

# SPECTRUM

## Author Guidelines Last update: August 2024

### Deadlines:

Submissions are accepted on an ongoing basis and will be considered for the next available issue (typically fall or winter). *Spectrum* operates on a continuous publication schedule, which means each issue will be “open” for six months, and submissions will be immediately published to the open issue as they are ready (vs. on set publication dates). This is intended to reduce the amount of time between editorial acceptance and final publication.

### About *Spectrum*:

*Spectrum* is a student-powered, collaborative undergraduate research journal supported by the [Undergraduate Research Initiative](#) at the University of Alberta. *Spectrum* is committed to producing thought-provoking, insightful and dynamic interdisciplinary content. We seek to create an open-minded journal with a focus on connecting our readers with all areas of study and new methods of inquiry, from the liberal arts to the natural sciences.

### What we publish:

*Spectrum* strives to publish diverse and engaging research completed by undergraduate students within and across the areas of health sciences, natural sciences and engineering, social sciences, arts and humanities. We will consider submissions in a variety of formats provided that the work is driven by an underlying research question.

Possible submission formats include (but are not limited to):

- research articles
- review articles
- music
- video
- visual arts & design

- curatorial projects

## **Who can submit to *Spectrum*:**

To be published by *Spectrum*, you must be either:

- a current undergraduate student at any post-secondary institution in any faculty, or
- a recent alumnus of an undergraduate program (within the last 12 months), who has not yet started a graduate program.

Authors may be asked to provide verification of their undergraduate student (or recent alumni) status in order for editors to assess submission eligibility to *Spectrum*.

Submissions from any discipline are welcome, but should be written in language accessible to readers from a variety of disciplines.

## **Peer review process:**

*Spectrum* uses a double-blind peer review process. All submissions will be reviewed by three reviewers:

- One undergraduate student in a related discipline
- One undergraduate student in an unrelated discipline
- One graduate student in a related discipline

## **Open Access Policy:**

*Spectrum* provides immediate open access to its content on the principle that making research freely available to the public supports greater global exchange of knowledge. Authors will never be charged to submit or publish a manuscript through *Spectrum*, and all articles will be published under Creative Commons licences.

## **Copyright Policy:**

By signing the *Spectrum* publication agreement ([download here](#)), authors agree to the following:

- The work has not been previously published in any format;
- *Spectrum* is granted the royalty-free right to publish and disseminate the work in current and future formats;
- The work will be published in *Spectrum* under a Creative Commons licence. *Spectrum* encourages authors to publish the work under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence (CC BY 4.0) that allows others to distribute, remix, tweak, and build upon the work, even commercially, as long as they credit the Author(s) for the original

creation. Authors may however choose to have their work distributed under any of the Creative Commons licenses currently available by specifying their preferred licence in the publication agreement. A description of the Creative Commons licences is available here: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/>

- Authors retain their copyright, including the right to subsequently publish or disseminate their work elsewhere, provided that they make reasonable efforts to ensure that the publication in *Spectrum* is acknowledged.
- Authors agree to determine, prior to publication, whether it is necessary to obtain permissions from any third party who hold rights with respect to any photographs, illustrations, drawings, text, or any other material (“third party work”) to be published in connection with your work. Copyright permission will not be necessary if the use is determined to be fair dealing, if the work is in the public domain, or if the rights-holder has granted a Creative Commons or similar licence.
- All co-authors and investigators (e.g. faculty supervisors) with claims to the intellectual property have read and signed the agreement, thereby providing their consent for the submission to be published in *Spectrum*.

Unless otherwise specified, authors guarantee that all parts of the submission are the author’s original work. Submissions containing evidence of plagiarism will **not** be eligible for publication.

## General Author Guidelines:

Submissions not adhering to these guidelines will be returned to the author for revision.

**Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools:** One of the goals of *Spectrum* is to stimulate critical thinking and skill development among authors and reviewers alike. *Spectrum* discourages the submission of content generated by artificial intelligence (AI)-assisted technologies (such as chatGPT and similar tools). This includes tools that generate text, data, images, figures, or other materials, as well as tools that are used to summarize and synthesize sources. Authors should be aware that such tools are vulnerable to factual inaccuracies, biases, and logical fallacies, and may pose risks to privacy, confidentiality, and copyright.

If authors choose to submit work created with the assistance of AI tools, such use **must be disclosed** and described in the submission. The disclosure must include: 1) what system was used, 2) who used it, 3) the time/date of the use, 4) the prompt(s) used to generate the content, and 5) the content in the submission that resulted from use of AI tools. The output from the AI system should also be submitted as supplementary material. Authors must accept full responsibility for the accuracy and integrity of the submission. AI systems do not meet the criteria for authorship, and should not be listed as a co-author.

This policy was adapted from the [Journal of the Medical Library Association](#).

