

CHOOSE THE DEPTH YOU NEED

Three ways to use the checklist

This is a decision aid, not a score. A single unresolved ethics, authorship, reporting, or evidence problem can matter more than dozens of completed formatting checks.

5 MINUTES

Stop-sign screen

Use the six red flags below. If one is unresolved, pause the submission and assign an owner.

20 MINUTES

Core readiness pass

Review the 29 items marked "Submission blocker" with the manuscript and journal instructions open.

45 TO 60 MINUTES

Full team sign-off

Complete all 42 checks, record exceptions, and archive the final package with the submission confirmation.

PAUSE BEFORE SUBMISSION

Six stop signs

These are not automatic-rejection predictions. They are unresolved issues that should have a named owner and a documented decision before submission.

1 The journal or article type does not fit the work.

2 Authorship, ethics approval, consent, or required disclosure is unresolved.

3 A required reporting guideline, registration, or protocol record is missing.

4 The abstract, main results, and figures disagree on a primary number or claim.

5 The data-availability statement promises access that cannot actually be provided.

6 The exact submission package has not been approved by every author.

The 42-point checklist

Work from the selected journal's current instructions. Mark an item not applicable only after confirming why it does not apply to the study, discipline, funder, institution, or journal.

All 42 checks

Blockers only (29)

0 of 42

0%

Reset

- ☐ **The journal's current aims and scope match the manuscript's subject, method, and intended audience.**

BLOCKER

Check the official scope page and several recent articles. A topic match alone is not enough if the article type, method, or audience differs.

- ☐ **The journal accepts this article type and the manuscript meets its current length and structure rules.**

BLOCKER

Use the journal's own author instructions. Save the access date because requirements can change during revision.

- ☐ **The journal's identity, peer-review process, fees, ownership, and policies are transparent.**

BLOCKER

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.

- ☐ **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.

- ☐ **Preprint, prior-publication, and overlapping-manuscript disclosures follow the journal's policy.**

BLOCKER

Describe related manuscripts and reused material honestly. A preprint is not treated the same way by every journal.

- ☐ **The manuscript is not under consideration elsewhere unless the journal explicitly permits it.**

BLOCKER

Concurrent submission is prohibited by many journals. Confirm the selected journal's rule before submission.

- ☐ **The correct reporting guideline or disciplinary standard has been identified.**

BLOCKER

For health research, search EQUATOR by study type and specialty. For other fields, check the journal, professional society, repository, or funder standard.

- ☐ **Every applicable reporting item is addressed, with page locations recorded if a checklist is required.**

BLOCKER

Do not mark an item as complete merely because the topic appears somewhere. Confirm that the requested information is actually reported.

- ☐ **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.

- ☐ **Study design, setting, dates, participants or materials, and inclusion or exclusion rules are explicit.**

BLOCKER

A qualified reader should not have to infer the basic design from scattered details.

- ☐ **Limitations, missing information, uncertainty, and departures from plan are reported proportionately.**

A limitation section should explain what changes interpretation, not simply list generic cautions.

- ☐ **The title accurately identifies the subject and, when required, the study design.**

BLOCKER

Remove claims the study did not test and labels that imply a stronger design than the methods support.

- ☐ **The abstract follows the journal's format and matches the main text, tables, and figures.**

BLOCKER

Check sample sizes, outcomes, effect estimates, dates, and conclusions against the final manuscript, not an earlier draft.

- ☐ **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.

- ☐ **Causal, comparative, and generalization claims match the design and population.**

BLOCKER

Use association language for observational evidence unless the design and analysis justify a causal claim.

- ☐ **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.

- ☐ **Methods identify the materials, instruments, software, versions, procedures, and decision rules needed to understand the work.**

BLOCKER

Use persistent identifiers and repository links when they improve reproducibility or access.

- ☐ **Sample size, stopping rules, exclusions, missing data, and analytic populations are explained.**

BLOCKER

Report these decisions even when the study was exploratory or no formal power calculation was appropriate.

