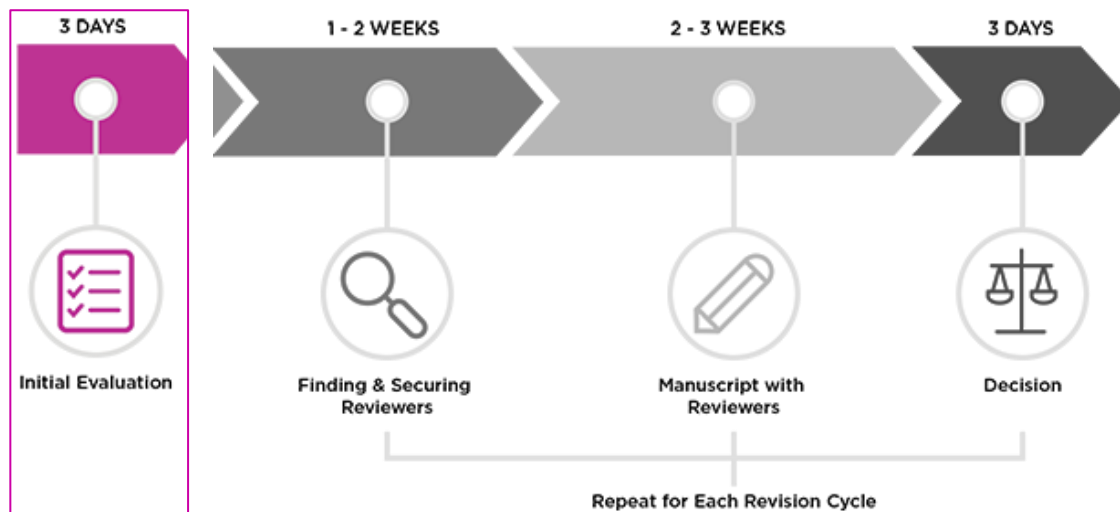


Initial Evaluation



✓ Key Takeaways & Contents

- Assess the manuscript using:
 - The publication criteria
Go to: [Publication Criteria](#)
 - Additional information provided by staff editors
Go to: [Information for the Academic Editor](#)
 - Your own subject area expertise
- Decide whether to send out for peer review or reject without review
Go to: [Peer Review or Reject?](#)



PUBLICATION CRITERIA

The publication criteria are the same for *PLOS ONE*, *PLOS Climate*, *PLOS Global Public Health*, and *PLOS Water*. When you are conducting your initial evaluation, run the manuscript through the following criteria:

1. **The study presents the results of original research.**
2. **Results reported have not been published elsewhere.**
3. **Experiments, statistics, and other analyses are performed to a high technical standard and are described in sufficient detail.**
4. **Conclusions are presented in an appropriate fashion and are supported by the data.**
5. **The article is presented in an intelligible fashion and is written in standard English.**
6. **The research meets all applicable standards for the ethics of experimentation and research integrity.**
7. **The article adheres to appropriate reporting guidelines and community standards for data availability.**

Details about the publication criteria, article types considered, guidelines, and policies are in the links below:

PLOS ONE	PLOS Climate	PLOS Global Public Health	PLOS Water
Publication Criteria	Publication Criteria	Publication Criteria	Publication Criteria
What We Publish	What We Publish	What We Publish	What We Publish
Submission Guidelines	Submission Guidelines	Submission Guidelines	Submission Guidelines
Editorial and Publishing Policies	Editorial and Publishing Policies	Editorial and Publishing Policies	Editorial and Publishing Policies



The inclusive mission of these PLOS journals allows for the consideration of all submissions reporting original research or research methods contributing to the base of academic knowledge, and we evaluate submitted manuscripts on the basis of methodological rigor and high ethical standards, **regardless of perceived novelty**.



PLOS does not copyedit manuscripts, nor do we expect you to. Publication criterion 5 can be a challenging nuance to navigate. If the methodology of the paper is rigorous, we encourage you to issue a revise decision rather than reject so the authors have an opportunity to copyedit. If you are at all unsure about applying this or any of the other criteria, [contact the journal office](#).



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Often staff editors will leave their personal contact email in the **Information for Editor** notes. They are the best people to contact with editorial questions about the manuscript, in addition to your journal's email.



PEER REVIEW OR REJECT?

If a manuscript clearly doesn't meet the publication criteria, it's ok to reject without inviting external reviewers. In your [decision letter](#) to the authors, please ensure you have provided enough information for the authors to understand the reason for the decision, clearly articulating your reasoning and citing the specific publication criteria that were not met.

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Generally, you should decide on your next action within four days of agreeing to handle the manuscript. Below are some recommendations on when to reject without review.

Reject without review when

- There are serious methodological or analytical flaws that cannot be addressed by peer review
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- Flawed, weak, or insufficiently detailed hypothesis, study rationale, methods, analyses, or results would prevent reviewers from properly evaluating the work
- Redundant work that doesn't clearly reference and discuss the existing literature (exceptions: purposeful replication studies or reanalyses that clearly discuss the existing literature. See publication criterion 2)
- Apparent revisions would take the authors more than a few months to complete. This could include additional experiments, extensive reframing or recontextualization of the work, or extensive reanalysis. An open reject (with invitation to resubmit) can be considered when extensive revisions are required that would exceed the usual 45-day major revision deadline.

In all other situations, please seek external peer review.



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