



The **how and why of the manuscript-handling process** remains a mystery to many of our authors. Here, we explain each step of the process and our reasons for making the requests we do of our authors, in the hope that closer adherence to our guidelines will maximize the efficiency of the editorial process, serving our authors and readers alike.

The most commonly asked question is “**why should I submit the manuscript in the journal’s template?**”. The answer is a simple one: to facilitate the peer-review process. In our experience, a manuscript fares better in peer review when it is well organised and formatted in an easily read manner. Using the template ensures that our reviewers get a standard manuscript layout with the graphics appearing in the appropriate place. A common complaint from reviewers that often leads to confusion or misunderstanding is the inclusion of a scheme at the end of a manuscript that is mentioned on the first page! The template also gives both the authors and referees an idea of a manuscript’s true length. For these reasons, we encourage our authors to submit their manuscripts using our template with formatting that closely resembles the final layout of the journal.

Of course, if a manuscript is accepted we ask for the production data in a completely different format, often to the dismay of our authors. **There is a method to our madness!** When a manuscript is accepted, revised by the authors and the final version received, the text undergoes what we term “coding”. This process involves a number of technical steps to standardise the presentation of units, symbols, non-breaking spaces, table formats and other style requirements of the journal in both the print and online formats. This process is naturally applied to the text only, and as a consequence we ask for the manuscript as a single Word file (.doc or .rtf) without any embedded figures, schemes or other images, and without the template used for the peer-review process.

Another commonly asked question is “**why are figures embedded in Word unusable?**” Again, the answer is simple: quality! When a figure is embedded in Word, a certain amount of resolution is irreparably lost from the image. While this is acceptable for viewing on screen or even printing from your office printer, high-quality production requires high-resolution images. For this reason we ask authors to supply the graphics, including the image for the Table of Contents, as separate files in their original format, in the highest available

resolution. With chemical structures and schemes, we ask that authors use our ChemDraw template. Our copy editors will adjust all images that do not meet our requirements; if a chemical scheme already meets our standards then this too will greatly shorten the time taken to copy edit the manuscript and thus the overall publication time. **Confused? Don’t worry, full instructions are provided in the form of a checklist upon acceptance.**

Once a manuscript has been coded, it is time for our copy editors to work their magic. **We use highly competent, well-trained scientists to ensure all manuscripts are expertly adjusted** in line with our house style, and edited for brevity, scientific accuracy and consistency, and correct English. The advantage to our authors, who come from all over the world, is that the text is polished into clear, concise, comprehensive language. Of course, this serves our readers just as much if not more.

While there is a certain amount of inconvenience to our authors in delivering their manuscript in two different formats, the time saved in the editorial process can be significant. It is for this reason we strongly recommend that authors adhere to our guidelines.

Next, once scientific copy editing is finished, an xml file is created from the Word document and sent to the typesetter along with the figure files. The advantage of the xml file format is that it enables enriched content features for the online paper, such as linked references and Supporting Information. **The typesetter then combines the text and figures in line with the journal style.** Figures/schemes/tables are all inserted as close as possible to where they are first mentioned in the text. This is in keeping with our house style, and is closely adhered to in most cases.

When the galley proofs appear in our authors’ e-mail inbox, they are looking at almost the final version, bar any final corrections and minor changes to the layout. **We hope our authors agree that their manuscript has been improved by our copy editors and presented in a professional manner.** We ask our authors to return the corrected proofs as soon as possible, preferably in an electronic format (typed list of corrections or annotated pdf), with changes clearly indicated. We then apply the changes, and return the manuscript to the typesetter for the final stages. The fewer the changes required, the quicker the process: when only minor changes are required, **the manuscript is published online within a matter of days.**

We hope that the manuscript-handling process has become clearer, and **we look forward to receiving your next high-impact submission!**