Section 1: Publishing Style

Contents

Introduction .............................................................................1–1
Requirements for Document Production and Publication ....1–1
  Clearance .........................................................................1–1
  Printing and Duplication .................................................1–1
  Coordination With the AHRQ Web Site .........................1–2
  Use of AHRQ Branding Design and Logos ....................1–2
  Proprietary Software .....................................................1–2

Disclaimers and Disclosures .................................................1–2
  Disclaimers .....................................................................1–2
    General Disclaimer ....................................................1–3
    Disclaimer for Multimedia Products ........................1–3
    Disclaimer of Conflicts of Interest ............................1–3
  Disclosures ....................................................................1–3
    Funding Statement ....................................................1–3
    Public Domain Notice ...............................................1–4
    Statement on Accessibility ........................................1–4

Copyright, Licensing Agreements, Trademarks, and Related Intellectual Property Requirements .............1–5
  Statutory Basis of Copyright ........................................1–5
  International Copyright ................................................1–5
  Signing Copyright Forms—Duties of Federal Employees .................................................................1–5
Reprinting Copyrighted Materials .....................................1–6
  Fair Use ........................................................................1–6
  Excerpting Content .....................................................1–6
  Tables, Graphs, and Figures ........................................1–6
  Photographs ..................................................................1–6
  Digital and Electronic Content ....................................1–7
  Reprinting From the Internet ......................................1–7
Copyright of Grantees’ Work .................................................1–7
Licensing Agreements .........................................................1–7
Copyright Notices ..............................................................1–7
  Additional Protections for Materials
    Published by HHS and its Agencies ..........................1–8
Documenting and Filing Permissions .................................1–9
Trademarks and Trade Names ............................................1–9
Additional Information ........................................................1–9

Revised November 2016
Authorship and Credit ............................................................ 1–10
Listing Authors With Their Affiliations .......................... 1–10
Listing Credentials After an Author’s Name .............. 1–10
Acknowledgments ............................................................. 1–10

Editorial Style, Usage, and Punctuation ....................... 1–11
Resources ........................................................................ 1–11
Style Manuals............................................................. 1–11
Dictionaries ................................................................ 1–11
Quick Tips on Usage and Style ..................................... 1–11
General Usage and Stylistic Considerations ............... 1–11
Statistical Usage ........................................................... 1–12
Medical Usage ............................................................. 1–12
Titles of Reports ......................................................... 1–13
General Punctuation .................................................. 1–13
Bulleted Lists ............................................................. 1–13
Hyphens ..................................................................... 1–14
Hyphenated Prefixes .................................................. 1–14
Compound Words ...................................................... 1–15
Acronyms ................................................................... 1–16
Abbreviations ............................................................. 1–16
Numerals .................................................................... 1–17
Capitalization ............................................................. 1–17

Citations, Reference List, Footnotes, and Bibliography .... 1–18
Citation Style ................................................................... 1–18
Rules for Citing Sources .................................................. 1–18
Citation Management Software ...................................... 1–18
Citing Journals ................................................................. 1–18
Citing Database Reviews and Other Public Health
Publications .................................................................. 1–20
Citing Books ................................................................. 1–20
Citing a Chapter in a Book or an Article
in a Compendium .......................................................... 1–21
Citing Scientific and Technical Reports
From Government Agencies .......................................... 1–22
Citing Grant or Contract Reports .................................... 1–23
Citing Dissertations and Theses .................................... 1–24
Citing Conference Proceedings .................................... 1–24
Citing a Publication With No Listed Author ............... 1–25
Citing Nonprint Data, Including Web Citations ......... 1–25
Footnotes ................................................................. 1–26
Bibliographies ............................................................. 1–26

Type Specifications for Print or Web Manuscripts .......... 1–27
Front Matter .............................................................. 1–27
Introduction

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) has developed these publishing specifications to give staff, contractors, and grantees basic guidance and a format to follow for preparing reports and other products submitted to the Agency for publication (e.g., conference summaries, scientific and technical reports, fliers, booklets, and multimedia products and tools).

This section includes guidance on such matters as clearance, printing and duplication, and posting on the AHRQ Web site. It also provides guidance on legal requirements such as disclaimers, copyright permissions, and the use of trademarks and trade names. It provides a set of tips on editorial style and a description of the editorial process that occurs once a document is received at AHRQ’s Office of Communications (OC).

This section provides instructions for most reports and includes general, not exhaustive, specifications for other documents. AHRQ programs may have developed detailed style guidance tailored to their particular needs. Please contact your OC managing editor for additional guidance pertaining to your program and products.

Requirements for Document Production and Publication

Clearance

Only certain publications require a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) clearance using the Strategic Communications Plan (SCP). This is an internal HHS platform. The review is designed to ensure that the material for publication is in line with Federal Government and departmental priorities and policy. Products that require Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs (ASPA) review and submission of the SCP include products that are newsworthy, controversial, new information, or part of a public education campaign. If not, then the SCP can be filled out for internal review only.

All products are assigned to an OC managing editor who will work with you and your project staff to develop clearance paperwork. The OC managing editor is responsible for submitting the SCP for approval. The SCP form can be found on the Intranet.

Printing and Duplication

Contractors are not permitted to obtain printing services on behalf of the Federal Government. The OC editor manages printing through the Government Printing Office.

With OC approval, contractors are allowed to make a limited number of copies of AHRQ documents. Quantities are not to exceed 25,000 impressions (i.e., the total number of pages; for example, five copies of a 100-page document equals 500 impressions). An OC managing editor must review the document before it is copied and will assign a publication number for the document.
Specifications for delivering art files to OC for printing are detailed on page 1-37.

**Coordination With the AHRQ Web Site**

All print products that AHRQ publishes are posted on the Agency’s Web site and often include associated Web-based tools and products. Many products are Web-only; these must adhere to the same requirements that apply to printed products. It is critical that you review Section 2 of these guidelines to understand AHRQ’s Web policies.

The OC managing editor will coordinate coding, loading, and posting of Web documents through AHRQ’s Web team, and with AHRQ’s program team for third-level domain Web sites.

**Use of AHRQ Branding Design and Logos**

AHRQ branding design elements must be included on all AHRQ products and communication materials, whether produced in-house or by a contractor. An OC managing editor can answer any questions on use of the AHRQ logo and branding design.

- Samples of AHRQ design elements/logos are provided in Section 7 of these guidelines.

- **Grantees** may not include HHS or AHRQ logos on their products.

- Products prepared under **contract** to AHRQ must include the HHS/AHRQ logos and may not contain contractor logos. Acknowledgment of the contractor’s role is usually given in the front matter.

- The HHS/AHRQ logo is only to be used on official, AHRQ-sponsored products.

**Proprietary Software**

Files should **not** be prepared in a manner that requires users to purchase a specific software program to access the information.

**Disclaimers and Disclosures**

**Disclaimers**

A disclaimer is used for reports developed under a contract or grant, to indicate the limitations of AHRQ’s responsibility for the content of the report, and any necessary cautions about its intended use. The disclaimer may be adapted to suit the needs of the individual project. It should be placed on the inside front cover of printed reports, and on the page following the title page of Web-only documents.

Examples of disclaimers for reports produced for AHRQ under contract are shown on the following pages.
General Disclaimer
A general disclaimer follows:

The findings and conclusions in this document are those of the author(s), who are responsible for its content, and do not necessarily represent the views of AHRQ. No statement in this report should be construed as an official position of AHRQ or of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Disclaimer for Multimedia Products
The following is a sample disclaimer for multimedia products (e.g., DVDs, Webinars, PowerPoint presentations) developed under contracts or grants and disseminated by AHRQ:

The (name of organization) and AHRQ have made a good faith effort to take all reasonable measures to ensure that this product is accurate, up to date, and free of error in accord with clinical standards accepted at the time of publication. Any practice described in this product must be applied by health care practitioners in accordance with professional judgment and standards of care in regard to the unique circumstances that may apply in each situation they encounter. The (name of organization) and AHRQ are not responsible for any adverse consequences arising from independent application by individual professionals of the content of this product to particular patient circumstances encountered in their practices.

