Brief guide for submission to *Nature Methods*

This guide outlines key points for preparing primary research manuscripts for submission to *Nature Methods*. For details on preparing revisions and other content types, please consult our Guide to Authors.

The corresponding author should be familiar with the Nature journals' editorial policies and is solely responsible for communicating with the journal and managing communication between coauthors. Before submission, the corresponding author ensures that all authors are included in the author list, its order has been agreed by all authors, and that all authors are aware the manuscript was submitted.

Cover letter

Although optional, the cover letter is an excellent opportunity to briefly discuss the importance of the submitted work and why it is appropriate for the journal. Please avoid repeating information that is already present in the abstract and introduction. The cover letter is not shared with the referees, and should be used to provide confidential information such as conflicts of interest and to declare any related work that is in press or submitted elsewhere.

Main manuscript

The Nature Research Journals are flexible with regard to the format of initial submissions. Within reason, style and length will not influence consideration of a manuscript. If revisions are requested, the editor will provide detailed formatting instructions at that time.

To facilitate the review process however, we strongly encourage you to incorporate the manuscript text and figures into a single pdf or Microsoft Word file. Suitably high resolution figures may be inserted within the text at appropriate positions or grouped at the end. Each figure legend should be presented on the same page as its figure. The reference list should include article titles. If providing a pdf, please number all lines. The submission system will number all lines in a Word document for you.

Title. Titles should be 100 characters including spaces or less (90 for Brief Communications) and avoid technical terms, abbreviations, punctuation and active verbs.

Authors. Corresponding author(s) should be identified with an asterisk.

Abstract. Provide a general introduction to the topic and a brief non-technical summary of your main results and their implications.

Text length and formatting. Attention to the following details can help expedite publication if we invite a revision after external review.

- **Brief Communications:** a brief unreferenced abstract (3 sentences, no more than 70 words); main text typically <1,500 words and no more than 3 display items (figures, tables); references are limited to 20. Section headings are not used.
- **Articles:** an abstract of approximately 150 words, unreferenced; main text of no more than 3,000 words and 6 display items (figures, tables); references are limited to 50. Section headings should be used and subheadings may appear in 'Results'. Avoid 'Introduction' as a heading.

Methods. A Methods section appears in all online original research articles and should contain all elements necessary for interpretation and replication of the results. Methods should be written as concisely as possible and typically do not exceed 3000 words but may be longer if necessary; methods-only references do not count against your reference limit. We encourage you to deposit any step-by-step protocols used in your study in Protocol Exchange, an open resource maintained by NPG. These protocols are linked to the Methods section upon publication.

References. These may only contain citations and should list only one publication with each number. Include the title of the cited article.

Acknowledgements (optional). Keep acknowledgements brief and do not include thanks to anonymous referees or editors, or effusive comments. Grant or contribution numbers may be acknowledged.

Author contributions. You must include a statement that specifies the individual contributions of each co-author. For example: "A.P.M. 'contributed' Y and Z; B.T.R. 'contributed' Y," etc. See our authorship policies for more details.

Competing financial interests. Submission of a competing financial interests statement is required for all content of the journal.

Materials & Correspondence. Indicate the author to whom correspondence and material requests should be addressed.

Tables. Each table should be accompanied by a short title sentence describing what the table shows. Further details can be included as footnotes to the table

Figures

High-resolution images are not required at initial submission, but please ensure they are of sufficient resolution for referees to properly assess the data. If necessary, supply separate image files or deposit image data in a suitable repository (e.g. figshare) for this purpose.

Should your manuscript be accepted, you will receive more extensive instructions for final submission of display items. However, some guidelines for final figure preparation are included below and here if you wish to minimize later revisions and possible delays.

- Provide images in RGB color and at 300 dpi or higher resolution.
- Use the same typeface (Arial or Helvetica) for all figures. Use symbol font for Greek letters.
- Use distinct colors with comparable visibility and avoid the use of red and green for contrast. Recoloring primary data, such as fluorescence images, to color-safe combinations such as green and magenta or other accessible color palettes is strongly encouraged. Use of the rainbow color scale should be avoided.
- Figures are best prepared at the size you would expect them to appear in print. At this size, the optimum font size is 8pt.
- We prefer vector files with editable layers. Acceptable formats are: .ai, .eps, .pdf, .ps, .svg for fully editable vector-based art; layered .psd or .tif for editable layered art; .psd, .tif, .png or .jpg for bitmap images; .ppt if fully editable and without styling effects; ChemDraw (.cdx) for chemical structures.
- Please refer to the Nature Chemical Biology style guidelines for formatting of chemical structures.

Figure legends should begin with a brief title sentence for the whole figure and continue with a short statement of what's being depicted in the figure, not the results (or data) of the experiment or the methods used (250 words or fewer). Legends should be detailed enough so that each figure and caption can, as far as possible, be understood in isolation from the main text.

Equations

Equations and mathematical expressions should be provided in the main text of the manuscript. Equations that are referred to in the text are identified by parenthetical numbers, such as (1), and are referred to in the manuscript as "equation (1)".

Compound numbering

All individual inorganic and organic chemical compounds should be identified by bold numerals (**1**, **2**, **3**, etc.), including those that are only mentioned in the manuscript or supplementary information, independent of whether they were utilized in the reported experiments. Standard buffers, reagents and solvents should not be numbered. Please number compounds in order of their appearance in the main text. Alphanumeric numbering can also be used, but try to be logical, for example, starting materials called **1a**, **1b**, **1c**... give products called **2a**, **2b**, **2c**... and so on.

