

# Lab on a Chip

## Guidelines for Authors†

Also see: [www.rsc.org/authorguidelines](http://www.rsc.org/authorguidelines)

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#### 1.0 General policy

*Lab on a Chip* provides a unique forum for the publication of significant and original work related to miniaturisation (on and off chips) at the micro- and nano-scale across a variety of disciplines, including chemistry, biology, bioengineering, physics, electronics, clinical/medical science, (bio)chemical engineering and materials science, which is likely to be of interest to the multidisciplinary community that the journal addresses. Critical and tutorial reviews, mini-reviews, cutting-edge primary research papers, communications and technical notes are all welcome. All manuscripts should be written such that they are accessible to scientists in all disciplines associated with the subject, across both academic and industrial sectors. All article types should highlight, in the abstract and at the end of the introduction, the novel features and explain the significance of the work and likely impact on the relevant (micro and nano) lab-on-a-chip communities.

Submissions from academic and industrial scientists involved with fundamental research, development or applications for micro-

and nano-scale systems, technologies and devices in the following disciplines are sought and encouraged (*Lab on a Chip* also deals with off-chip systems):

- Chemical and biological micro/nanoreactors for chemical synthesis, biosynthesis, high-throughput synthesis, combinatorial chemistry, generation of hazardous chemicals at point-of-requirement, and safer synthesis
- Micro/nanofabrication technologies (in silicon, plastics, glass and other materials) including laser micro/nanofabrication, photochemistry, micro/nanophotolithography, micro/nanomachining *etc.*
- Monitoring in micro/nanoreactors
- Environmental monitoring/monitoring for health and security
- Micro/nanoelectronics and micro/nanorobotics
- Micro/nanomechanics and engineering in chip-based systems (MEMS and NEMS)
- Microbiotechnology and nanobiotechnology
- Polynucleotide arrays for genetic sequence analysis
- Genomics, proteomics, cellomics, DNA probes and PCR
- High-speed catalysis in miniaturised systems
- Micro/nanotechnical interfaces and interconnections
- Fluidics, fluids for micro/nanosystems, their mobilisation and control
- Medical diagnostics and screening, point-of-care clinical analyses, disease detection, drug delivery, and implantable devices
- Micro and nano total analytical systems ( $\mu$ TAS, nTAS), their components and applications
- Sample preparation in micro/nanostructured devices, nanoencapsulation, and nanotubes
- Micro/nanochip-based separation systems
- Micro/nanooptics and on-chip detection systems
- Micro/nanosensor systems
- Reduction of toxic wastes, and increases in efficiency, reliability and performance
- Waste minimisation (decreases in power and reagent consumption, time and cost)

All contributions are judged on (i) originality, novelty and quality of scientific content and (ii) their contribution to advancing the theory, understanding, practice or application of miniaturisation in the subjects concerned, and (iii) appropriateness of length to content of new science. Papers reporting applications must contain a comparison with existing methods and demonstrate advantages over accepted methods before publication can be

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† For more detailed information on this topic, including guidelines for article layout, preparation of illustrations, presentation of experimental data, and supplementary information deposition, as well as links to useful web sites, templates and other software resources, and authoring tools, see: <http://www.rsc.org/authorguidelines>.

considered. Although short articles are considered, the RSC strongly discourages fragmentation of a substantial body of work into a number of short publications. Unnecessary fragmentation will be a valid reason for rejection of manuscripts.

There is no page charge for papers published in *Lab on a Chip*.

## 2.0 Article types

### 2.1 Communications

These must report preliminary research findings that are highly original, of immediate interest and are likely to have a high impact on the lab-on-a-chip community. Communications are given priority treatment, are fast-tracked through the publication process and appear prominently at the front of the journal in a dedicated Communications section. The key aim of Communications is to present innovative chemical concepts with important implications. Authors should provide at the time of submission a short paragraph explaining why their work justifies urgent publication as a Communication. There is a strict three-page limit. Ideally, a Full Paper in *Lab on a Chip* should follow each Communication.

### 2.2 Full Papers

These must represent a significant development in the particular field and are judged according to originality, quality of scientific content and contribution to existing knowledge. Although there is no page limit for Full Papers, appropriateness of length to content of new science will be taken into consideration, and *Lab on a Chip* recommends a maximum of five figures and five tables.

### 2.3 Technical Notes

These should be brief descriptions of instrumental developments, techniques or applications that offer definite advantages over those already available. Technical Notes should offer practical solutions to problems that are of interest to the *Lab on a Chip* readership and merit publication, but neither a Full Paper nor an Urgent Communication is justified. Technical Notes are subject to a strict three-page limit and should be as brief as possible; wherever appropriate authors should use references to the established technique, explaining in full only what is novel about the proposed approach.

### 2.4 Critical and Tutorial Reviews

These must be a critical evaluation of the existing state of knowledge on a particular facet of lab on a chip science; however, original work may be included. Simple literature surveys will not be accepted for publication. Potential review writers should contact the Editor before embarking on their work.

### 2.5 Mini-Reviews

These are summaries of research in a well-defined, specific topic area covering approximately the last 24 months.