Disclaimer of Conflicts of Interest
The following disclaimer may be used to show that there are no affiliations or financial involvements that conflict with the material presented in a report:

None of the investigators has any affiliations or financial involvement that conflicts with the material presented in this report.

Disclosures

Funding Statement
For materials developed under an AHRQ contract that may or may not be published (final reports and contract deliverables) and for grantee journal articles, a funding statement is required:

This project was funded under contract/grant number XXXX from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The opinions expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not reflect the official position of AHRQ or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
Public Domain Notice
This notice tells the reader whether the material is copyrighted or in the public domain. (Public domain applies to use in the United States only. Permission is needed for use in other countries). It should appear immediately following the disclaimer, either on the inside front cover (for printed reports) or on the page following the title page (for Web-only documents).

When a publication is entirely in the public domain, use the following notice:

This document is in the public domain and may be used and reprinted without special permission. Citation of the source is appreciated. Note: “…under the Social Security Act [42 USC 1320b-10 (a)(2)(B)], reprinting or distribution of AHRQ or other HHS materials for a fee is prohibited without prior specific, written authorization.”

When the entire publication is in the public domain, except for short copyrighted quoted passages or reproduced tables or figures that require permission to reproduce, use the following notice:

This document is in the public domain and may be used and reprinted without permission except those copyrighted materials that are clearly noted in the document. Further reproduction of those copyrighted materials is prohibited without the specific permission of copyright holders. Note: “…under the Social Security Act [42 USC 1320b-10 (a)(2)(B)], reprinting or distribution of AHRQ or other HHS materials for a fee is prohibited without prior specific, written authorization.”

When the entire document is copyrighted—as in special pre-approved situations where AHRQ grants a contractor permission to retain copyright to a product—use the copyright notice on page 1–8. A special copyright notice appears on the United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) Web site, whose Recommendation Statements are not in the public domain (see page 1-8).

Use a simpler public domain statement on fliers or pamphlets. For example:

This material may be reprinted without further permission.

For all notices, include at the end: Public domain applies to use in the United States only. Permission is needed for use in other countries.

Statement on Accessibility
Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requires Federal agencies to make all electronic and information technology accessible to persons with disabilities. If your document contains figures or complex tables, they must be readable by assistive devices for the visually disabled, or else provide a text description of their content.
If the managing editor decides that meeting these requirements would entail an undue burden in a particular situation, you will be asked to add this disclaimer statement to your report, usually on the page following the title page:

Persons using assistive technology may not be able to fully access information in this report. For assistance contact AHRQ at https://info.ahrq.gov [or other appropriate contact designated by the managing editor].

For further information on accessibility, see Appendix 2-C.

Copyright, Licensing Agreements, Trademarks, and Related Intellectual Property Requirements

This subsection outlines the key copyright principles that AHRQ staff, grantees, and contractors need to understand as they develop print and Web-based documents. It provides links to sites that provide authoritative information on these issues. Sample forms for obtaining permissions and implementing licensing agreements are provided in Appendix 1-A.

Statutory Basis of Copyright

U.S. Code, Title 17 – Copyrights. The statute states that articles, books, photographs, and other copyrightable materials (such as software) belong to the authors upon creation or to the persons or institutions to which they have assigned the copyright.

International Copyright

Copyright protection in a particular country depends on the laws of that country. However, most countries offer copyright protection to foreign works according to international copyright treaties and conventions. If you are seeking foreign protection for a product, consult International Copyright Relations of the United States, a publication of the U.S. Copyright Office, which lists the major bilateral and multinational agreements and countries that are parties to specific agreements.

Signing Copyright Forms—Duties of Federal Employees

Employees of the Federal Government who submit articles to journals for publication must not assign copyright to the journal. Work done by Federal employees is not protected by the Copyright Act, and copyright ownership cannot be transferred. The following statement should be used if a Federal employment option is not provided on the journal’s copyright form:

I was an employee of the U.S. Federal Government when this work was completed and prepared for publication. Therefore, it is not protected under the Copyright Act, and copyright ownership cannot be transferred.
Reprinting Copyrighted Materials

Fair Use
A common issue for government employees, grantees, and contractors is the use of material from copyrighted publications in reports or documents to be published by AHRQ. The ability to directly quote short passages of text relevant to a particular point is protected under the Fair Use doctrine. Short passages (typically several paragraphs or less) can be quoted without permission, but the copyrighted sources must be indicated in the text or by a footnote or endnote. The ideas from a copyrighted publication can be summarized in your own words, but the author(s) of the original idea should be referenced.

Excerpting Content
Copyright must be taken into account when reproducing material written by others, including tables and figures that were first published in copyrighted publications, photographs and illustrations, software applications, and multimedia content. To use any of these materials, the AHRQ-associated author needs written permission from the copyright holder to reproduce the item. A copy of the permission must accompany any document delivered to AHRQ.

In some cases, the copyright holder, often a journal or book publisher, may charge a fee to use the material. At a minimum, copyright holders will require the reprinted item to run with a statement, such as “Reprinted with permission from J Reason. Human Error. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990, p.175.”

Tables, Graphs, and Figures
If you create a diagram, graph, or a new table using only part of the data from a copyrighted source, you may be able to cite the item without asking for permission to reprint. If changes are minor and you are using most of the original content, request permission from the source to adapt the material. The changes have to be significant so that the item is sufficiently different than its source to be considered a distinct product. Once permission to adapt the material is received, the item would appear with a statement along the lines of, “Adapted from Donabedian A. Explorations in Quality Assessment and Monitoring: The Definition of Quality and Approaches to Its Assessment. Volume I. Ann Arbor, MI: Health Administration Press, 1980.”

Photographs
Permission is needed to reproduce photographs that are under copyright protection. An exception to this is if the photo is in the public domain (for example, if it was taken specifically for the Federal Government’s use or if it is old enough to be out of copyright). With regard to photographs under copyright protection, you first must determine who owns the rights to the image. Sometimes, the photographer, not the publisher, retains the copyright. The credit line under the picture in a book or journal/magazine/newspaper article should state who the copyright owner is, if it is not held by the publisher. For AHRQ publications, photographs should be accompanied by a

Revised November 2016
notice, for example, “Copyright [or ©] 1956, Time-Life Books.” If the photographer’s name is known, it should be part of the credit line as well (e.g., “Photograph by Ansel Adams, copyright 1967 by National Geographic.”). A sample permission form for the use of photographs is provided in Appendix 1-A.

**Digital and Electronic Content**

Digital or electronic content is subject to the same protections as print products with some additional provisions specific to online resources. Consult with AHRQ on licensing and permission considerations for the development of electronic databases or Web-based tools.

**Reprinting From the Internet**

Special care is needed when excerpting or reprinting material from Web sites. Current copyright law suggests that posted material is considered to be under copyright by the author immediately upon its creation, even if no copyright notice is given. Ask permission to reprint posted messages if an email address is given for the author; otherwise, cite the Web site and the date of posting, if indicated.

For both text and graphics, the original source should be consulted to ensure the accuracy of quoted or copied material found on a Web site other than that of the original writer or publisher. Text may have been misquoted, and photographs and other graphics may have been altered.

