



Abstract submission regulations and instructions

Eligibility for submission

Abstracts containing **original scientific data** from **randomized phase III trials** in oncology, or from **phase II trials** which demonstrate **remarkable therapeutic benefit, scientific insight or progress in an area of unmet need**.

Real world data studies will be considered for eligibility based on scientific interest.

Submission methods and deadlines

All abstract submissions for an ESMO Virtual Plenary must be completed by **12:00hrs local Swiss time** on the dates listed below.

Abstract submission deadline	For ESMO Virtual Plenary presentation
12 February 2021	18 March 2021
12 March 2021	15 April 2021
9 April 2021	13 May 2021
14 May 2021	17 June 2021
11 June 2021	15 July 2021
9 July 2021	12 August 2021
10 September 2021	14 October 2021
12 November 2021	16 December 2021

Note: ESMO Virtual Plenaries are not scheduled in September and November 2021.

Abstract submission is free of charge.

Submission categories

Basic science	Neuroendocrine tumours
Biliary tract cancer, incl. cholangiocarcinoma	New diagnostic tools
Biomarkers (agnostic)	NSCLC, early stage
Breast cancer, early stage	NSCLC, locally advanced
Breast cancer, locally advanced	NSCLC, metastatic
Breast cancer, metastatic	Oesophagogastric cancer
CNS tumours	Palliative care
Colorectal cancer	Pancreatic cancer
Developmental therapeutics	Psycho-oncology
Endocrine tumours	Public policy
Genitourinary tumours, prostate	Sarcoma
Genitourinary tumours, non-prostate	SARS-CoV-2 and cancer
Gynaecological cancers	SCLC
Haematological malignancies	Supportive care
Head and neck cancer, excluding thyroid	Thoracic malignancies, other
Hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC)	Thyroid cancer
Investigational immunotherapy	Translational research (agnostic)
Melanoma and other skin tumours	Tumour biology and pathology
Miscellaneous	

Submission regulations

1. By submitting an abstract intended for presentation at an ESMO Virtual Plenary, the first author (= presenter) warrants that the **material has neither been, nor will be, previously published** in any publication in peer review setting **or presented** at a meeting of any other scientific organisation prior to an ESMO Virtual Plenary.

Abstracts containing data with **significant/major updates** with respect to a previous presentation or publication may, however, be submitted to an ESMO Virtual Plenary. In this case, additional information must be given specifying clearly which new data will be presented, for example final analysis of primary endpoint(s), intermediate statistical analysis or sub-group analysis. Authors must at the same time also supply information regarding the prior presentation for identification and comparison purposes, indicating the name of the meeting, year and/or publication number.

Violation of this policy will result in a rejection of the submitted abstract.

Should any similarities to prior presentations or publications exist, these must be explained in a covering letter, citing the ESMO Virtual Plenary abstract submission number, title and first author, to the ESMO Scientific Programmes Department (programme@esmo.org). Except for exceptional circumstances, abstracts containing previously published material will be rejected.

Pure encore abstracts are not accepted.

2. With the submission of an abstract, and on behalf of him/herself and all co-authors, the first author (= presenter) undertakes to:

1. Release full copyright to ESMO and give full permission for the abstract, if accepted, to be published in Annals of Oncology as well as on the Annals of Oncology and ESMO websites.
2. Warrant that he/she is an investigator with a substantial involvement in the study presented in the abstract.
3. Accept responsibility for the accuracy and confidentiality (see corresponding paragraph) of the submitted abstract.
4. Confirm that all authors and sponsors are aware of, and agree to, the content of the abstract and support the data therein; furthermore the first author will be responsible for obtaining, and, upon request, showing proof that all authors and sponsors have given their permission for the submission of the abstract and content therein as well as for the potential inclusion of the abstract in an official ESMO Virtual Plenary Press activity.
5. Make all reasonable efforts to ensure the anonymity of any patient discussed in the abstracts.
6. Be the contact person for all correspondence concerning the abstract and to keep co-authors duly informed about its status.
7. Present his/her abstract in the ESMO Virtual Plenary setting and potentially in a subsequent ESMO meeting. The first author may nominate a co-author to present an abstract in his/her place provided that the replacement presenter is also a listed co-author **independent of the sponsor (unless for data generated as mentioned in point 10 below)**. The name of the replacement must be submitted to the ESMO Scientific Programmes Department (programme@esmo.org) within twenty-four (24) hours of outcome notification.
8. An author employed by the abstract sponsor cannot act as the presenter or corresponding author of any work related to clinical data. Clinical data are defined as data/parameters of clinical relevance captured in observational or interventional clinical studies, registries and real-world databases. This restriction also applies to literature-based systematic reviews or meta-analysis of clinical data. The presenter must be an independent, practicing physician or independent investigator listed in the abstract author string.
9. An author employed by a company submitting clinical or translational research data generated by the same company is not allowed to present the data. The presenter must be an independent, practicing physician or independent investigator listed in the abstract author-string.
10. Employees of pharmaceutical, diagnostic or artificial intelligence companies may submit and present data generated in in-vitro and pre-clinical research, **excluding**: translational research, gene expression sets from databases of clinical data series and artificial intelligence-enabled analyses or products from clinical data series. The latter must be presented by an independent, practicing physician or independent investigator listed in the abstract author-string.
11. Indicate whether he/she agrees to participate in an ESMO Virtual Plenary Press activity if the abstract is selected for coverage by ESMO and guarantee he/she is not subject to any restrictions by the institute he/she belongs to or by the scientific journals he/she may have submitted his/her research to and he/she is independent of the sponsor.
12. The first author must further confirm his/her presence at an ESMO Virtual Plenary Press activity if selected; however, he/she may nominate a co-author to participate in his/her place provided that the replacement presenter is also a listed

