



Handling Reassignments Guide

Applies to all PLOS journals except for *PLOS Biology* and *PLOS Medicine*.

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What is a reassignment?

A **reassignment** occurs when an Academic Editor is unable to see a manuscript through to a final decision and the manuscript then needs to be reassigned to another editor.

Why and when do reassignments occur?

Reassignments occur for a wide variety of reasons including, but not limited to, an Academic Editor (AE) became unavailable, an AE accidentally accepted the invitation when they didn't intend to, a staff editor issued a decision, or a conflict of interest was discovered.

Reassignments can occur at any stage in the editorial process. The key to easily handling a reassigned paper is to know where to look in the history to see what previous activity has occurred to determine your next action.

Handling Reassignments

Step 1 – Get oriented

Once you have agreed to handle a reassigned submission the first step is to determine where the manuscript is in the editorial process.

In addition to reading the full submission as you normally would, these are key status questions to ask and where to find the answers:

What round of revision is the manuscript in?

- If the manuscript is followed by R1, R2, R3, etc. then it has been revised. If there is no R at the end of the manuscript number, it is still the original submission.

What is the review status?

- You can check the review status in several places:

- On the overview page of the manuscript by looking in the **Reviewers** and **Review Status** columns

Review Status
1 Complete
1 Agreed
(more...)

- On the **View Reviews and Comments** page. There you can see any completed reviews for all rounds of revision, previous decision letters, and the author's response to reviewers, if applicable.

	Revision 1	Original Submission
██████████ (Reviewer 1)	Accept	Major Revision
██████████ (Reviewer 2)	(None)	Major Revision
██████████	Agreed to Review	(None)
██████████ (Academic Editor)		Major Revision
PLOS Manuscript Reassignment (Staff Editor)		[Skipped]
Author Decision Letter		Major Revision
██████████ (Author)		Response to Reviewers

Note: you may also see a Staff Editor name, "PLOS Manuscript Reassignment". This is our shared PLOS account used to send Academic Editor invitations (most reassignment invitations – as with new manuscript invitations – are sent by term-based matching)

- On the **Invite Reviewers** page. Here you will see any completed, pending, declined/uninvited reviewers, and alternate reviewers, if applicable.

Invited Reviewers and Linked Alternate Reviewers		
██████████ (Reviewer)	Review Complete Sep 09 2022 04:30PM	
██████████ (Reviewer)	Agreed to Review Oct 03 2022 12:28PM	Un-assign
██████████ (Reviewer)	Un-invited Before Agreeing to Review Sep 16 2022 01:22AM	Reinvite
Alternate Reviewers		
██████████ (Reviewer)		
██████████ (Reviewer)		



What else has happened with this manuscript?

A full list of statuses, actions, and communications for any manuscript can be found on the **History** page.

Step 2 – Decide on your next action

The next action you take depends largely on the current status and past history of the manuscript. Here are our recommendations for common situations:

R0 Manuscript – No reviews

Conduct an initial evaluation and decide if the manuscript should be rejected or sent out for peer review. Regardless of whether the previous Academic Editor invited reviewers, you should conduct your own assessment following the guidance in the Initial Evaluation Quick Guide. Difficulty securing reviewers by the previous AE is **not** in and of itself a reason to reject a paper.

R0 Manuscript – 1 or more reviews

Read the reviews and determine if you need to invite additional reviewers. We also recommend checking the expertise, qualifications, and potential conflicting interests of the secured reviewers. While two is preferred, our policy is that all accepted manuscripts must have at least one external reviewer besides yourself as Academic Editor.

Visit the [Resources for Editors](#) page for a Suitable Reviewers Checklist in the Finding & Securing Reviewers Quick Guide as well as editorial guidance in the Assessing Reviews & Making Decisions Quick Guide.

R1+ Manuscript

Read the revised submission, previous decision letter(s), reviews from all rounds of revision, and the response(s) to reviewers to determine if the authors have addressed all outstanding concerns.

You may decide to:

- Issue a revise or final decision without further review
- Re-invite previous reviewers to comment on the current version



- *Note: If a manuscript enters reassignment when the authors submit a revision, PLOS will automatically re-invite the previous reviewers*
- Invite new reviewers to a revision, though if at all possible, try to avoid this. It can lead to frustration and delays for both you and the authors.

Step 3 – Contact us if you have questions

You can always reach the [journal office](#) if you need help handling a reassignment.

Links to more resources for Editors:

[PLOS Aging and Health](#) | [PLOS Climate](#) | [PLOS Complex Systems](#) | [PLOS Computational Biology](#) | [PLOS Digital Health](#) | [PLOS Ecosystems](#) | [PLOS Genetics](#) | [PLOS Global Public Health](#) | [PLOS Mental Health](#) | [PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases](#) | [PLOS One](#) | [PLOS Pathogens](#) | [PLOS Sustainability and Transformation](#) | [PLOS Water](#)

Need help? Contact customercare@plos.org