

Undergraduate Journal Submission Criteria

Publishing a scientific manuscript brings you into a conversation happening between many members of the scientific community throughout the world every day. Everyone has a different opinion and unique perspective to share in this conversation, and together we are aimed at learning step by step to understand and predict the human and non-human world. This is science. The Undergraduate Research Journal of Psychology at UCLA (URJP at UCLA) encourages you to join this conversation by publishing clear, inspiring, and accessible scientific content that expresses your unique, objective perspective. As you publish your submissions, also consider that you are writing to welcome your peers, and people of all ages and backgrounds to join the conversation as well. The following guidelines are here to give you a sense of what we look for in a manuscript, and help you decide the way(s) you want to join the conversation of science by submitting one of three possible article types.

The Submission Process

Your submitted article will go through a three step process from submission to acceptance. First, your manuscript will be pre-screened to make sure all of the parts are included. Second, we will review your manuscript. Third, if your paper is accepted or returned with a request for review and resubmission, we will make the final decision to publish your paper. All accepted papers will be published in print and online through the URJP at UCLA.

- ❖ ***Pre-Publication Screening*** All submitted articles will undergo a brief screening before the review process begins. This screening is to ensure that your submission is **complete** and that it fits all the **requirements of the article type** you have chosen to write. Please read through the submission instructions carefully. If your article does not meet the specific requirements outlined below (e.g., word limit, required sections, etc) it will not pass the pre-publication screening. We will have to send it back to you without a review, which will put you later in line for review and delay the publication process.
- ❖ ***Your profile information*** If your article is accepted to the journal, we will feature it along with a profile description of you (the primary author). This is an extra effort to help you become recognized for your work. Please include the following profile information:

1. A condensed author bio (250 words max): Your bio should include information about your major, educational and career aspirations, hobbies, etc. You may also include a photograph headshot if you wish; however, this is optional.

- ❖ **Copyright** Contributions will be considered for publication with the understanding that they are solely contributing to The Undergraduate Research Journal of Psychology at UCLA and have not been previously published elsewhere. Authors should include a statement with their initial submission indicating that the manuscript has not been published and is not under consideration elsewhere.
- ❖ **Conflict of Interest** Every time you submit an article for the URJP at UCLA (or any scientific journal) you are required to declare whether you have a conflict of interest. Make sure you answer these questions now, before you submit your paper!

Individuals who have independent roles in projects and who are responsible for the design, analysis, conduct, or reporting of the results of research performed (or to be performed) under a human subjects protocol must disclose whether or not they have a conflict of interest associated with the subject matter of the submission. *A conflict of interest occurs when an author's financial or personal relationship, such as employment, stock ownership, or consultancies, inappropriately influences the content of the submission (e.g., how the results of his or her study are interpreted).* A good rule of thumb for determining if something is a conflict of interest is "if in doubt, disclose." Conflict of interest does not necessarily negate a submission and it is a mandatory requirement.

This checklist pertains to the entire project team working under the protocol. Any individual who has a conflict must comply with university regulations and procedures for disclosure of financial conflict of interest.

Please answer the following questions:

Does any member of the project team (defined as UCLA and non-UCLA personnel working under the protocol) with substantive responsibility for the design, conduct or reporting of activities under the protocol, or any member of their immediate family (defined as spouse, dependent child and registered domestic partner) have any of the following relationships with the non-UC entity financing the research to be done under the protocol or the non- UC entity supplying materials, drugs or devices being tested under the protocol:

- | | | | |
|----|-----|----|--|
| 1. | Yes | No | Positions of management (e.g., board member, scientific advisor, director, officer, partner, trustee, employee, consultant). |
| 2. | Yes | No | Equity interest (e.g., stock, stock options, investment or other ownership). |
| 3. | Yes | No | Rights to a pending patent application or issued patent to any invention(s), or license rights or copyright for software that has a direct relationship to the project proposed. |

If the answer to any of the above is Yes, then each individual(s) with any "Yes" response(s) must submit a Human Subjects Financial Conflict of Interest Form DIRECTLY to the Conflict of Interest (COI) Committee for a separate review.

The following list gives some examples of conflict of interest.

- (a) A close relationship with, or a strong antipathy to, a person whose interests may be affected by publication of your paper.
- (b) Membership of a special interest group whose interests may be affected by publication of your paper.