**Copyright of Grantees’ Work**

Grantees may copyright their work, such as tools and products; however, the Federal Government has the right to use the work for its own purposes, as long as it does not distribute the products outside the Agency.

**Licensing Agreements**

In general, contractors may not copyright products they create on behalf of AHRQ because contract deliverables are the property of the Federal Government.

However, contract project officers may, in certain circumstances, elect to allow contractors to share rights to the materials by negotiating a licensing agreement after AHRQ receives the deliverable. In these situations, the contractor retains the copyright and the Federal Government has the license to disseminate the products. The Federal Government must indicate who holds the copyright for the tools and products. The licensing agreement can be in the form of a letter. (See a sample form in Appendix 1-A.) When the Agency distributes the material, it will include a disclaimer and copyright notice in the packaging. For further information contact the OC managing editor assigned to the project.

**Copyright Notices**

A notice should be provided of the existence of copyrighted material, as follows:
• When an entire print or electronic document is copyrighted, the notice should be placed on the back of the title page or in another appropriate location in the front matter. (See above, Public Domain Notice.)

• When copyrighted material pertains only to particular photographs, tables, illustrations, or other graphic materials, an abbreviated copyright notice should be placed directly under the copyrighted item.

• For DVDs and other electronic media, the notice should be included in the sleeve or wallet.

A sample copyright notice follows for use in situations where AHRQ has concluded a licensing agreement for the use of a copyrighted product:

“The (description of item), (title of product), is the intellectual property of (name of organization). The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) has a nonexclusive, royalty-free, worldwide license to use and disseminate the work and to authorize others to use it in their delivery of health care or for quality improvement and educational purposes. The author/owner hereby assures health care professionals, physicians, nurses, and hospital systems that use of the (description of item), distributed by or through AHRQ, in their practices is permitted. Each user is granted a royalty-free, non-exclusive, non-transferable license to use the product in accordance with the guidance contained in the work.

The product may not be changed in any way by any user. The product and its contents may be used and incorporated into other (training/educational/specify) programs on the condition that no fee is charged by the reproducer of the product or its contents for its use. The product may not be sold for profit or incorporated in any profit-making venture without the expressed written permission of (name of author/owner organization/copyright holder).”

Additional Protections for Materials Published by HHS and its Agencies

In addition to copyright protections for some AHRQ products, reprinting of AHRQ (and other HHS or HHS Agency) publications without permission for commercial purposes is also prohibited under a section of the Social Security Act (42 United States Code 1320b-10). Although originally written to prohibit commercial use of Social Security and Medicare logos for commercial purposes, another paragraph in the subsection describing “Prohibited Acts” covers all HHS publications bearing a Departmental or Agency logo:

2(B) No person may, for a fee, reproduce, reprint, or distribute any item consisting of a form, application, or other publication of the Department of Health and Human Services unless such person has obtained specific,
written authorization for such activity in accordance with regulations which the Secretary shall prescribe.

Violators of this section of the Social Security Act can be fined up to $5,000 per printed or electronic copy sold without permission—and even more for commercial use or audio-video materials.

If a staff member, grantee, or contractor finds a commercial publisher or bookseller reprinting AHRQ-funded reports and selling them for a profit, please alert the AHRQ Office of Communications. If the use was not with permission, the Office of Communications will contact the Office of the General Counsel to take appropriate action.

**Documenting and Filing Permissions**

AHRQ requires authors to provide to the OC managing editor a copy of the written permission they received to use copyrighted material; also, to give credit to the copyrighted source in a footnote. Example:


The complete citation for the source of the copyrighted material should be included in the reference list. If a table or figure is compiled from data from a number of sources, each source should be listed in a footnote at the bottom of the item, and the complete citation should be included in the reference list. Indication should be given if the table or figure has been adapted.

Samples of copyright permission forms are provided in Appendix 1-A.

**Trademarks and Trade Names**

- Registered trademarks must be reflected in print or Web copy by using the™ or ® symbols. Use the symbols on first mention in each chapter and in major headings.

- Trade or brand names of drugs or products must be avoided. For a trademarked or a brand name of a drug, use the generic name whenever possible. Use the Physicians’ Desk Reference® to determine the drug’s generic name.

- Any constraints on using the materials must be specified.

- For information about trademarks, see Appendix 1-B.

**Additional Information**

Additional information on copyright and the use of copyrighted materials can be obtained from the U.S. Copyright Office, which has links to copyright management organizations, such as the Copyright Clearance Center. The Copyright Clearance Center helps businesses and academic institutions pay fees for uses of copyright material that do not
fall under the Fair Use protections. The AHRQ Information Resources staff collaborates with the Copyright Clearance Center.

AHRQ staff authors, project officers, and contractors should work with managing editors in AHRQ’s Office of Communications to help them decide what permissions are needed for their project.

Authorship and Credit

Listing Authors With Their Affiliations
A separate list of authors with their affiliations may also be provided in the front matter of a scientific or technical report.

Listing Credentials After an Author’s Name
The professional credentials listed after an author’s name help establish a publication’s credibility. They should be relevant to the topic, the intended audience, and the author’s contribution to the publication. Editors should be guided by the author’s preferences.

Credentials should be listed in the following order:

- Academic and professional degrees, with the higher-ranked degree first
- Licenses or other State-issued designations
- Professional certifications
- Honors, including fellowships in honorary societies

As a general rule, no more than three credentials should be given.

Acknowledgments
Acknowledgments are optional. Short acknowledgments can be included in the front matter; longer lists of acknowledgments may warrant an appendix. Acknowledgments should describe briefly the specific substantive contribution an individual or organization made. They should call attention to special efforts, and should avoid suggesting that individuals are being thanked for performing their paid duties. Do not include AHRQ staff. The acknowledgments may recognize contractor affiliation, but no outside logo may be used. For example:

We thank John Doe, Ph.D., Professor of Environmental Health Sciences at the XXX School of Public Health, and Jane Roe, M.D., M.Sc., Associate Professor of Medicine at the XXX School of Medicine, for their valuable advice on this document.

Revised November 2016
Editorial Style, Usage, and Punctuation

Resources

Style Manuals


- AMA Manual of Style. For issues of scientific and medical usage not addressed by GPO, we ask you to refer to the American Medical Association Manual of Style.

- Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. Refer to this manual for social science terminology and usage.

- Associated Press Stylebook. Refer to this manual for materials such as press releases intended for publication in newspapers, magazines, and other journalistic outlets.

Dictionaries

- Standard English usage. We suggest Webster’s Third New International Dictionary.

- Medical usage. We suggest Dorland’s Illustrated Medical Dictionary.

Quick Tips on Usage and Style

The following sections list helpful tips from GPO, along with AHRQ style preferences.

General Usage and Stylistic Considerations

- Data. The word “data” takes a plural verb. “Datum” is the singular form of data.

- Sex versus gender. “Sex” refers to male or female physical characteristics. “Gender” distinguishes masculine and feminine social roles.

- People versus persons. “People”—not persons—is the plural of “person.” Exception: do not correct this in article or book titles in reference lists.

- Comparisons. Say “compared with” not “compared to.”

- Use. Not utilize.

- Subjects without content. Avoid beginning sentences with “it” or “this” when “it” or “this” has no referent.

- Prevention. Say “preventive,” not “preventative.”
Statistical Usage

- **p-values.** We prefer lower case regular (p<0.05).

- **Confidence intervals.** Use 95% CI, 3.0 to 6.1. This format makes it clear that the interval is a range; it also prevents confusion between negative signs and hyphens.

- **Probabilities.** When comparing probabilities, be precise. Use “[however many times] as likely” rather than “more likely,” “less likely,” or “very likely.” (Example: Say the odds of getting cancer = 5.7/1000 for women and 17/1000 for men. This means that men are about 3 times as likely to get cancer as women.)

