

Research Manuscript Submission Checklist

42 evidence-linked checks for the final review before journal submission

VERSION	LAST REVIEWED	LICENSE
1.0.0	August 5, 2026	CC BY 4.0

Use this checklist with the selected journal's current author instructions. Mark an item not applicable only after confirming why it does not apply to the study, discipline, funder, institution, or journal.

Five-minute stop-sign screen
Pause if the venue or article type does not fit; authorship, ethics, consent, or disclosure is unresolved; a required reporting record is missing; core numbers disagree; the availability statement is not true; or the exact package lacks author approval.

5 MINUTES	20 MINUTES	45 TO 60 MINUTES
Stop-sign screen Pause and assign an owner for any unresolved red flag.	Core readiness pass Complete every item marked Blocker.	Full team sign-off Complete all 42 checks and archive the final package.

01 Journal and submission route

Confirm that the venue, article type, audience, costs, and policies fit the work before the team spends time on final formatting.

	CHECK	STATUS
[]	The journal's current aims and scope match the manuscript's subject, method, and intended audience. Check the official scope page and several recent articles. A topic match alone is not enough if the article type, method, or audience differs.	BLOCKER
[]	The journal accepts this article type and the manuscript meets its current length and structure rules. Use the journal's own author instructions. Save the access date because requirements can change during revision.	BLOCKER
[]	The journal's identity, peer-review process, fees, ownership, and policies are transparent. Use Think. Check. Submit. when a journal or invitation is unfamiliar. Do not rely on indexing or a metric claim shown only on the journal's website.	BLOCKER
[]	Publication charges, waiver routes, institutional agreements, and funding limits are understood. Ask the library or research office about agreements and funder rules before selecting a paid open-access option.	REVIEW
[]	Preprint, prior-publication, and overlapping-manuscript disclosures follow the journal's policy. Describe related manuscripts and reused material honestly. A preprint is not treated the same way by every journal.	BLOCKER
[]	The manuscript is not under consideration elsewhere unless the journal explicitly permits it. Concurrent submission is prohibited by many journals. Confirm the selected journal's rule before submission.	BLOCKER

02 Reporting and study record

Make the research record complete enough for readers, reviewers, and future researchers to understand what was planned and what was done.

	CHECK	STATUS
[]	The correct reporting guideline or disciplinary standard has been identified. For health research, search EQUATOR by study type and specialty. For other fields, check the journal, professional society, repository, or funder standard.	BLOCKER
[]	Every applicable reporting item is addressed, with page locations recorded if a checklist is required. Do not mark an item as complete merely because the topic appears somewhere. Confirm that the requested information is actually reported.	BLOCKER
[]	Registration, protocol, preregistration, or analysis-plan identifiers are included where applicable. State material deviations from the registered plan or protocol and explain why they occurred.	REVIEW
[]	Study design, setting, dates, participants or materials, and inclusion or exclusion rules are explicit. A qualified reader should not have to infer the basic design from scattered details.	BLOCKER
[]	Limitations, missing information, uncertainty, and departures from plan are reported proportionately. A limitation section should explain what changes interpretation, not simply list generic cautions.	REVIEW

03 Title, abstract, and claims

Make the first screen accurate, internally consistent, and appropriately calibrated to the evidence.

	CHECK	STATUS
[]	The title accurately identifies the subject and, when required, the study design. Remove claims the study did not test and labels that imply a stronger design than the methods support.	BLOCKER
[]	The abstract follows the journal's format and matches the main text, tables, and figures. Check sample sizes, outcomes, effect estimates, dates, and conclusions against the final manuscript, not an earlier draft.	BLOCKER
[]	The primary question, contribution, or argument is visible without inflated novelty language. State what this work adds and for whom. Avoid claiming a field-changing contribution when the evidence supports a narrower advance.	REVIEW
[]	Causal, comparative, and generalization claims match the design and population. Use association language for observational evidence unless the design and analysis justify a causal claim.	BLOCKER
[]	Keywords, names, and plain-language terms make the work findable by its intended readers. Use the journal's keyword rules and include established terms a researcher would actually search.	REVIEW

04 Methods, results, and evidence

Check whether the evidence can be followed, evaluated, and reconciled across every part of the manuscript.