Submission Requirements for the 3 URJP Article Types

Stepping Stones

Stepping Stones are articles written for specific groups of people who do not (yet) specialize in a specific area of scientific research, which summarize a single published scientific article, or scientific field. You will choose to write for one of two audiences: non-scientist adults (18+), and the college-bound high school senior (17-18). You will find that to translate scientific concepts into something a younger audience will understand will teach you a lot about what you personally do and do not know. This is perhaps the single best way to learn your science *well*, and to show others the beauty of what you study.

- ❖ **Purpose** The purpose of Stepping Stones is to create entrance points for students young and old to enter the scientific conversation at a level that is approachable to them. These articles are aimed at making scholarly research more accessible to the general public.
- ❖ **Word limit** 1500 words. This does not include title page or references cited. Papers must be double spaced with 1-inch margins, in Times New Roman 12-point font.

Writing for non-scientists may be new to you so below are some tips to help you as you write:

1. **Getting Started:** Select one of the two target audiences to write for (18+, 17-18) and tailor your writing to that particular audience. Before you begin writing, make sure to organize the information you wish to present and find the key points you wish to cover. We find that creating outlines in this way helps to streamline the information to its essence.
2. **Vocabulary:** Keep the audience's vocabulary in mind as you write. Substitute common words like "do" (implement) or "in short" (synopsis), to make your research more accessible. If you choose to introduce technical language, be sure to define the words as clearly and simply as you can. In general, be clear and concise, and avoid using unnecessarily complex words or phrases.
3. **Voice:** Use the active voice whenever possible:

This is an example of the active voice:

“The active voice is direct to the point and is more likely to engage the reader, although some scientific writers do employ the passive voice.”

This is an example of the passive voice:

“Although some scientific writers do employ the passive voice, the active voice is direct to the point and is more likely to engage the reader.”

...do you feel the difference? Which one do you like better?

4. **Reporting Results:** Almost all quantitative research articles found in professional research journals assume that their readers are literate or even fluent in statistics, but your audience is probably not. In your Stepping Stones article, your goal is to convey complex statistical jargon, methods, and findings to a general, non-technical audience. Report key findings in a “discussion” or narrative language that summarizes the key results without diving too deep into the dense details. You may also choose to define and explain statistical terms and concepts in your article if you feel you can do it in a way that is understandable by your audience. This is an excellent opportunity to make an area of science available to different ages and backgrounds that is normally scary to approach without academic training.

If you include figures from other manuscripts (*with permission only!*), be sure to explain the most basic elements of the figure including what the axes mean, and how to read a figure, if necessary. This may be the first chart or data plot your readers have seen!

5. **Implications of Research:** It’s extremely important to demonstrate to your audience why the research is significant and relevant to their lives. Discuss the practical implications of the research and what the next steps should be in continuing to advance knowledge in the research area. It is equally important to convey the meaning of the research covered objectively and to include your own subjective interpretations only if they can be supported by other published research.

Research Articles

A research article describes a novel study or set of studies that you have performed, which investigate one specific hypothesis. In the conversation of science, this is the equivalent of a clear and concise sentence, backed by solid research. ** Your Research Article must include a **Title Page**, an **Abstract**, **Key Words**, **Acknowledgements**, and **References Cited** sections, in addition to the sub-sections within the Body of the manuscript.

- ❖ **Title Page** This includes the title of your manuscript, the author's names, the author's affiliations (e.g., your university), the Acknowledgements section, and the contact information for the corresponding author.
- ❖ **Acknowledgements** Thank the people/organizations and funding sources that have supported the research.
- ❖ **Abstract** A brief, comprehensive summary of the contents of the article. This should be one single-spaced paragraph of no more than 250 words in length.
- ❖ **Key words** This is a list of up to five words or short phrases that are central and specific to your research. We will use these keywords to facilitate the retrieval of your paper from abstracting and indexing databases.

Body of Manuscript

Word limit: 6000 words. Not including title page, abstract, or references cited. For formatting continuity, papers must be double spaced with 1-inch margins in Times New Roman 12 point font.

