

***PLOS ONE* Manuscript Guidelines**

(copied from the PLOS ONE website in 2015)

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1. Format Requirements

PLOS ONE does **not** consider presubmission inquiries. All submissions should be prepared with the following files:

- Cover letter
- Manuscript, including tables and figure legends
- Figures (guidelines for preparing figures can be found at the [Figure and Table Guidelines](#))

Prior to submission, authors who believe their manuscripts would benefit from professional editing are encouraged to use language-editing and copyediting services. Obtaining this service is the responsibility of the author, and should be done before initial submission. These services can be found on the web using search terms like "scientific editing service" or "manuscript editing service." Submissions are **not** copyedited before publication.

In addition to the guidelines below, please refer to our downloadable sample files to make sure that your submission meets our formatting requirements:

- [Download sample title, author list, and affiliations page \(PDF\)](#)
- [Download full manuscript sample \(PDF\)](#)

Submissions that do not meet the [PLOS ONE Publication Criterion for language standards](#) may be rejected.

Cover Letter

You should supply an approximately one page cover letter that:

- Concisely summarizes why your paper is a valuable addition to the scientific literature
- Briefly relates your study to previously published work
- Specifies the type of article you are submitting (for example, research article, systematic review, meta-analysis, clinical trial)
- Describes any prior interactions with PLOS regarding the submitted manuscript
- Suggests appropriate *PLOS ONE* Academic Editors to handle your manuscript (view a [complete listing of our academic editors](#))
- Lists any opposed reviewers

Your cover letter should **not** include requests to reduce or waive publication fees. Should your manuscript be accepted, you will have the opportunity to include your requests at that time. See [PLOS ONE Editorial Policy](#) for more information regarding publication fees.

Manuscript Organization

PLOS ONE considers manuscripts of any length. There are no explicit restrictions for the number of words, figures, or the length of the supporting information, although we encourage a concise and accessible writing style. We will **not** consider monographs.

All manuscripts should be double-spaced and include line numbers and page numbers.

Manuscripts should begin with the ordered sections:

- Title
- Authors
- Affiliations
- Abstract
- Introduction

and end with the sections of:

- Acknowledgments
- References
- Supporting Information Captions

Figures should be cited in ascending numeric order upon first appearance. Each figure caption should then be inserted immediately after the first paragraph in which it is cited in the article file.

Figures should not be included in the main manuscript file. Each figure must be prepared and submitted as an individual file. Find more information about preparing figures [here](#).

Tables should be cited in ascending numeric order upon first appearance. Each table should then be inserted immediately after the first paragraph in which it is cited in the article file.

The title, authors, and affiliations should all be included on a title page as the first page of the manuscript file.

There are no explicit requirements for section organization between these beginning and ending sections. Articles may be organized in different ways and with different section titles, according to the authors' preference. In most cases, internal sections include:

- Materials and Methods
- Results
- Discussion
- Conclusions (optional)

PLOS ONE has no specific requirements for the order of these sections, and in some cases it may be appropriate to combine sections. Guidelines for individual sections can be found [below](#).

Abbreviations should be kept to a minimum and defined upon first use in the text. Non-standard abbreviations should not be used unless they appear at least three times in the text.

Standardized nomenclature should be used as appropriate, including appropriate usage of species names and SI units.

PLOS articles do not support text footnotes. If your accepted submission contains footnotes, you will be asked to move that material into either the main text or the reference list, depending on the content.

Manuscript File Requirements

Authors may submit their manuscript files in Word (as .doc or .docx), LaTeX (as .pdf), or RTF format. Word files must not be protected.

LaTeX Submissions. If you would like to submit your manuscript using LaTeX, you must author your article using the [PLOS ONE LaTeX template and BibTeX style sheet](#). Articles prepared in LaTeX may be submitted in PDF format for use during the review process. After

acceptance, however, .tex files will be required. Please consult our [LaTeX guidelines](#) for a list of what will be required.

Microsoft Word Submissions with Equations. If your manuscript is or will be in Microsoft Word and contains equations, you must follow the instructions below to make sure that your equations are editable when the file enters production.

1. Format display equations only in MathType (<http://www.dessci.com/en/products/mathtype/>).
2. Inline equations should be completely input via MathType. Do not include an equation that is part text, part MathType.
3. Do not use graphic objects.

If you have already composed your article in Microsoft Word and used its built-in equation editing tool, your equations will become unusable during the typesetting process. To resolve this problem, re-key your equations using MathType.

If you do not follow these instructions, PLOS will not be able to accept your file.