co-author independent of the sponsor who has also made a substantive contribution to the work. The name of the replacement must be submitted by email to the ESMO Press Office (media@esmo.org) within twenty-four (24) hours of Press invitation acceptance.

13. Declare the name of the legal entity responsible for the governance, coordination and running of the study.
14. Declare how the study detailed in the abstract was funded, for example by a pharmaceutical, biotech or other commercial company or by a Foundation or academic group, and to name the organisation(s) funding the study.
15. Ensure that all authors complete the “Declaration of Interest” statement identifying any financial/non-financial interest in products or processes involved in their activities, related or not, to the work submitted in the abstract. This includes stock ownership, membership on an advisory board or board of directors, corporate-sponsored research, or other substantive relationships such as employment with a pharmaceutical company or any other organisation. Should no valid disclosure statement be provided at submission, authors may, at the discretion of the ESMO Virtual Plenary Review Panel, be removed from the author string without further recourse to the authors.
16. Guarantee the scientific independence of the author or principle investigator (whichever is going to be the presenting author) when presenting his/her data, and confirm that he/she has full control over the text of the submitted abstract, subsequent presentation (slides or poster) and content of the press release prepared by ESMO (if part of the official ESMO Press activity), and that he/she has not been influenced by any third party, including the sponsor of the study **(unless for data generated as mentioned in point 10 above)**.
17. Indicate where applicable the number of the trial protocol (NIH or European equivalent) and the release date (when it was obtained).
18. Ensure that for all studies involving human or animal subjects, permission has been obtained from the relevant regulatory authority and that properly informed consent, where appropriate, has been given.
19. Acknowledge any editorial assistance in the writing of the abstract that was provided by a third party, providing the name of the writer and the company who provided this service.

3. Withdrawal of abstracts

If the first author wishes to withdraw his/her abstract from an ESMO Virtual Plenary presentation after outcome notifications have been made available, he/she must submit a written request **within twenty-four (24) hours** to programme@esmo.org. Any withdrawal requests made after 24 hours cannot be assured of removal from Annals of Oncology.

4. Correction of accepted abstracts

Once an accepted abstract has been published, no corrigenda will be considered unless the data published in the original abstract is proved to have a relevant and negative impact on the treatment of patients and/or the future of any related research.

Submission instructions

- Each section of the online abstract submission system must be completed. Authors failing to give all information required in the online submission system will not have their abstract considered by the ESMO Virtual Plenary Review Panel.
- Once each step is completed, the author must click ‘**Finish Submission**’ in order to complete the process. Without clicking this option, the abstract will not be considered as submitted and will not be forwarded to the ESMO Virtual Plenary Review Panel for consideration.
- Abstracts should be structured in such a way as to include the following four (4) sections:
 - Background: A short introduction indicating the rationale of the study
 - Methods: A brief description of pertinent methodological procedures
 - Results: A summary of the results of the research
 - Conclusions: A statement of the main conclusions
- The title of the abstract should include significant words that reflect the content of the abstract but not refer to the study results or conclusions. The ESMO Virtual Plenary Review Panel reserves the right to correct the title format without further recourse to the authors.
- Commercial names may not be used in the title of the abstract. Compounds should be mentioned with the generic name in lower case. Commercial names are admitted in the text, with the ® symbol, and if in brackets following the generic name, i.e. ‘generic (Commercial®)’. The ESMO Virtual Plenary Review Panel reserves the right to substitute commercial names with generic names where necessary without further recourse to the authors.

