

Invitations to Handle Manuscripts

Key Takeaways & Contents

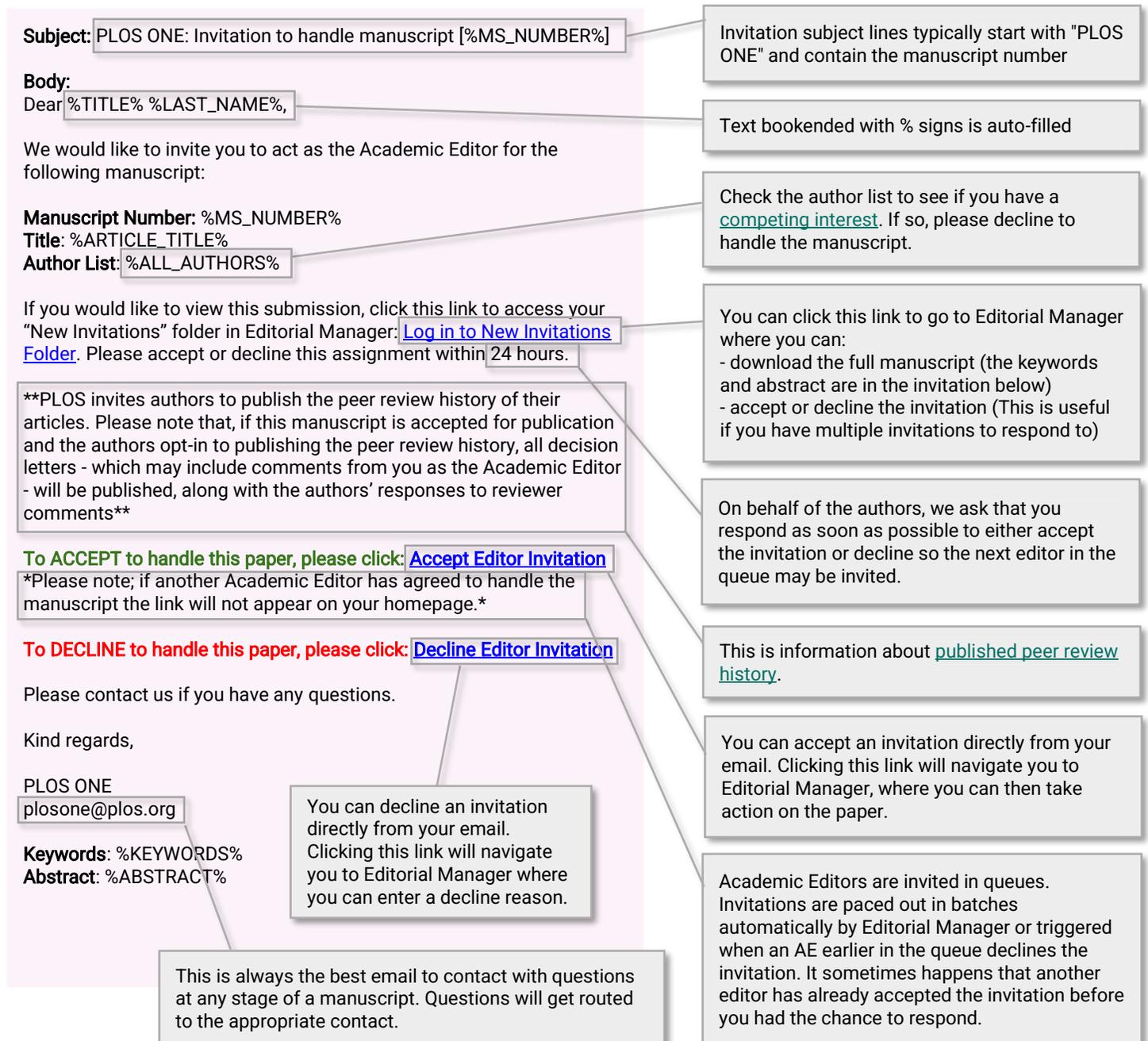
- Invitations to handle manuscripts come through email
Go to: [Manuscript Invitation Anatomy](#)
- Most invitations are sent by an algorithm
Go to: [PLOS Match Algorithm](#)
- You always have the choice to accept or decline invitations
Go to: [Responding to Manuscript Invitations](#)

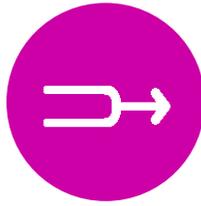


MANUSCRIPT INVITATION ANATOMY

Invitations to handle manuscripts are sent to you by email. Please ensure emails from plosone@plos.org or em@editorialmanager.com are not marked as spam.