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2. Guidelines for Standard Sections

Title

Manuscripts must be submitted with both a full title and a short title, which will appear at the top of the PDF upon publication if accepted. Only the full title should be included in the manuscript file; the short title will be entered during the online submission process.

The full title must be 250 characters or fewer. It should be specific, descriptive, concise, and comprehensible to readers outside the subject field. Avoid abbreviations if possible. Where appropriate, authors should include the species or model system used (for biological papers) or type of study design (for clinical papers).

Examples:

- Impact of Cigarette Smoke Exposure on Innate Immunity: A *Caenorhabditis elegans* Model
- Solar Drinking Water Disinfection (SODIS) to Reduce Childhood Diarrhoea in Rural Bolivia: A Cluster-Randomized, Controlled Trial

The short title must be 50 characters or fewer and should state the topic of the paper.

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Authors and Affiliations

All author names should be listed in the following order:

- First names (or initials, if used),
- Middle names (or initials, if used), and
- Last names (surname, family name)

Each author should list an associated department, university, or organizational affiliation and its location, including city, state/province (if applicable), and country. If the article has been submitted on behalf of a consortium, all author names and affiliations should be listed at the end of the article.

This information cannot be changed after initial submission, so please ensure that it is correct.

To qualify for authorship, one should contribute to **all** of the following:

1. Conception and design of the work, acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data
2. Drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content
3. Final approval of the version to be published
4. Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work

All persons designated as authors should qualify for authorship, and all those who qualify should be listed. Each author must have participated sufficiently in the work to take public responsibility for appropriate portions of the content. Those who contributed to the work but do not qualify for authorship should be listed in the acknowledgments.

When a large group or center has conducted the work, the author list should include the individuals whose contributions meet the criteria defined above, as well as the group name.

All authors must approve the final manuscript before submission. PLOS ONE will contact all authors by email at submission to ensure that they are aware of the submission of the manuscript.

One author should be designated as the corresponding author, and his or her email address or other contact information should be included on the manuscript cover page. This information will be published with the article if accepted.

See the [PLOS Editorial and Publishing Policies](#) for more information.

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Abstract

The abstract should:

- Describe the main objective(s) of the study
- Explain how the study was done, including any model organisms used, without methodological detail
- Summarize the most important results and their significance
- Not exceed 300 words

Abstracts should **not** include:

- Citations
- Abbreviations, if possible

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Introduction

The introduction should:

- Provide background that puts the manuscript into context and allows readers outside the field to understand the purpose and significance of the study
- Define the problem addressed and why it is important
- Include a brief review of the key literature
- Note any relevant controversies or disagreements in the field
- Conclude with a brief statement of the overall aim of the work and a comment about whether that aim was achieved

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Materials and Methods

This section should provide enough detail to allow suitably skilled investigators to fully replicate your study. Specific information and/or protocols for new methods should be included in detail. If materials, methods, and protocols are well established, authors may cite articles where those protocols are described in detail, but the submission should include sufficient information to be understood independent of these references.

We encourage authors to submit detailed protocols for newer or less well-established methods as Supporting Information. Further information about formatting Supporting Information files, can be found [here](#).

Methods sections of papers on research using **human or animal subjects and/or tissue or field sampling** must include required ethics statements. See the [Reporting Guidelines for human research](#), [clinical trials](#), [animal research](#), and [observational and field studies](#) for more information.

Methods sections of papers with **data that should be deposited in a publicly available database** should specify where the data have been deposited and provide the relevant accession numbers and version numbers, if appropriate. Accession numbers should be provided in parentheses after the entity on first use. If the accession numbers have not yet been obtained at the time of submission, please state that they will be provided during review. They must be provided prior to publication. A list of recommended repositories for different types of data can be found [here](#).

Methods sections of papers using **cell lines** must state the origin of the cell lines used. See the [Reporting Guidelines for cell line research](#) for more information.

Methods sections of papers adding **new taxon names** to the literature must follow the Reporting Guidelines below for a new [zoological taxon](#), [botanical taxon](#), or [fungal taxon](#).

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Results, Discussion, and Conclusions

These sections may all be separate, or may be combined to create a mixed Results/Discussion section (commonly labeled "Results and Discussion") or a mixed Discussion/Conclusions section (commonly labeled "Discussion"). These sections may be further divided into subsections, each with a concise subheading, as appropriate. These sections have no word limit, but the language should be clear and concise.

Together, these sections should describe the results of the experiments, the interpretation of these results, and the conclusions that can be drawn. Authors should explain how the results relate to the hypothesis presented as the basis of the study and provide a succinct explanation of the implications of the findings, particularly in relation to previous related studies and potential future directions for research.