- The name(s) of the legal entity/entities responsible for the governance, coordination and running of the study detailed in the abstract, and the name(s) of the organisation(s) providing funding must be provided. This information will be published with the abstract.
- Abbreviations may be used in the title and text of abstracts if they are defined. Terms must be spelt out in full at first mention and followed with the abbreviation in parentheses. Particular care should be taken to identify complex chemotherapeutic regimens.
- The character limit for all submitted abstracts is set at **2'000**, excluding spaces. This limit includes characters entered in the title, abstract body and table but not the author names and institutions.
- Illustrations and graphs are not permitted. **One brief and clear** table counting for a default of 225 characters is accepted (however the table itself must not be longer than 600 characters). More than one table may not be submitted under the guise of Table 1.1, 1.2 etc.
- The maximum number of authors allowed per abstract is limited to **twenty (20)**. Mailing addresses, academic degrees and professional positions such as Medical Director, CEO, CMO etc. must not be mentioned.
- The names of all listed authors will be published in the order provided during submission. Changes may be requested within **twenty-four (24) hours** of outcome notification to programme@esmo.org. Any requests for changes to the author string made after twenty-four (24) hours cannot be guaranteed inclusion in Annals of Oncology or the online programme.
- Authors must select the appropriate abstract submission category, however, the ESMO Virtual Plenary Review Panel reserves the right to re-categorise abstracts without further recourse to the authors.
- The use of good English and proof-reading is essential. Once the abstract is submitted, online changes, corrections or rewording will not be possible. The ESMO Virtual Plenary Review Panel reserves the right to reject abstracts which are presented in poor English or to request an immediate revision by the first author.
- Supplementary data such as manuscripts will not be accepted or forwarded to the ESMO Virtual Plenary Review Panel.

Review and publication of accepted abstracts

Submitted abstracts will be reviewed by the the ESMO Virtual Plenary Review Panel comprising the ESMO President, ESMO President-elect, ESMO Chief Medical Officer, ESMO Congress Scientific Chairs and the appropriate Scientific Track Chairs. Accepted abstracts will be granted an oral presentation by the first author, followed by expert perspectives and an interactive panel and audience discussion / Q&A session. Presented abstracts will be published in Annals of Oncology as well as on the Annals of Oncology and ESMO websites.

Embargo policy and publication

Abstracts accepted for ESMO Virtual Plenary presentation are under full embargo until the start of the ESMO Virtual Plenary session during which the data are presented. Data and information beyond what is included in all accepted abstracts, for example full data sets, may only be made public at the start of the official ESMO Virtual Plenary session during which the study is presented.

Confidentiality policy

Abstracts submitted to an ESMO Virtual Plenary are considered confidential by ESMO, the author, co-authors and research sponsors until publicly released in connection with the ESMO Virtual Plenary. Prior to public release, the author, co-authors, research sponsors, journalists and others may not:

- Make the information public or provide it to others who can make it public
- Publish or present the information or provide it to others who can make it public
- Use the information for trading purposes or provide it to others who can use it for trading purposes

ESMO reserves the right to share material under embargo with journalists on the authorised ESMO media list who have agreed to respect the ESMO embargo policy.

If details or relevant information from the abstract or additional study data are disclosed in advance of public release in connection with an ESMO Virtual Plenary, the abstract will no longer be eligible for inclusion in the ESMO Virtual Plenary and/or will be subject to removal.

Confidentiality policy exceptions

According to the Confidentiality policy, data and other information in a research abstract is confidential until public release in connection with the ESMO Virtual Plenary.

When a publicly traded company is required to disclose data or other information from a confidential abstract in advance of the public release to satisfy requirements of the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) or a corresponding body in another country, the abstract is still eligible for inclusion in the ESMO Virtual Plenary programme provided that the company submits to the ESMO Scientific Programmes Department (programme@esmo.org) in advance of the release written notification of the requirement to issue information in accordance to SEC regulations.

In the interest of effective peer-reviewed presentation of data, the company is required to get in contact with the ESMO Scientific Programmes Department (programme@esmo.org) and/or Press Office (media@esmo.org) in advance of the release to notify that a press release regarding an abstract included in the Virtual Plenary Programme will have to be issued in accordance to SEC regulations.

ESMO recommends that the company's press release adheres to the [Qualitative Sample Press Release](#) and:

1. Summarises data cited in the abstract in a qualitative way rather than providing specific quantitative information, including exact figures on the study
2. Avoids interpretations about the implications of the data for clinical practice
3. Notes that full data has been submitted for presentation at an ESMO Virtual Plenary.

The ESMO Press Office will review the company's press release to ensure it adheres to the Qualitative Sample Press Release and evaluate if the abstract can still be included in an official ESMO Press activity.

If the press release includes significantly more information than ESMO's recommendations, the abstract's placement in an ESMO Virtual Plenary is subject to change and can be withdrawn from an official ESMO press activity.

Copyright

ESMO holds copyright of all abstracts accepted for an ESMO Virtual Plenary and therefore abstracts cannot be made public prior to official release and publication.

ESMO copyright is lifted only if the abstract is not accepted for inclusion in an official ESMO Virtual Plenary programme and/or publication in Annals of Oncology.

The submission of abstracts accepted for an ESMO Virtual Plenary to subsequent conferences, organised either by ESMO or third parties, requires the permission of ESMO as copyright holder. Requests must be addressed to programme@esmo.org.

Commercial data mining of published ESMO Virtual Plenary abstracts requires the permission of ESMO and approval must be sought before inception of the project. Queries should be addressed to programme@esmo.org.