- **Comparisons.** To achieve precision and enable the reader to imagine the importance of your results, report them in comparative terms to describe the magnitude of effect (units, relative risks, absolute terms), when applicable. For example, if the risk of cancer in men is 3/1000 and the risk in women is 6/1000, then the relative risk for women is 2 (twice the risk in men). Use all three terms to provide a full description.

- **Significance.** Ensure that terms such as “inconclusive,” “inadequate,” “insufficient,” “inconsistent,” and “significance” are used consistently and correctly. “Statistical significance has a precise meaning.

- **Equivalence.** Use the technical terms “equivalent,” “noninferior,” and “superior” appropriately.

Medical Usage

- Medical language should be precise. In this example—“as shown on mammography or other imaging”—the techniques are doing the showing and not the images produced by them. A more accurate description would be: “as shown on a mammogram or other radiographic image.”

- Cancer is a general term referring to both carcinomas and sarcomas.

- Taxonomic terms are always italicized (e.g., *Clostridium difficile* or *C. difficile*). Note that the term is spelled out at first usage.

- Patients and study subjects should be described with humane language:
  - Diabetic patients or patients with diabetes, rather than diabetics.
  - The treatment failed to alleviate the patient’s symptoms, rather than the patient failed treatment.
The patient reported chest pain, rather than the patient complained of chest pain.

**Titles of Reports**

Titles of reports should be brief yet informative. The following tips should help achieve this goal:

- If possible, keep the title to a maximum of 10 words. A short subtitle is optional.

- In general, do not use acronyms in titles. However, if spelling out a term would make the title too long or incomprehensible, or if the acronym is so familiar to the audience that the spelled-out term would be awkward, use the acronym rather than the spelled-out term. Never use both spelled-out term and acronym in a title. (For the purposes of this rule, headings are treated like text, not like titles.)

**General Punctuation**

- **Spacing at end of sentences.** Use a single space after the period at the end of a sentence.

- **Serial comma.** For elements in a series, use a comma before the conjunctions “and,” “or,” and “nor” (e.g., dog, cat, and bird).

- **Et al.** Use a comma before “et al.” in a reference list (see below under References).

- **Em dash.** Use an em dash (—), with no spaces before or after, to separate phrases or clauses from the rest of a sentence.

- **En dash.** Use an en dash (–) for compound terms when one element of a compound is itself a multi-word element (e.g., New York–New Jersey bridge), and for numeral ranges (e.g., 10–20 or 1999–2000) within the body of the text. (In a reference lists, use hyphens for ranges of pages.)

**Bulleted Lists**

For a simple list consisting only of words or phrases, do not use periods at the end of the items:

The store has three locations:

- Silver Spring
- Wheaton
- Rockville
If the list contains full sentences, include periods at the end of each item:

The man noticed three things in the waiting room:

• The clock was slow.
• The plants needed to be watered.
• The magazines were dated 1985.

If one item in a list requires a period, all items get periods:

The researchers were very interested in three topics:

• Health care quality.
• Grants.
• The National Healthcare Disparities Report. The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality publishes this report annually.

**Hyphens**

• Hyphenate descriptive words when they modify a noun (e.g., lipid-modifying treatment, patient-centered communication, core-needle biopsy).

• Hyphenate the following words only when they are used as modifiers (e.g., long-term care).
  
  ◦ In-depth analysis
  ◦ Long-term care
  ◦ Short-term memory
  ◦ Up-to-date statistics

• Do not hyphenate adverbs when they are used descriptively with an adjective (e.g., developmentally based models, clinically relevant dose).

• Use hyphens for ranges of pages in reference lists. (Use en-dashes for numeral ranges within the body of text.)

**Hyphenated Prefixes**

Prefixes are not hyphenated in AHRQ style, unless the compound produces an unreadable or ambiguous word, or the original word is a proper noun, for example:
• Anti (e.g., anticoagulant; but anti-inflammatory, anti-AIDS)
• Co (e.g., codirector, but co-occurrence)
• Non (e.g., nonopioid, but non-Hispanic)
• Post (e.g., postsurgical, postmarketing; but post-test, post-Darwinian)
• Pre (e.g., preterm)
• Re (e.g., rebiopsy; but re-creation vs. recreation)

**Compound Words**

• The following appear as one word:
  ◦ Database
  ◦ Dataset
  ◦ Decisionmakers
  ◦ Decisionmaking
  ◦ Email
  ◦ Followup (one word if used as a noun, but two words if used as a verb, such as “the doctor will follow up with you in a few days”)
  ◦ Online
  ◦ Policymakers
  ◦ Policymaking

• Words beginning with “anti,” “non,” or “co” are used as compounds unless the compounding produces an unreadable or ambiguous word. (e.g., prefer anti-inflammatory, See above, under Hyphens.)

• Do not compound the following:
  ◦ Use “health care” as two words, except in the Agency’s name or if it is used as one word in official titles.
  ◦ Quality of life, except when used as an adjective (quality-of-life outcomes).
Acronyms

• Define all acronyms in the text at the first mention in each chapter or major report section (i.e., in the text or headings but not the title).

• The first usage should be followed by the acronym in parentheses—for example, angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors (ACEIs).

  ➢ Exception: do not define HIV/AIDS.

• After first usage, use the acronym consistently.

• Use acronyms judiciously. If a term is used only a handful of times in a document, an acronym may not be necessary.

• Avoid using “the” before the acronyms AHRQ, FDA, and NIH.

• List all acronyms and abbreviations at the bottom of figures and tables.

Abbreviations

• Spell out standard medical abbreviations—such as SAMe (S-adenosyl methionine), HbA1c (hemoglobin A1c), MRSA (methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus)—at first usage. In general, place the spelled-out version first, followed by the abbreviation in parentheses. (There may be exceptions, when the abbreviation is the focal point of the sentence.)

• Spell out “United States” when used as a proper noun. Use the abbreviation “U.S.” when used as an adjective.

• Spell out these standard abbreviations when they are in text and abbreviate them when they are within parentheses:

  ° Et cetera (etc.)

  ° For example (e.g.)

  ° That is (i.e.)

  ° Versus (vs.)

• Be careful to distinguish between e.g. (an example from a larger class) and i.e. (an explanation of the term that has been described in the preceding phrase).

• Spell out “percent” in text, but use % in tables, figures, charts, graphs, and parentheses.
Numerals

- Use numerals for time, measurement, and money (e.g., 2-year followup, 4 weeks, 4 percent, 10 cm, $5 million) and for the number 10 and greater. Write out everything else (six cats, nine oranges, three-ply, fivefold).

- Use numerals for ordinal numbers beginning with 10th (in text and footnotes).

- Numerals are also preferred in charts and in parentheses; for example (n=3 studies).

Capitalization

- Avoid long strings of capitalization, bold, and italics in text.

- Capitalize the following in text as well as headings:
  - The titles and subtitles of the report.
  - The words Federal, State, Nation, and Federal Government. However, do not capitalize nationwide, statewide, local, or federally.
  - Capitalize the Web in “Web site” and “Web conference.” Also capitalize Webcast, Weblog, and Webinar, as one word.
  - Capitalize offices and officers related to AHRQ programs when used as titles: e.g., John Doe, Project Officer; Mary Roe, Task Order Officer.

- In titles and headings, capitalize the following:
  - Prepositions with four or more letters (With, From, Between).
  - All 4-letter demonstrative pronouns (This, That).
  - All 2- and 3-letter verbal forms (To [in an infinitive], Am, Be, Is, Was, Has, Have).
  - Each word in a hyphenated term with initial caps (Off-Label Use of Drugs).

