AIMS AND SCOPE OF JOURNAL

Nature Neuroscience is a multidisciplinary journal that publishes papers of the highest quality and significance in all areas of neuroscience. The editors welcome contributions in molecular, cellular, systems and cognitive neuroscience, as well as psychophysics, computational modeling and diseases of the nervous system. No area is excluded from consideration, although priority is given to studies that provide fundamental insights into the functioning of the nervous system.

Nature Neuroscience provides readers and authors high visibility, emphasis on interdisciplinary communication, accessibility to a broad readership, high standards of copy editing and production, rigorous peer review, rapid publication, and independence from academic societies and other vested interests.

In addition to primary research, Nature Neuroscience publishes news and views, reviews, editorials, commentaries, perspectives, book reviews and correspondence. In this way, the journal aims to be the voice of the worldwide neuroscience community.

EDITORIAL PROCESS

The overview of the journal’s manuscript decision process includes submission, editorial decision on whether the paper should be reviewed, peer review, decisions after review, revision, acceptance in principle, final submission and acceptance, proofs, advance online publication, and print publication. Before submitting a paper, authors should consult our editorial policies as well as technical tips for using our online submission system.

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Full contact information for the journal can be found here.

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Please see authors & referees for detailed information about author and referee services and publication policies at the Nature family of journals. These journals, including Nature Neuroscience, share a number of common policies including the following:

Making methods clearer
Author responsibilities
License agreement and author copyright
Compliance with open access mandates
Embargo policy and press releases
Use of experimental animals and human subjects
Competing financial interests
Availability of materials and data
Reporting requirements for life sciences articles
Digital image integrity and standards
Security concerns
Refutations, complaints and corrections
Duplicate publication
Confidentiality and pre-publicity
Plagiarism and fabrication

IMPACT FACTOR

The 2014 impact factor for Nature Neuroscience is 16.095, according to the Journal Citation Reports® (Thomson Reuters, 2015).

The 2014 impact factor represents the number of citations in 2014 to papers published in 2012 and 2013, divided by the total number of papers published in 2012 and 2013. A more detailed explanation of impact factors appears on the Thomson Reuters web site. The use, and
misuse, of impact factors was discussed in *Nature Neuroscience* editorials in 1998 and 2003.

**EDITORIAL BLOGS**

We encourage community participation in all Nature journal blogs. Nature Publishing Group blogs can be found on the blog index page.

**ABBREVIATION**

The correct abbreviation for abstracting and indexing purposes is *Nat. Neurosci.*

**ISSN AND EISSN**

The international standard serial number (ISSN) for *Nature Neuroscience* is 1097-6256, and the electronic international standard serial number (EISSN) is 1546-1726.

**FURTHER EDITORIAL INFORMATION**

Please see the following editorials for more information on various aspects of journal policy.

- Why did we launch *Nature Neuroscience*? (May 98)
- Use and abuse of impact factors (December 98)
- Anonymity in peer review (March 99)
- Clarity in scientific writing (February 00)
- How to be a successful author (July 00)
- What makes a good fMRI paper? (April 01)
- What makes a good multidisciplinary paper? (July 01)
- Advance online publication (August 01)
- Policy on financial disclosure (October 01)
- How we handle appeals (October 02)
- Retractions (December 02)
- Policy on preprint servers (May 03)
- Papers reviewed at other Nature journals (June 03)
- New sections in *Nature Neuroscience* (June 03)
- Interpreting impact factors (August 03)
- Financial disclosure for review authors (October 03)
- Guidelines for single-patient studies (February 04)
- Expanding *Nature Neuroscience* (January 05)
- Using statistical tests (February 05)
- Changes in house rules (August 09)
- Crafting a revision (August 11)
- Raising standards (June 13)
- Navigating issues of related submission and embargo (July 14)

**CONTENT TYPES**

**PRIMARY RESEARCH FORMATS**

An *Article* is a substantial novel research study, with a complex story often involving several techniques or approaches. The main text (excluding abstract, online Methods, references and figure legends) is 2,000–4,000 words. The abstract is typically 100–150 words, unreferenced. Articles have no more than 8 display items (figures and/or tables). An introduction (without heading) is followed by sections headed Results, Discussion and online Methods. The Results and online Methods should be divided by topical subheadings; the Discussion may contain subheadings at the editors’ discretion. References are limited to 50.

