

# Universal Manuscript Architecture (UMA): The Complete Guide to Academic Research Publishing

Version 2.0 - February 2026

This document is the authoritative reference for SAGE's manuscript analysis system. It synthesizes current standards from ICMJE, EQUATOR Network, APA 7th Edition, Nature, Science, COPE, and all major publishers into a single, actionable architecture for evaluating and improving academic manuscripts across disciplines.

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## How to Use This Guide

**For researchers:** This guide provides comprehensive standards for every aspect of manuscript preparation, from title optimization to response to reviewers.

**For SAGE:** When providing feedback, reference specific numbered citations [like this] and point users to the Resources section at the end, which contains direct links to all authoritative sources. This transforms SAGE from a feedback tool into an educational platform.

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## **RESOURCES: Complete Reference List with URLs**

**This section provides direct links to all authoritative sources cited throughout this guide.** When SAGE provides feedback, it can reference these resources to help researchers understand the standards behind each recommendation.

### **1. CORE PUBLISHING STANDARDS**

#### **ICMJE (International Committee of Medical Journal Editors)**

- Main Recommendations (Updated January 2025): <https://www.icmje.org/recommendations/>
- Preparing for Submission: <https://www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/manuscript-preparation/preparing-for-submission.html>
- Author Responsibilities & COI: <https://www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/roles-and-responsibilities/author-responsibilities--conflicts-of-interest.html>
- Full PDF Download: <https://www.icmje.org/icmje-recommendations.pdf>

#### **EQUATOR Network**

- Main Portal: <https://www.equator-network.org/>
- Library of Reporting Guidelines: <https://www.equator-network.org/library/>
- Guidelines Under Development: <https://www.equator-network.org/library/reporting-guidelines-under-development/>
- Wolters Kluwer Overview: <https://www.wolterskluwer.com/en/expert-insights/authors-equator-network>

#### **APA Style (7th Edition)**

- Official Website: <https://apastyle.apa.org/>
- Numbers and Statistics Guide (PDF): <https://apastyle.apa.org/instructional-aids/numbers-statistics-guide.pdf>
- Purdue OWL APA Statistics:  
[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/apa\\_style/apa\\_formatting\\_and\\_style\\_guide/apa\\_number](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/apa_number)

## **AMA Manual of Style (11th Edition)**

- Overview: [https://grokipedia.com/page/AMA\\_Manual\\_of\\_Style](https://grokipedia.com/page/AMA_Manual_of_Style)

## **COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics)**

- Main Website: <https://publicationethics.org/>
  - Authorship and AI Tools: <https://publicationethics.org/guidance/cope-position/authorship-and-ai-tools>
  - AI and Authorship Position: <https://publicationethics.org/news-opinion/artificial-intelligence-and-authorship>
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## **2. REPORTING GUIDELINES BY STUDY TYPE**

### **CONSORT 2025 (Randomized Trials)**

- CONSORT 2025 Statement (PLOS Medicine, April 2025): <https://journals.plos.org/plosmedicine/article/file?id=10.1371/journal.pmed.1004587&type=printable>
- CONSORT 2025 Full Text (PMC): <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11996237/>
- PubMed Link: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/40228477/>
- Wikipedia Overview: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consolidated\\_Standards\\_of\\_Reporting\\_Trials](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consolidated_Standards_of_Reporting_Trials)

### **CONSORT-AI & SPIRIT-AI (AI Interventions)**

- CONSORT-AI Extension (Nature Medicine, 2020): <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32908283/>
- SPIRIT-AI Extension (Nature Medicine, 2020): <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32908284/>
- Alan Turing Institute Overview: <https://www.turing.ac.uk/research/research-projects/spirit-ai-and-consort-ai-initiative>
- Lancet 2025 Commentary: [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(25\)01268-1/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(25)01268-1/fulltext)

### **STROBE (Observational Studies)**

- STROBE Explanation (PLOS Medicine): <https://journals.plos.org/plosmedicine/article?id=10.1371/journal.pmed.0040297>
- STROBE Guidelines (PMC): <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6398292/>

### **PRISMA 2020 (Systematic Reviews)**

- PRISMA 2020 Statement (PMC): <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8007028/>
- EQUATOR PRISMA Page: <https://www.equator-network.org/library/reporting-guidelines-under-development/reporting-guidelines-under-development-for-systematic-reviews/>