PLOS ONE editorial decisions do not rely on perceived significance or impact, so authors should avoid overstating their conclusions. See the *PLOS ONE* [Publication Criteria](#) for more information.

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Acknowledgments

People who contributed to the work but do not fit the [PLOS ONE authorship criteria](#) should be listed in the acknowledgments, along with their contributions. You must ensure that anyone named in the acknowledgments agrees to being so named.

Funding sources should **not** be included in the acknowledgments, or anywhere in the manuscript file. You will provide this information during the manuscript submission process.

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References

General guidelines

- PLOS uses the reference style as outlined in the [ICMJE sample references](#), also referred to as the “Vancouver” style.
- References must be listed at the end of the manuscript and numbered in the order that they appear in the text.
- In the text, citations should be indicated by the reference number in brackets.
- Authors may cite any and all available works in the reference list.
- Authors may not cite unavailable and unpublished work, including manuscripts that have been submitted but not yet accepted (e.g., “unpublished work,” “data not shown”).

- If an article is submitted to a journal and also publicly available as a pre-print, the pre-print may be cited.
- If [related work](#) has been submitted to PLOS ONE or elsewhere, authors should include a copy with the submitted article as confidential supplementary information, for review purposes only.
- Authors should not state 'unpublished work' or 'data not shown,' but instead include those data as supplementary material or deposit the data in a publicly available database.
- Journal name abbreviations should be those found in the [NCBI databases](#).

Reference formatting

Because all references will be linked electronically as much as possible to the papers they cite, proper formatting of the references is crucial. References should be formatted as follows:

Published papers

1. Hou WR, Hou YL, Wu GF, Song Y, Su XL, Sun, B, et al. cDNA, genomic sequence cloning and overexpression of ribosomal protein gene L9 (rpL9) of the giant panda (*Ailuropoda melanoleuca*). *Genet Mol Res*. 2011;10: 1576-1588.

Note: Use of a DOI number for the full-text article is acceptable as an alternative to or in addition to traditional volume and page numbers:

Devaraju P, Gulati R, Antony PT, Mithun CB, Negi VS. Susceptibility to SLE in South Indian Tamils may be influenced by genetic selection pressure on TLR2 and TLR9 genes. *Mol Immunol*. 2014 Nov 22. pii: S0161-5890(14)00313-7. doi: 10.1016/j.molimm.2014.11.005

Accepted, unpublished papers

Same as above, but “In press” appears instead of the page numbers or DOI.

Websites or online articles

1. Huynen MMTE, Martens P, Hilderlink HBM. The health impacts of globalisation: a conceptual framework. *Global Health*. 2005;1: 14. Available: <http://www.globalizationandhealth.com/content/1/1/14>.

Books

1. Bates B. *Bargaining for life: A social history of tuberculosis*. 1st ed. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press; 1992.

Book chapters

1. Hansen B. New York City epidemics and history for the public. In: Harden VA, Risse GB, editors. *AIDS and the historian*. Bethesda: National Institutes of Health; 1991. pp. 21-28.

Deposited articles (preprints, e-prints, or arXiv)

1. Krick T, Shub DA, Verstraete N, Ferreiro DU, Alonso LG, Shub M, et al. Amino acid metabolism conflicts with protein diversity; 1991. Preprint. Available: arXiv:1403.3301v1. Accessed 17 March 2014.

Published media (print or online newspapers and magazine articles)

1. Fountain H. For Already Vulnerable Penguins, Study Finds Climate Change Is Another Danger. The New York Times. 29 Jan 2014. Available: <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/30/science/earth/climate-change-taking-toll-on-penguins-study-finds.html>. Accessed 17 March 2014.

New media (blogs, websites, or other written works)

1. Allen L. Announcing PLOS Blogs. 2010 Sep 1 [cited 17 March 2014]. In: PLOS Blogs [Internet]. San Francisco: PLOS 2006 - . [about 2 screens]. Available: <http://blogs.plos.org/plos/2010/09/announcing-plos-blogs/>.

Masters' theses or doctoral dissertations

1. Wells A. Exploring the development of the independent, electronic, scholarly journal. M.Sc. Thesis, The University of Sheffield. 1999. Available: <http://cumincaad.scix.net/cgi-bin/works/Show?2e09>.

Databases and repositories (Figshare, arXiv)

1. Roberts SB. QPX Genome Browser Feature Tracks; 2013. Database: figshare [Internet]. Accessed: http://figshare.com/articles/QPX_Genome_Browser_Feature_Tracks/701214.

Multimedia (videos, movies, or TV shows)

1. Hitchcock A, producer and director. Rear Window [Film]; 1954. Los Angeles: MGM.

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Figure Legends

Figures should **not** be included in the manuscript file, but figure legends should be. Guidelines for preparing figures can be found [here](#).

