

South African Journal of Science Guidelines for Authors

Scope

The *South African Journal of Science* considers articles from any field on the understanding that they are the original work of the authors named, that they are being offered only to the *South African Journal of Science* and that the content is relevant to and for Africa.

Article types

Various kinds and categories of article are welcome.

Front section

Items for consideration for publication in the front section of the journal, such as Book Reviews and Scientific Correspondence, should be submitted online. Material considered for the front section is subject to the normal representations and warranties, that is, inter alia, that the material must be original and must conform to the specifications for manuscripts provided in the [formatting guidelines](#). Submissions must be accompanied by a signed Publishing Agreement. The names, affiliations and full contact details of all authors must be provided together with the material submitted for consideration. Manuscripts submitted for consideration as front-section items are reviewed by the Editor-in-Chief who decides what should be included and in which issue of the journal. Although the Editor-in-Chief may solicit an external review at his discretion, items published in the front section of the journal are not subject to peer review and therefore do not qualify for the Department of Higher Education and Training subsidy. For guidelines on specific front-section article types see [Front-section articles](#).

Peer-reviewed research communications

Peer-reviewed research communications are of three kinds: Research Letters, Research Articles and Review Articles. Research Letters are short reports (no longer than 2000 words) and should be up-to-date accounts of interesting and noteworthy scientific developments. Although these reports may be concerned with very particular advances, they should be of wider than specialist interest. Research Letters are given priority in terms of rapid publication after acceptance. Research Articles are longer papers (no more than 6000 words). Here the criteria of intelligibility and wider interest are strictly applied. Review Articles (up to 6000 words) should be up-to-date surveys of important current developments in science. Research and Review Articles that receive a high priority rating from at least two reviewers are given preference in terms of rapid publication after acceptance.

Submission of manuscripts for consideration

Manuscripts for peer review must be submitted online. Please ensure that you have complied with the [guidelines](#) and completed the Publishing Agreement before you start the submission

process. Submissions that are incomplete or do not comply with the instructions will be returned.

Fees

There are no submission fees or article-processing charges.

Readability

As the journal has a multidisciplinary focus, manuscripts must be written in a manner and style that is intelligible to specialists and non-specialists alike. Articles are judged by reviewers at the discretion of the editors. Contributions should therefore be written clearly and simply so that they are accessible to readers in other disciplines and those for whom English is not a first language.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is when you use someone else's work (book, article, website, etc.) or idea without acknowledging them as the source, whether it be copied verbatim or paraphrased. Manuscripts submitted online will be screened for potential plagiarism before peer review using similarity detection software. All cases of suspected or alleged plagiarism are considered very seriously in accordance with the journal's [Plagiarism Policy](#).

Permissions

Permission must be obtained from the copyright owner for the use of quotations, illustrations, tables and other materials taken from previously published works that are not in the public domain. The author is responsible for the payment of any copyright fee(s) if these have not been waived. The letters of permission must accompany the manuscript. The original source(s) must be mentioned in the figure legend or as a footnote to a table.

Ethical guidelines

Submissions involving research conducted on human or non-human vertebrates must meet the highest standards regarding both the ethical consideration given and reporting of the procedures followed. Full details are necessary so that a non-specialist reader can appreciate the need for the research undertaken.

All reported research involving humans or other animals must be approved prior to commencement of the study by an institutional ethics committee. The name of the approving body and a reference number (if provided) must be included in the Methods section of the manuscript.

In addition, all manuscripts describing research involving human subjects, tissue or data must also indicate that informed consent was obtained and that the [principles of the Declaration of Helsinki](#) were adhered to. All manuscripts describing research involving non-human animals must also indicate that the [ARRIVE guidelines](#) for reporting in vivo animal experiments were adhered to. Proper reporting should include the number, sex, age, weight, health status and source of the individuals used, as well as full details of anaesthesia and surgical procedures. The Declaration of Helsinki and the ARRIVE guidelines are also available from the [Editorial](#)

Office. Manuscripts failing to adhere to these instructions will not be considered for publication.