Articles include received/accepted dates. They may be accompanied by supplementary information. Articles are peer reviewed, and authors must provide a competing financial interests statement before publication.

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Please use American English spelling throughout.

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Authors should use approved nomenclature for gene symbols, and use symbols rather than italicized full names (*Ttn*, not *titin*). Please consult the appropriate nomenclature databases for correct gene names and symbols. A useful resource is **Entrez Gene**. Approved human gene symbols are provided by HUGO Gene Nomenclature Committee (HGNC), e-mail: hgnc@genenames.org; see also [www.genenames.org](http://www.genenames.org). Approved mouse symbols are provided by The Jackson Laboratory, e-mail: nomen@informatics.jax.org; see also [http://www.informatics.jax.org/mgihome/nomen](http://www.informatics.jax.org/mgihome/nomen).

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Designate each item as Supplementary Table, Figure, Audio, Video etc. Each type of supplementary information should be continuously numbered (for example, Supplementary Figure 1, Supplementary Figure 2, Supplementary Table 1, Supplementary Table 2 and so on).

Please provide a title for Supplementary Tables and a title and a caption for all the other Supplementary information types. Please note that Supplementary methods are not allowed. A Supplementary Note should be used only in consultation with the editors and for specific elements best presented in supplementary information, such as stand-alone descriptions related to methods (for example, algorithm description or compound synthesis and characterization).

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INITIAL SUBMISSION
Papers should be submitted via the online submission system. Each new submission is assigned to a primary editor, who reads the paper, consults with the other editors, and decides whether it should be sent for peer review. Many papers describing solid studies of interest to those in the field are nonetheless judged to be unlikely to compete successfully with the best work submitted to the journal.

Like other journals in the Nature family, Nature Neuroscience has no external editorial board. However, if a paper’s importance within the field is unclear, an editor may request advice from outside experts in deciding whether to review it. The novelty of a submitted paper is considered to be compromised if it has significant conceptual overlap with a published paper or one accepted for publication by Nature Neuroscience. Preprint archives do not compromise novelty.

If a paper was previously reviewed at another Nature journal, the authors can use an automated manuscript transfer service to transfer the referees’ reports to Nature Neuroscience via a link sent by the editor who handled the manuscript. In that case, the journal editors will take the previous reviews into account when making their decision, although in some cases the editors may choose to take advice from additional or alternative referees. Alternatively, authors may choose to request a fresh review, in which case they should not use the automated transfer link, and the editors will evaluate the paper without reference to the previous review process. However, this decision must be made at the time of initial submission and cannot be changed later. If the authors ask the editors to consider the previous reviews, they should include a note explaining the relationship between the submitted manuscript and the previous submission and (assuming it has been revised in light of the referees’ criticisms) giving a point-by-point response to the referees. In cases where the work was felt to be of high quality, papers can sometimes be accepted without further review, but if there were serious criticisms, the editors will consider them in making the decision. In the event of publication, the received date is the date of submission to Nature Neuroscience. More details are available on the manuscript transfer service and on the relationships between Nature titles.

PEER REVIEW
The corresponding author is notified by e-mail when the editor decides to send a paper for review. Authors may indicate a limited number of scientists who should not review the paper. Excluded scientists must be identified by name. Authors may also suggest referees; these suggestions are often helpful, although they are not always followed. By policy, referees are not identified to the authors, except at the request of the referee.

Conceptually similar manuscripts are held to the same editorial standards as far as possible, and so they are often sent to the same referees. However, each of the cosubmitted manuscripts must meet the criteria for publication without reference to the other paper. Thus if one paper is substantially less complete or convincing than the other, it may be rejected, even if the papers reach the same conclusion.