Figure legends should describe the key messages of a figure. Legends should have a short title of 15 words or less. The full legend should have a description of the figure and allow readers to understand the figure without referring to the text. The legend itself should be succinct, avoid lengthy descriptions of methods, and define all non-standard symbols and abbreviations.

Figures should be cited in ascending numeric order upon first appearance. Each figure caption should be inserted immediately after the first paragraph in which they are cited in the article file. Further information about figure captions can be found in the [Figure Guidelines](#).

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Supporting Information Captions

Because Supporting Information is accessed via a hyperlink attached to its captions, captions must be listed in the article file. Do not submit a separate caption file. It is acceptable to have them in the file itself in addition, but they must be in the article file for access to be possible in the published version.

The file category name and number is required, and a one-line title is highly recommended. A legend can also be included but is not required. Supporting Information captions should be formatted as follows.

S1 Text. Title is strongly recommended. Legend is optional.

Please see our [Supporting Information guidelines](#) for more details.

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Data Reporting Guidelines

All data and related metadata underlying the findings reported in a submitted manuscript should be deposited in an appropriate public repository, unless already provided as part of the submitted article. Repositories may be either subject-specific (where these exist) and accept specific types of structured data, or generalist repositories that accept multiple data types. We recommend that authors select repositories appropriate to their field. Repositories may be subject-specific (eg, GenBank for sequences and PDB for structures), general, or institutional, as long as DOIs or accession numbers are provided and the data are at least as open as CCBY. Authors are encouraged to select repositories that meet accepted criteria as trustworthy digital repositories, such as criteria of the Centre for Research Libraries or Data Seal of Approval. Large, international databases are more likely to persist than small, local ones.

To support data sharing and author compliance of the PLOS data policy, we have integrated our submission process with a select set of data repositories. The list is neither representative nor exhaustive of the suitable repositories available to authors. Current repository integration partners include: Dryad and figshare. Please contact data@plos.org to make recommendations for further partnerships.

Instructions for PLOS submissions with data deposited in an integration partner repository:

Deposit data in the integrated repository of choice. Once deposition is final and complete, the repository will provide the author with a dataset DOI (provisional) and private URL for reviewers to gain access to the data. Enter the given data DOI into the full Data Availability Statement, which is requested in the Additional Information section of the PLOS Submission form. Then provide the URL passcode in the Attach Files section. If you have any questions, please contact us at plosone@plos.org

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Accession Numbers

All appropriate datasets, images, and information should be deposited in public resources. Please provide the relevant accession numbers (and version numbers, if appropriate). Accession numbers should be provided in parentheses after the entity on first use. Suggested databases include, but are not limited to:

- [ArrayExpress](#)
- [BioModels Database](#)

- [Database of Interacting Proteins](#)
- [DNA Data Bank of Japan \[DDBJ\]](#)
- [DRYAD](#)
- [EMBL Nucleotide Sequence Database](#)
- [GenBank](#)
- [Gene Expression Omnibus \[GEO\]](#)
- [Protein Data Bank](#)
- [UniProtKB/Swiss-Prot](#)
- [ClinicalTrials.gov](#)

In addition, as much as possible, please provide accession numbers or identifiers for all entities such as genes, proteins, mutants, diseases, etc., for which there is an entry in a public database, for example:

- [Ensembl](#)
- [Entrez Gene](#)
- [FlyBase](#)
- [InterPro](#)
- [Mouse Genome Database \(MGD\)](#)
- [Online Mendelian Inheritance in Man \(OMIM\)](#)
- [PubChem](#)

Providing accession numbers allows linking to and from established databases and integrates your article with a broader collection of scientific information.

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Striking Images

Authors are encouraged to upload a "striking image" that may be used to represent their paper online in places like the journal homepage or in search results. The striking image must be derived from a figure or supporting information file from the paper, ie. a cropped portion of an image or the entire image. Striking images should ideally be high resolution, eye-catching, single panel images, and should ideally avoid containing added details such as text, scale bars, and arrows. If no striking image is uploaded, a figure from the paper will be designated as the striking image.

Please keep in mind that PLOS's [Creative Commons Attribution License](#) applies to striking images. As such, do not submit any figures or photos that have been previously copyrighted unless you have express written permission from the copyright holder to publish under the CCAL license. Note that all published materials in PLOS ONE are freely available online, and any third party is permitted to read, download, copy, distribute, and use these materials in any way, even commercially, with proper attribution.

