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After initially launching titles in Genetics, Neuroscience and Molecular Cell Biology, the series has been extended to cover Cancer and Immunology, both introduced in October 2001, Drug Discovery, which was launched in January 2002, and Microbiology, which was launched in 2003. Whatever your discipline, Nature Reviews provides access to the highest quality overview of your field.

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• To be the premier source of reviews and commentary in each of the fields that we cover.
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Nature Reviews Neuroscience is organized into the following main sections: Research Highlights, Progress, Reviews, Analysis and Perspectives.

Research Highlights
The current-awareness section — short updates on new papers, written chiefly by the in-house editorial journal teams. We also include details of new web resources in short ‘Web Watch’ articles. Papers and web sites are selected with the aid of a panel of external, expert advisors. In the printed journal, around 10 Research Highlights are published each month, along with 4–8 ‘In Brief’ items that provide a concise description of yet more significant papers. Research Highlights are published continuously online.

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Progress articles are short, timely articles that focus on current papers of outstanding interest that are setting new standards in the field. Because of their topicality, Progress articles should be concisely written (2,000–2,500 words, 3 display items, 40 references maximum) and submitted in a timely manner.

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Commissioned from leaders in the field, reviews vary in length from around 2,500–5,000 words, depending on the topic. Reviews are thoroughly and carefully edited, and figures are drawn by our in-house art editors. All reviews are supplemented with glossary explanations for non-specialist readers, as well as highlighted references that are accompanied by an explanation as to why these references are essential reading. Reviews are continuously published online.

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Based on the Review format, Analysis articles are review-type articles that include a new analysis (using standard and well-defined methods) of existing data (typically large biological datasets, from genomes, microarrays, proteomes, and so on) that lead to a novel and exciting conclusion, or that substantially enhance our knowledge of a given topic. As with all articles we publish, Analysis articles will be subject to a rigorous peer-review process.

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Authors are required, before final acceptance of their contribution, to return a declaration of competing financial interests. A shortened version of this declaration is published as part of the paper, with a more detailed version, if appropriate, published online accompanying the paper. If no such statement is present in the article, then the authors had declared to the editors that they do not have any competing financial interests.

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Second, there is a more general concern among researchers and others about the possible undermining of the integrity of scientific research by increasing commercial links and consequent influences. We believe that the best way to maintain readers’ trust in the integrity of the research we publish is through a policy of transparency. If financial interests are disclosed, readers will be able to make an informed judgment about their significance or lack of significance. We believe this will be to the benefit of readers and authors alike.

Third, many institutions have introduced policies on competing interests that require authors to include descriptions of financial and other interests in publications. We are happy to support them.

We do not expect to police this policy ourselves: we believe that primary responsibility for ensuring that researchers’ conduct is appropriate lies with their employers, rather than with journal editors. However, where we believe trust has been significantly compromised by an author’s actions, we will seek to redress the matter by an appropriate combination of sanctions and communications to readers and employers.

We welcome comments and suggestions about this policy, which should be sent to nature@nature.com, marked “Competing interests policy”.

Dr Philip Campbell
Editor, Nature
Editor-in-Chief, Nature publications

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Editors may seek advice about submitted papers not only from technical referees but also on any aspect of a paper that raises concerns. These may include, for example, ethical issues or issues of data or materials access. Very occasionally, concerns may also relate to the societal implications of publishing a paper, including threats to security. In such circumstances, advice will usually be sought simultaneously with the refereeing process. As in all publishing decisions, the ultimate decision whether to publish is the responsibility of the editor of the journal concerned.

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