

# Pre-submission checklist: protocols

*Version 1.0 updated 16 April 2024*

## How to use this checklist

1. Use the [Cochrane Handbooks](https://training.cochrane.org/handbooks) and Cochrane’s [conduct standards for protocols](https://community.cochrane.org/mecir-manual/standards-conduct-new-cochrane-intervention-reviews-c1-c75/developing-protocol-review-c1-c23) for guidance on how to **plan** your protocol methods.
2. Use the [Cochrane review template](https://documentation.cochrane.org/display/RMHELP/Cochrane%2Breview%2Btemplate) for guidance on how to **describe** your protocol methods.
3. Read our [author guidelines](https://training.cochrane.org/online-learning/author-guidelines) for an overview of support and resources available to authors.
4. **Complete this checklist before you submit your draft to Cochrane Central Editorial Service. The checklist will help you meet core requirements for submission.**

If you wish, you can submit this checklist with your manuscript as a submission item in Editorial Manager.

# Research integrity

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| Done? | Section  | Requirement |
| Authorship – see Cochrane’s [criteria for authorship](https://www.cochranelibrary.com/cdsr/editorial-policies#authorship) |
|  | All | All authors have seen and approved the version to be submitted.  |
|  | All  | Authors take full responsibility for the accuracy of the protocol, and understand that any [supplementary materials](https://training.cochrane.org/online-learning/author-guidelines/supplementary-materials) will not be copy edited or proofread. |
|  | Contributions of authors | Describe each author’s contribution to protocol design and development. Show how each author meets Cochrane’s [criteria for authorship](https://www.cochranelibrary.com/cdsr/editorial-policies#authorship). |
|  | Acknowledgements | Give the names of people who contributed to the protocol but are not listed authors. Everyone named must give permission to be acknowledged. Further details in our [Author guidelines](https://training.cochrane.org/online-learning/author-guidelines#Pre-submission%20checklist).*Tip:* [*Use our template email to contact contributors*](https://training.cochrane.org/sites/training.cochrane.org/files/public/uploads/EM_author_images/Acknowledgement%20%28permissions%29%20template.docx)*.*If you used any AI tools when preparing your manuscript, give full details in accordance with [Cochrane policy on AI-generated content](https://www.cochranelibrary.com/cdsr/editorial-policies#ai). |
| Conflicts of interest – see [Cochrane’s Conflict of Interest Policy](https://training.cochrane.org/online-learning/editorial-policies/coi-policy) |
|  | Declarations of Interest | Confirm all listed authors comply with [Cochrane’s Conflict of Interest Policy](https://training.cochrane.org/online-learning/editorial-policies/coi-policy). Include a summary of authors’ interests, even if authors have no interests to disclose. *Tip: All authors will complete a declaration of interest after submission. The Corresponding author should then* [*view author disclosures*](https://training.cochrane.org/online-learning/em-training/editorial-manager-information-authors#Section%205) *and revise this section after submission to reflect any interests disclosed.*  |
|  | Order of authors on byline | Some interests may prevent authors being listed as first or last author. See [section 5.6 of Cochrane’s Conflict of Interest Policy](https://training.cochrane.org/online-learning/coi-policy/coi-policy-cochrane-library#funding_and_interests). |
|  | Data collection and analysis  | Confirm if any listed authors are involved in studies potentially eligible for inclusion. If so, you must specify in your methods (Selection of studies; Data extraction and management; Risk of bias assessment in included studies; Certainty of the evidence assessment), how you will comply with [section 5.6 of Cochrane’s Conflict of Interest Policy](https://training.cochrane.org/online-learning/coi-policy/coi-policy-cochrane-library#funding_and_interests).  |
| Funding |
|  | Sources of support | List all sources of funding and other support, including internal sources (for example, the home institution of any author) and external sources (for example, grant funding). |
| Copyright and plagiarism |
|  | All | Cite all sources of information, particularly for facts and figures in the Background section. |
|  | All | Check your submission complies with [Cochrane’s plagiarism policy](https://www.cochranelibrary.com/cdsr/editorial-policies#plagiarism). We use iThenticate CrossCheck software to detect text copied from other material. |
|  | Figures | Obtain permission to reproduce any images from copyrighted works. Include this evidence with your submission.  |

# Consistency and completeness

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Done? | Section  | Requirement |
|  | All | All key section headings are completed. Your submission will be returned if it is incomplete.  |
|  | All | Read the protocol from beginning to end, to check it makes sense. |
|  | All | Describe all key terms using the same language and in the same order, throughout the protocol. |
|  | All | Check each section complies with the reporting guidance in the [Cochrane review template](https://documentation.cochrane.org/display/RMHELP/Cochrane%2Breview%2Btemplate) or other relevant reporting guidelines. If you are not writing an intervention review, check the [PRISMA website](http://prisma-statement.org/Extensions/) for any extension that might be relevant for your review.  |
|  | All  | Resolve all [Validation errors and warnings](https://documentation.cochrane.org/display/RMHELP/Validation%2Breport) on the RevMan dashboard. If you are unsure about whether you can ignore a warning, please contact support@cochrane.org.  |

# Style and formatting

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Done? | Section  | Requirement |
|  | All | Use the [future tense and active voice](https://training.cochrane.org/online-learning/author-guidelines/essential-style-guidelines#Tense%20and%20voice) for your protocol methods. |
|  | All | Explain all [acronyms and abbreviations](https://training.cochrane.org/online-learning/author-guidelines/essential-style-guidelines#Abbreviations%20and%20symbols). |
|  | All | Use [Cochrane referencing style](https://training.cochrane.org/online-learning/author-guidelines/essential-style-guidelines#References).  |
|  | All | Choose either US or UK English and complete a [spellcheck in RevMan](https://documentation.cochrane.org/x/Bwf9C). |

# Supplementary materials

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Done? | Section  | Requirement |
|  | All supplementary materials  | Follow the guidance on supplementary materials in our [Author guidelines](https://training.cochrane.org/online-learning/author-guidelines#Supplementary%20materials). |
|  | All supplementary materials | Check for accuracy. Supplementary materials are not proofread by Cochrane. |
|  | Search strategies | Add all search strategies for each database (and other sources, if applicable) to the Search strategies section in RevMan. Include search strings, database names, access platforms, search fields and other limitations/settings. |
|  | Other supplementary materials | Provide a clear and informative title for each additional supplement (if relevant). |

# We welcome your feedback!

Please [complete a short survey](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=HuLCtrdNM0WRY5jBRRwcqm54JVSN8vlOiSG73XxfqfZUM1NBTjJQSElLVzQ3UzFYTjdHMkI2Sk9TNi4u) (4 quick questions) to let us know what you think of this checklist.