Care should be taken with the following image types in particular:

1. PLOS ONE is unable to publish any images generated by Google software (Google Maps, Street View, and Earth)
2. Maps in general are usually copyrighted, especially satellite maps
3. Photographs

4. Commercial or government images, slogans, or logos
5. Images from Facebook or Twitter

Authors must also take special care when submitting manuscripts that contain potentially identifying images of people. Identifying information should not be included in the manuscript unless the information is crucial and the individual has provided written consent by completing the [Consent Form for Publication in a PLOS Journal](#) (PDF).

For license inquiries, e-mail [license \[at\] plos.org](mailto:license@plos.org).

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Tables

Tables should be cited in ascending numeric order upon first appearance. Each table should be inserted immediately after the first paragraph in which it is cited in the article file. All tables should have a concise title. Footnotes can be used to explain abbreviations. Citations should be indicated using the same style as outlined [above](#). Tables occupying more than one printed page should be avoided, if possible. Larger tables can be published as [Supporting Information](#). Please ensure that table formatting conforms to our [Guidelines for table preparation](#).

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3. Specific Reporting Guidelines

Human Subject Research

Methods sections of papers on research using human subject or samples must include ethics statements that specify:

- The name of the approving institutional review board or equivalent committee(s). If approval was not obtained, the authors must provide a detailed statement explaining why it was not needed
- Whether informed consent was written or oral. If informed consent was oral, it must be stated in the manuscript:
 - Why written consent could not be obtained
 - That the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved use of oral consent
 - How oral consent was documented

For studies involving humans categorized by race/ethnicity, age, disease/disabilities, religion, sex/gender, sexual orientation, or other socially constructed groupings, authors should:

- Explicitly describe their methods of categorizing human populations
- Define categories in as much detail as the study protocol allows
- Justify their choices of definitions and categories, including for example whether any rules of human categorization were required by their funding agency

- Explain whether (and if so, how) they controlled for confounding variables such as socioeconomic status, nutrition, environmental exposures, or similar factors in their analysis

In addition, outmoded terms and potentially stigmatizing labels should be changed to more current, acceptable terminology. Examples: "Caucasian" should be changed to "white" or "of [Western] European descent" (as appropriate); "cancer victims" should be changed to "patients with cancer."

For papers that include identifying, or potentially identifying, information, authors must download the [Consent Form for Publication in a PLOS Journal](#) (PDF), which the individual, parent, or guardian must sign once they have read the paper and been informed about the terms of PLOS open-access license. The signed consent form should not be submitted with the manuscript, but authors should securely file it in the individual's case notes and the methods section of the manuscript should explicitly state that consent authorization for publication is on file, using wording like:

The individual in this manuscript has given written informed consent (as outlined in PLOS consent form) to publish these case details.

For more information about *PLOS ONE* policies regarding human subject research, see the [Publication Criteria](#) and [Editorial Policies](#).

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Clinical Trials

Authors of manuscripts describing the results of clinical trials must adhere to the [CONSORT](#) reporting guidelines appropriate to their trial design, available on the [CONSORT Statement website](#). Before the paper can enter peer review, authors must:

1. Provide the registry name and number in the methods section of the manuscript
2. Provide a copy of the trial protocol as approved by the ethics committee and a completed [CONSORT checklist](#) as Supporting Information (which will be published alongside the paper, if accepted). This should be named S1 CONSORT Checklist.
3. Include the [CONSORT flow diagram](#) as the manuscript's "Fig. 1"

Any deviation from the trial protocol must be explained in the paper. Authors must explicitly discuss informed consent in their paper, and we reserve the right to ask for a copy of the patient consent form.

The methods section must include the name of the registry, the registry number, and the URL of your trial in the registry database for each location in which the trial is registered.

For more information about *PLOS ONE* policies regarding clinical trials, see the [Editorial Policies](#).

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Animal Research

Methods sections of manuscripts reporting results of animal research must include required ethics statements that specify:

- The full name of the relevant ethics committee that approved the work, and the associated permit number(s) (where ethical approval is not required, the manuscript should include a clear statement of this and the reason why)
- Relevant details for efforts taken to ameliorate animal suffering

For example:

This study was carried out in strict accordance with the recommendations in the Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals of the National Institutes of Health. The protocol was approved by the Committee on the Ethics of Animal Experiments of the University of Minnesota (Permit Number: 27-2956). All surgery was performed under sodium pentobarbital anesthesia, and all efforts were made to minimize suffering.

The organism(s) studied should always be stated in the abstract. Where research may be confused as pertaining to clinical research, the animal model should also be stated in the title.

