



# Lab Protocols

Developed in partnership with [protocols.io](https://protocols.io), Lab Protocols describe, reusable methodologies. They consist of two interlinked components:

1. A step-by-step protocol posted to protocols.io
2. A peer-reviewed *PLOS ONE* article contextualizing the protocol

## Editorial Process

### Manuscript Invitations

- Look for the **article type** in manuscript invitations. After you accept a Lab Protocol invitation, there will also be a note from staff in the “Information for Editor” section of the confirmation email and manuscript Details page.

### Initial Assessment

- Evaluate the submission against the [publication criteria modifications for Lab Protocols](#) and decide whether to:

- Reject without review
- Invite reviewers to peer review the protocol

- The parts of Lab Protocol submissions will be different than a Research Article
  - Lab Protocols will have **Expected Results** instead of Results and Discussion sections (read the full [submission guidelines](#) for authors)
  - The Materials and Methods section will be very short. The step-by-step protocol, equivalent to the Methods section, will be a supporting information file (and eventually hosted on protocols.io if published).

### Peer Review

- As Lab Protocols report methods that have already been shown to work in the literature, you will typically only need **one external reviewer** and at most **one round of revision** unless you feel further subject matter input and revision is necessary
- Refer to the specific reviewer [guidelines and forms](#) for Lab Protocols

### Editorial Decisions

- When writing your decision letter, be sure to use the [publication criteria](#) modifications for Lab Protocols



# Study Protocols

Study Protocols describe detailed plans and proposals for research projects that have not yet generated results. They consist of a single peer-reviewed article on *PLOS ONE* that can be referenced in future papers.

## Editorial Process

### Manuscript Invitations

- Look for the **article type** in manuscript invitations. After you accept a Study Protocol invitation, there will also be a note from staff in the “Information for Editor” section of the confirmation email and manuscript Details page.

### Initial Assessment

- Evaluate the submission against the [publication criteria modifications for Study Protocols](#) and decide whether to:

- Reject without review
- Accept without review\*  
*\*If you have the relevant expertise to evaluate the subject matter and methodology. This is different than for Research Articles.*
- Invite reviewers to peer review the protocol

- The parts of Study Protocol submissions will be different than a Research Article
  - Study Protocols will **not** have a Results section (read the full [submission guidelines](#) for authors)

### Peer Review

- You can issue an Accept decision for Study Protocols without external review
- Refer to the specific [reviewer guidelines and forms](#) for Study Protocols

### Editorial Decisions

- When writing your decision letter, use the [publication criteria](#) modifications for Study Protocols

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Consult the [Academic Editor Handbook](#) (Appendix D: Other Article Types) for more detail on handling these article types and connect with other Academic Editors and ask questions about Protocols on [Discourse](#).