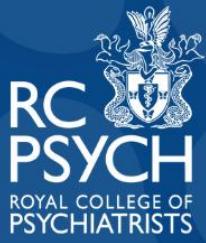




ROYAL COLLEGE OF PSYCHIATRISTS
**International
Congress**



Submission guidance

RCPsych International Congress 2026
Monday 15 - Thursday 18 June
ACC, Liverpool



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General Information

We are now accepting submissions for the 2026 International Congress programme. You are able to submit your ideas for sessions within the main programme, the Congress fringe and the fringe stage.

The 2026 International Congress is an in-person event so we would expect all speakers to present in-person (speakers from outside the UK may be considered for a pre-recorded presentation).

Submissions for the International Congress programme is highly competitive. We receive around 250 submissions each year for only 60/65 slots. This means that while competition is high, the selected sessions represent the highest quality and most relevant topics.

We want everyone to have a fair and equal chance of being successful, so please read through the guidelines below to help put your proposal together.

[View how submissions are accepted into the programme \(pdf\).](#)

What is a session?

- A session takes place within the main Congress programme and is 75 minutes in length
- Sessions are scheduled concurrently, so up to five sessions can be taking place at one time
- Each session typically includes three speakers and a chair, with each speaker presenting for 15 – 20 minutes and a 15 minute Q&A/discussion
- Sessions are organised into streams within the programme which are self-selected within the submission form
- We are specifically looking for symposia proposals, so you will need at least three speakers and a chair (who can be one of the speakers). If you are struggling to find co-presenters, please do contact us (congress@rcpsych.ac.uk) and we would be happy to help

What the committee is looking for

The College is committed to promoting equity, diversity and inclusion for our existing and future members, associates, affiliates, staff and visitors in all our practices, including the International Congress programme.

Please read our [speaker diversity policy](#) before submitting your proposal

We are aware that not all groups can be represented in a single session but efforts should be made to take into account the diversity of our workforce, including;

- Gender, ethnicity and other protected characteristics
- Professional background (different faculties, special interests)
- Varying career grades (SAS doctors, resident doctors, LE doctors and emerging researchers)
- People with lived experience
- Geographical representation (especially international perspectives and global diversity)
- Speakers from different institutions (proposals with speakers from one institution will not be accepted)

We encourage submissions that consider issues of health inequality and how this can be mitigated.

Submissions should take an approach that supports collaboration and promotes the patient voice, either through having experts by experience on the panel or presenting on patient narratives, patient satisfaction outcomes or feedback.

If you are interested in including experts by experience or international perspectives in your session but do not have any relevant contacts, please do get in touch, congress@rcpsych.ac.uk, and we will be able to support you

If you are an expert by experience or international member looking for further links with psychiatrists or those practicing in the UK, please email congress@rcpsych.ac.uk and we will try to support you making those connections

You will be required to state in your proposal how your session covers equity, diversity and inclusion and varying perspectives.

Things to consider for your proposal

- **Relevance** – does your session address a current and pressing issue in psychiatry
- **Innovation** – we are supportive of proposals that focus on new research, groundbreaking findings and essential updates
- **Balance** – aim for a well rounded session with diverse speakers and perspectives
- **Impact** – how will your session contribute to the knowledge and practice of attendees

Ensure you select appropriate subject matter and focus on scientific discovery, open communication and new learning that is clinically relevant. Think about diversity within scientific research and understudied topics such as

- **Diagnostic areas:** learning difficulties and neurodivergence, particularly comorbidities with psychosis and affective disorders; Personality disorder; Substance misuse
- **Age groups:** Older adults; Children
- **Health inequities:** research, implementation and intersectionality

In your proposal summary and learning objectives think about the applicability and relevance of your proposal to clinical practice, patient care and/or professional development

We strongly encourage including disaggregated data in your scientific submission, so including sub-categories such as age, sex, disability or geographic area

Make sure your proposal is as focused as possible, avoid making it too wide or diffuse. Detailed, intriguing and topical pitches often score highly

Consider cross collaboration with other specialties, faculties and special interest groups to gather different perspectives

The 2026 International Congress will be an in-person event and we would therefore expect all speakers to present in person. If there are mitigating circumstances, or international speakers are involved in your session please make a clear case in your submission as to why a virtual presentation would be necessary

The College is committed to providing high quality sessions focused on educational content that is free from commercial influence or bias. You are therefore expected to provide any declarations of interest for all speakers

Please ensure you have contacted all speakers to obtain their permission, prior to submitting your proposal

Submission form

On the submission form you will be asked to submit the following information. Please [download a word version \(DOC\)](#) of the submission form to help you prepare your notes before submitting online