We ask authors to follow the [ARRIVE \(Animal Research: Reporting of *In Vivo* Experiments\) guidelines](#) for all submissions describing laboratory-based animal research and to upload a completed [ARRIVE Guidelines Checklist](#) to be published as supporting information. Please note that inclusion of a completed ARRIVE Checklist will be a formal requirement for publication at a later date.

For more information about *PLOS ONE* policies regarding animal research, see the [Publication Criteria](#) and [Editorial Policies](#).

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Observational and Field Studies

Methods sections for submissions reporting on any type of field study must include ethics statements that specify:

- Permits and approvals obtained for the work, including the full name of the authority that approved the study; if none were required, authors should explain why
- Whether the land accessed is privately owned or protected
- Whether any protected species were sampled
- Full details of animal husbandry, experimentation, and care/welfare, where relevant

For more information about *PLOS ONE* policies regarding observational and field studies, see the [Publication Criteria](#) and [Editorial Policies](#).

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Cell Line Research

Authors reporting research using cell lines should state when and where they obtained the cells, giving the date and the name of the researcher, cell line repository, or commercial source (company) who provided the cells, as appropriate. Authors must also include the following information for each cell line:

For *de novo* (new) cell lines, including those given to the researchers as a gift, authors must follow our policies for [human subject research](#) or [animal research](#), as appropriate. The ethics statement must include:

- Details of institutional review board or ethics committee approval; AND
- For human cells, confirmation of written informed consent from the donor, guardian, or next of kin

For established cell lines, the Methods section should include:

- A reference to the published article that first described the cell line; AND/OR
- The cell line repository or company the cell line was obtained from, the catalogue number, and whether the cell line was obtained directly from the repository/company or from another laboratory

Authors should check established cell lines using the [ICLAC Database of Cross-contaminated or Misidentified Cell Lines](#) to confirm they are not misidentified or contaminated. Cell line authentication is recommended - e.g. by karyotyping, isozyme analysis, or short tandem repeats (STR) analysis - and may be required during peer review or after publication.

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Blots and Gels

Authors of manuscripts reporting results from blots (including Western blots) and electrophoretic gels should follow these guidelines:

- In accordance with [PLOS ONE's policy on image manipulation](#), the image should not be adjusted in any way that could affect the scientific information displayed, e.g. by modifying the background or contrast
- All blots and gels that support results reported in the manuscript should be provided
- Original uncropped and unadjusted blots and gels, including molecular size markers, should be provided in either the figures or the supplementary files
- Lanes should not be overcropped around the bands; the image should show most or all of the blot or gel. Any non-specific bands should be shown and an explanation of their nature should be given
- The image should include all relevant controls, and controls should be run on the same blot or gel as the samples
- A figure panel should not include composite images of bands originating from different blots or gels. If the figure shows non-adjacent bands from the same blot or gel, this should be clearly denoted by vertical black lines and the figure legend should provide details of how the figure was made

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Antibodies

Manuscripts reporting experiments using antibodies should include the following information:

- The name of each antibody, a description of whether it is monoclonal or polyclonal, and the host species
- The commercial supplier or source laboratory
- The catalogue or clone number and, if known, the batch number
- The antigen(s) used to raise the antibody
- For established antibodies, authors are encouraged to supply a stable public identifier from the Antibody Registry (www.antibodyregistry.org).

Authors should also report the following experimental details:

- The final antibody concentration or dilution
- A reference to the validation study if the antibody was previously validated, and if not, details of how the authors validated the antibody for the applications and species used. Authors should consider adding information on new validations to a publicly available database such as [Antibodypedia](#) or [CiteAb](#).

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Systematic Review/Meta-Analysis

A systematic review paper, as defined by [The Cochrane Collaboration](#), is a review of a clearly formulated question that uses explicit, systematic methods to identify, select, and critically appraise relevant research, and to collect and analyze data from the studies that are included in the review. These reviews differ substantially from narrative-based reviews or synthesis articles. Statistical methods (meta-analysis) may or may not be used to analyze and summarize the results of the included studies.

Reports of systematic reviews and meta-analyses must include a completed [PRISMA \(Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses\) checklist and flow diagram](#) to accompany the main text. Blank templates are available here:

- Checklist: [PDF](#) or [Word document](#)
- Flow diagram: [PDF](#) or [Word document](#)

Authors must also state in their "Methods" section whether a protocol exists for their systematic review, and if so, provide a copy of the protocol as Supporting Information and provide the registry number in the abstract.

