=Reject)					Final Decision	Comment
		1	2	3	Mean	Majority Consensus		
A	Oral	(O)20	(P)15	(O)16	<b>17</b>	Oral	Oral	Review consensus = Oral (Decision 1)
B	Oral	(P)14	(O)16	(O)15	<b>15</b>	Oral	Poster	Review consensus =Oral. However, the score is below inclusion threshold for orals = Poster (Decision 1&4)
C	Poster	(O)19	(O)19	(O)16	<b>18</b>	Oral	Poster	Review consensus =Oral, and score is above inclusion threshold. However, author preference is for a poster =Poster. (Decision 2)
D	Oral	(O)19	(P)19	(R)13	<b>17</b>	None	(Oral)	No consensus, but 2/3 reviewers (majority) indicate acceptance. Preliminary decision based on scores, pending final review by the Scientific Committee. (Decision 3 & 4)
E	Oral	(O)16	(P)16	(O)15	<b>15,7</b>	Oral	Poster	Review consensus = Poster, so even though score is above capacity threshold, the abstract is allocated to posters. (Decision 1)
F	Oral	(O)18	(R)4	(P)15	<b>12</b>	None	(Reject)	<b>See Example D:</b> Divergent score pending review and final decision by the Scientific Committee. (Decision 3 & 4)
G	Oral	(R)16	(P)14	(R)12	<b>14</b>	Reject	Reject	Review consensus to reject= Reject (Decision 1)