



## Manuscript Guidelines for Authors

2014–2015

Our intention in providing these guidelines is to make the submission and review process more efficient for authors, reviewers and *Inquiry* board members. Your adherence to these guidelines is very much appreciated. If anything is unclear or if you have any additional questions, please direct them to [inquiry@uab.edu](mailto:inquiry@uab.edu). We look forward to receiving your submissions.

Best wishes,

Chapin Cavender  
John Decker

*Inquiry* Chief Editors 2014–2015

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# **1 Types of Submissions**

## **1-1 Short Report**

A short report should give a concise overview of an original research project. It should cover only strictly necessary background information and should briefly summarize the methods utilized and the results obtained. Short reports are comparable to the content of science posters. The suggested length for a short report is 1000–2000 words.

## **1-2 Long Paper**

A long paper should give a substantial description of an original research project. It should cover ample background information and should include detailed discussions of the methods utilized and the results obtained, as well as a discussion of the authors' interpretation of their results and their importance in the relevant field. The suggested length for a long paper is 2500–4000 words.

## **1-3 Research Narrative**

A research narrative is a short submission written in editorial or narrative style. The content of the narrative should relate to scientific research. These submissions will be reviewed by faculty and students and will be considered based on the relevance of the content and the quality of the writing. The suggested length for a research narrative is 600–800 words.

Narratives are not subject to the guidelines outlined in section 3.

## 2 Submission Instructions and General Formatting Guidelines

### 2-1 How to submit

Links to submission forms for short reports and long papers can be found on the *Inquiro* website at [www.uab.edu/inquiro/submission-guidelines](http://www.uab.edu/inquiro/submission-guidelines). UAB students should access the electronic submission form in the first section of the webpage and will submit manuscripts through SharePoint. A Blazer ID will be required to access this submission form. Non-UAB students should access the electronic submission form in the second section of the webpage and will submit manuscripts through email to [inquiro@uab.edu](mailto:inquiro@uab.edu). Note that non-UAB students are only eligible to submit to *Inquiro* if the research described in the submission was performed at or in collaboration with UAB.

Ensure that you have informed your mentor of your intent to submit your research to *Inquiro* and have had him or her approve of your submission. A confirmation email will be sent to your mentor requesting his or her official approval, which must be obtained before we can move forward in finding a reviewer for the manuscript.

Research narratives should be submitted through email to [inquiro@uab.edu](mailto:inquiro@uab.edu). Include a title for the article along with your name, university, major, and class standing in the body of the email.

### 2-2 When to submit

The deadline for consideration in the 2014–2015 issue is October 10, 2014. However, early submissions are encouraged and expedite the review process. We begin identifying reviewers as soon as submissions are received and can therefore notify authors of acceptance or rejection sooner.

### 2-3 Formatting guidelines

Please send submissions as Microsoft Word documents, double-spaced in 12 pt Times New Roman font with 1 inch margins. Include page numbers.

We ask that you **remove all author information** from the manuscript in order to facilitate our double-blind review process. Author names and affiliations are requested on the Submission Form.

Please submit figures and tables as a single PDF file separate from the document containing the manuscript. Figures should appear in numerical order followed by tables in numerical order with each figure and table on a separate page. Include a legend describing each figure or table after the References section of the manuscript (see section 4 of this document for more detailed guidelines about preparing figures and tables). You may indicate in the main text where each figure or table should appear.

## **3 Manuscript Sections**

Short reports and long papers should contain the following clearly designated sections. Short reports may combine the Results and Discussion sections if desired. The Conclusions and Acknowledgments sections are optional. Authors may include subheadings as necessary.

### **3-1 Title**

The Title should be concise, describe the research performed, and avoid abbreviations or symbols. No special formatting should be used for the title. Only the first word of the Title and proper nouns should be capitalized. Do not include author information here or anywhere else in the manuscript. Author names and affiliations will be collected on the Submission Form.

### **3-2 Abstract**

The Abstract should summarize the paper, focusing on the methods utilized and the major conclusions drawn from the research. A list of up to five keywords or keyphrases related to the article should be supplied immediately below the abstract.

### **3-3 Introduction**

The Introduction should provide relevant background information that will enable the reader to understand the research presented in the article. It should be written so that it is comprehensible to a reader with a general undergraduate-level science background and should avoid technical jargon.

### **3-4 Materials and Methods**

The Materials and Methods section should discuss the procedure(s) carried out in the experiment, including any equipment, chemicals, and biological materials used. It should include sufficient information so that the experiment could be replicated without any additional instructions.

### **3-5 Results**

The Results section should present the outcome of the experiment without comment. Use of tables and figures to present visually the data described in the text is encouraged. Postpone interpretation of the data to the Discussion, unless Results and Discussion are combined into one section (more common for short reports than for long papers).

### **3-6 Discussion**

The Discussion section should provide interpretation of the data presented in the Results section. The significance of the findings should be apparent to a reader with a general science background. Discussion can also include speculation on the implications of the research or its applications to other areas of study.

### 3-7 Conclusions

The Conclusions section should enumerate the major findings of the study. This section should be brief and may be incorporated into the end of the Discussion rather than set apart as a separate section if desired.

### 3-8 Acknowledgments

The Acknowledgements section may list individuals or organizations who supported the research, e.g. through mentorship, provision of special materials or financial assistance. This section is not required.