  ➢ Exception: Evidence-based Practice Centers

- Do not capitalize in text:
  - The words “syndrome” and “disease” (e.g., Prader-Willi syndrome, Paget disease).
Medical conditions (e.g., type 2 diabetes).

Citations, Reference List, Footnotes, and Bibliography

Citation Style
For citations and reference lists, AHRQ uses its own modification of the Vancouver Style®, which is similar to PubMed. A detailed explanation follows of how sources should be cited.

Rules for Citing Sources
For the in-text citations:

- Assign each source a number, in the order in which it is referred to in the text. When the same source is cited a second time, it retains its number.
- Provide a source or attribution for all statements of fact. For example, “Only two studies1,2 showed a positive outcome for this treatment approach.”

For the reference list:

- Format all references in AHRQ style; do not use the reference style of the source material.
- Cite in the reference list every reference used in the text.
- Ensure that every reference in the reference list is cited in the text.
- List only the first three authors, followed by a comma, then et al.
- Separate inclusive page numbers by a hyphen.
- To facilitate retrieval, add a document identifier if one is available, such as a PMID number for journal articles indexed by PubMed, an NTIS number for government reports, or a digital object identifier (DOI) for Web documents.

Cross-check to ensure that every reference used in the reference list is cited in the text and vice versa.

Citation Management Software
The use of reference management software, such as Procite®, EndNote®, or Reference Manager®, is recommended.

Citing Journals
- Author name(s) followed by initials (no periods). List up to three authors and then add a comma followed by “et al.” Period at the end of the author list.
• Full title of article, including subtitles, followed by a period. Sentence capitalization.

• Title of journal, abbreviated in Index Medicus style. However, do not italicize the journal title. (This is a deviation from Index Medicus style.)

• Year (month optional), followed by a semicolon, no space after.

• Volume, issue (optional, in parentheses), and page numbers; no spaces. Use a hyphen for a range of numbers.

• Add the PubMed identification (PMID) number to the end of each reference found in PubMed. This unique identifier can be obtained simply by searching for the reference in PubMed. Having it makes future retrieval easier.

Example: standard journal citation:


Example with more than three authors:


Note: The issue number is optional.

Example of a policy statement in a journal, where a committee is the author:


Note: The issue number is optional.

Example of an article where individuals are writing as participants in a program (the CERT at U. of Penn.). Because this journal may be unfamiliar, spelling out the institution’s name may help the reader recognize the source:

Strom BL, Schinnar R; Center for Education and Research on Therapeutics, University of Pennsylvania. Evaluating health information

Note: In the example above, a semicolon is used to separate the individual authors from the institutional author.

Example of an article in a journal supplement, with a related discussion:

Hadley J. Sicker and poorer—the consequences of being uninsured: a review of the research on the relationship between health insurance, medical care use, health, work, and income. Med Care Res Rev. 2003;60(2 Suppl):3S-75S; discussion 76W-112S. PMID: 12800687.

Example of an editorial in a journal:


Example of a magazine article without a by-line:

“Teach back” technique improves patient safety. Patient Education Management. 2007 April;44-5.

Citing Database Reviews and Other Public Health Publications
Use standard PubMed formats for the following kinds of documents, but do not italicize the journal titles:

- **Database Reviews:**
  

- **Other Public Health Publications:**
  

Citing Books

- Author name(s) followed by initials (no periods after initials). Comma between each author. After three authors, use a comma followed by “et al.”

- Title. Use title capitalization for the title of a work as a whole; sentence capitalization for titles of parts—chapters, articles in a series, and so forth.

- City of publication (followed by a colon), publisher (followed by a semicolon), and date. For the State, (used only when location of city is not clear), use the two-letter U.S. Postal Service abbreviation.
Use a period to separate each of the three major elements above (author, title, and publication information).

Examples: books with an individual author:


Example: book with an institutional author:


Example where both the city and State are needed:


Citing a Chapter in a Book or an Article in a Compendium

Note: The parts are in sentence case capitalization; the whole is in title case capitalization.

Examples: chapter in a book:


Note: Inclusive page numbers are preferred; the chapter is a less desirable alternative.

Examples: volumes in a series:


Note: The designation ed./eds. is abbreviated.

Example of a reference with specific page numbers:


A volume in an AHRQ series posted on the Web:


Citing Scientific and Technical Reports From Government Agencies

- Author name(s). Use “et al.” after three authors. Insert a comma before “et al.”

- Title of the article and/or individual publication within a series. Title capitalization for full-length reports.

- Name of the series.

- Publication or acquisition number.

- City (and state if necessary) of publication, followed by a colon.

- Agency or organization responsible for the series, followed by a semicolon.

- Date of publication.

- DOI number, if available.

- Statement of online availability, if applicable.

Examples: Reports with individual or institutional authors:


Example: Citation with DOI number:

doi:10.1036/073732658

Example: AHRQ compilations for which there are no authors:


Citing Grant or Contract Reports

• Author name(s).

• Full title of the report. Title capitalization.

• Status of the report, if given (final, draft, preliminary).

• Grantee or contractor.

• Grant or contract number.

• Publication or acquisition number.

• City of publication.

• Agency for which the report was prepared.

• Date (year with first three letters of month).
Example: grant or contract report


Example: series of case studies published under contract to AHRQ [from Julius]:


Citing Dissertations and Theses

- Author name.
- Full title of the report. Title capitalization.
- Publication type.
- Location and name of institution.
- Date of publication.

Example: dissertation


Example: thesis

Devins GM. Helplessness, Depression, and Mood in End-Stage Renal Disease [master’s thesis]. Montreal, Quebec: McGill University; 1981.

Citing Conference Proceedings

- Editor names(s).
- Title of publication. Title capitalization.
- Title of conference. Title capitalization.
- Dates and place of conference.
- City of publication, publisher, and date of publication.
Example: conference proceedings


In addition, papers presented at meetings should begin with:

- Author name(s).
- Full title of paper. Sentence capitalization.

Example: conference paper


Example: conference abstract


Citing a Publication With No Listed Author

When no author is listed for a reference, list the reference alphabetically by title (excluding “A,” “An,” or “The” if it is the first word). For government documents, the publishing agency often will be listed as the report author.

Citing Nonprint Data, Including Web Citations

When nonprint data are used, give the following information as applicable and available:

- Author name(s) followed by initials (no periods). Comma between each author. After three authors, use a comma followed by “et al."
- Title. Use title capitalization for the title of a work as a whole; sentence capitalization for titles of parts—chapters, articles in a series, and so forth.
- Type of medium (CD, DVD, and so forth).
- Source of data.
- Availability information (for example, Web URL).
- Date accessed, if a Web product.
Example: Web citation


Example: part of database


Example: Web site

Use the following simplified format:


Footnotes

Footnotes should not be confused with references. The reference list at the end of a report is a list of sources cited in the report. Footnotes, on the other hand, are used primarily to provide an explanation that, if included in the text, would interrupt its flow. The following rules apply:

- Use footnotes sparingly.
- Use superscript letters rather than numbers.
- Tables and figures are likely to need footnotes, and may also include citations to the reference list. Cite the source by letter in the body of the table, provide an abbreviated reference at the foot of the table, and list the source(s) in the reference list.
- Provide an alphabetical list of all acronyms and abbreviations at the foot of the table.

Bibliographies

A bibliography should be distinguished from a reference list. A reference list documents the sources of specific statements in the text of a literature review or report. A bibliography can serve various broader purposes: to document the sources used in developing a paper or report, whether or not they were discussed specifically in the text; to evaluate the opinions of others who have written on a topic; or to provide suggestions for further reading.
The structure of a bibliography will depend upon its purpose. Most often, it is arranged alphabetically by its first element: either by author, or in the case of a document without an author, by title.