Deposition of new sequences and structures

The reporting of new or not previously reported structures or sequences (such as chemical and crystallographic structures, synthetic compounds, genes and proteins) must include the accession numbers of the relevant database in which they have been deposited. Details of the synthesis of new structures and compounds must also be given. See [Data sets](#) for deposition of other data.

Authorship

Authorship of a manuscript should be agreed upon by authors prior to submission. Generally, a person attributed as an author should have contributed to (1) the conception and design of the study and data collection or data analysis; (2) writing or revising the manuscript; and (3) final approval of the version to be published. The corresponding author is responsible for ensuring that all listed authors have agreed to: (1) the authorship as listed and in the order given by the submitting author; (2) the content of the manuscript; and (3) its submission to the journal. All authors are required to sign the Publishing Agreement before submission. Any requests for changes in authorship prior to publication should be accompanied by a new Publishing Agreement.

Author contributions

The contributions of each author should be listed and submitted as a separate file. Contributions should be specified along the lines of: conceptualisation; methodology; data collection; sample analysis; data analysis; validation; data curation; writing – the initial draft; writing – revisions; student supervision; project leadership; project management; and funding acquisition. For a brief description of each contribution please [click here](#).

Reviewers

Authors must suggest three potential reviewers to evaluate their work. The names and full contact details (including email) of the suggested reviewers must be provided in the cover letter. Suggested reviewers should not be people with whom the authors have recently collaborated or published. Authors may also indicate if they oppose any potential reviewers. The final selection of reviewers is, however, at the discretion of the editors. Please see [Peer-review Process](#) for more information on the peer-review process.

Cover letter

The cover letter should outline the study and the article's relevance to the broad readership of the *South African Journal of Science*. The cover letter should identify the author to whom all correspondence should be addressed and detail any [conflicts of interest](#). The cover letter should also include the names and full contact details (including email) of the suggested reviewers. Details of the significance of the findings can also be provided.

Significance of the main findings

The significance of the main findings or conclusions should be given in the main document below the abstract [a minimum of two and maximum of five should be given]. The significance of the findings should not be a summary of the results, but should reflect the contribution the results make to the field, and how the results are applicable in their respective field and in other fields. The points of significance should start with general contributions and proceed with more specific contributions. The significance of the findings will be published with the aim of promoting greater interest not only from readers in the field but also from a wider readership. The points of significance should therefore be written for a non-specialist.

Title page

The title page must include the title of the article (a maximum of 95 characters including spaces); a running head (a shortened version of the title, 65 characters or less); five keywords; the authors' names, affiliations and [ORCID](#)s; and the name and email of the corresponding author. The title page must be submitted as a separate document during the submission process [select Title Page as the file format when uploading the file during submission].

Acknowledgements

Any significant help received in conceiving, designing or carrying out the work, as well as provision of a service or material must be acknowledged. Authors should always acknowledge outside reviewers of their drafts. The Acknowledgements must be submitted as a separate document during the submission process [select Acknowledgements as the file format when uploading the file during submission].

Funding

Authors should acknowledge all sources of funding that supported their research. In addition to including funding sources in their Acknowledgements, authors will be able to select funding bodies under the Funding field during the submission process.

Abstract

Articles and letters must begin with a summary paragraph (of up to 250 words) aimed at readers in other disciplines. The paragraph should start with 2–3 sentences that provide an introduction to the field and the particular problem investigated, followed by a one-sentence statement of your main findings (or conclusions, in the case of a Review Article), and a further 2–3 sentences placing these findings/conclusions in a general context so that readers are made aware of the implications of the findings. Summary paragraphs typically do not include references, but if a reference is essential, the full reference must be given.