If your article is a Systematic Review or a Meta-Analysis you should:

- State this in your cover letter
- Select "Research Article" as your article type when submitting

- Include the PRISMA flowchart as Fig. 1 (required where applicable)
- Include the PRISMA checklist as Supporting Information

Meta-Analysis of Genetic Association Studies

Manuscripts reporting a meta-analysis of genetic association studies must report results of value to the field and should be reported according to the guidelines presented in “[Systematic Reviews of Genetic Association Studies](#)” by Sagoo *et al.*

On submission, authors will be asked to justify the rationale for the meta-analysis and how it contributes to the base of scientific knowledge in the light of previously published results. Authors will also be asked to complete a [checklist](#) outlining information about the justification for the study and the methodology employed. Meta-analyses that replicate published studies will be rejected if the authors do not provide adequate justification.

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Paleontology and Archaeology Research

Manuscripts reporting paleontology and archaeology research must include descriptions of methods and specimens in sufficient detail to allow the work to be reproduced. Data sets supporting statistical and phylogenetic analyses should be provided, preferably in a format that allows easy re-use.

Specimen numbers and complete repository information, including museum name and geographic location, are required for publication. Locality information should be provided in the manuscript as legally allowable, or a statement should be included giving details of the availability of such information to qualified researchers.

If permits were required for any aspect of the work, details should be given of all permits that were obtained, including the full name of the issuing authority. This should be accompanied by the following statement:

All necessary permits were obtained for the described study, which complied with all relevant regulations.

If no permits were required, please include the following statement:

No permits were required for the described study, which complied with all relevant regulations.

See the [PLOS ONE Editorial Policies](#) for more information regarding manuscripts describing paleontology and archaeology research.

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Software Papers

Manuscripts describing software should provide full details of the algorithms designed. Describe any dependencies on commercial products or operating system. Include details of the supplied test data and explain how to install and run the software. A brief description of enhancements made in the major releases of the software may also be given. Authors should provide a direct link to the deposited software from within the paper.

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Database Papers

For descriptions of databases, provide details about how the data were curated, as well as plans for long-term database maintenance, growth, and stability. Authors should provide a direct link to the database hosting site from within the paper.

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New Zoological Taxon

For proper registration of a new zoological taxon, we require two specific statements to be included in your manuscript.

In the **Results** section, the globally unique identifier (GUID), currently in the form of a Life Science Identifier (LSID), should be listed under the new species name, for example:

Anochetus boltoni Fisher **sp. nov.** urn:lsid:zoobank.org:act:B6C072CF-1CA6-40C7-8396-534E91EF7FBB

You will need to contact [Zoobank](#) to obtain a GUID (LSID). Please do this as early as possible to avoid delay of publication upon acceptance of your manuscript. It is your responsibility to provide us with this information so we can include it in the final published paper.

Please also insert the following text into the **Methods** section, in a sub-section to be called "Nomenclatural Acts":

The electronic edition of this article conforms to the requirements of the amended International Code of Zoological Nomenclature, and hence the new names contained herein are available under that Code from the electronic edition of this article. This published work and the nomenclatural acts it contains have been registered in ZooBank, the online registration system for the ICZN. The ZooBank LSIDs (Life Science Identifiers) can be resolved and the associated information viewed through any standard web browser by appending the LSID to the prefix "http://zoobank.org/". The LSID for this publication is: urn:lsid:zoobank.org:pub:XXXXXXXX. The electronic edition of this

work was published in a journal with an ISSN, and has been archived and is available from the following digital repositories: PubMed Central, LOCKSS [author to insert any additional repositories].

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New Botanical Taxon

When publishing papers that describe a new botanical taxon, PLOS aims to comply with the requirements of the International Code of Nomenclature for algae, fungi, and plants (ICN). In association with the [International Plant Names Index](#) (IPNI), the following guidelines for publication in an online-only journal have been agreed such that any scientific botanical name published by us is considered effectively published under the rules of the Code. Please note that these guidelines differ from those for zoological nomenclature, and apply only to seed plants, ferns, and lycophytes.

Effective January 2012, "the description or diagnosis required for valid publication of the name of a new taxon" can be in either Latin or English. This does not affect the requirements for scientific names, which are still to be Latin.

Also effective January 2012, the electronic PDF represents a published work according to the ICN for algae, fungi, and plants. Therefore the new names contained in the electronic publication of a *PLOS ONE* article are effectively published under that Code from the electronic edition alone, so there is no longer any need to provide printed copies.

Additional information describing recent changes to the Code can be found [here](#).

For proper registration of the new taxon, we require two specific statements to be included in your manuscript.

In the **Results** section, the globally unique identifier (GUID), currently in the form of a Life Science Identifier (LSID), should be listed under the new species name, for example:

Solanum aspersum S.Knapp, sp. nov. [urn:lsid:ipni.org:names:77103633-1] Type: Colombia. Putumayo: vertiente oriental de la Cordillera, entre Sachamates y San Francisco de Sibundoy, 1600-1750 m, 30 Dec 1940, J. Cuatrecasas 11471 (holotype, COL; isotypes, F [F-1335119], US [US-1799731]).

