

Formatting Rules and Constraints

How to Submit

Contact

Tables

The instructions provided here pertain to tables included in the main article. The more closely your tables adhere to these requirements at submission, the fewer times you will need to revise your manuscript to meet them. Your tables will therefore publish more accurately and will be less likely to slow down publication of your accepted manuscript.

Tables as Supporting Information

Supporting Information is auxiliary to the main content of the article. Supporting Information tables have fewer requirements than tables included in the main article. For full instructions, please follow the [supporting information guidelines](#).


Formatting Rules and Constraints

› Tables must be editable, cell-based objects.

We cannot typeset tables that are graphic objects. Use the table tool in your text editing software to create tables. If necessary, create tables in Excel and insert them into the manuscript. Do not insert text boxes or graphics within your tables.

› Text justification.

Justification of the text within cells is honored at typesetting. If you have a preference, indicate justification of content within cells by using your text editor's alignment features (for example, centered or left justified).

 Do not use returns, spaces, or tabs to align content across columns. To have content appear on separate lines within the same cell, you can [insert a list](#).

› Merged cells.

You can use merging to indicate cells that span multiple columns and rows.

› Multi-section tables.

Tables with multiple sections must have a consistent number of columns throughout all sub-sections. If necessary, you may divide and re-number the sections as separate tables. Do not insert tables within tables or cells within cells.

› Text color and formatting.

Text color is limited to black. Bolded, italicized, underlined, superscript, subscript, and strikethrough text is OK. Meaning can also be expressed with symbols that are explained in the footnotes. Text in header rows will be automatically formatted in bold type.

› Text Font.

Use a standard font size and any standard font, except for the font named "Symbol". To add symbols to the manuscript, use the Insert → Symbol function in your word processor or paste in the appropriate Unicode character.

› Cell shading.

Background color can be applied to cells to convey meaningful information. [Read the instructions for applying cell shading](#).

› Size.

Tables do not have strict width and height requirements. Do not split your table or otherwise try to make the table appear within the manuscript margins if it does not fit on one page. In Word, tables that run off of the manuscript page can be seen using Draft View. In the PDF version of the published article, very wide tables may be printed sideways, and long tables may span more than one page.

When should I make my table a figure?

If the table has a very complex structure or contains graphics, the safest solution is to make it into a figure. Export the table as a TIFF, and cite and re-label it as a figure. [Read the figure guidelines](#).

Arrangement of cell content

Use the following rules to arrange content within individual cells and to match alignment across multiple rows and columns.

To view the marks for returns, spaces, and indents in Microsoft Word, click the ¶ (paragraph) button in the toolbar. These paragraph marks are normally hidden from the document, unless you turn on the tools to make them visible. Use the key to understand the paragraph marks shown in the examples on this page.

Symbol	Indicates
¶ or ¶	Return
.....	Spaces
→	Indent/Tab/List Entry
□	End of content

Arranging content within a cell

- Use only separate cells, ordered lists, unordered lists, or returns to separate content onto individual lines.
- Use a single tab to indent individual pieces of content.
- Do not use spaces to create a new line, indent, or justify content.

Correct

Incorrect

Correct					Incorrect	
Separate cells	Ordered list	Unordered list	Single return	Single tab indent	Do not use spaces to make a new line	Do not use spaces to indent and justify
Heading¶	Heading¶	Heading¶	Heading¶	Heading¶	Heading¶	Heading¶
Data·Data· Data·Data¶ Data¶ Data¶	1. · Data¶ 2. · Data¶ 3. · Data¶	• · Data¶ • · Data¶ • · Data¶	Data¶ [Data]¶ (Data)¶	Data¶ - Data¶ - Data¶	Data..... Data¶	Data¶ ····Data¶ ····Data¶

Aligning content across rows and columns

- Enter content in separate cells to match the text alignment used in other rows and columns.
- Do not use returns, spaces, or tabs to align content across the table. Alignment set in this manner may not be preserved in the published version of the article.

