



## **PNAS Page Length Estimate Guidelines**

[Click here](#) to access the Article Sizing Tool. Details about length requirements for PNAS can be found in the [Information for Authors](#).

If you have problems with the Article Sizing Tool or if you have questions about your Length Estimate PDF, please contact [PNASProcessing@nas.edu](mailto:PNASProcessing@nas.edu).

### **Formatting your manuscript file for the Article Sizing Tool**

The manuscript file must be in .doc or .docx format in order to use this tool. A manuscript file template is available [here](#). Authors interested in submitting LaTeX files should see [Submitting LaTeX Files](#). If you are submitting your text in Microsoft Word, please format your text as follows:

1. The file should start with a title page that includes the manuscript title, classification(s), complete corresponding author contact information, and a list of all co-authors and their respective affiliations.
2. Place your abstract and significance statement after the title page.
3. Type “/body” after the abstract and significance statement. The tool will use this body tag to identify the beginning of the manuscript text.
4. Use the header “Materials and Methods” for your methods section. This will instruct the tool to format the methods section correctly. The methods section should appear before the acknowledgements.
5. Acknowledgments, data sharing statements, and conflict of interest disclosures should be placed after the methods section and before the references.
6. Use the header “References” to instruct the tool to format the references correctly.
7. List the figure legends after the references, with the header “Figure Legends.” Table captions and footnotes should not be included in this list.

## **Preparing figures and tables for the Article Sizing Tool**

For tips on preparing figures that will be suitable for publication, please see our [Digital Art Guidelines](#).

Figures and tables will be sized and placed in the Length Estimate PDF according to your column width selection. All images should be submitted at the desired print size so that no scaling or cropping is necessary. To ensure that your images are as close to publication-ready as possible and that the system is sizing correctly, remove all unnecessary white space and submit each figure and table separately.

Figures should be provided in separate .eps, .tif, .pptx, or .pdf files. There should be one figure per file, and each file should contain only the figure. Please do not include figure numbers, captions, or author names as part of the image, as this may cause the figures to be expanded or distorted in the Length Estimate PDF.

Tables must be provided in separate .doc or .docx files, one table per file. Tables cannot be uploaded in multiple parts. They must be built using the Table function in Microsoft Word rather than being pasted into the file from another program. Table titles should be included in the table files above the tables. Table footnotes should appear under the table.

## **How to generate a Length Estimate PDF using the Article Sizing Tool**

1. Click “Continue” at the bottom of the “Welcome to the Article Sizing Tool” page.
2. Enter your first name, last name, and email address, and then click “Continue.”
3. On the “Manuscript” tab, click “Add Manuscript,” select your manuscript file, which should be in .doc or .docx format, and click “Open” to upload it.
4. If your manuscript has figures, click on the “Figures” tab. Click “Add Figure,” select the first figure source file, and click “Open” to upload it. Repeat this process until all figures are uploaded.
5. If your manuscript has tables, click on the “Tables” tab. Click “Add Tables,” select the first table file in .doc or .docx format, and click “Open” to upload it. Repeat this process until all tables are uploaded.

Alternatively, you may use the link at the top of the page, “Click here to drag and drop” to upload all of the files at once. When you click “Process” after dragging the files into the box, the tool will place the first .doc or .docx file in the manuscript tab, any other .doc or .docx files in the tables tab, and any figure source files in the figures tab.

You can reorder figures or tables by selecting the correct order number from the drop down menu next to the file. You can also select the checkbox next to any file to delete or replace it, or to move it to a different tab.

6. When you are ready, click “Continue” to instruct the tool to process your files. This can take several minutes. If the tool identifies problems with any of your files, you will be returned to the upload tab to address the issues in the error message.

7. When all files are processed correctly, complete the “Manuscript Information” fields by selecting the appropriate manuscript type and pasting information from the manuscript file into the rest of the fields.

8. When all fields are complete, click “Continue” to access the figure sizing section. For the first figure, choose a column width that makes the text legible. Check that the correct figure legend was imported by the tool and paste the correct legend into the box if necessary.

9. Click on the next figure in the figure row above the sizing screen and repeat step 8. Do this for each figure in the manuscript.

10. If your manuscript has tables, click “Continue” to access the table sizing section and size the tables similarly.

11. When all figures and tables have been sized, click “Build PDF.” You will receive a confirmation email with a Locator ID. Please include the Locator ID in any email you send to [PNASProcessing@nas.edu](mailto:PNASProcessing@nas.edu) for assistance. When the tool has built your estimate, you will receive another email with the PDF attached.