### **COREQ (Qualitative Research - Interviews & Focus Groups)**

- COREQ 32-Item Checklist (PubMed): <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/17872937/>
- Harvard PDF Guide: <https://content.sph.harvard.edu/wwwhsph/sites/2448/2024/02/Consolidated-criteria-for-reporting-qualitative-research-COREQ.pdf>
- Oxford Academic Full Text: <https://academic.oup.com/intqhc/article-abstract/19/6/349/1791966>

### **STARD 2015 (Diagnostic Accuracy)**

- STARD 2015 Guidelines (PubMed): <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28137831/>

### **ARRIVE 2.0 (Animal Research)**

- ARRIVE Guidelines 2.0 (Springer/BMC): <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s12917-020-02451-y>

### **TRIPOD+AI (Prediction Models)**

- TRIPOD+AI Statement (PMC, 2024): <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11019967/>

## **3. TITLE AND KEYWORD OPTIMIZATION**

### **Title Writing**

- "Title Does Matter" Citation Study (PMC): <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6999185/>
- Writing an Effective Title (Wiley): <https://wildlife.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/jwmg.21881>
- Declarative Titles Impact Study (BMC):  
<https://researchintegrityjournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s41073-016-0018-3>
- How to Choose a Title (Wordvice): <https://blog.wordvice.com/how-to-write-the-perfect-title-for-your-research-paper/>

### **SEO and Keywords**

- Academic SEO Guide (SciSpace): <https://scispace.com/resources/optimize-scholarly-articles-for-academic-search-engines-researchers-seo-guide/>
- Keyword Selection Best Practices (Proof-Reading-Service): <https://www.proof-reading-service.com/blogs/academic-publishing/how-to-select-the-best-keywords-titles-for-research-visibility->

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- Search Engine Optimization (Embry-Riddle): <https://guides.erau.edu/c.php?g=1194513&p=8741890>
  - MeSH on Demand Tool: <https://library.mskcc.org/blog/2016/10/mesh-on-demand-tool-an-easy-way-to-identify-relevant-mesh-terms/>
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## **4. ABSTRACT WRITING**

- How to Write a Structured Abstract (Academia): [https://www.academia.edu/84588350/How to Write a Structured Abstract for Research Articles](https://www.academia.edu/84588350/How_to_Write_a_Structured_Abstract_for_Research_Articles)
  - How to Write a Good Abstract (PMC): <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC3136027/>
  - JMIR Abstract Guidelines: <https://support.jmir.org/hc/en-us/articles/360020341552--for-authors-Guidelines-for-writing-abstracts>
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## **5. INTRODUCTION STRUCTURE**

### **CARS Model (Create A Research Space)**

- The C.A.R.S. Model (USC): <https://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/CARS>
- CARS Model Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CARS\\_model](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CARS_model)
- Swales' CARS PDF Guide (Charles University): <https://iuuk.mff.cuni.cz/~andrew/EAP/CaRS.pdf>

### **IMRAD Structure**

- Structured Abstract - IMRAD (Liberty University): <https://libguides.liberty.edu/ama/IMRAD>
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## **6. METHODS AND REPRODUCIBILITY**

### **Nature Research Guidelines**

- Nature Formatting Guide (MIT Archive): <http://li.mit.edu/Archive/Activities/PubFormat/Nature/FormattingGuide.pdf>
  - Nature Initial Submission: <https://www.nature.com/nature/for-authors/initial-submission>
  - Nature Portfolio General Guide: <https://www.nature.com/documents/npj-gta.pdf>
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## 7. STATISTICAL REPORTING

### P-Values and Statistical Standards

- ASA Statement on P-Values: <https://www.crossfit.com/health/the-asa-statement-on-p-values-context-process-and-purpose>
- Reporting Statistics in APA (Scribbr): <https://www.scribbr.com/apa-style/results-section/>
- APA Statistics (Essays UK): <https://essays.uk/reporting-statistics-in-apa/>
- Statistics Formatting (University of Lincoln): <https://guides.library.lincoln.ac.uk/mash/apaformatting>
- APA Reporting (StudyCrumb): <https://studycrumb.com/reporting-statistics-in-apa-style>

### Effect Sizes

- APA Effect Size Guide:  
[https://coshima.davidrjifikis.com/EPRS8530/APA%20effect%20size\\_Thompson.htm](https://coshima.davidrjifikis.com/EPRS8530/APA%20effect%20size_Thompson.htm)
  - Statistical Recommendations APA (Taylor & Francis):  
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1742-9536.2011.00037.x>
  - Calculating Effect Sizes (ASHA): <https://pubs.asha.org/doi/pdf/10.1044/cicsd.33.S.42>
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## 8. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