- 1. Introduction:** Introduces the problem
 - Presents the specific problem under investigation and describes the research strategy
 - Places the work in a theoretical context, and enables the reader to understand and appreciate its objectives
 - States the hypothesis of the research study
- 2. Methods:** Describes in detail how the study was conducted, including conceptual and operational definitions of the variables used in the study.
 - Participants (describe the participant group information and history, how they were recruited, informed consent, subject payment, etc)

- Description of testing procedure, equipment and materials used, etc.
 - Analysis
 - Enables readers to evaluate the appropriateness of your methods and reliability and validity of your results
 - Is detailed enough to allow other investigators to replicate the study
- 3. Results:** Report results in a completely objective manner (interpretations belong in the discussion section)
- Include observations that run counter to expectation, null results, etc.
 - Assume the reader has a professional knowledge of statistical methods
 - Analysis of data should be appropriate to the research questions being asked
- 4. Discussion:** Use this section to discuss your interpretation of the results of the project.
- Provide an interpretation of results, along with support for all interpretations, using evidence from the experiment combined with previous findings from other published studies.
 - Should begin with a clear statement of the support or nonsupport for the original hypotheses
 - Provide explanations that account for the results
 - Offers alternative explanations if reasonable alternatives exist
- 5. Conclusion:** Use this section to give broad future directions
- Usually no more than 1-2 paragraphs
 - Puts research findings into a broader context of the field
 - Offers future directions, next possible studies
 - Does NOT simply reiterate article findings again

❖ **Figures** If inclusion of figures is applicable, they should follow APA style format. For more information on how to write an APA style paper, consult the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, (2009) 6th edition*.

❖ **References Cited** All references should follow APA style format. Again, for more information on how to write an APA style paper, consult the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, (2009) 6th edition*.

Review Articles

A review article consolidates research on a specific topic and presents the bigger picture of what has been accomplished and where this particular field of research is headed. *Note that review articles DO NOT contain formal methods sections or statistical analysis sections.* If new findings are reported within the context of a review, they should not include all of the detailed methods and analyses. Ideally, you should submit new findings for publication as a research article, and only provide a summary of yours and other studies within a review article. This is because Review Articles are written to give readers a sense of the broad scope of a field, reveal loose ends in the research, and provoke new questions to be researched, rather than to validate a particular study or opinion.

****** Your Review Article must include a *Title Page*, an *Abstract*, *Key Words*, *Acknowledgements*, and *References Cited* sections, in addition to the sections within the body of the manuscript.

- ❖ ***Title Page*** This includes the title of your manuscript, the author's names, the author's affiliations (e.g., your university), the Acknowledgements section, and the contact information for the corresponding author.
- ❖ ***Acknowledgements*** Thank the people/organizations that have helped write, review, or offer feedback to your review article, but are not listed as authors. If your review article has a funding source, list that here as well.
- ❖ ***Abstract*** This is a brief, comprehensive summary of the contents of the review article. This should be one single-spaced paragraph of no more than 250 words in length.
- ❖ ***Key words*** This is a list of up to five words or short phrases that are central and specific to your review. We will use these keywords to facilitate the retrieval of your paper from abstracting and indexing databases.

Body of Manuscript

Word limit: 6000 words. This does not include the title page, abstract, or references cited. For formatting continuity, papers must be double spaced with 1-inch margins in Times New Roman 12 point font.

A Review Article begins with an *introduction* that explains the relevance of the topic of review and how it relates to the bigger picture. The bigger picture can include

other fields of science, other aspects of society, means of advancing our understanding of a topic, solving a lasting problem, etc. remember that the main goal of a review article is to give a broad overview of a specific aspect of science for others to learn from and become interested in.

The ***middle section*** of a Review Article is often the bulk of the manuscript. It contains summaries of previously published research that are woven together to create a clear, objective story of what is known of the review topic. For example, if the topic of your (rather outdated) review article was on the discovery of a new and poorly understood animal called “an elephant”, you might describe how one research group confirmed that elephants have tails, another group found that elephants have thick skin, another group found that there is a high likelihood that elephants eat plants, etc. And your review would try to best paint the picture of what an elephant really is based on all of these bits and pieces of information that you and other scientists have collected in their investigations.

A review article often ends with a ***discussion of the future directions*** of the topic. This may include the possibility of new treatments, new methods, new understandings of the world, etc. The future directions will really depend on what you feel is the future of this topic or field of study you are reviewing. It is common to briefly describe new experimental directions that could be followed to advance the study of your review topic.

Methods: NONE

Results: NONE

Discussion: NONE

- ❖ ***References Cited*** All references should follow APA style format. For more information on how to write an APA style paper, consult the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, (2009) 6th edition*.