References

The reference list should begin on a separate page. The number of references is limited to 30 for Research Letters, 60 for Research Articles and 80 for Review Articles.

The *South African Journal of Science* uses the Vancouver referencing style; no other style will be permitted. [Click here](#) for examples.

To expedite the publication process, the reference list should include a DOI (digital object identifier) for each applicable reference. The DOIs can be retrieved easily using [CrossRef's Simple Text Query tool](#). The tool is user friendly and free to access once you have registered for a free account.

Online supplementary material

Online supplementary material is material additional to but directly relevant to your article that cannot be included within the article for reasons of space or medium (such as videos). Various formats are allowed (e.g. Word documents, Excel spreadsheets, video files). The material is peer reviewed in conjunction with the article and must be submitted as supplementary material during online submission. Supplementary material must be numbered separately when referred to in the article (e.g. Supplementary table 1) and must conform with the journal's [formatting guidelines](#). Online supplementary material undergoes copy-editing but not layout and is published separately on the article page. As it is published separately, any references must be given in a self-contained reference list. Supplementary material should be limited to 10 figures/tables and 2000 words.

Data sets

Although only the deposition of some data – specifically new sequences and structures – is compulsory, we welcome and encourage the publication of the data set on which an article is based. Wherever possible, access to such data sets must be open.

The publication of data sets serves several objectives and these objectives should be kept in mind when depositing and referring to data. These objectives broadly follow the FAIR Guiding Principles of Findability, Accessibility, Interoperability and Reusability.

Data sets can take the form of computational or curated data or those produced through experimental or observational procedures and should be provided in the 'rawest' form that will permit reuse. Raw data should be treated as a data set and not as supplementary material.

Data sets are citable sources. Published data sets must be cited within the manuscript (numbered as for figures and tables, e.g. Data set 1) and the citations must appear in the reference list. A description of the data set must be provided in the manuscript, which must include the format of the data and details of any software that is required to view the data.

Authors choosing to publish their data sets after acceptance of a manuscript, must deposit their data in a reputable repository that follows the principles of data management and citation. The persistent link to the data set in the repository must be provided to the Editorial Office before publication of the article and will be published on the article landing page on the Journal website, ensuring that the data set is visible and accessible to readers.

The repository selected must: be actively managed; include quality control measures; enable unrestricted access to the data set (except for reasons of privacy); enable searching and retrieval of data sets; include a globally unique persistent ID (or DOI) which resolves to a publicly accessible landing page which is maintained even if the data are retracted; appropriately describe the data and include metadata; ensure data set persistence; include

version control and ensure data set stability (which means that the specific version cited can be retrieved). If for good reason the data are removed from the repository after publication, the Editorial Office must be informed.

The following is a list of recognised repositories for general data (please confirm suitability for your data type and adherence to best practice before choosing a repository): [Dataverse](#); [Dryad](#); [Figshare](#); [Open Science Framework](#) (for open data); and [Zenodo](#).

General specifications of manuscripts

Format of text: Manuscripts should be typed in Arial font 11 point with one and a half line spacing. Please save manuscripts for upload in .DOC (not .DOCX) format. Please ensure authors' names and affiliations and any acknowledgements are omitted [and provided on the title page] to facilitate the double-blind review process.

Unique fonts: If these are necessary, they should be embedded in the .DOC file in order to ensure they display correctly.

Layout: Start each paragraph at the margin (no tabs to indent first line). Include a line space between paragraphs to separate. Numbered paragraphs/sections are not permitted.

Heading styles: First level headings: boldface, normal case, centred, on a separate line, 14pt. Second level headings: boldface, normal case, justified at left margin, on a separate line, 14pt. Third level headings: boldface, normal case, justified at left margin, on a separate line, 12pt. Fourth-level headings: underlined, not bold, normal case, justified at left margin, on a separate line, 12pt.

Spelling: Please use UK spelling and not US spelling. Use IUPAC nomenclature recommendations for chemical elements and compounds.