### 3-9 References

The References section should include a complete list of sources referenced in the text of the article. The list should be numbered in the order in which the references are cited in the text. The format of the reference entries should follow the guidelines for the journal *Nature*. All authors should be included in reference lists unless there are six or more, in which case only the first author should be given, followed by 'et al.'. Authors should be listed last name first, followed by a comma and initials (followed by full stops) of given names. Article titles should be in Roman text, only the first word of the title should have an initial capital and the title should be written exactly as it appears in the work cited, ending with a full stop. Book titles should be given in italics and all words in the title should have initial capitals. Journal names are italicized and abbreviated (with full stops) according to common usage. Volume numbers and the subsequent comma appear in bold. The full page range should be given, where appropriate.

For example: 2. Schott, D. H., Collins, R. N. & Bretscher, A. Secretory vesicle transport velocity in living cells depends on the myosin V lever arm length. *J. Cell Biol.* **156**, 35–39 (2002).

For a list of common journal abbreviations, visit:

[http://www.sciencemag.org/site/feature/contribinfo/prep/res/journal\\_abbrevs.xhtml](http://www.sciencemag.org/site/feature/contribinfo/prep/res/journal_abbrevs.xhtml).

It is recommended that the software EndNote be used to generate the references list. UAB students can download this software free of charge here:

<http://www.uab.edu/it/home/component/k2/item/74-endnote>

## **4 Guidelines for Figures, Tables, etc.**

Figures and tables should be submitted in a single PDF file separate from the primary manuscript document. Legends for figures and tables should appear after the References section. See section 2-3.

Avoid redundancy in the information presented in figures and tables. Reviewers will be asked to comment on the necessity and clarity of figures.

### **4-1 Figures, Illustrations and Photographs**

These should be original, if possible, and of the highest resolution that can be attained. JPEG, TIFF and PNG files are acceptable. If any images are not original, the author agrees by submitting the manuscript that necessary permission has been obtained from the copyright holders to publish any images being reproduced.

Ensure that all graph axes are labeled and include units of measurement. For photos or microscope images, include a scale bar for size reference. Figures should be high quality and legible. Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator, among other professional programs used to generate figures, are available for UAB students' use free of charge in the Digital Media Commons in Heritage Hall Room 334.

Subparts of a single figure may be labeled A, B, C, etc.

### **4-2 Tables**

The same guidelines regarding originality apply. Ensure that all columns and rows are labeled and include units if applicable. Titles should appear in the legend, not on the table itself.

### **4-3 Legends**

Legends should allow the reader to fully and clearly understand the figure or table independent from the text. The legend should include a label (Figure, Table, Chart, etc.) followed by an Arabic numeral. Figures and tables should be numbered independently. The first statement in the legend should be in present tense and serve as the "title," offering a summary of the information being presented. Only the first word and any proper nouns should be capitalized. Additional sentences, if necessary, should be in past tense and clarify the parameters and/or significance of the information contained in the figure or table. All legend text should be the same size and format as the main body text of the manuscript.

### **4-4 Equations and Formulas**

Equations and formulas should be set apart from the body of the text and numbered independently of figures and tables (i.e. *Eq. 1*, *Eq. 2*, etc.).

## 4-5 Quantities and units

When reporting units, please use the conventions of the International System of Units (SI). Guidelines for the SI can be found at <http://physics.nist.gov/cuu/pdf/sp811.pdf>. Briefly, you should:

- Express all measurements as a numeral followed by a space and a recognized SI unit. The unit should be expressed using roman type, e.g. “20 MHz” instead of “20 *MHz*”.
- Use negative exponents to express reciprocal units, e.g. “5 g mL<sup>-1</sup>” instead of “5 g/mL.”
- Express a range of measurements using parentheses around the values or using a unit with each value. Do not use a hyphen or an en dash, e.g. “12.1 cm ± 0.2 cm” or “(20 to 22) °C” instead of “12.1 ± 0.2 cm” or “20–22 °C.”
- Use a minus sign (−) instead of a hyphen (-) to express negative quantities. The minus sign can be accessed by copying the symbol in parentheses above or by using the “Insert Symbol” function in Microsoft Word. On a Windows computer, you can also hold down the “Alt” key, press “8722” on the numeric keypad, and then release the “Alt” key; or, in Microsoft Word, type “2212” and then press the “Alt” and “X” keys simultaneously. On a Macintosh computer, go to System Preferences -> Language & Text -> Input Sources and check “Unicode Hex Input”; select “Unicode Hex Input” in the menu bar; then hold down the “option” key, press “2212”, and then release the “option” key.

## 4-6 Abbreviations

Abbreviations should be stated explicitly the first time they are used in the main body of the text and again in each figure or table legend. The following terms do not require initial clarification and the abbreviations may be used throughout a manuscript:

- SI units of measurement
- Other common units (e.g. bp, kb, Da)
- Chemical symbols for the elements
- DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid)
- RNA (ribonucleic acid)
- rRNA (ribosomal RNA)
- mRNA (messenger RNA)
- tRNA (transfer RNA)
- AMP, ADP, ATP, dAMP, ddATP, and GTP, etc.
- NAD (nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide), NAD<sup>+</sup>, NADH, NADP, NADPH, NADP<sup>+</sup>
- UV (ultraviolet)
- DEAE (diethylaminoethyl)
- EDTA (ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid)
- EGTA [ethylene glycol-bis(β-aminoethyl ether)-*N,N,N',N'*-tetraacetic acid]
- HEPES (*N*-2-hydroxyethylpiperazine-*N'*-2-ethanesulfonic acid)
- AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome)
- Abbreviations for cell lines (e.g. HeLa)

When using **binomial nomenclature**, spell out the entire genus and species names the first time the organism is mentioned (*Danio rerio*). Future mentions may use the first letter of the genus followed by the entire species epitaph (*D. rerio*). These should always be italicized.

Use roman type instead of italic type when using the abbreviations “i.e.” and “e.g.” in the text. Neither abbreviation is followed by a comma.