- Select whether your proposal is for the main programme or Congress fringe
- **Your personal details:** including name, affiliation, career status and email address. Please note that all correspondence will be with the submitter until acceptance of the proposal is confirmed. If successful we will then contact the relevant speakers
- **Demographic information:** To enable the College to better understand and support the needs of those it works with, we are requesting that you complete a set of questions on your demographic information. The information you provide will help us to better understand the breakdown and needs of those we work with and support, and help to identify areas of inequality and any appropriate actions to remedy these. Your answers to these questions will have no bearing on the outcome of your proposal. Completion of this section of the form is voluntary and all responses will be treated in line with our privacy policy
- **The title of your session:** this is limited to 25 words, so should be succinct and reflective of the session. This will be used in the final programme so please use clear English, sentence case (the first letter of the sentence is capitalised, with the rest being lowercase except for proper nouns and acronyms) and avoid using abbreviations
- **Brief summary of the session:** this should include what delegates will gain from attending your session and will be used for marketing purposes. Please ensure this is written in clear English with accurate grammar and spelling. Think about the applicability and relevance of your session to clinical practice, patient care and/or professional development
- **The learning objectives of your session:** this should include a maximum of four objectives and will also be used for marketing purposes. Use sentences such as “in this session you will gain/learn/explore....”
- **Information on the speakers and chair of the session:** including their presentation title, declaration of interest, if they are an expert

by experience and the reason they are being suggested. Please do not just put expert in the field, or expert by experience, think about providing more detailed information as to why this speaker is relevant for your proposal

- **How your session covers equity, diversity and inclusion and varying perspectives** as outlined in the section above, for both the populations served and our workforce. Think about how you have taken into account the diversity of the workforce, differing career grades, international perspectives and experts by experience. Consider diversity in scientific topics, impact/understanding of health inequalities and address understudied factors
- **The stream your submission belongs to and any relevant categories:** you will be able select which programme stream you feel your submission is best suited under. The streams include
 - **Clinical practice** – sessions in this stream should focus on defined clinical topics that are relevant across psychiatric specialties. They should offer practical insights, share evidence based approaches, and address common challenges in everyday mental health care to support learning and reflection across the profession.
 - **Developmental** – these sessions should explore how mental health develops across the lifespan, with a particular focus on childhood and adolescence, as well as recognizing the changing needs across the longer life course. They should cover key topics in developmental psychiatry, including early detection, intervention, and the impact of developmental changes on mental health
 - **Education and training** – these sessions should explore all aspects of training, spanning academic and clinical settings, and covering the full career life cycle. Topics might include new training models, innovations in psychiatric education, and how we support learning and development at every stage
 - **Leadership and management** – these sessions should focus on the challenges and learning involved in leading, at all levels, within multidisciplinary teams and how we can use inclusive, shared leadership to improve mental health services, encourage collaboration and promote voices of those with lived experience
 - **New science** – these sessions should showcase emerging research and cutting edge developments that have the potential to transform mental health care. They should highlight novel findings, methods, or technologies and explore how these advances can be translated into practice

- **Policy and media** - these sessions should explore how policy and media shape mental health care, from influencing public attitudes to driving system wide change. They should focus on effective ways to engage with policymakers, journalists, and the public to challenge stigma, share evidence, and push for meaningful reform
- **Psychopharmacology** – these sessions should focus on the latest research and insights in psychopharmacology, highlighting new treatments, advances in understanding medication effects, and emerging evidence to guide safe and effective prescribing and de-prescribing in mental health care taking into consideration different demographic groups
- **Quality improvement** – these sessions should focus on how we can close the gap between best practice and everyday care in mental health services, looking at how we can tackle complex problems, test changes and involve people at all levels in making continuous improvement. Submissions should also consider ongoing monitoring of patient safety and experience data, including, identifying unintended consequences or harms and measuring the impact on health inequality

- You will also be asked to choose from several categories including whether your proposal has international representation, experts by experience, resident doctors, SAS doctors and new consultants, is submitted on behalf of a faculty or SIG and which specialties it includes
- Please ensure you complete all sections of the form otherwise your proposal will not be submitted
- You will be able to make amendments to your proposal up until the deadline, please do not submit duplicate proposals
- There is no limit to the number of proposals you can submit, however a speaker may not be listed in more than three sessions within the final programme. Speakers may be asked to suggest alternative speakers if they are presenting more than three times
- After the deadline any draft proposals will be deleted
- Proposals must be submitted via the online form, proposals submitted by email will not be accepted

