

For each writing project, make a copy of this document and customize it with the people you are accountable to

Goal: Develop and use a more structured approach to enable a 6 month timeline from manuscript initiation to submission. This will encourage continuous progress on specific manuscripts and keep them front-of-mind. It will therefore also avoid long delays in which a given manuscript loses attention and is 'back burnered' intentionally or not. It will also keep any given core writing team focused on a smaller number of manuscripts to ensure productivity, as opposed to people overcommitting and struggling to deliver due to being overcommitted.

Philosophy: This approach is meant to be co-developed between core writing teams and project leads, as opposed to being imposed on writers. It is also likely to evolve through time. Critically, the project lead is expected to work closely with writing teams to help them meet the milestones. That is, the writing team is not expected to work in isolation and simply deliver documents/material. The expectation is continual interaction with the project lead, and the project lead should also contribute significantly to mentoring writing teams in the writing process.

Approach for each manuscript:

- Work with the core writing team (often a two-person team) to define the timing of milestones going from manuscript initiation to submission. This will account a priori for individual schedules, such as large field efforts, travel, etc.
- Example milestones:
 - Deliver and iterate initial science questions and/or hypotheses
 - Deliver and iterate on initial storyboard with topical sentences for Introduction, Methods, Results (in form of proposed figures), and envisioned Discussion
 - Deliver and iterate on initial set of figures as guided by the storyboard
 - Compile and deliver the data package for ESS-DIVE
 - Edit storyboard and questions as needed, based on results
 - Deliver and iterate on fully drafted Introduction and Methods
 - Deliver and iterate on fully drafted Results and Discussion, including final figures
 - Finalize manuscript following all co-author edits
 - Deliver and iterate on cover letter
 - Submit manuscript

Carrots and Sticks:

- For each manuscript there will need to be individualized incentives (i.e., 'carrots') and 'sticks' that are co-developed between the core writing team and project lead.
- The incentives will likely vary a lot across papers and teams as each person values different things.
- Example incentives:
 - Support for additional manuscript efforts
 - Support for specific data types of interest
 - Unstructured labor/time support

- Opportunity to work in a team-based writing environment (energizing and mutual learning)
- The 'sticks' may vary less, and a primary one will be that if the milestones are being significantly missed, the project lead will take over leading the paper and drive it towards submission, potentially in a different way/form than what the core writing team had envisioned.