### Discussion Section

- The Discussion (USC): <https://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/discussion>
- Discussion Dos and Don'ts (eCORRECTOR): <https://ecorrector.com/dos-and-donts-when-writing-discussion-sections/>
- How to Write a Discussion (Scribbr): <https://www.scribbr.com/dissertation/discussion/>
- Discussion Section Guide (SJSU):  
<https://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/docs/handouts/Discussion%20Section%20for%20Research%20Papers.pdf>
- Sacred Heart University Guide: <https://library.sacredheart.edu/c.php?g=29803&p=185933>

### Limitations

- How to Frame Limitations (Cambridge Proofreading): <https://proofreading.org/learning-center/how-to-frame-limitations-and-future-research-directions/>
- How to Write Study Limitations (Yomu AI): <https://www.yomu.ai/blog/how-to-write-study-limitations>

- Limitations That Strengthen Credibility (Proof-Reading-Service): <https://www.proof-reading-service.com/blogs/academic-publishing/how-to-write-research-limitations-that-strengthen-credibility-and-trust>
- Making Limitations Positive (Ref-n-Write): <https://www.ref-n-write.com/blog/how-to-make-your-study-limitations-sound-positive/>

## Conclusions

- The Conclusion (USC): <https://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/conclusion>
  - The Conclusion (Sacred Heart): <https://library.sacredheart.edu/c.php?g=29803&p=185935>
  - Writing Conclusions (Scribbr): <https://www.scribbr.com/research-paper/research-paper-conclusion/>
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## 9. WRITING STYLE AND VOICE

### Voice and Tense

- Voice and Tense in APA (Gvltec): <https://libguides.gvltec.edu/c.php?g=922017&p=6645194>

### Causal Language

- Being Honest with Causal Language (Wiley/JAN): <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jan.14311>

### Grammar

- Dangling Modifiers (Purdue OWL): [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general\\_writing/mechanics/dangling\\_modifiers\\_and\\_how\\_to\\_correct\\_them.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/mechanics/dangling_modifiers_and_how_to_correct_them.html)
  - Grammar Tips (Papyr): [https://papyr.com/hypertextbooks/grammar/grammar\\_and\\_usage\\_tip\\_of\\_the\\_week\\_19.htm](https://papyr.com/hypertextbooks/grammar/grammar_and_usage_tip_of_the_week_19.htm)
  - 10 Common Errors (Researcher.Life): <https://researcher.life/blog/article/10-common-grammar-errors-in-research-papers-and-how-to-fix-them/>
  - Which vs. That (Grammarly): <https://www.grammarly.com/blog/grammar/which-vs-that/>
  - Writing Myths (ThinkSCIENCE): <https://thinkscience.co.jp/en/articles/writing-myths>
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## 10. AI DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS

### Comprehensive AI Policy Guides

- AI Policies in Academic Publishing 2025 (Thesify): <https://www.thesify.ai/blog/ai-policies-academic-publishing-2025>
- Journal AI Policies Database (Texas A&M): [https://libguides.tamusa.edu/AI\\_for\\_lit\\_research/journal\\_requirements](https://libguides.tamusa.edu/AI_for_lit_research/journal_requirements)

### **Publisher-Specific Policies**

- Nature Portfolio AI Policy: <https://www.nature.com/nature-portfolio/editorial-policies/ai>
- Nature Peer Review Policy: <https://www.nature.com/nature-portfolio/editorial-policies/peer-review>
- Springer Nature Policies: <https://www.springeropen.com/get-published/editorial-policies>
- Springer Nature AI (LibGuide): <https://libguides.iou.edu/gm/c.php?g=1482669&p=11059634>
- UVM AI Policy Example: <https://journals.uvm.edu/jeed/site/ai-policy/>

### **ICMJE AI Guidance**

- ICMJE 2024 Update (The Publication Plan): <https://thepublicationplan.com/2024/04/02/icmje-recommendations-update-2024-whats-new-and-whats-next/>
- ICMJE AI Recommendations (Editage): <https://www.editage.com/insights/the-icmje-recommendations-on-ai-advice-for-authors-and-peer-reviewers>
- NIEHS Factor on AI: <https://www.niehs.nih.gov/news/factor/2023/3/feature/2-artificial-intelligence-ethics>