Supplementary information

Please submit supplementary figures, small tables and text as a single combined PDF (with the pieces in the order: figures, tables, text). Please limit figures to 15 or less. Tables longer than one page should be

provided as an Excel or similar file type. For optimal quality video files please use H.264 encoding, the standard aspect ratio of 16:9 (4:3 is second best) and do not compress the video. We encourage submission of step-by-step synthesis procedures for chemical compounds and data on compound characterization. Supplementary information is not copy-edited, so please ensure that it is clearly and succinctly presented, and that the style and terminology conform to the rest of the manuscript. Include the title of the manuscript and full author list on the first page.

Data deposition

The following data types must be deposited in an appropriate public structured data depository (see below) and the accession number(s) provided in the manuscript. Full access is required at publication.

- Protein sequences – Uniprot
- DNA and RNA sequences – Genbank, DDBJ, ENA
- DNA and RNA sequencing data – NCBI Trace Archive, NCBI SRA
- Genetic polymorphisms – dbSNP, dbVar, EVA
- Linked genotype and phenotype data – dbGAP, EGA
- Macromolecular structure data – wwPDB, BMRB, EMDB
- Microarray data (must be MIAME compliant) – ArrayExpress, GEO
- Crystallographic data for small molecules – Cambridge Structural Database

Deposition of the data types below is strongly encouraged.

- Proteomic data – PRIDE, ProteomeXchange
- Chemical data – Pubchem

We encourage provision of other source data in unstructured public depositories such as dryad or figshare, or as supplementary information. To maximize data reuse, we encourage publication of detailed descriptions of datasets in *Scientific Data*.

Crystallographic data

Manuscripts reporting new crystallographic structures of small molecules must be accompanied by a standard .cif file. A structural figure with probability ellipsoids should be included in the main supplementary information file. The structure factors for each structure should also be submitted, preferably embedded in the main .cif file, although they may be provided as a separate .hkl and/or .fcf file. Use of the 2014 version of the program SHELXL, which embeds the structure factors information in the main .cif file, is encouraged. The structure factors and structural output must be checked using IUCr's CheckCIF routine and a PDF copy of the output supplied, explaining any A- or B-level alerts.

Computer code

Any previously unreported custom computer code used to generate results reported in the manuscript and that are central to the main claims must be made available to editors and referees. Any practical issues preventing code sharing will be evaluated by the editors who reserve the right to decline the manuscript if important code is unavailable. At publication, Nature journals consider it best practice to release custom computer code in a way that allows readers to repeat the published results.

For all studies using custom code that is deemed central to the conclusions, a statement must be included in the Methods section, under the heading "Code availability", indicating whether and how the code can be accessed, including any restrictions.

Life sciences reporting guidelines

Life sciences research manuscripts sent for external review must include relevant details about several elements of experimental and analytical design. These requirements aim to improve the transparency of reporting and the reproducibility of published results. They focus on elements of methodological information that are frequently poorly reported (see more details on these elements here). You must complete a reporting checklist to indicate where these details are presented in your manuscript prior to peer review. The completed checklist will be provided to the referees. Guidance and resources related to the use and reporting of statistics are available here.

Human subject data

For describing human biospecimens, we recommend referring to the BRISQ reporting guidelines and ensuring at least Tier 1 characteristics are provided (doi: 10.1002/cncy.20147).

Related manuscripts

It is a requirement of submission that you alert us to any related manuscripts with overlapping authorship that are under consideration or in press at other journals (see our editorial policies on duplicate submissions for details). Copies of these manuscripts should be clearly marked and included as separate files with your submission.

Preprint servers

The Nature journals support the posting of submitted manuscripts on community preprint servers such as arxiv and bioarxiv. We do, however, ask you to respect the following summary of our policies:

- The original submitted version may be posted at any time.
- The accepted version may be posted 6 months after publication.
- The published version—copyedited and in Nature journal format—may not be posted on a preprint server or other website.

Double-blind peer review

To participate in double-blind peer review, please prepare your manuscript in a way that conceals the identities of all the authors (see checklist) and tick the appropriate box during online submission. Please note that editors do not ensure that the paper is properly anonymized; that is the responsibility of the authors.

Transferring your manuscript

If an editor is unable to offer publication of your manuscript, you have the opportunity to transfer all manuscript materials, the decision letter and any referee comments to a selection of Springer Nature journals without re-entering submission information. Use the link in your decision letter to explore suggested alternative journals. You may then initiate the transfer process to the journal of your choice or submit elsewhere. Please see this page for more information.

Appeals

Authors who feel that they have strong grounds for appealing a decision may contact the journal to request the opening of an appeal, after which they may upload a cogently argued rebuttal letter that addresses the referees' and/or editor's comments in a point-by-point manner. Decisions are reversed on appeal only if the editors are convinced that the original decision was made in error or critical new information or data has been added.

Comments on published articles

Important scientific comments and clarifications on peer-reviewed articles published in *Nature Methods* may be submitted as Correspondence.

Questions and manuscript submission

General editorial enquiries should be addressed to the Editor at [main journal email address]. Manuscripts should be submitted through our online submission system. Further submission details are available here.