## **Article sizing FAQ**

### **How long does it take to generate a length estimate?**

During peak hours (9:00 AM to 5:00 PM Eastern time), it may take up to 15 minutes for the system to convert your files into PDF format and generate a length estimate. If your manuscript has not been converted after 30 minutes, please contact [PNASProcessing@nas.edu](mailto:PNASProcessing@nas.edu).

### **What information does the system use to generate a length estimate?**

The length estimate calculations and corresponding PDF are generated using a combination of the following:

- The information you enter on the “Manuscript Information” page.
- The text that follows the /body tag in the uploaded manuscript file.
- The figure and table files and the column widths you selected in the tool.

### **What is the maximum page length for PNAS research articles?**

PNAS encourages authors of Direct Submission and NAS member Contributed research articles to remain within 6 pages, but allows up to 12 pages.

### **What should I do if the Length Estimate PDF is over the PNAS page limit?**

Please note that the sizing tool provides an estimate and may not represent the actual length of the manuscript. Here are a few tips to reduce manuscript length:

- Eliminate redundancies and ensure the writing is concise. Make sure your figures and tables are uploaded separately and not embedded within your manuscript text.
- Move nonessential figures/tables to the SI Appendix.
- Move nonessential details and/or portions of your “Materials and Methods” section to the SI Appendix. Note that the main text must contain a “Materials and Methods” section with enough detail for readers to follow the experiments in the paper.
- Eliminate unnecessary references.

- Ensure your references are in PNAS style. For revisions or final submissions, if there are more than five authors, list only the first author's name followed by "et al." For more information on the PNAS reference style, please see <https://www.pnas.org/page/authors/format>.

### **Why didn't the system create a Length Estimate PDF for my manuscript?**

Common reasons why the system fails to create a Length Estimate PDF are listed below. If you have checked these items and are still unable to create a length estimate, please contact the Editorial Office at [PNASProcessing@nas.edu](mailto:PNASProcessing@nas.edu) or 202-334-2769:

- Your manuscript file is not a Microsoft Word file.
- You did not include the /body tag in your Microsoft Word file.
- You have figures or tables embedded in your manuscript file.
- One or more of your tables are images taken from another file and copied into Word.
- Equations in your manuscript file are embedded images.
- Your references are not in plain text.

### **Will font type, size, or paragraph spacing have an impact on the length estimate calculation for my manuscript?**

Paragraph spacing, font type, and font size will have no bearing on your length estimate. The system is only looking at the actual text along with the figure and table sizes when calculating the length estimate.

### **Why aren't my references appearing in the length estimate PDF?**

You must use the heading "References" before your reference list. References should be created in plain text; please avoid using Microsoft Word's 'Insert Endnote' function or automatic numbering tool.

### **Why are my figure legends shown after the references in the length estimate PDF?**

Figure legends must be placed after your references with the heading "Figure Legends." The tool will then recognize this section and format it accordingly, with the figure legends appearing in the Length Estimate PDF with the figures.

### **How do I rebuild my Length Estimate PDF after I make changes to my manuscript?**

If you would like to create an updated PDF, return to the [Article Sizing Tool](#), click "Continue" and then click "Access Existing Estimate." Paste the Locator ID for your Length Estimate PDF into the box and click "Change Existing Length Estimate." Follow the instructions above to update your files and build a new estimate.

### **Why are there black boxes in my manuscript text?**

The system will insert a black box for special characters that are not Unicode-font compliant or identifiable by the system. Please note that this tool is solely for the purpose of estimating the length of your manuscript and does not represent how the text will be published if your manuscript is accepted.

### **Can I embed equations in my manuscript file?**

Yes, equations should be embedded in your manuscript file. Please use the Insert Equation tool in Word. Do not paste equation images from another program into your manuscript file.

### **What do "1 column," "1.5 columns," and "2 columns" mean when selecting a width for my figures and tables?**

Most PNAS manuscripts are published in two-column format. When you select "1 column" as a

width, your figure or table will span the width of one column in this format (less than or equal to 8.7 cm). When you select "1.5 columns," your figure or table will span the width of one-and-a-half columns. When you select "2 columns," your figure or table will span the width of the entire page (up to 17.8 cm).

**Why do my figures look blurry in the Length Estimate PDF?**

If your figures were created at an appropriate resolution (at least 300 dpi), then their quality will be retained in the Length Estimate PDF. If the quality of your images has substantially decreased, we recommend reducing the size of the figure source files, as the tool may have reduced their quality to make a smaller, more manageable PDF. Each file should be smaller than 10 MB and no more than 30 MB at absolute maximum.

**Why do my tables take up so much space in the Length Estimate PDF?**

The [Article Sizing Tool](#) provides a rough approximation of the published table format. If your manuscript is accepted, your tables will be composed to meet PNAS style. If you believe that your manuscript is overlong in the Length Estimate PDF because of the rendering of your tables, please proceed with submission.