- Given topics should review work no more than 24 months old.
- Articles should cover only the most interesting/significant developments in that specific subject area.
- The article should be highly critical and selective in referencing published work.
- One or two paragraphs of speculation about possible future developments may also be appropriate in the conclusion section.
- Mini-reviews should be brief, four journal pages are recommended (*ca.* ten double spaced, typed A4 pages) and should contain no more than two or three tables and a minimal number of figures.

Mini-reviews may also cover techniques/technologies that are too new for a full review or may address a subset of technologies available for a given area of research.

## 3.0 Submission

### 3.1 Initial submission

Articles should be submitted using the RSC file upload service,

‡ See <http://www.rsc.org/resource>.

ReSource.‡

Rapid publication is aided by careful preparation of text and illustrations. Particular attention is drawn to the use of (i) SI units and associated conventions, (ii) IUPAC nomenclature for compounds and (iii) standard methods of literature citation.

The RSC ReSource service allows any number of files to be uploaded. All files relating to a single manuscript should be uploaded simultaneously during one transaction. Files uploaded separately will result in more than one manuscript number being assigned and may subsequently be lost.

All authors submitting work for publication are required to agree a Licence to Publish. Authors submitting online will be asked to agree a Licence to Publish as part of the process. Alternatively, a downloadable PDF version is available,‡ which can be completed and forwarded to the Editorial Office. On submitting their manuscripts, authors are also encouraged to supply the names and addresses of 2–3 potential referees.

After submission your file will be acknowledged by the Editorial Office as soon as possible. Authors should contact the Editorial Office if they have not received an acknowledgement within 4 working days. Authors should not forward more than one version of their manuscript or submit the manuscript by post or e-mail to avoid errors in manuscript handling by the Editorial Office.

### 3.2 Submission of revised articles and material for proof preparation

Revised manuscripts should be sent to the Editorial Office by file upload *via* ReSource.‡

Please check the manuscript carefully for consistency, particularly in the representation of chemical formulae, compound names and words with alternative spellings.

Successful use of your electronic files should speed up the production process and avoid errors being introduced. Authors should ensure that files submitted at this stage contain the final version of their manuscript. Proof corrections should only correct errors from the Production process and should not be used to make general changes to the text.

We will try to use the supplied data in our production process, but mathematical equations and tables in particular may be re-keyed by the typesetter. It is imperative that authors check their proofs (including any tabulated data and figures) very carefully. Papers are published as advance Articles on the web as soon as possible after the return of proof corrections. Late corrections cannot be incorporated after publication of the Advance Article.

## 4.0 Administration

The Editorial Office will acknowledge receipt of a contribution for consideration immediately by e-mail (if an appropriate e-mail address has been supplied). The acknowledgement will indicate the paper reference number assigned to the contribution. Authors are particularly asked to quote this number on all subsequent correspondence. Correspondence will be sent by e-mail where possible.

### 4.1 Peer review, revision, acceptance, rejection

Details of refereeing policy and procedure are available *via* ReSource.‡

Each manuscript deemed suitable for consideration as a submission will be reviewed by at least two referees, whose names are not disclosed to the authors. The referees' reports constitute recommendations to the appropriate Editor, who is empowered to take final action on manuscripts submitted. The Editor is responsible for all administrative and executive actions, and is empowered to accept or reject papers. This decision and relevant comments of the referees are communicated to the author. Differences of opinion are mediated by the Editor, possibly after consultation with further referees, or by the Editorial Board. It is the Editor's duty to see that, as far as possible, agreement is reached between authors and referees; although the referees may need to be consulted again concerning an author's reply to comments, further refereeing will be avoided as far as possible. Authors will receive formal notification when papers are accepted for publication. When rejection of a paper is recommended, the Editor informs the author. Authors have the right to appeal to the Editorial Board if they regard a decision to reject as unfair.

#### 4.2 Proofs for correction

PDF proofs for correction are sent by e-mail to the corresponding author. Please note that authors are responsible for the final proof-reading of manuscripts. It is imperative that authors check the proofs very carefully. Particular attention should be paid to numerical data both in the tables and text. Proof corrections should be returned to the Editorial office within 4 days of receipt (by e-mail, fax, first class mail, air mail, or express mail). All corrections should be sent at the same time. Papers are published as Advance Articles on the web as soon as possible after proof corrections are received from the authors. Late corrections cannot be incorporated after publication of the Advance Article.

An author may be required to pay the cost of any extensive changes made by him/her at proof stage (other than the correction of printer's errors). So far as possible, essential changes should be made without altering the length of the text, or at the end of a paragraph. The standard signs for proof correction set out in British Standard BS5261: Part 2 (1976) may be used: these are conveniently summarised in the pamphlet "*Authors' alterations cost money and cause delay ...*", which can be purchased from the British Printing Industries Federation (11 Bedford Row, London, UK, WC1R 4DX). However, the author may prefer simply to put a line through the incorrect characters and write the correct version in the margin. Corrections should be made in ink, clearly and without ambiguity, and any queries from the printer and editorial staff on the manuscript, proof or query sheet should be answered fully. Alternatively, corrections can be sent by e-mail, in list format, clearly stating the page, paragraph and line number alongside each correction.

#### 4.3 Reprints

The corresponding author will receive an electronic reprint (in

PDF format) after publication. Authors may print and distribute hardcopies of their article on demand. Authors may also send the electronic file to individuals, as one would send a printed reprint. However, the electronic file may not be distributed *via* an email listserver and it may not be placed on any web site.

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