

From planning to proceedings

A beginner’s view on timeline for preparing a JACoW conference

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(or kid)

The whole journey in one picture

The conference date is the fixed point; almost everything else works backwards from it.



Award	Program	Open & Invite	Lock	Deliver
mandate + team	programme + systems	abstracts + registration	schedule + production	conference + publication

Every phase should create an input needed by the next phase.

Who is preparing what?

Four workstreams move in parallel, but they share deadlines and data.

Scientific programme

SPC

classifications, abstracts, speakers, timetable

Local delivery

LOC / OC

venue, suppliers, finance, registration, social programme

Proceedings

Editor-in-Chief + editors

templates, author guidance, editing, QA, publication

Digital platform

Event administrator + IT

JACoW Indico, roles, workflows, integrations, onsite equipment

The integration points matter most: programme codes, presenter status, deadlines, rooms, permissions and publication metadata.

Phase 1 — Award — Commit and organise

Illustrative timing: roughly C−24 to C−18 months for a large conference. Adjust to the event series.

- Confirm mandate, dates and venue approach
- Name OC, LOC, SPC leadership and Editor-in-Chief
- Request the JACoW event and establish roles
- Build the master milestone plan and decision rhythm
- Secure resources for proceedings, IT and onsite support

Output: one accountable organisation and one integrated timeline.



Phase 2 — Program — Build the conference

Illustrative timing: C−18 to C−9 months. This is where the event becomes real.

C−18 → C−12

Programme design

- Define classifications
- Shape sessions and programme skeleton
- Invite keynote / invited speakers
- Prepare abstract review

C−15 → C−9

Participant journey

- Launch website information
- Prepare registration and payments
- Accommodation, travel and visas
- Exhibition and sponsorship

C−12 → C−9

Publishing setup

- Author instructions
- Publish author instructions
- Confirm templates and licences
- Plan proceedings office

Phase 3 — Open & Invite — Open, collect and converge

Illustrative timing: C−9 to C−3 months. Volumes become visible and assumptions become numbers.



Goal for this phase: each accepted contribution must have consistent people, presentation and publishing metadata.

Phase 4 — Lock — Program The final 90 days

This is not “finishing the plan”. It is converting the plan into an operation.

C–3 months	Programme codes, poster layout, paper submission enabled, editor invitations
C–2 months	Room layouts, equipment images, print and signage, author communications
C–1 month	Final programme, staffing rota, software and workflow rehearsals, exception handling
Final week	Build rooms, test network and printers, brief teams, open help channels

Protect the final month from new scope. Use it for rehearsal, data quality and exceptions.

Phase 5 — Two events run at once

The delegate experience and the publishing operation are connected, but each needs its own structure and team.



Delegate-facing — registration, programme changes, rooms, speaker preparation, posters

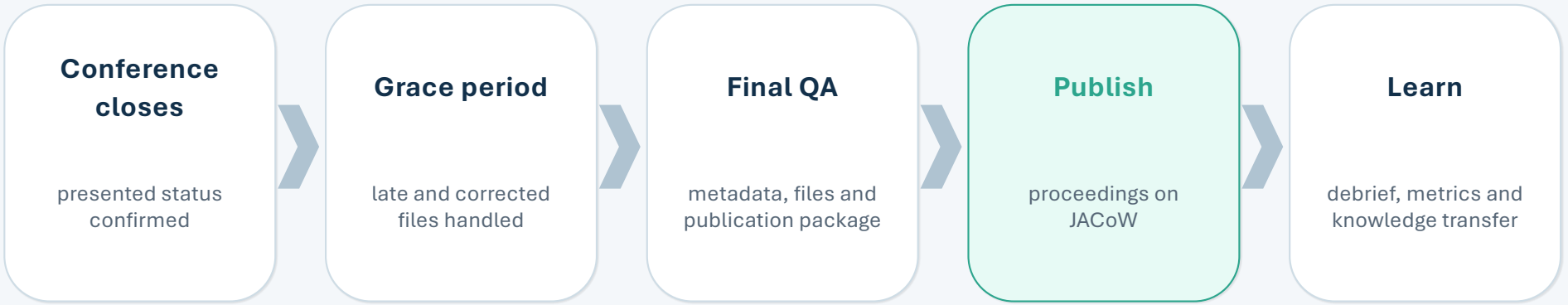
Proceedings-facing — author reception, paper editing, QA, status tracking, metadata

Shared control — daily briefing, escalation owner, cut-off times, visible issue log

Success pattern — Short feedback loops, clear decisions and immediate author contact.

After the applause: Publication is still part of the conference

JACoW's value is realised when the proceedings are complete, consistent and discoverable.



Example from JACoW routine: prepublication during conference week, a short grace period after the event, then final publication.

Five beginner traps — and the practical countermeasure

The schedule is owned by one person	Maintain one integrated milestone plan across SPC, LOC, proceedings and IT.
The platform is configured too late	Create the event early; test roles, workflows and realistic data.
Accepted means confirmed	Continuously verify presenter, registration and contribution status.
Onsite logistics are “just equipment”	Rehearse rooms, network, printers, software, supplies and support routes.
Editing starts at the conference	Author guidance, templates, staffing and QA criteria begin months earlier.

Preparation rhythm

If you remember only one slide, use this as the conversation starter.

Every month

Review milestones, risks, budget, volume assumptions and cross-team dependencies.

At every phase gate

Confirm outputs are complete before opening the next process to participants.

In the final 90 days

Run readiness reviews: data, people, facilities, systems and communications.

During the event

Use daily briefings, visible status, named decision owners and fixed cut-offs.

After the event

Close exceptions, publish, debrief and transfer reusable knowledge.

Start early. Join the collaboration. Rehearse. Finish with publication.

Questions?

Where is your conference on the timeline?

- What must be decided next?
- Which workstream depends on it?
- What can you test before participants see it?

