

PNAS Page Length Estimate Guidelines

Check your Manuscript Length Prior to Submission

Click here to see our [policy on manuscript length](#). [Click here](#) to access an Article Sizing Tool that estimates whether your manuscript fits within journal page limits (6 journal pages for Direct Submissions or NAS member Contributed papers and 10 pages for Direct Submission Plus or Contributed Plus papers) *before* you submit to PNAS.

For details, see the Length Estimate FAQ below or contact the Editorial Office at pnas@nas.edu or 202-334-2679. If you have problems with the Article Sizing Tool or if you have questions about your length estimate PDF, please contact PNASProcessing@nas.edu.

Sizing Figures and Tables

Shown are desired attributes for your figure and table file submissions. Digital art guidelines are located at www.pnas.org/misc/digitalart.pdf.

Column size	Min width	Max width	Min height	Ideal height
1 column	5.3 cm	8.7 cm	4 cm	6.4 cm
2 column	11.4 cm	18 cm	4 cm	12.7 cm

How to Generate a [Length Estimate](#)

1. You must have a Microsoft Word text file.
2. Type "**\body**" (without quotes) after your cover page, abstract, and significance statement, but before the introduction section of your manuscript.
3. Use "References" as the heading for the citation section.
4. Use "Figure Legends" as the heading for the figure legends section and place after the references section.
5. Include each table legend at the top of each individual table file.
6. Submit all manuscript files separately, including figures and tables, and place figure legends in your text file, not within your figures. Keep your manuscript files to 10MB or less.
7. Once you have uploaded your files and entered your manuscript data, access the PNAS Article Sizing Tool in the "Length Estimate" section of the submission form.
8. Complete all steps, reviewing the files and manuscript information, and sizing the figures and tables for optimal display.
9. Check the "Review Files" section in the submission form for the converted PDF. When the estimate file is created, it will be imported as the "Merged PDF."
10. Review the Merged PDF to make sure the text, figures, and tables are correct. If everything is correct, you may approve the file and complete your submission. If you would like to make changes, you will need to modify the files and manuscript information in the submission form and create a new Merged PDF via the Length Estimate section.

Sample of PNAS Manuscript Formatting

Title Page (Including Footnotes)

Abstract

Significance Statement

\body

Introduction

Manuscript Text

Calculating Character Counts

- Overall character count must not exceed 49,000 characters for a 6-page article and 82,000 for a 10-page article; this includes text, spaces, and the number of characters displaced by figures, tables, and equations.
- Text: When submitting tables, figures, and/or equations in addition to text, keep the text for your manuscript under 5 two-column, single-spaced pages, or under 39,000 characters for a 6-page article and 65,000 for a 10-page article (including spaces).
- Figures: Calculated at 180 characters per cm in height for one column and 360 characters per cm in height for two columns.
- Tables and equations: Calculated at 60 characters per line for one column and 120 characters per line for two columns.

Length Estimate FAQ

1. How long does it take to generate a length estimate?

During peak hours (9:00 AM to 5:00 PM Eastern time), it may take up to 15 minutes for the system to convert your files into PDF format and generate a length estimate. If your manuscript has not converted within 30 minutes, please contact PNASProcessing@nas.edu.

2. What information does the system use to generate a length estimate?

The length estimate calculations and corresponding PDF are generated using a combination of the following:

- a. The title page information provided on the submission form, including author names, keywords, abstract, and title (which is why you are asked to type `\body` after your title page, abstract, and significance statement).
- b. The manuscript text that follows the `"\body"` tag.
- c. The figure and table files and the column widths selected when creating the estimate.

3. What is the maximum page length for PNAS research articles?

Direct Submission and NAS member Contributed research articles may be up to 6 journal pages. PNAS Plus and Plus Contributed articles may be up to 10 pages.

4. What should I do if the length estimate PDF is well over the PNAS page limit?

Once your length estimate PDF is created, you will be able to review the PDF to see if your article is over the limit. Please note that the sizing tool provides an estimate and may not represent the actual length of the manuscript.