	CHECK	STATUS
[]	Methods identify the materials, instruments, software, versions, procedures, and decision rules needed to understand the work. Use persistent identifiers and repository links when they improve reproducibility or access.	BLOCKER
[]	Sample size, stopping rules, exclusions, missing data, and analytic populations are explained. Report these decisions even when the study was exploratory or no formal power calculation was appropriate.	BLOCKER
[]	The analysis matches the design, measurement scale, assumptions, and stated research questions. Involve a statistician or methods specialist when the validity of the analysis cannot be resolved by a checklist.	BLOCKER
[]	Numbers and labels agree across the abstract, text, tables, figures, supplements, and data files. Check denominators, units, rounding, confidence intervals, p values, category labels, and figure-panel references.	BLOCKER
[]	Null, negative, unexpected, and sensitivity results are reported when they affect interpretation. Do not let the narrative hide results that qualify the central claim.	REVIEW

05 Authorship, ethics, and transparency

Resolve responsibility and disclosure questions before they become submission or publication disputes.

	CHECK	STATUS
[]	Every listed author meets the applicable authorship standard, and contributor order is approved. Resolve disputed additions, removals, and ordering before submission. Acknowledgment is different from authorship.	BLOCKER
[]	Contributor roles are recorded using CRediT or the journal's required taxonomy. A contribution statement describes roles. It does not by itself determine who qualifies as an author.	REVIEW
[]	Names, affiliations, corresponding-author details, and researcher identifiers are current. Confirm ORCID identifiers and institutional names directly with each author where they are supplied.	REVIEW
[]	Ethics approval, exemption, consent, registration, and community or cultural permissions are reported where applicable. Use the wording and identifiers required by the responsible institution, community, field, and journal.	BLOCKER
[]	Funding, financial and non-financial relationships, and other competing interests are complete. Check each author's disclosure against the selected journal's form and policy.	BLOCKER
[]	Use of AI and other automated tools is disclosed exactly as the journal requires. Do not list an AI system as an author. Human authors remain responsible for accuracy, originality, citations, confidentiality, and the submitted text.	BLOCKER

06 Data, code, materials, and rights

Make access claims true and settle repository, reuse, and permissions questions while the full research record is still available.

	CHECK	STATUS
[]	The data-availability statement matches what a reader can actually access and under what conditions. Name the repository, persistent identifier, embargo, license, and controlled-access process where applicable.	BLOCKER
[]	Code, computational environments, instruments, and materials have the documentation needed for reuse or evaluation. Include versions, dependencies, licenses, and a short README when code or digital materials are shared.	REVIEW
[]	Sensitive, proprietary, community-governed, or restricted material is not exposed by the sharing plan. State the legitimate access path instead of promising open availability that would violate consent, law, contract, or community expectations.	BLOCKER
[]	Permissions or documented exceptions cover reused figures, tables, instruments, images, and substantial text. Keep written permissions and the exact credit language with the submission records.	BLOCKER
[]	Funder deposit rules, institutional open-access policy, rights retention, and the accepted-manuscript plan have been checked. Ask the library before signing away rights or paying an avoidable charge.	REVIEW

07 References, figures, and accessibility

Verify that sources support the claims and that visual evidence remains understandable across formats and users.