Below is the template that most invitations follow. It can vary depending on the [type of manuscript](#) and any previous history. Please read these invitations carefully before responding.





PLOS MATCH ALGORITHM

For most *PLOS ONE* submissions, invitations are sent by a natural language processing algorithm, known as **PLOS Match** (Match). Match compares a manuscript's text with editors' publications and keywords to create a similarity score and build a queue of editors to invite.

Match uses the text of your authored papers, classifications, keywords, and over time, published papers you have handled for *PLOS ONE*.

If the algorithm does not match an editor within ten days, PLOS staff will manually send invitations informed by your classifications, keywords, and sections in Editorial Manager. It's important to keep these terms up to date.



Read more about [PLOS Match](#) and [manuscript invitations](#) and participate in the discussion on *PLOS ONE* Discourse, a forum for Editorial Board members.



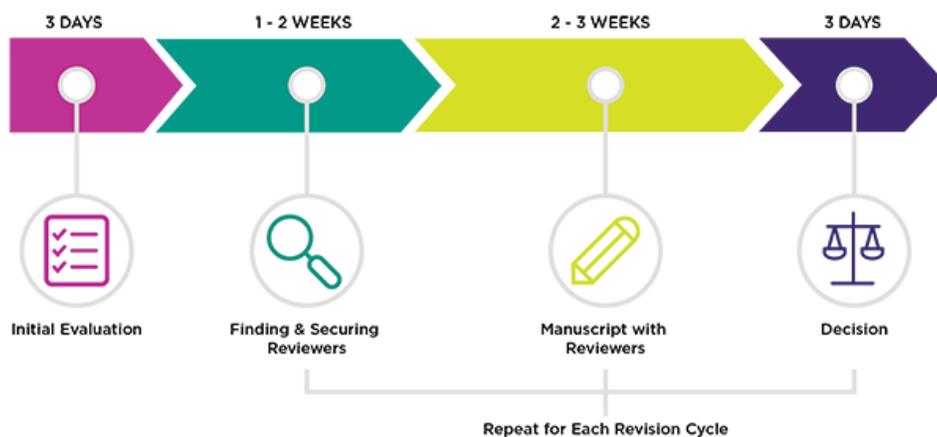
You may also occasionally receive personal invitations directly from PLOS staff to handle manuscripts requiring special attention. In these cases, the message will include clear and detailed information describing the circumstances and any specific handling requests.



RESPONDING TO MANUSCRIPT INVITATIONS

Generally, we ask that you accept 1-2 new manuscript invitations per month, however you always have the choice whether to accept or decline invitations.

Below is a typical peer review timeline and guidance to help you decide whether to accept or decline an invitation.



Consider **accepting** an invitation when...

- You have time to handle the submission all the way through to a final decision
- It's in your area of expertise*
- You have no [competing interests](#)
- It's not suitable for peer review**

Consider **declining** an invitation when...

- You are too busy, either with external commitments or with other *PLOS ONE* assignments
- It's outside your area of expertise*
- You have a real or perceived [competing interest](#)

* Due to the interdisciplinarity of *PLOS ONE* and algorithmic nature of most invitations, it's likely that you'll receive invitations that are outside your core area of expertise. If you feel confident enough that you can identify [suitable reviewers](#) and put their [comments in context](#) for the authors, we suggest accepting the invitation and prioritizing comprehensive expertise in the reviewer panel. On the other hand, if you do not feel able to identify reviewers with the necessary expertise or are concerned about your ability to interpret their comments, please decline the invitation.

** If you feel a manuscript is in your area of expertise and you have the time, but is not suitable to send out for peer review, we ask that you accept the invitation and issue a reject [decision](#) citing the appropriate [publication criteria](#). This helps the authors receive swift feedback and decide on the next steps for their manuscript.



Setting Expectations

- You are not expected to accept all invitations that are sent to you. Generally, we ask that you accept 1-2 new manuscript invitations per month and that you handle these through to a final decision.
- On behalf of the authors, we do ask that you respond to invitations (accept/decline to handle a manuscript) as soon as possible.
- Most invitations are sent through PLOS Match so may not always be perfectly in your area of expertise.
- Please let us know if you are having a poor experience with invitations: you may be receiving too many, too few, or those frequently far outside of your expertise. Contact us at edboardsupport@plos.org



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Need help? Contact plosone@plos.org