DECISION AFTER REVIEW AND REVISION
When making a decision after review, editors consider not only how good the paper is now, but also how good it might become after revision.

In cases where the referees have requested well-defined changes to the manuscript that do not appear to require extensive further experiments, editors may request a revised manuscript that addresses the referees’ concerns. The revised version is normally sent back to some or all of the original referees for re-review. The decision letter will specify a deadline (typically a few weeks), and revisions that are returned within this period will retain their original submission date.

In cases where the referees’ concerns are more wide-ranging, editors will normally reject the manuscript. If the editors feel the work is of potential interest to the journal, however, they may express interest in seeing a future resubmission. The resubmitted manuscript may be sent back to the original referees or to new referees, at the editors’ discretion. In such cases, revised manuscripts will not retain their earlier submission date.

In either case, the revised manuscript should be accompanied by a cover letter that includes a point-by-point response to referees’ comments and an explanation of how the manuscript has been changed.
An invited revision should be submitted via the revision link to the online submission system provided in the decision letter, not as a new manuscript.

**FINAL SUBMISSION AND ACCEPTANCE**

A request for final submission is sent when the paper is nearly ready to publish, possibly requiring some text changes but no revisions to the data or conclusions. These letters are accompanied by detailed comments on the paper’s format from the copy editor. A high priority of *Nature Neuroscience* is that all papers be accessible to nonspecialists. Manuscripts are subject to substantial editing to achieve this goal. After acceptance, a copy editor may make further changes so that the text and figures are readable and clear to those outside the field, and so that papers conform to our style.

For the final revision, authors should use the revision link to the online submission system provided in the decision letter to upload a final version of the text with all the requested format changes.

When all remaining editorial issues are resolved, the paper is formally accepted. The received date is the date on which the editors received the original (or if previously rejected, the resubmitted) manuscript. The accepted date is when the editor sends the acceptance letter.

Contributors are sent proofs and are welcome to discuss proposed changes with the editors, but *Nature Neuroscience* reserves the right to make the final decision about matters of style and the size of figures.

**APPEALS**

Even in cases where editors did not invite resubmission, some authors ask the editors to reconsider a rejection decision. These are considered appeals, which, by policy, must take second place to the normal workload. In practice, this means that decisions on appeals often take several weeks.

Decisions are reversed on appeal only if the editors are convinced that the original decision was a serious mistake, not merely a borderline call that could have gone either way. Further consideration may be merited if a referee made substantial errors of fact or showed evidence of bias, but only if a reversal of that referee's opinion would have changed the original decision. Similarly, disputes on factual issues need not be resolved unless they were critical to the outcome. Thus, after careful consideration of the authors’ points, most appeals are rejected by the editors.

If an appeal merits further consideration, the editors may send the authors’ response or the revised paper to one or more referees, or they may ask one referee to comment on the concerns raised by another referee. On occasion, particularly if the editors feel that additional technical expertise is needed to make a decision, they may obtain advice from an additional referee.

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**GENERAL EDITORIAL INQUIRIES AND CORRESPONDENCE**

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Manuscripts should be submitted through our online submission system. For more information, see our general guide for manuscript preparation and submission. Please do not send complete manuscripts by e-mail unless specifically requested.

**PRESUBMISSION INQUIRIES**

Please send inquiries via our online submission system, designating them as presubmission inquiries as requested on the form.

**INQUIRIES ABOUT THE STATUS OF A MANUSCRIPT**

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**REVIEWS OF MANUSCRIPTS**

Please return referee comments to the URL included in the referee instruction letter sent to you after you agreed to review the manuscript. The review can also be returned by accessing the manuscript you are reviewing on your personal *Nature Neuroscience* homepage and, when on the manuscript's summary page, selecting the link 'Review Manuscript'. Alternatively, the review can be sent to neurosci@us.nature.com, quoting the manuscript tracking number of the manuscript to which the review applies.

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