	CHECK	STATUS
[]	Each citation supports the nearby claim and represents the cited source accurately. Open the source for high-stakes, disputed, surprising, or numerical claims. Do not verify only the citation metadata.	BLOCKER
[]	Reference metadata, links, and identifiers are correct, and material updates are accounted for. Check for retractions, expressions of concern, corrections, and newer versions that change the use of a source.	BLOCKER
[]	Every in-text citation appears in the reference list and every listed reference is cited. Remove duplicates and confirm author names, title, venue, year, volume, pages or article number, and DOI where applicable.	REVIEW
[]	Figures and tables define units, groups, denominators, uncertainty, symbols, and analysis details. A caption should let a reader interpret the display without reconstructing basic definitions from the main text.	BLOCKER
[]	Visual information does not depend on color alone and has appropriate text alternatives. Check contrast, labels, patterns, reading order, captions, and the journal's method for supplying alt text. Avoid using an image of a table when a real table is possible.	REVIEW

08 Files and final sign-off

Submit the intended version with a complete package and a record the author team can reconstruct later.

	CHECK	STATUS
[]	The manuscript is anonymized or identified according to the journal's review model. Check file properties, acknowledgments, self-citations, tracked changes, comments, repository links, and supplement metadata.	BLOCKER
[]	File types, names, word limits, figure resolution, supplements, and required forms meet the current instructions. Open every final file after export. Confirm that equations, fonts, links, symbols, figures, and tables render correctly.	BLOCKER
[]	The cover letter and submission-form answers are accurate, consistent, and free of unsupported claims. Disclose related work, preprints, conflicts, and reviewer information exactly as requested. Do not copy an inflated abstract into the letter.	BLOCKER
[]	Every author has approved the exact manuscript, author list, declarations, and target journal. Record approval before the corresponding author presses submit.	BLOCKER
[]	The submitted package and confirmation record will be archived together. Keep the final files, forms, cover letter, reporting checklist, submission date, manuscript ID, and portal confirmation in a shared location.	REVIEW

Reporting guideline starting points

This table covers common health-research study designs. Search EQUATOR for extensions. Outside health research, use the standard named by the journal, professional society, repository, or funder.

STUDY TYPE	GUIDELINE	OFFICIAL SOURCE
Randomized trial	CONSORT	Open guidance
Observational study	STROBE	Open guidance
Systematic review or meta-analysis	PRISMA	Open guidance
Study protocol	SPIRIT or PRISMA-P	Open guidance
Diagnostic or prediction study	STARD or TRIPOD	Open guidance
Qualitative study	COREQ or SRQR	Open guidance
Animal research	ARRIVE	Open guidance
Case report	CARE	Open guidance
Quality improvement	SQUIRE	Open guidance
Economic evaluation	CHEERS	Open guidance

Scope and limits

- The selected journal's current author instructions and submission forms
- Discipline-specific reporting and ethical standards
- Statistical, methodological, legal, accessibility, or research-ethics review
- Advice from a librarian on open access, author rights, repositories, and funder deposit rules
- Independent verification of every factual claim, citation, or analysis

Primary sources

Think. Check. Submit.: Think. Check. Submit. journal checklist

Journal identity, transparency, peer review, fees, policies, and preservation
<https://thinkchecksubmit.org/check/>

EQUATOR Network: Reporting Guidelines

Health-research reporting guideline search by study type and specialty
<https://www.equator-network.org/reporting-guidelines/>

ICMJE: Recommendations for Scholarly Work in Medical Journals

Medical-journal authorship, disclosure, manuscript preparation, and AI use; updated January 2026
<https://www.icmje.org/recommendations/>

Committee on Publication Ethics: Core Practices

Authorship, conflicts, data, ethical oversight, and publication responsibility
<https://publicationethics.org/core-practices>

Committee on Publication Ethics: Handling concurrent and duplicate submissions

Journal and author responsibilities for concurrent and duplicate submission
<https://doi.org/10.24318/y9lyqPiR>

NISO CRediT: Contributor Roles Taxonomy

Standard contributor-role vocabulary
<https://credit.niso.org/>

ORCID: ORCID researcher identifiers

Persistent researcher identifiers
<https://orcid.org/>

W3C Web Accessibility Initiative: Images Tutorial

Purpose-based text alternatives and accessible image treatment
<https://www.w3.org/WAI/tutorials/images/>

License and disclosure

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Corrections: hello@manusights.com | Maintenance: reviewed at least twice per year and earlier when a named standard changes materially.