

Transparency and Openness Promotion Guidelines: FAQs for *Cortex*

1. Why is *Cortex* implementing the TOP guidelines?

The aim of the [TOP guidelines](#) is to raise standards for research transparency and reproducibility by inviting journals to self-certify their compliance with open science practices, such as data sharing, study pre-registration and replication. *Cortex* joins 5000 journals and scientific organisations in adopting this initiative.

2. How did *Cortex* decide which levels of the TOP standards to adopt?

The TOP guidelines include eight modular standards. Following external consultation and consideration by the *Cortex* editorial board, we adopted levels that we believe will substantially improve transparency while also being readily achievable by the research community in psychology, cognitive neuroscience, and neuropsychology. Our [levels of adoption](#) will be regularly reviewed and we welcome [feedback](#) from authors and readers.

3. What additional bureaucracy does this involve for authors?

We aim to make this process as minimally bureaucratic as possible. For Research Reports (including standard reports, Clinical Neuroanatomy, and Behavioural Neurology), Letters, Notes, Exploratory Reports, we ask authors to complete a short checklist upon submitting a *revised* manuscript. For Registered Reports, a shorter checklist is completed upon *initial* submission confirming adherence to the [Registered Report guidelines](#). The checklist for Research Reports, Letters, Notes, and Exploratory Reports can be viewed [here](#).

Despite attempts to minimise form filling as much as possible, we recognise that adherence to the TOP guidelines creates additional workload for authors. To offset this burden, we have therefore eliminated a number of other administrative requirements for all submissions. We now offer the [Your Paper Your Way](#) scheme in which authors are welcome to submit a single integrated PDF for first submissions, including figures and tables placed in-text rather than at the end of the manuscript, and with references formatted in any consistent style. We have also made Highlights optional rather than mandatory.

4. What do I need to know before submitting?

We first recommend reading our [TOP policy](#) and becoming familiar with the [submission checklist](#). Further, to guarantee full compliance please ensure that the reporting methods in your submission are consistent with the following statement: “We report how we determined our sample size, all data exclusions (if any), all inclusion/exclusion criteria, whether inclusion/exclusion criteria were established prior to data analysis, all manipulations, and all measures in the study”. Authors are required to certify adherence to this statement, at a minimum including this exact text in the manuscript (where it is correct), and elaborating it as necessary. Authors are advised to become familiar with the range repositories that support open or embargoed archiving, including (but are not limited to) [Zenodo](#), [Figshare](#), [Harvard Dataverse](#), [Dryad](#) and the [Open Science Framework](#). For a comprehensive list of available data repositories, see <http://www.re3data.org/>

5. I am not willing or able to archive data / materials / analysis code. Can I still submit to *Cortex*?

Yes. In this case, all that is required is that authors provide a legal or ethical reason in the manuscript for why data / materials / analysis code are not archived. Example reasons might include:

- i. “The conditions of our ethics approval do not permit public archiving of anonymised study data. Readers seeking access to the data should contact the lead author X or the local ethics committee at the Department of Y, University of Z. Access will be granted to named individuals in accordance with ethical procedures governing the reuse of clinical data, including completion of a formal data sharing agreement and approval of the local ethics committee.”
- ii. “Legal copyright restrictions do not permit us to publicly archive the full set of stimuli used in this experiment. Readers seek access to the stimuli are advised to contact the lead author X. Stimuli will be provided on request without restriction.”

Note that while legal or ethical barriers are the only permissible *long-term* reasons for not archiving, authors can request a 12-month embargo on archiving of data / materials / code for any special reason. Such requests will be considered by the editors on a case-by-case basis. Authors in such circumstances are advised to contact the journal in advance of submission: cortex@ed.ac.uk

6. My study was not pre-registered. Can I still submit to *Cortex*?

Yes. Whether or not the study procedures and/or analysis plans were pre-registered is simply stated in the manuscript. Pre-registration is not mandatory and no reason need be provided for lack of pre-registration.