**Type Specifications for Print or Web Manuscripts**

Contractors are asked to submit material to AHRQ for publication as a final manuscript. **Type specifications provided here are for word-processed documents only.** Information on preparation of documents for the Web is available in Section 2 of these guidelines. Please follow this document’s guidelines for how manuscript submissions should be formatted. In addition to the examples provided, AHRQ can provide sample publications for contractors or grantees to use as references.

**Please note:** These specifications are for final contract reports and other generic reports. Use these specifications as guidance only. These specifications do not apply to brochures, booklets, and other desktop published products. Samples provided are for word-processed documents only.

**Front Matter**

Title page:

- Series title is 18-point bold Arial, title caps
- Main title is 20-point bold Arial, title caps
- Remainder is 12-point Times New Roman

Preface heading is 16-point Arial, flush left.

Contents heading is 16-point Arial, flush left. Use dot leaders before page numbers.

The contents lists chapter titles plus two levels of headings. Include a list of all figures, tables, and appendixes at the end of the contents.

**Report Body**

Text is 12-point Times New Roman.

Footnotes are 10-point Times Roman, flush left with a block indent. Use superscript numerals (1,2) for ordered references.

**Headings**

The logical order of your document is made clear by the headings, which provide essential signposts to your readers. Take care to develop a plan for the headings and maintain it throughout the document.
Groups of related headings should be parallel in grammatical construction. Headings should be short and clear. In general, do not use full sentences or questions as headings.

- Be sparing with headings, as too many levels of subordination will confuse the reader. A series of four levels of headings is provided below, in descending order of prominence. Use judgment in choosing the headings. For example, if the deepest level of subordination in your document consists of short paragraphs that really require run-in headings, but you need only two levels of subordination, you may want to choose Levels 1 and 3.

Please use the styles below for your report headings:

- Chapter headings are 18-point Arial, bold, flush left, initial caps. All printed chapters begin on a right (odd) page and all Web-only chapters begin immediately after the previous chapter.

- Level-1 headings are 16-point Arial, bold, centered, initial caps.

- Level-2 headings are 14-point Arial, bold, flush left, initial caps.

- Level-3 headings are 12-point Times Roman, bold, run-in with a period, paragraph indent of .25, first word capitalized.

- Level-4 headings are 12-point Times Roman, italic, run-in with a period, paragraph indent of .25, first word capitalized.

Tables and Figures
Text figures and text tables can be placed either in the chapter near their call-outs or at the end of each chapter. If they are placed at the end of the chapter, provide the table or figure number in the title.

Headings for tables and figures are 10-point Arial, bold, flush left, first word capitalized. They are numbered sequentially throughout the document with a period after the number.

Continued headings use the word “continued” in parentheses (continued) at the end of the heading.

Text for tables and figures is no smaller than 10-point Arial, except for unusually large tables, where 9 point may be warranted.

Table footnotes are 9-point Times Roman, flush left. Use superscript symbols (*,#) or superscript lower-case alpha (a,b) for ordered references.

Back Matter
References and bibliography headings are 18-point Arial, bold, flush left, initial (title) caps.
Type Specifications for Desktop-Published Products

Periodically contractors are asked to submit materials to AHRQ for publication as final, typeset (desktop published) products. Please ask for samples of AHRQ products (i.e., fact sheets, brochures, DVDs, booklets) to gain a clear understanding of design concepts used at AHRQ.

Font sizes and graphics must be appropriate for the audience and culture. Many programs have an established “family of products” design that use colors and design elements that tie them together with a common theme. Please ask if your product is part of a larger program. See Section 7 for more information about design specifications.

If stock photographs are used, they must be purchased for AHRQ use and must be royalty-free.

Samples for Print or Web Documents

Sample Headings

Note: These sample headings are for word-processed documents only. Examples follow each entry.

Chapter headings are 18-point Arial, bold, flush left, initial title caps.

Introduction

Level-1 headings are 16-point Arial, bold, centered, initial title caps.

Workshop

Level-2 headings are 14-point Arial, bold, flush left, initial caps.

Workshop Scope

Level-3 headings are 12-point Times Roman, bold, run-in with a period, paragraph indent of .25, first word capitalized.

A new system. The workshop chair, all six session chairs, and the two keynote speakers articulated the characteristics of the ideal health care delivery system of the
future in their vision statements, without drawing the details of the structure. The new system is not merely an extension of the existing system but is fundamentally different.

Level-4 headings are 12-point Times Roman, italic, run-in with a period, paragraph indent of .25, first word capitalized.

A *patient-centered system*. At the center of the system is the patient and their family. Care is personalized for them, with consistency throughout the lifespan, and memory of their preferences and particularities.
Sample: Inside front cover for a final report

This page is usually blank in printed documents.
Final Contract Report

Industrial and Systems Engineering and Health Care: Critical Areas of Research

Prepared for:
Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857
www.ahrq.gov

Contract No. 290-2007-10055

Prepared by:
Patrick Romano, M.D., M.P.H.
University of California, Davis

Peter Hussy, Ph.D.
RAND Corporation

Dominique Ritley, M.P.H.
University of California, Davis

AHRQ Publication No. 09(10)-0073
May 2010
[For grantee articles, final reports, and contract deliverables that AHRQ publishes:]
The findings and conclusions in this document are those of the author(s), who are responsible for its content, and do not necessarily represent the views of AHRQ. No statement in this report should be construed as an official position of AHRQ or of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Disclaimer of Conflict of Interest
None of the investigators has any affiliations or financial involvement that conflicts with the material presented in this report.

Funding Statement
This project was funded under contract/grant number XXXX from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The opinions expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not reflect the official position of AHRQ or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Public Domain Notice
This document is in the public domain and may be used and reprinted without special permission. Citation of the source is appreciated.

[Or,]

This document is in the public domain and may be used and reprinted without permission except those copyrighted materials that are clearly noted in the document. Further reproduction of those copyrighted materials is prohibited without the specific permission of copyright holders.

Statement on Accessibility
Persons using assistive technology may not be able to fully access information in this report. For assistance contact AHRQ at http://info.ahrq.gov [or other appropriate contact designated by the managing editor].

Suggested Citation
Acknowledgments

We thank John Doe, Ph.D., Professor of Environmental Health Sciences at the XXX School of Public Health, and Jane Roe, M.D., M.Sc., Associate Professor of Medicine at the XXX School of Medicine, for their valuable advice on this document.
Contents

Executive Summary ..............................................................................................................
Introduction ...........................................................................................................................
Risk Factors .......................................................................................................................
Key Questions .....................................................................................................................
Uses of This Report .........................................................................................................
Methods ................................................................................................................................
  Literature Review Methods...........................................................................................
    Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria....................................................................................
    Literature Search and Retrieval Process ....................................................................
  Literature Synthesis ........................................................................................................
    Development of Evidence Tables and Data Abstraction Process .........................
    Quality Rating of Individual Studies .......................................................................... 
    Strength of Available Evidence ..................................................................................
Results .................................................................................................................................
Discussion ..............................................................................................................................
References and Included Studies .....................................................................................
List of Acronyms/Abbreviations ....................................................................................... 

Figures
Figure 1. Figure name ........................................................................................................

Tables
Table 1. Table name ...........................................................................................................

Appendixes
Appendix A. Exact Search Strings ..................................................................................
Appendix B. Sample Data Abstraction Forms .................................................................
Appendix C. Evidence Tables ...........................................................................................
Appendix D. Excluded Studies .......................................................................................... 
Appendix E. Peer Reviewers .............................................................................................
Submission of Documents to AHRQ

General Procedures

1. Adhere strictly to the font types, sizes, margins, spacing, and other guidance in these Publishing and Communications Guidelines. Consult with the AHRQ managing editor regarding any special formatting requirements.