**Simultaneous submissions:** *Spectrum* will only consider ONE submission per author for each issue (i.e. max of 2 submissions per year). Submissions in excess of this limit will be rejected without review. If you have multiple submissions you'd like to publish, please consider submitting some of your work to other journals/venues for consideration.

**Submissions from classes:** *Spectrum* welcomes multi-author submissions from classes; however, all authors are responsible for keeping their contact information current with the editors. If you graduate or move during the time your work is under review, please inform us. There must be a designated corresponding author for the group who will manage communications between the authors and the *Spectrum* editorial team for the duration your submission is under consideration. Please be mindful that for some submissions (particularly complex submissions with a large number of authors, or those requiring multiple rounds of review), the standard editorial timelines may be extended.

**Communication with editors:** The *Spectrum* team endeavors to review and publish submissions in a timely manner. Clear and consistent communication between authors and editors is crucial to achieve this goal. If you will be unavailable for an extended period while your work is under consideration, please notify your corresponding editor. If our editors are unable to reach you and/or you have editorial action items that are overdue for a period of **4 weeks or longer**, your submission will be removed from the editorial queue.

**Authorship:** To be published by *Spectrum*, you must be either:

- a current undergraduate student at any post-secondary institution in any faculty, or
- a recent alumnus of an undergraduate program (within the last 12 months), who has not yet started a graduate program.

**Authors must indicate on the title page of their submission the undergraduate program and year of study (or year of graduation, as applicable) for student author(s).**

Each submission must have a corresponding author, who is available throughout the submission and review process to respond to editorial or administrative inquiries from the journal. The corresponding author is also responsible for ensuring that all those who qualify for co-authorship are listed as such in the submission, and that all co-authors (including the faculty supervisor, if applicable) review and approve the final version of the submission for publication.

*Spectrum* strongly recommends that students discuss authorship decisions (e.g. who is to be a co-author, order of authorship) with their supervisor and potential co-authors prior to submission. If in doubt about whether a contribution qualifies for co-authorship, the *Spectrum* editorial board suggests consulting the [recommendations from the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors](#).

**Accessibility:** *Spectrum* is an interdisciplinary journal intended for an interdisciplinary audience. Therefore, we encourage authors to submit work written at a level appropriate for

readers in other disciplines. Technical language should be explained, and sufficient context should be provided so that the relevance of your research is clear to readers who may be new to your research area.

**Language:** Submissions may be in English or French.

**Length:** The maximum length of any text submission is 5000 words (including abstract, title, figure captions). The word limit does NOT include references. Reasonable exceptions to this limit may be considered at the discretion of the editorial board.

**Title:** All submissions must have a title (max 15 words) that must be descriptive of the work and is accessible to readers outside the discipline.

**Abstract:** All submissions must have an abstract (max 250 words). An effective abstract answers the following questions:

- What is the background/context for this research? (Why did you do it?)
- What was the research question/hypothesis? (What did you do?)
- What was your methodological approach? (How did you do it?)
- What are the key results or findings from your research? (What did you learn?)
- What is the significance or relevance of these findings? (What's important about it? Who can use it? What happens next?)

**File format(s):** For peer-review purposes, please ensure your submission meets the following requirements:

- Please submit the entire work (including the abstract, references, and all figures/tables) in one double-spaced Microsoft Word document.
- Please ensure your submission is fully anonymized to ensure the authors' identities are concealed from peer reviewers. This includes but is not limited to:
  - Ensuring any identifying information (including names, emails, etc.) for authors/co-authors is removed from the text of the submission.
  - Ensuring there is no identifying information (i.e. author names) in the filename of your submission files.
  - Ensuring that author details are removed from the metadata (File Properties) of your submission. To remove personal information from the metadata of a Microsoft Word document, use the Document Inspector function (see [help article for details](#))
- Please provide a word count on your submission.
- Please insert page numbers in the bottom right corner of the page.
- Please indicate the citation style used in the submission (see acceptable formats below).

For multimedia or other submission types not amenable to this format, please contact the editors at [spectrum@ualberta.ca](mailto:spectrum@ualberta.ca) with a description of your submission and file type. The editorial team will then advise you on the best way to submit your work for review.

If your work is accepted for publication, we may request that figures and tables be provided as separate files for the production stage.

