nature

Brief guide for submission to *Nature*

This guide outlines key points for preparing primary research manuscripts for initial submission to *Nature*.

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 and agree with its order, and that they are aware the manuscript is to be submitted. For more information on editorial and authorship policies, please review our Guide to Authors.

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 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. We accept LaTeX files at the acceptance stage, but before that time please supply PDFs.

Title. Titles must fit on two lines in print (75 characters including spaces for Articles and 90 for Letters) and should avoid technical terms, abbreviations 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 implication.
Text length and formatting. Attention to the following details can help expedite publication if we invite a revision after external review.

- **Letters:** a referenced ~200 word introductory paragraph; main text of no more than 1,500 words and 4 display items (figures, tables); as a guideline, up to 30 references. Section headings are not used.
- **Articles:** an abstract of approximately 150 words, unreferenced; main text of no more than 3,500 words and 6 display items (figures, tables); as a guideline, up to 50 references. Section headings should be used and subheadings may appear in 'Results'. Avoid 'Introduction' as a heading.

Please consult *Nature*'s content types for final length and formatting requirements of other article types.
Methods. The Methods section appears in most 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 3,000 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 or dataset.
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 interests. Submission of a competing 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

We prefer the figures to be incorporated with the manuscript text into a single PDF or Word file at initial submission. High-resolution image files are not required at initial submission, but please ensure images 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 7pt.
- 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 use the Nature Research Chemical Structures Guide and ChemDraw template for formatting of chemical structures. .

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

Statistical information

Comprehensive information on the statistical analyses used must be included in the paper. The Methods must include a statistics section where you describe the statistical tests used and whether they were one- or two-tailed. Please ensure that the error bars are defined throughout the figures. For all statistics (including error bars), provide the EXACT *n* values used to calculate the statistics (reporting individual values rather than a range if *n* varied among experiments). For representative results, report the number of times that the measurements were repeated. Where relevant, provide exact values for both significant and non-significant *P* values. For ANOVAs, provide *F* values and degrees of freedom. For *t*-tests, provide *t*-values and degrees of freedom. Please specifically define the replicates.

Extended data

To improve its readability and navigability online, all data integral to the work being described should be included in up to ten multi-panel Extended Data display items similar to regular printed figures and tables. These will not appear in print but are included in the online versions of the published article. If the main finding includes a complex process we encourage the inclusion of a schematic to aid readers unfamiliar with the topic. For initial submission you may include Extended Data items as regular display items in the body of the manuscript or as Supplementary

Information. But if accepted for publication, all Extended Data will need to be properly formatted.

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

This should be limited to material that is essential background (for example, large data sets and calculations), but which is too large, impractical or specialized to justify inclusion in the printed version of the article. Any figures or small tables should ideally be supplied as Extended Data, not Supplementary Information.

Data availability

Please provide a Data Availability statement in the Methods section under "Data Availability"; detailed guidance can be found in our data availability and data citations policy. Certain data types must be deposited in an appropriate public structured data depository (details are available here), and the accession number(s) provided in the manuscript. Full access is required at publication. Should full access to data be required for peer review, authors must provide it.

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 upon request. 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

To improve the transparency of reporting and the reproducibility of published results, authors of life sciences research manuscripts must provide details about elements of experimental and analytical design that are frequently poorly reported. Before peer review, you must complete a reporting summary that will be available to editors and reviewers during manuscript assessment and will be published with the manuscript, if accepted. All authors must also complete an editorial policy checklist to ensure compliance with Nature Research editorial policies. Because of the forms' advanced features, you must use Adobe Reader to open the documents and fill them out. Guidance and resources related to the use and reporting of statistics are available here.

Other reporting summaries or checklists

For certain research areas, you may be asked to complete an additional or a different reporting summary or checklist prior to peer review.

Human subject data

If you are reporting phase II or phase III randomized controlled trials you must refer to the CONSORT Statement for recommendations to facilitate the complete and transparent reporting of trial findings. Reports that do not conform to the CONSORT guidelines may need to be revised before peer review.

We encourage authors reporting prognostic studies with tumor markers to follow the REMARK reporting guidelines.

Before the start of patient enrollment prospective clinical trials must be registered in www.clinicaltrials.gov or a similar public repository that matches ISMJE criteria and the trial registration number reported in the manuscript. (Trials in which the primary goal is to determine pharmacokinetics are exempt.)

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 (including under appeal) 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

Nature Research journals support posting of primary research manuscripts on community preprint servers such as arXiv and bioRxiv. We do, however, ask you to respect our policies on posting, citation and licensing of preprints.

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

Exceptionally interesting or important scientific comments and clarifications on peer-reviewed articles published in *Nature* may be submitted as Brief Communications Arising.

Questions and manuscript submission

General editorial enquiries should be addressed to the Editor at nature@nature.com. Manuscripts should be submitted through our online submission system. Further submission details are available here.