2. Use “Styles” in Microsoft Word to designate the font type and size for titles, heading, and subheadings. Doing so facilitates conversion to a 508-compliant document.

3. Remove any contractor graphics and logos.

4. Submit the entire report electronically, either in a single Microsoft Word, Excel, or PowerPoint file or a series of files; as an attachment to an email or on a flash drive. **PDF files are not acceptable as primary submissions but a PDF of the entire series of files may accompany the submission.**

5. Include the title page, citation, preface, and acknowledgments in one document called “front matter.” OC will add minimal front matter information to reports, including the Agency logo, AHRQ publication number, and the publication date.

6. Name the remaining files separately, indicating clearly what they are (i.e., structured abstract, table of contents, executive summary, chapter name and number, table number, appendix number, or references). Add the date of submission to each file name for purposes of version control.

7. Paginate the report consecutively, according to the table of contents, with the exception of an executive summary and any appendixes, which should be numbered independent of the report.

8. At the very end of the editorial process, “delink” all databases (such as EndNote) from the final electronic files. Ensure that any data that would be pulled from a database is included in the final submission. EndNote can generate a final standalone reference list. Consult with the AHRQ managing editor about the appropriate timing of “delinking.”

9. The reference list should be numbered sequentially, and no reference should be listed more than once. **Note: If inserting endnotes using the MS Word endnote function, use the cross-reference function to cite the same reference more than once.**

10. Check your report for copyrighted materials. Include with your final submission a copy of permissions you received to use copyrighted material. **Be sure that all copyrighted material includes attribution to source** (see Appendix 1-A).
Procedure for Reports Submitted as Final Copy
Submit the entire report in hard copy, in a form that can be used for printing, with spacing, pagination, and margins. Submit electronic files as described above. Do not bind the final report.

Submitting Figures, Charts, Graphs, and Tables
Figures, charts, graphs, and tables should be placed in the text of the manuscript and should be numbered sequentially in the text (Figure 1, Table 1, and so forth).

Figures, charts, and graphs must be provided in an editable format as well as the image pasted into the Word document. The figures, charts, and graphs should be created in Adobe Illustrator and saved as either Illustrator or eps files. Minimum resolution is 300 dpi. Tables should be created in Word. Microsoft Visio, PowerPoint, and PDF are not acceptable formats for figures, charts, and graphs.

Procedure for Reports Submitted as Final Manuscript or Peer Review Copy
If binding the deliverable in a certain format is essential to the usefulness of the product, submit one bound hardcopy sample for AHRQ to use in developing formatted products.

Note: Grant Final Progress Reports must be submitted in accordance with instructions in Appendix 1-C.

Procedures for Print-Ready Products Submitted for Offset Printing
1. If submitting print-ready files, save them in their native page layout formats (i.e., Adobe InDesign) to a CD or flash drive. Formats such as Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint are not considered print-ready formats and cannot be used for offset printing.

2. Submit graphic files (illustrations, charts, graphs, and so forth), in their native format along with the files for any fonts that have been used in the publication. Save them to the same CD or flash drive as the page layout file. If the graphic files (eps or tif) include text, convert the text to outlines prior to saving the files.

3. Print-ready PDFs can also be accepted as long as the publication has been approved as “final” by AHRQ. Print-ready PDFs should be saved at maximum resolution and include bleed and crop marks. Colors should be either Pantone or CMYK.

4. Send a color printout of the document at actual size, including folioed pages, as well as documentation indicating the versions of software used, computer platform (Mac or PC), ink colors (Pantone or CMYK), number of pages, contact person, and other relevant information. GPO Form 952 provides an easy way to convey this information.
Procedures for DVD Products

If the contract stipulates that your final product will be a DVD, you must consult with your managing editor to determine the file format for any multimedia product you submit. If your final product will be a DVD, you must provide system requirements and directions for accessing the product. An example follows:

System Requirements

This DVD can be played in stand-alone DVD players and on Mac® and personal computers with DVD drives. The minimum hardware and software requirements for viewing the DVD on a PC or a Mac are:

Processor: 667 MHz Intel® Pentium® III processor or equivalent

Memory: 128 MB RAM

Screen Resolution: 800 x 600

Color: 16-bit

Sound card: 16-bit sound card and speakers

Peripherals: DVD drive

Directions for Use

The DVD is designed to start automatically when it is inserted into any stand-alone DVD player or computer with a DVD drive. If it doesn’t:

For DVD Player: Press the Play button for the video to begin.

For Windows® PC: Open Internet Explorer, select your DVD drive, and double click Play.

For Mac: Double click on the icon to open the disk in the Finder and then double click on the file.

The Editorial and Production Processes at AHRQ

This section provides an overview of the different types of editorial review a document goes through once it is received by the AHRQ managing editor. It informs you about the three levels of editing most commonly undertaken, and shows you the checklists used by the editor.

Objectives of the Editorial Process

The objectives of the editorial process at AHRQ are to: (1) ensure that the manuscript is grammatically correct and in Government Printing Office (GPO) style; (2) improve its
consistency, clarity, and general readability; and (3) ensure that it conforms with AHRQ format and branding requirements. Regardless of level of edit or degree of difficulty, each editing assignment includes a general read-through of the manuscript, editing according to the requirements of the specific level of edit, monitoring of production aspects, proofreading, and a final review of the camera-ready document.

Levels of Edit
The publishing team in AHRQ’s Office of Communications (OC) has established an editorial policy that defines three “levels of edit.” Each print or electronic document received by the publishing team is assigned a level of edit according to its category and series within each category. Each level of edit indicates the degree of scrutiny and resource allocation that the document will receive.

Each level of edit includes a specified set of editorial tasks. A production schedule is established for each document, according to the level of effort desired and the time and labor resources available. This production schedule may be influenced by external factors such as a pre-specified AHRQ release date or a journal publication date.

The three levels of edit are described below:

1. **Production editing:** Minimal review for completeness, obvious errors in format, conformance with branding, and compliance with Government Printing Office style and *AHRQ Publishing and Communications Style Guidelines* (as appropriate). Production editing encompasses proofreading of page proofs and preparation of documents prior to final approval for printing or Web publishing.

2. **Copyediting:** This level encompasses all elements of production editing, plus attention to sentence and paragraph structure, parallel construction, conciseness, clarity, and consistency in terminology. Cross-references in the text are checked as well as the completeness, accuracy, and format of tables, charts, footnotes, and reference citations and lists. AHRQ’s copyediting level also includes one major substantive element: review of documents for policy implications and political sensitivities.

3. **Substantive editing:** This level encompasses all elements of production editing and copyediting, as well as direct efforts to improve the clarity, consistency, and readability of the work. Substantive editing may entail reorganizing and redrafting text, drafting transitions between sections, writing abstracts and summaries, recasting or developing tables and figures, and reviewing source documents to determine that they have been used and cited correctly.

Checklist of Standard Editorial Procedures
The following procedures are followed for all documents regardless of level of edit. The editor will check them off as they are completed:

- Call out first references to tables or figures in the margin (T1 for Table 1, F3 for Figure 3).
□ Number queries consecutively in the margin (Q1, Q2, Q3).

□ Create a separate query sheet, listing each query by number and detailing the concern. This separate document will facilitate communication with the author and AHRQ program staff by providing a quick overview of the major issues to be addressed.

□ In addition, embed all changes by using the “track changes” function and post all queries using the “comment” function.

□ Review the document for copyright permissions and credit lines.

