Lab Protocols

Developed in partnership with protocols.io, Lab Protocols describe, reusable methodologies. They consist of two interlinked components:

1. A step-by-step protocol posted to protocols.io
2. A peer-reviewed PLOS ONE article contextualizing the protocol

Editorial Process

Manuscript Invitations

- Look for the article type in manuscript invitations. After you accept a Lab Protocol invitation, there will also be a note from staff in the “Information for Editor” section of the confirmation email and manuscript Details page.

Initial Assessment

- Evaluate the submission against the publication criteria modifications for Lab Protocols and decide whether to:
  - Reject without review
  - Invite reviewers to peer review the protocol

- The parts of Lab Protocol submissions will be different than a Research Article
  - Lab Protocols will have Expected Results instead of Results and Discussion sections (read the full submission guidelines for authors)
  - The Materials and Methods section will be very short. The step-by-step protocol, equivalent to the Methods section, will be a supporting information file (and eventually hosted on protocols.io if published).

Peer Review

- As Lab Protocols report methods that have already been shown to work in the literature, you will typically only need one external reviewer and at most one round of revision unless you feel further subject matter input and revision is necessary
- Refer to the specific reviewer guidelines and forms for Lab Protocols

Editorial Decisions

- When writing your decision letter, be sure to use the publication criteria modifications for Lab Protocols

Other PLOS ONE article types

February 2021
Study Protocols

Study Protocols describe detailed plans and proposals for research projects that have not yet generated results. They consist of a single peer-reviewed article on PLOS ONE that can be referenced in future papers.

Editorial Process

Manuscript Invitations

- Look for the article type in manuscript invitations. After you accept a Study Protocol invitation, there will also be a note from staff in the “Information for Editor” section of the confirmation email and manuscript Details page.

Initial Assessment

- Evaluate the submission against the publication criteria modifications for Study Protocols and decide whether to:
  - Reject without review
  - Accept without review*
    - If you have the relevant expertise to evaluate the subject matter and methodology. This is different than for Research Articles.
  - Invite reviewers to peer review the protocol

- The parts of Study Protocol submissions will be different than a Research Article
  - Study Protocols will not have a Results section (read the full submission guidelines for authors)

Peer Review

- You can issue an Accept decision for Study Protocols without external review
- Refer to the specific reviewer guidelines and forms for Study Protocols

Editorial Decisions

- When writing your decision letter, use the publication criteria modifications for Study Protocols

Consult the Academic Editor Handbook (Appendix D: Other Article Types) for more detail on handling these article types and connect with other Academic Editors and ask questions about Protocols on Discourse.

Resources for Editors

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