Correct

Incorrect

Enter content in separate cells to set alignment across rows and columns.

Do not use returns to align content across rows and columns.

Heading¶	Heading¶	Heading¶
36·(positive)¶	87¶	¶
-¶	¶	5¶
12·(negative)¶	13¶	¶

Heading¶	Heading¶	Heading¶
36·(positive)¶	87¶	¶
-¶	¶	5¶
12·(negative)¶	13¶	¶

Cell shading

Color can only be applied to the cell background.

- You may use any shading color, but keep legibility in mind. The [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\)](#) advise a contrast ratio of 4.5:1 between the text and the background color. PLOS requires the text color to be black.
- Use only solid colors, with no patterns or gradients.
- Lighter shades are recommended in order to clearly contrast against the black text.
- If using more than one shading color, avoid combinations that could make color differentiation difficult for people with colorblindness.
- Footnotes referencing background color should describe it using words, not images or colored text. Example: "Comparisons involving any renin-angiotensin receptor blocker are shaded orange."

Heavy gridlines

You can apply a heavy gridline to individual cells or to entire rows or columns. The line will appear 3 times heavier than a normal gridline.

To apply a heavy gridline, use the Borders and Shading options in your text editor to apply a line weight of 3 pt (point) to the appropriate border.

Note: It is OK if the surrounding normal-weight gridlines appear as dotted lines once this action is performed (as in the example below). The normal-weight gridlines will still be applied to those cells during typesetting.

1	3.4
2	0.0
3	5.5
Levers	
1	1.2
2	7.8

How to Submit**Organization**

Place each table in your manuscript file directly after the paragraph in which it is first cited (read order). Do not submit tables in a separate file(s).

Captions

Place the caption with the table in the manuscript. Captions include 3 main elements.

- › **Label:** in the format of "Table X". Number your tables with Arabic numerals.
- › **Title:** brief, descriptive, and placed above the table.
- › **Legend, Footnotes:** placed below the table.

In-text citations

You must cite tables in numerical order upon first mention in the text. During typesetting, tables will be placed immediately after the paragraph where they are first cited. Be aware that if a table's first citation is in another table, a figure legend, or a box, the table will be placed immediately after.

Match the citation with the label. Example: If your label is Table 1, the in-text citation will also read "Table 1".

You may cite multiple tables as "Table 1 and 2", "Tables 1-3", or use a similar variation.

**Manuscript Example**

Please refer to our downloadable [sample manuscript \(PDF\)](#) to ensure that your table captions, citations, and organization in the manuscript meet our formatting requirements.

Correctly formatted table with caption

Label Title

Table 3. Analyses of Prognostic Factors for Overall Survival and Recurrence-free Survival.

Factors	Overall Survival (n = 36)		Recurrence-Free Survival (n = 22)	
	Hazard ratio (95% CI)	P- value ^a	Hazard ratio (95% CI)	P- value ^a
ALK CNG (+) vs. CNG(-)	2.63 (0.86-8.11)	0.076	5.63 (1.11-28.44)	0.037
ER positive vs. negative	0.67 (0.21-2.16)	0.504	0.78 (0.23-2.65)	0.694
HER2 positive vs. negative	0.63 (0.21-1.89)	0.404	0.77 (0.23-2.51)	0.660
AJCC stage IV vs. III	2.74 (0.86-8.73)	0.671		

Legend, footnotes

ALK, anaplastic lymphoma kinase; CNG, copy number gain; AJCC, American Joint Committee on Cancer; ER, estrogen receptor; HER2, human epidermal growth factor receptor 2.

^a *p* values were calculated using the Cox-proportional hazard model.

Adapted from: Kim MH, Lee S, Koo JS, Jung KH, Park IH, et al. Anaplastic lymphoma kinase gene copy number gain in inflammatory breast cancer (IBC): prevalence, clinicopathologic features and prognostic implication. PLoS ONE. 2015. 10(3): e0120320. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0120320

Contact

If you have questions about how to format and submit your tables, contact plosmedicine@plos.org.