PLOS ONE staff will contact IPNI to obtain the GUID (LSID) after your manuscript is accepted for publication, and this information will then be added to the manuscript during the production phase

In the **Methods** section, include a sub-section called "Nomenclature" using the following wording:

The electronic version of this article in Portable Document Format (PDF) in a work with an ISSN or ISBN will represent a published work according to the International Code of Nomenclature for algae, fungi, and plants, and hence the new names contained in the electronic publication of a *PLOS ONE* article are effectively published under that Code from the electronic edition alone, so there is no longer any need to provide printed copies.

In addition, new names contained in this work have been submitted to IPNI, from where they will be made available to the Global Names Index. The IPNI LSIDs can be resolved and the associated information viewed through any standard web browser by appending the LSID contained in this publication to the prefix <http://ipni.org/>. The online version of this work is archived and available from the following digital repositories: [INSERT NAMES OF DIGITAL REPOSITORIES WHERE ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT WILL BE SUBMITTED (PubMed Central, LOCKSS etc)].

All *PLOS ONE* articles are deposited in [PubMed Central](#) and [LOCKSS](#). If your institute, or those of your co-authors, has its own repository, we recommend that you also deposit the published online article there and include the name in your article.

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New Fungal Taxon

When publishing papers that describe a new fungal taxon name, PLOS aims to comply with the requirements of the International Code of Nomenclature for algae, fungi, and plants (ICN). The following guidelines for publication in an online-only journal have been agreed such that any scientific fungal name published by us is considered effectively published under the rules of the Code. Please note that these guidelines differ from those for zoological nomenclature.

Effective January 2012, "the description or diagnosis required for valid publication of the name of a new taxon" can be in either Latin or English. This does not affect the requirements for scientific names, which are still to be Latin.

Also effective January 2012, the electronic PDF represents a published work according to the ICN for algae, fungi, and plants. Therefore the new names contained in the electronic publication of a *PLOS ONE* article are effectively published under that Code from the electronic edition alone, so there is no longer any need to provide printed copies.

Additional information describing recent changes to the Code can be found [here](#).

For proper registration of the new taxon, we require two specific statements to be included in your manuscript.

In the **Results** section, the globally unique identifier (GUID), currently in the form of a Life Science Identifier (LSID), should be listed under the new species name, for example:

Hymenogaster huthii. Stielow et al. 2010, sp. nov.
[urn:lsid:indexfungorum.org:names:518624]

You will need to contact either [Mycobank](#) or [Index Fungorum](#) to obtain the GUID (LSID). Please do this as early as possible to avoid delay of publication upon acceptance of your manuscript. It is your responsibility to provide us with this information so we can include it in the final published paper. Effective January 2013, all papers describing new fungal species must reference the identifier issued by a recognized repository in the protologue in order to be considered effectively published.

In the **Methods** section, include a sub-section called "Nomenclature" using the following wording (this example is for taxon names submitted to MycoBank; please substitute appropriately if you have submitted to Index Fungorum):

The electronic version of this article in Portable Document Format (PDF) in a work with an ISSN or ISBN will represent a published work according to the International Code of Nomenclature for algae, fungi, and plants, and hence the new names contained in the electronic publication of a *PLOS ONE* article are effectively published under that Code from the electronic edition alone, so there is no longer any need to provide printed copies.

In addition, new names contained in this work have been submitted to MycoBank from where they will be made available to the Global Names Index. The unique MycoBank number can be resolved and the associated information viewed through any standard web browser by appending the MycoBank number contained in this publication to the prefix <http://www.mycobank.org/MB/>. The online version of this work is archived and available from the following digital repositories: [INSERT NAMES OF DIGITAL REPOSITORIES WHERE ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT WILL BE SUBMITTED (PubMed Central, LOCKSS etc)].

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Qualitative Research

Qualitative research studies use non-quantitative methods to address a defined research question that may not be accessible by quantitative methods, such as people's interpretations, experiences, and perspectives. The analysis methods are explicit, systematic, and reproducible, but the results do not involve numerical values or use statistics. Examples of qualitative data sources include, but are not limited to, interviews, text documents, audio/video recordings, and free-form answers to questionnaires and surveys.

Qualitative research studies should be reported in accordance to the [Consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative research \(COREQ\) checklist](#). Further reporting guidelines can be found in the Equator Network's [Guidelines for reporting qualitative research](#).

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