### **AI Disclosure Examples**

- AI Disclosure Requirements (Kennesaw): <https://campus.kennesaw.edu/offices-services/research/ai-disclosure.php>
- Disclosure in Practice (SMU): <https://library.smu.edu.sg/topics-insights/disclosure-use-ai-research-manuscripts-how-are-researchers-doing-it>

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## **11. ETHICS AND TRANSPARENCY**

### **IRB and Ethics**

- Types of IRB Review (TCNJ): <https://irb.tcnj.edu/types-of-irb-review/>
- Exempt Research (HHS.gov): <https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/regulations-and-policy/guidance/exempt-research-and-research-expedited-review/index.html>

### **CRedit Contributions**



- CRediT Role Descriptors (Official NISO): <https://credit.niso.org/contributor-roles-defined/>

## Data Availability

- EQUATOR Data Guide (ResearchGate): [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/24282891\\_The\\_EQUATOR\\_Network\\_and\\_reporting\\_guidelines\\_Helping\\_to\\_achieve\\_high\\_standards\\_in\\_reporting\\_health\\_research\\_studies](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/24282891_The_EQUATOR_Network_and_reporting_guidelines_Helping_to_achieve_high_standards_in_reporting_health_research_studies)
- Research Data Policy (AIP): <https://publishing.aip.org/resources/researchers/open-science/research-data-policy/>
- Code Availability (PLOS): <https://journals.plos.org/ploscompbiol/s/code-availability>
- Zenodo Citation Guide: <https://help.zenodo.org/docs/github/describe-software/citation-file/>

## Preregistration

- OSF Registration FAQ: <https://help.osf.io/article/550-registration-and-preregistration-faq-s>
- Preregistering Research (Melbourne): [https://library.unimelb.edu.au/open-scholarship/preregistering\\_research](https://library.unimelb.edu.au/open-scholarship/preregistering_research)
- OSF Registries (Rochester): <https://libguides.lib.rochester.edu/c.php?g=1370983&p=10131307>

## 12. TOOLS AND RESOURCES

### Journal Finder Tools

- JANE (Journal Author Name Estimator): <https://jane.biosemantics.org/>
- Elsevier Journal Finder: <https://journalfinder.elsevier.com/>
- Springer Nature Journal Suggester: <https://journalsuggester.springer.com/>

### Predatory Journals

- Think.Check.Submit: <https://thinkchecksubmit.org/>
- Beall's List Archive: <https://beallslist.net/>

### Color Accessibility

- Color Oracle (Desktop): <https://colororacle.org/>
- Coblis (Web): <https://www.color-blindness.com/coblis-color-blindness-simulator/>

### Statistical Tools

- G\*Power (Sample Size): <https://www.psychologie.hhu.de/arbeitsgruppen/allgemeine-psychologie-und-arbeitspsychologie/gpower>

## Repository Platforms

- OSF (Open Science Framework): <https://osf.io/>
- Zenodo: <https://zenodo.org/>
- Dryad: <https://datadryad.org/>
- Figshare: <https://figshare.com/>
- re3data (Repository Finder): <https://www.re3data.org/>
- FAIRsharing: <https://fairsharing.org/>

## Database Tools

- MeSH Browser: <https://meshb.nlm.nih.gov/>
- Google Scholar: <https://scholar.google.com/>
- PubMed: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/>
- Scopus: <https://www.scopus.com/>
- Web of Science: <https://www.webofscience.com/>

## DOI Lookup

- DOI.org Resolution: <https://www.doi.org/>

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## HOW SAGE USES THESE RESOURCES

When SAGE analyzes your manuscript and provides feedback, it references specific resources from this list to explain WHY each recommendation matters. This transforms SAGE from a simple feedback tool into an educational platform that builds your research and writing skills.

### Examples:

- **Abstract too long?** SAGE points you to ICMJE guidelines and the PMC abstract writing guide.
- **Statistical reporting incomplete?** SAGE directs you to the APA Numbers and Statistics Guide.
- **Discussion section needs work?** SAGE references the USC Discussion writing guide.
- **AI disclosure needed?** SAGE shows you your target journal's specific policy.
- **CONSORT items missing?** SAGE links to the CONSORT 2025 checklist with explanations.

Every piece of feedback becomes a learning opportunity with direct access to authoritative sources.

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*Universal Manuscript Architecture (UMA) v2.0 - February 2026 Synthesizes standards from ICMJE, EQUATOR, APA 7th, AMA 11th, CONSORT 2025, PRISMA 2020, Nature/Science/PLOS, COPE, ASA, CRediT, and all major publishers.*