Congress fringe submissions

- Submissions for the Congress fringe can fall into a number of categories, including, music, wellbeing, art, film and comedy
- Congress fringe sessions will take place either in the morning, at lunchtime or at the end of the day
- These sessions can range from 30 minutes in length to 75 minutes, depending on when they are held within the programme
- The structure doesn't have to follow a typical session but please bear in mind that we are limited by room layouts at the venue - if your proposal is accepted we may contact you to discuss the logistics of your session in more detail
- We will allocate you a date and time on acceptance of your proposal
- [View the 2025 International Congress fringe programme](#) for some examples of fringe sessions we've held in the past

Speaker expenses

- Only non-members of the College are eligible to apply for expenses
- For UK based non-member speakers we will cover one night's accommodation per day a speaker is presenting and advanced travel only. In line with our policy certain limits apply. Expenses will be confirmed on acceptance of your submission
- For international speakers we will offer two nights accommodation and £300.00 towards travel if based in Europe and £700.00 towards travel if based outside of Europe in Band A and B countries
- For those in Band C and D countries, we will cover up to £1200 towards travel, two night's accommodation and complimentary registration for the whole Congress
- Country banding is based on current [membership fee bandings](#)
- For experts by experience we will offer expenses as above as well as a £180.00 speaker fee per presentation and complimentary registration for the whole Congress. Please ensure you indicate on the form which speakers are experts by experience
- Please ensure you indicate on your submission form if a speaker wishes to claim expenses. We will not be able to accept any additional expense requests at a later date
- All speakers will receive complimentary registration for the day/s they are presenting
- Please note that facilitators and presenters taking part in any of the fringe sessions will not be able to claim expenses. They will, however, receive complimentary registration for the day they are taking part in a session
- We will not be able to offer expenses to session Chairs
- In line with our policy certain limits apply, please read through our expenses claim guidance for details on what can be claimed
- Expenses will be confirmed on acceptance of your submission

Submission system information

- To submit your proposal you will need to use our online portal [Oxford Abstracts](#). Please watch our [video guide](#) on how to submit through the portal for detailed guidance
- All submissions need to be submitted through the portal, we will not be able to accept submissions by any other method
- To start your submission click the 'submit your proposal' link which will take you through to Oxford Abstracts
- If you have used Oxford Abstracts previously or have submitted for the International Congress in the past few years you should have log in details. If you have forgotten your password click the 'forgot password' button
- If you are new to Oxford Abstracts you can create an account by clicking the 'sign up' button. You will need to enter your name, email address and set a password. Please ensure this email address is one you have access to and use regularly as this is the email we will use to contact you
- To confirm your submission please ensure you complete all sections of the form
- You are able to edit and amend your submission up until the deadline **(midnight (BST), Friday 24 October)**
- No changes will be possible after the deadline, so please ensure that all submissions that you wish to be considered for the International Congress 2026 are marked as complete by the deadline. Any drafts or incomplete submissions after the deadline will be deleted
- There is no limit to the number of submissions you can submit. Please avoid submitting duplicate proposals, try to amend your proposal if you notice any errors. If we notice any duplicate submissions we will delete older versions and retain the most up to date version for review
- All submissions must be received by the deadline, **midnight (BST), Friday 24 October**. Any submissions received after the deadline will not be considered
- Please do not submit poster abstracts. A separate call for poster submissions will be available later on in the year

Submission review

- Once the submission deadline has passed, all submissions are then sent for review by the Congress organising committee
- You can find out more details on who is on the committee on our [organising committee webpages](#)
- Each member of the committee is allocated a random selection of the proposals and is asked to mark them against set criteria
- Once all the reviews have been collated, each submission is given a mean score and an indicative score for acceptance into the programme is allocated
- The organising committee then meet to discuss all submission, highlighting any areas that might be underrepresented
- Following the organising committee meeting the Congress executive committee meet to discuss through the sessions that have reached the indicative score, to ensure they are the right fit for the programme and there is overall balance
- The final programme is then set by the executive committee
- Some sessions are held in reserve for commissioned sessions, which are either filled with hot topics that come up throughout the year or underrepresented areas

Submission acceptance

- Once all submissions have been reviewed we will inform you of the outcome of your proposal. This should be by January 2026
- If your submission is accepted you will be allocated a date and time for your session on acceptance
- If your submission is accepted you will be asked to confirm the details of your submission for the Congress programme
- You may be asked to make some changes to your submission before it is formally accepted for the main programme, this could include, a change of session title or alternative speakers
- A speaker may not be listed in more than three sessions within the final programme. Speakers may be asked to suggest alternative speakers if they are presenting more than three times
- Don't be disheartened if you are unsuccessful. We will provide feedback where possible and please do consider resubmitting