**Citation Styles:** *Spectrum* strongly encourages the use of APA or MLA format. However, any of the following citation styles are acceptable, provided only ONE style is used throughout the submission:

- Chicago
  - MLA
  - APA
  - CSE
- Citation guides are available here: <http://guides.library.ualberta.ca/citing>
  - For electronic sources (e.g. websites), please provide the URL.
  - Where available, please ensure DOIs are provided for your references, noting the correct format:
    - Correct: <https://doi.org/#####>
    - Incorrect: doi: #####

**Images:**

- When submitting images, please provide the highest-quality image possible (minimum 300dpi resolution).
- For review purposes, all images should be included in numerical order at the end of your Word document. If your work is accepted for publication, you may be asked to submit the original images as separate files.
- All images must be numbered in the order in which they are referenced in the main text of the submission, and must include a descriptive caption.
- For images of works of art, your descriptive caption should include: author name, title of work and year created, medium, dimensions, and date and location (incl. institution) of access.
- Authors agree to determine, prior to publication, whether it is necessary to obtain permissions from any third party who holds rights with respect to any photographs, illustrations, drawings, text, or any other material (“third party work”) to be published in connection with your work. Copyright permission will not be necessary if the use is determined to be fair dealing, if the work is in the public domain, or if the rights-holder has granted a Creative Commons or similar licence. For any third party work included in your submission, please indicate in the caption whether permission is necessary, whether it has been granted, and details about what permissions have been granted.

**Ethics approval (for research on humans or animals):** If your submission describes research on humans or animals, authors must provide a copy of their research ethics approval, and include a statement in their submission that indicates ethics approval has been obtained for the project.

**Acknowledgements (for all non-author contributions):** Authors are encouraged to include an acknowledgements section to list any contributions that do not meet the criteria for co-authorship. Examples include acknowledging funding agencies or sponsors for their support, and acknowledging those who were involved in proofreading of the manuscript. Please note that Acknowledgements may be redacted from the submission prior to peer review in order to ensure anonymity of the submission.

## How to submit your work:

All submissions must be submitted online through the *Spectrum* website.

For a tutorial on how to submit your files through the Open Journal System platform, please visit: <https://openjournalsystems.com/ojs-3-user-guide/> (See Section 9: Authoring)

Please ensure that all authors on the submission are listed as contributors in the OJS Metadata form. All authors listed in OJS should receive email notification acknowledging the submission.

You will also be prompted to paste the title and a copy of your abstract into the OJS Metadata form. Please note that reviewers do not have access to the submission metadata, so you must also include this information in your Word document.

## What happens after you submit:

### Submission stage:

- The *Spectrum* editorial board will do a preliminary review of your submission to ensure that the submission is complete, is an appropriate fit for the aims & scope of *Spectrum*, and is of sufficient quality to proceed to peer review.
- If your submission meets these basic criteria, a corresponding editor will be assigned to handle your submission through the peer review process.

### Review stage:

- ❑ Peer reviewers will be recruited and assigned to your submission. Depending on the availability of reviewers, the peer review process may take (on average) about 5-7 weeks. Reviewers will provide feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of your submission, and provide a recommendation to the editors about whether to accept, decline, or request revisions on your submission.
- ❑ Your corresponding editor will consolidate the information from all of the reviews, and take their feedback into account when making a final assessment of your submission. Based on the reviews, and in consultation with the *Spectrum* editorial board, the editor will then notify you of the editorial decision. There are typically four possible outcomes:
  - ❑ **Accept** - the editor will provide details about what minor revisions are necessary and provide a deadline for submitting your revisions (normally ~2 weeks).
  - ❑ **Revisions Required** - the editor will provide details about what revisions are necessary and provide a deadline for submitting your revisions (normally ~2 weeks). You will be asked to submit your revisions, along with an explanation of how you addressed any concerns from the reviewers. The editor will then record a final editorial decision.
  - ❑ **Decline** - the editor will provide feedback explaining why your submission was not accepted for publication at this time.
  - ❑ **Revise & Resubmit** - If there are major concerns with your submission that would require the submission to go through a new round of peer review, you may be asked to revise and resubmit for a future issue. Your submission would be treated as a “new” submission and would go through the peer review process again.

### **Copyediting stage: (Accepted submissions only)**

- ❑ Once you have submitted your revisions and they are accepted by the editor, your submission will be passed on to a copyeditor.
- ❑ The copyeditor will review the submission for grammar, style, consistency, and formatting.
- ❑ The copyeditor (or your corresponding editor) will notify you of any additional minor revisions that are necessary prior to publication, and will provide a deadline for submitting your copyedits (normally ~1 week).

### **Production stage: (Accepted submissions only)**

- ❑ Once you have provided a final, copyedited version of your submission, the editors will create a PDF proof of your submission, laid out in the *Spectrum* article template.
- ❑ The PDF will be sent to you to proofread. This is the final opportunity for you to review and make corrections to your submission prior to publication. You will normally be asked to notify your editor of any required corrections within one week.

- ❑ You will also be asked at this stage to review and sign the *Spectrum* publication agreement. All co-authors and your faculty supervisor (if applicable) must also sign the agreement. In the publication agreement, you must also designate the Creative Commons License you wish to assign to your submission.

## **Publication -- congratulations!**

## **Still have questions?**

Please feel free to contact the *Spectrum* team at [spectrum@ualberta.ca](mailto:spectrum@ualberta.ca) if you have any questions about submitting your work.