- ☐ **The analysis matches the design, measurement scale, assumptions, and stated research questions.**

BLOCKER

Involve a statistician or methods specialist when the validity of the analysis cannot be resolved by a checklist.

- ☐ **Numbers and labels agree across the abstract, text, tables, figures, supplements, and data files.**

BLOCKER

Check denominators, units, rounding, confidence intervals, p values, category labels, and figure-panel references.

- ☐ **Null, negative, unexpected, and sensitivity results are reported when they affect interpretation.**

Do not let the narrative hide results that qualify the central claim.

- ☐ **Every listed author meets the applicable authorship standard, and contributor order is approved.**

BLOCKER

Resolve disputed additions, removals, and ordering before submission. Acknowledgment is different from authorship.

- ☐ **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.

- ☐ **Names, affiliations, corresponding-author details, and researcher identifiers are current.**

Confirm ORCID identifiers and institutional names directly with each author where they are supplied.

- ☐ **Ethics approval, exemption, consent, registration, and community or cultural permissions are reported where applicable.**

BLOCKER

Use the wording and identifiers required by the responsible institution, community, field, and journal.

- ☐ **Funding, financial and non-financial relationships, and other competing interests are complete.**

BLOCKER

Check each author's disclosure against the selected journal's form and policy.

- ☐ **Use of AI and other automated tools is disclosed exactly as the journal requires.**

BLOCKER

Do not list an AI system as an author. Human authors remain responsible for accuracy, originality, citations, confidentiality, and the submitted text.

- ☐ **The data-availability statement matches what a reader can actually access and under what conditions.**

BLOCKER

Name the repository, persistent identifier, embargo, license, and controlled-access process where applicable.

- ☐ **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.

- ☐ **Sensitive, proprietary, community-governed, or restricted material is not exposed by the sharing plan.**

BLOCKER

State the legitimate access path instead of promising open availability that would violate consent, law, contract, or community expectations.

- ☐ **Permissions or documented exceptions cover reused figures, tables, instruments, images, and substantial text.**

BLOCKER

Keep written permissions and the exact credit language with the submission records.

- ☐ **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.

- ☐ **Each citation supports the nearby claim and represents the cited source accurately.**

BLOCKER

Open the source for high-stakes, disputed, surprising, or numerical claims. Do not verify only the citation metadata.

- ☐ **Reference metadata, links, and identifiers are correct, and material updates are accounted for.**

BLOCKER

Check for retractions, expressions of concern, corrections, and newer versions that change the use of a source.

- ☐ **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.

- ☐ **Figures and tables define units, groups, denominators, uncertainty, symbols, and analysis details.**

BLOCKER

A caption should let a reader interpret the display without reconstructing basic definitions from the main text.

- ☐ **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.

- ☐ **The manuscript is anonymized or identified according to the journal's review model.**

BLOCKER

Check file properties, acknowledgments, self-citations, tracked changes, comments, repository links, and supplement metadata.

- ☐ **File types, names, word limits, figure resolution, supplements, and required forms meet the current instructions.**

BLOCKER

Open every final file after export. Confirm that equations, fonts, links, symbols, figures, and tables render correctly.

- ☐ **The cover letter and submission-form answers are accurate, consistent, and free of unsupported claims.**

BLOCKER

Disclose related work, preprints, conflicts, and reviewer information exactly as requested. Do not copy an inflated abstract into the letter.

- ☐ **Every author has approved the exact manuscript, author list, declarations, and target journal.**

BLOCKER

Record approval before the corresponding author presses submit.

- ☐ **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.

STUDY-DESIGN MODULE

Find the reporting guideline before the final pass

This table covers common health-research study designs. EQUATOR indexes hundreds of guidelines and extensions. Researchers outside health fields should use the standard named by their journal, professional society, repository, or funder.