Here are a few tips to reduce manuscript length:

- a. Eliminate redundancies and ensure writing is concise. If your text count is over 39,000 characters (including spaces) or 5 two-column, single spaced pages and you have figure and/or table files, you will likely need to shorten your text.
- b. Make sure your figures and tables are uploaded separately and not embedded within your manuscript text.
- c. Move nonessential figures/tables to supporting information (SI).
- d. Move nonessential details and/or portions of your materials and methods to SI. (Note that the main text must contain a materials and methods section with enough detail for readers to follow the experiments in the paper.)
- e. Eliminate unnecessary references.
- f. Ensure your references are in PNAS style. For revisions or final submissions, if there are more than five authors, list the first author's name followed by "et al."

5. Why didn't the system create a length estimate PDF for my manuscript?

Common reasons why the system fails to create a length estimate PDF are listed below. If you have checked these items and are still unable to create a length estimate, please contact the Editorial Office at PNASProcessing@nas.edu or 202-334-2769:

- a. Your manuscript is not a Microsoft Word file.
- b. You neglected to add or misspelled the `"\body"` tag in your Microsoft Word file.
- c. You have embedded figures or tables in your manuscript file.
- d. Your table is an image taken from another file and copied into Word.

6. What should I do if my document is not in Microsoft Word?

Only Microsoft Word files can generate the length estimate PDF. LaTeX authors may use the [PNAS LaTeX template](#), which will provide an estimate of page length. We no longer accept WordPerfect files for initial submissions.

Paragraph spacing, font type, and font size will have no bearing on your length estimate. The system is only looking at the actual text along with the figure and table sizes when calculating the length estimate.

9. Why don't my references appear in the length estimate PDF?

You must use the heading "References" before your reference list.

10. Why are my figure legends shown with the references in the length estimate PDF?

Figure legends must be placed after your references with the heading "Figure Legends." Figure legends will appear in the length estimate PDF with the figures.

11. How do I rebuild my length estimate PDF after I have made changes to my manuscript?

After making the necessary changes on the submission form, you can create a new length estimate PDF via the "Length Estimate" section. Simply click the "Restart Length Estimation" button. You will be returned to the PNAS Article Sizing Tool. Once you complete the estimate process, your new files and manuscript data will be incorporated into a new PDF.

12. Why are there black boxes in my manuscript text?

The system will insert a black box for special characters that are not Unicode font compliant or identifiable by the system.

13. Can I embed my figures, tables, and/or equations in my manuscript file?

No, the length estimate cannot be generated if figures and tables are embedded in your manuscript file. Equations, however, should be embedded in your manuscript file, and will be displayed as an image.

14. What do "1 printed column," "1.5 printed columns," and "2 printed columns" mean when selecting a width for my figures and tables?

When you select "1 printed column" as a width, this means that your figure or table will span the width of one printed column (less than or equal to 8.7 cm). When you select "1.5 printed columns," your figure or table may span the width of one-and-a-half printed columns. When you select "2 printed columns," your figure or table may span the width of two printed columns.

15. How are figures and tables rendered?

Figures and tables will be sized and placed in the length estimate PDF according to your column width selection. All images should be submitted at the desired print size so that no scaling or cropping is necessary. To ensure that your images are as close to publication-ready as possible and that the system is sizing correctly, remove all unnecessary white space and submit each figure and table file separately.

16. Will my figures be viewable by peer review participants if I submit them at the recommended sizes?

If your figures are created using the appropriate resolution (at least 300 dpi), then their quality will be retained when reviewed and magnified by peer review participants. Publication-ready files are required only for the final version of your manuscript. Please keep your manuscript files to 10MB or less.

17. Are table calculations accurate?

Table calculations are only a rough approximation. If you believe that your manuscript is overlong because of the rendering of your table(s), please proceed with submission. We will be in touch if other components of your manuscript need to be shortened.

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