

PRODUCTION & PUBLISHING GUIDE

Manuscript Formatting Checklist

Preparing the final Word document so it converts perfectly into the online reading version — no missing figures, no vanished formulas, no broken tables.

Who this is for

Anyone preparing the final, ready-to-publish Word file — before it is uploaded through the website's docx-to-HTML conversion tool.

READ BEFORE FINAL FORMATTING

Why this matters: once the final Word document is uploaded, our website automatically turns it into a clean, readable web page that sits alongside the PDF. Following the simple rules below means every figure, formula, table and reference appears correctly the first time — with nothing missing or broken.

1 Section Titles (Headings)

- Use Word's built-in heading styles for every section title — **Home tab** → **Styles box** → "**Heading 1**" for main sections (Introduction, Methods, Results, Conclusion, etc.) and "**Heading 2**" for sub-sections.
- Do not just make the text bold and bigger by hand — the website needs the real Word heading style to recognise it as a section title and build the article's navigation menu.
- The very first section of the body **must be titled exactly "Introduction"** (or "Background"). This is how the website knows where the title page/abstract ends and the main article begins.

2 Mathematical Formulas / Equations

- Always insert formulas using Word's own equation tool: **Insert tab** → **Equation** (or press **Alt + =**).
- Do not use the old "Microsoft Equation 3.0" tool or the MathType add-in — formulas made with these do not convert properly and may appear blurry or disappear entirely.
- Do not insert a formula as a screenshot or photo — it may look fine in Word but will not display as a sharp, readable formula online.

Tip: Multi-line formulas, fractions and matrices convert perfectly well — just make sure they were built with Word's own Equation tool.

3 Pictures, Diagrams, Charts & Drawings

This is the step people most often get wrong, so please read carefully.

- **If a figure is made of several separate pieces** (boxes, arrows, lines, a SmartArt diagram, or a chart copied from Excel), combine them into **one single picture** before placing it in the document:
 - Select all the pieces of the drawing together.
 - Right-click → **Group** so they become one object.
 - Right-click the grouped object → **Save as Picture** (JPG or PNG).
 - Delete the original drawing/chart and insert the saved picture instead.
- **Set every picture to "In Line with Text"**: click the picture → **Picture Format** → **Wrap Text** → **In Line with Text**.

Why this matters: the website's converter can only read real, flattened pictures. Separate drawn shapes, SmartArt and embedded charts are invisible to it and will simply vanish with no warning if not flattened first. Floating images can also shift out of place or disappear.

4 Captions for Figures and Tables

- Every figure or table needs its caption as **plain ordinary text** directly above or below it, starting with the words "**Figure 1.**", "**Figure 2.**", "**Table 1.**", and so on.
- Word's own **References tab** → **Insert Caption** button is fine to use.
- Do not put a caption inside a separate text box floating near the picture — text boxes are invisible to the converter, so the caption is lost even though the picture stays.

5 Tables

- If a table is genuine **data in rows and columns**, build it with Word's own **Insert** → **Table** tool.
- If what you're calling a "table" is really a **diagram or scoring matrix** that doesn't fit neatly into simple rows and columns, flatten it into a picture (see Section 3) and caption it as a table, e.g. "Table 3."
- Avoid tables inside tables and very complicated merged-cell layouts — simple, clean grids convert best.

6 Reference List

- Place references at the very end, one per paragraph (or numbered list item), in the correct final order.
- The section title must be exactly **"References"** (or "Bibliography"), styled as Heading 1.
- Include the DOI as plain text wherever available.

Example: *doi:10.1016/j.destud.2010.07.001 or <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.destud.2010.07.001> — the website turns this into a working link automatically.*

7 Closing Sections

Funding, Acknowledgements, Ethics, and similar short sections should use a bold label followed by a colon, as a normal paragraph (not a heading):

Funding: *This research received no external funding.*

Conflicts of Interest: *The authors declare no conflict of interest.*

Use this same style for any that apply: Funding, Data Availability Statement, Author Contributions, Acknowledgements, Conflicts/Competing Interests, Institutional Review Board Statement, Informed Consent Statement, Ethics Statement, Abbreviations, Disclaimer/Publisher's Note, Supplementary Materials.

8 Before You Send the Final File

- **Accept or reject every tracked change**, and **delete every comment**: **Review tab** → **Accept All** and **Delete All Comments in Document**.
- **Remove any text boxes** used for body content, pull-quotes, or captions — move that text into ordinary paragraphs.
- **Avoid multi-column layouts** for body text — keep it to a single column.

Quick Checklist — Before You Hand Over the File

Run through this list one last time before sending the final Word document for online conversion.

- ☐ Every section title uses a real Word Heading style (not just bold text)
- ☐ The main body starts with a section literally titled "Introduction" (or "Background")
- ☐ All formulas were made with Word's own Equation tool (not MathType, not a screenshot)
- ☐ Every diagram, chart, or drawing has been flattened into one single picture
- ☐ Every picture is set to "In Line with Text"
- ☐ Every figure/table has a plain-text caption directly above or below it (not in a text box)
- ☐ Real data tables use Word's Table tool; image-style tables are flattened pictures
- ☐ The reference list is titled exactly "References" and DOIs are included where available
- ☐ Funding / Acknowledgements / Ethics / etc. sections use the bold-label format
- ☐ All tracked changes are accepted and all comments are deleted
- ☐ No text boxes or multi-column layouts remain in the body

That's it. Following this checklist means the online version of the article will look right the first time — no missing figures, no vanished formulas, and no broken tables. Questions about a specific manuscript? Contact the editorial office at editorial@dapresses.com.