Study type	Starting guideline	Official source
Randomized trial	CONSORT	Open guidance (https://www.consort-statement.org/)
Observational study	STROBE	Open guidance (https://www.strobe-statement.org/)
Systematic review or meta-analysis	PRISMA	Open guidance (https://www.prismastatement.org/)
Study protocol	SPIRIT or PRISMA-P	Open guidance (https://www.equator-network.org/reporting-guidelines/)
Diagnostic or prediction study	STARD or TRIPOD	Open guidance (https://www.equator-network.org/reporting-guidelines/)
Qualitative study	COREQ or SRQR	Open guidance (https://www.equator-network.org/reporting-guidelines/)
Animal research	ARRIVE	Open guidance (https://arriveguidelines.org/)
Case report	CARE	Open guidance (https://www.care-statement.org/)
Quality improvement	SQUIRE	Open guidance (https://www.squirestatement.org/)
Economic evaluation	CHEERS	Open guidance (https://www.equator-network.org/reporting-guidelines/)

SCOPE

What this checklist does not replace

- 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

METHOD

How the checklist was built

Manusights mapped the final submission workflow against current primary guidance from Think. Check. Submit., EQUATOR, ICMJE, COPE, NISO CRediT, ORCID, and the W3C Web Accessibility Initiative. We then separated universal workflow questions from medical-journal and health-reporting guidance that requires an explicit scope label.

The checklist converts those standards into operational questions. It does not reproduce or replace any source checklist. When this resource and a journal or disciplinary standard differ, follow the controlling standard.

Primary sources

Sources were checked on August 5, 2026. Each source remains under its own copyright and terms.

THINK. CHECK. SUBMIT.

Think. Check. Submit. journal checklist (<https://thinkchecksubmit.org/check/>)

Journal identity, transparency, peer review, fees, policies, and preservation

EQUATOR NETWORK

Reporting Guidelines (<https://www.equator-network.org/reporting-guidelines/>)

Health-research reporting guideline search by study type and specialty

ICMJE

Recommendations for Scholarly Work in Medical Journals

(<https://www.icmje.org/recommendations/>)

Medical-journal authorship, disclosure, manuscript preparation, and AI use; updated January 2026

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

Core Practices (<https://publicationethics.org/core-practices>)

Authorship, conflicts, data, ethical oversight, and publication responsibility

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

Handling concurrent and duplicate submissions

(<https://doi.org/10.24318/y9lyqPiR>)

Journal and author responsibilities for concurrent and duplicate submission

NISO CREDIT

Contributor Roles Taxonomy (<https://credit.niso.org/>)

Standard contributor-role vocabulary

ORCID

ORCID researcher identifiers (<https://orcid.org/>)

Persistent researcher identifiers

W3C WEB ACCESSIBILITY INITIATIVE

Images Tutorial (<https://www.w3.org/WAI/tutorials/images/>)

Purpose-based text alternatives and accessible image treatment

FOR LIBRARIES AND RESEARCH-SUPPORT TEAMS

Ready for a LibGuide or workshop

You may link to the permanent HTML page, distribute the PDF, or adapt the checklist with attribution. No permission, reciprocal link, purchase, or institutional endorsement is required.

Suggested placement

Publishing Your Research / Manuscript Preparation

Permanent URL

<https://manusights.com/resources/pre-submission-checklist>

Corrections

hello@manusights.com

SUGGESTED LISTING COPY

Research Manuscript Submission Checklist

A free, evidence-linked 42-point checklist covering journal fit, reporting guidelines, authorship, research ethics, data and code, reference integrity, accessible figures, and final submission files.

Available as HTML and print PDF. No login required. CC BY 4.0.

CITE THIS RESOURCE

Citation formats

APA

Manusights. (2026). Research manuscript submission checklist (Version 1.0.0). <https://manusights.com/resources/pre-submission-checklist>

MLA

Manusights. "Research Manuscript Submission Checklist." Version 1.0.0, 5 Aug. 2026, <https://manusights.com/resources/pre-submission-checklist>.

Chicago

Manusights. "Research Manuscript Submission Checklist." Version 1.0.0. Last reviewed August 5, 2026. <https://manusights.com/resources/pre-submission-checklist>.

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Maintenance policy: Manusights reviews this resource at least twice per year and earlier when a named standard changes materially. Corrections are dated in the version note. The permanent URL will remain unchanged.