Quotations in the text: Single quotation marks are used for all quotations; to highlight a quote within a quote, please use double quotation marks. If citations are longer than 30 words, please do not use single quotation marks; rather indent the quotation and italicise it.

Footnotes may not be used in the text but may be used for Tables and Figures.

Equations: Use English Equation Editor if you have equations in your manuscript; other versions will not convert correctly.

Acronyms: If a phrase with an established acronym or abbreviation is used, and appears more than five times in your article, please include the acronym/abbreviation in brackets after first mention of the phrase, then use the acronym/abbreviation only. Please note that you should not define acronyms or abbreviations in any of your headings. If either has been used in your abstract/summary, you need to define them again on their first use within the main text. Abbreviations/acronyms used in figures and tables must be explained in the heading/legend or footnote.

Units: The use of units should conform to the SI convention and be abbreviated accordingly. Metric units and their international symbols are used throughout, as is the decimal point (not the decimal comma), and the 24-hour clock.

Spacing and punctuation: There should be one space (not two) between sentences; one space before unit terms (e.g. 5 kg, 5 mm, 5 mmol, 5 days, 5 °C); but no space before %. Thousands/millions are marked with a space, not a comma, from 10 000 (e.g. 10 000, 1 000 000 but 1000). Ranges are expressed with an extended hyphen, not with a short hyphen (e.g. 1990–2000).

Dates: Dates must be written as: 12 July 2012.

Tables and figures: There should be no more than 10 figures and tables in total per article. All **captions** must be provided together on a separate page at the end of the manuscript. Abbreviations/acronyms used in figures and tables must be explained in the heading/legend or footnote.

Figures must be provided as high-resolution images in TIFF format (avoid compressed formats like GIFF and JPEG). Ensure that your figures will be clear and legible when reduced in size.

Tables must be submitted in editable format in Word or Excel and not as image files. Excel files should be uploaded as individual sheets, not the entire workbook.

Submission of revised manuscripts

Revisions to the text should be indicated using the track changes mode in MS Word or by using coloured font. If you use track changes, please ensure that your name does not appear in the comment box.

Your revised manuscript must be submitted online. Your original files will be available to you when you upload your revised manuscript – please delete any redundant files before completing the submission. You will not be able to access your manuscript to resubmit if the deadline has expired (the deadline expires at 00:00 SAST/GMT+2). If you need a few extra days to resubmit, please request the Editorial Office to extend the deadline on the submission site. Manuscripts requiring major revisions for resubmission and review should be resubmitted within 60 days following the decision and those requiring minor revisions should be resubmitted within 30 days. Resubmissions not received within these deadlines may be treated as a new submission, but should not be submitted as such.

During the submission process, you will be required to respond to the comments made by the reviewers in the space provided as well as to upload your responses as a separate (blinded) document [select Response to Reviewers as the file format when uploading the file during submission]. Your responses should be as specific as possible.

In order to expedite publication should your revised manuscript be accepted, it is important to ensure that you have complied with the [guidelines](#), specifically that your figures are of appropriate size and resolution and have been uploaded individually as TIFF files and that your references have been numbered and formatted correctly and include DOIs where applicable.

Post-acceptance

The corresponding author will be notified as soon as possible as to which issue their manuscript has been assigned for publication. Authors who have manuscripts awaiting publication should please notify the Editorial Office if they plan to be out of email reach for a length of time or assign another author as corresponding author.

Corresponding authors can provide feedback on the publication process of their manuscript at two stages: (1) after copy-editing of the Word document and (2) on the PDF proof after layout. Revisions and corrections must be received promptly (within 48 hours) to avoid delays in publication. Substantial changes made at PDF proof stage will be charged to the author.

Corresponding authors will be notified as soon as the article is published online. The journal is openly accessible and you can freely download and share your article. You can view your article's metrics (views and downloads) on the article's landing page.

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