

Choose one decision worth tracing.

Do not summarize the whole journal. Choose one decision that will change what you submit, how you prepare it, or what you verify next.

Good decision questions

- Is this article type eligible?
- Which files are required at initial submission?
- What anonymity model applies?
- Which disclosure or data statement is required?
- What does the journal say counts as an in-scope contribution?

Questions to narrow

- "Is this a good journal?"
- "What are all the rules?"
- "Will my paper be accepted?"
- "What did a search engine say?"

Rewrite the question so an official source can settle a defined part of it.

Learner or group

Journal and publisher

Decision to resolve

Why this decision changes the submission

Evidence boundary

A search result, AI answer, commercial directory, or library summary can help locate a source. It does not replace the live page owned by the journal, publisher, or society.

Record the authority path.

Use one row per official page. Preserve enough detail that someone else can reopen the source and audit your conclusion.

OWNER AND PAGE TITLE	URL AND ACCESS DATE	DECISION THIS PAGE SETTLES

Source 1: What does it state?

Use a brief quotation only when wording matters.
Otherwise paraphrase accurately.

Source 2 or 3: What changes?

Record added detail, a narrower condition, or a contradiction.

Which source controls the exact decision, and why?

If the source is inaccessible, record the official URL, the access problem, and what you did not verify. Do not substitute a search snippet as proof.

Separate evidence from judgment.

1. Source-backed evidence

What does the controlling official source establish?

2. Interpretation

What does that evidence mean for this manuscript or workflow? Name the inference.

3. Planned action

What will happen next, who owns it, and when should the source be rechecked?

4. Unresolved edge

Record a contradiction, access limit, ambiguous instruction, or fact that the sources do not establish.

5. Clarification route

Which official page, office, editor, librarian, or coauthor can resolve it?

Do not overclaim

Eligibility is not readiness. Readiness is not acceptance. Keep each conclusion at the level the evidence supports.

Can another researcher reproduce the record?

Swap records. The reviewer checks the evidence trail, not whether they agree with the journal choice.

- ☐ The decision is narrow enough for official guidance to address.
- ☐ Every source has an identifiable official owner, page title, URL, and access date.
- ☐ The chosen source has authority for this decision, not merely for the journal in general.
- ☐ The evidence statement is supported and no broader than the source.
- ☐ Evidence, interpretation, planned action, and uncertainty are separate.
- ☐ The next verification step has an owner.

One strength in the record

One claim or source path that needs revision

Exit reflection: What will you do differently before your next submission?

Ready to share

Every audit item is checked, or the unresolved item is explicit and assigned.

Needs another pass

A source is unofficial, a claim exceeds the evidence, or the next action is not owned.

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