**Production Editing Checklist**

Production editing is the least intensive of the three levels of edit undertaken at AHRQ. It entails both proofreading and elements of copyediting. The document is reviewed for completeness and for conformance with the format of the particular series to which it belongs and with GPO and AHRQ style. Obvious errors are identified and corrected. Tables and figures are reviewed and reference citations are checked for completeness and correctness of format. The need for copyright permissions is identified and permission or credit lines are created accordingly.

At this level, the editor focuses primarily on the mechanical basics rather than context or content. The production edit is used when only minimal editing is feasible, or as the final editorial review of an edited manuscript already in the production process.

Proofreading page proofs or final copy prior to approval for printing is a separate process to ensure that no elements of the text have been dropped as the document has moved through production. It is a final review for format, layout, and branding, and to ensure that no typographical errors have crept into or have been carried through the document during the process.

The production editor will check off each of the following tasks as they are completed:

□ Determine that component parts are present and in correct order.

□ Check for compliance with branding requirements and AHRQ identity and formatting.

□ Review title page and correct for compliance with AHRQ requirements.

□ Review title for appropriateness and length (10-word maximum).

□ Ensure that pages, tables, and figures are numbered in sequence.

□ Cross check contents page with text.

□ Check consistency and subordination of headings according to AHRQ guidelines.

□ Check factual information that can be readily verified (such as addresses, phone numbers, historical dates, AHRQ legislation numbers, publication number, grant or contract number, and so forth).
□ Ensure that all figures, tables, graphics, and other elements have copyright
  attribution and permission where appropriate.
□ Review and correct for GPO style.
□ Correct typographical errors.
□ Correct spelling errors.
□ Correct punctuation errors.
□ Correct capitalization errors.
□ Correct abbreviations and acronyms; spell out at first mention.
□ Ensure that symbols are used properly.
□ Correct use of numerals and units of measurement.
□ Correct race and ethnicity designations, per AHRQ style.
□ Ensure internal consistency in alphabetical or numeric sequences in lists, text,
  footnotes, tables, and figures.
□ Check cross-references in text to tables and figures.
□ Check that data discussed in text match the same data presented in tables and
  figures.
□ Check tables and figures for unified approach and format; query inconsistencies.
□ Check reference citations for completeness and format; check that all references
  cited are listed and that all listed are cited; check agreement of embedded
  references and reference list, in terms of author name spelling and year; query
  inconsistencies or indicate the need for verification if errors or omissions are
  found.

Copyediting Checklist
Copyediting includes all features of a production edit, plus attention to sentence and
paragraph structure, parallel construction, conciseness, clarity, and consistency in
terminology. The AHRQ copyeditor will check cross-references in text and the
completeness, accuracy, and format of tables, charts, footnotes, reference citations, and
lists. The copyeditor will also review for policy implications and political sensitivities. At
this level, the editor reviews the mechanical basics but also focuses on the readability and
sense of the document and provides thorough verification of data presented with careful
review of reference citations. This is an appropriate level of editorial review for most
types of documents to ensure an accessible, good-quality publication. The copyeditor will
check off the following tasks as they are completed:

□ Determine that component parts are present and in correct order.
□ Check for compliance with branding requirements and AHRQ identity and
  formatting.
□ Review title page and correct for compliance with AHRQ requirements.
□ Review title for appropriateness and length (10-word maximum).
□ Ensure that pages, tables, and figures are numbered in sequence.
□ Cross check contents page with text.
□ Check consistency of headings and subordination (AHRQ guidelines).
□ Check factual information that can be readily verified (such as addresses, phone numbers, historical dates, AHRQ legislation numbers, publication number, grant or contract number, etc.)
□ Ensure that subordinate heads follow logically.
□ Ensure that there are at least two entries for each level of subordination.
□ Add or delete subheads as needed to reflect content.
□ Reword or shorten headings to reflect content (3-5 words).
□ Ensure that all figures, tables, graphics, and other elements have copyright attribution and permission where appropriate.
□ Correct typographical errors.
□ Ensure that all sentences are complete.
□ Ensure that any incomprehensible statements are queried.
□ Shorten and clarify excessively long sentences.
□ Ensure that elements in a series are parallel.
□ Review and correct for GPO style.
□ Correct spelling errors.
□ Correct punctuation errors.
□ Correct capitalization errors.
□ Correct abbreviations and acronyms; spell out at first mention.
□ Ensure that symbols are used properly.
□ Correct use of numerals and units of measurement.
□ Correct race and ethnicity designations, per AHRQ style.
□ Ensure internal consistency in alphabetical or numeric sequences in lists, text, footnotes, tables, and figures.
□ Check cross-references in text to tables and figures.
□ Ensure that all tables and figures are specifically referenced in the correct order.
□ Verify data in text against tables and figures.
□ Check tables and figures for unified approach and format; query inconsistencies.
□ Ensure consistent use of headings and footnotes for tables.
□ Check for legends and x- and y-axis labels on charts and graphs.
□ Ensure that line art (figures, illustrations, etc.) is titled and clearly labeled.
Check reference citations for completeness and format; query inconsistencies or missing information.

Cross check reference citations in text against reference list for accuracy.

Reformat reference list and bibliography entries according to prescribed style.

Eliminate or rework derogatory, judgmental, or otherwise inappropriate comments.

**Substantive Editing Procedures**

Substantive editing includes all features of a production edit and copyedit, plus review for meaningful content to ensure that presentation is logical and coherent. This level of editing may involve reorganizing and redrafting text, writing transitions between sections, preparing abstracts and summaries, recasting or developing tables or figures, and reviewing source documents listed as references to ensure that they have been used and cited correctly.

This is the most complete and thorough type of editorial review. The editor evaluates and reworks the document to ensure coherent organization and understandable presentation. This level is reserved for documents that are intended to be high visibility publications that must meet the highest standards for professionalism and effective communication. It is especially important that the author and AHRQ program staff authorize all substantive changes.

The copyediting checklist is used in addition to any substantive rewriting and reorganization of the material.

**The Publications Process**

This information provides an overview of the steps involved in the publishing process.

1. Program Planning and Consultation
2. Manuscript Preparation DHHS Concept Clearance
   - Document is a deliverable
   - Document written/ adapted in house
2a. Manuscript Written/ Substantive Edit
2b. Program Review
2c. Revisions Incorporated, Draft Made Final
3. Copyedit and Queries Resolved
4. Program Reviews/ Revisions, As Needed
5. Desktop Publishing
6. Final Review Courtesy Copy Provided
   - Printing Preparation (if Web only, Skip to Step 8)
   - Web Preparation
7. Printing Preparation
8. Web Preparation
9. Distribution

Revised November 2016
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Program planning and consultation</td>
<td>Individual programs determine a need for a publication based on specific program requirements and AHRQ goals. Center/Office directors request OC publications planning and consultation services. A managing editor who will handle all aspects of the publishing and production process is assigned to the project. The managing editor meets with marketing and implementation and program staff to discuss the distribution plan, dissemination needs, format, presentation, clearance issues, and parameters of document (sections, length, need for appendices, data requirements, unusual style or content needs, or requests to specific staff or contract writers to prepare product). If OC staff or contractor will be drafting the document, timeframes for deliverables are negotiated, including Web requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Manuscript preparation, DHHS SCP clearance, if warranted (Note: Steps 2a-2c do not apply if the document is a contract deliverable)</td>
<td>Departmental Strategic Communications Plan (SCP) prepared for clearance, if warranted, because it is newsworthy, controversial, new information, or part of a public affairs campaign. Not required otherwise. Sensitive clearances are discussed with program officials and strategic planner. Meetings with strategic planner, marketing and implementation, and other program staff are held to discuss potential press or other related issues, including release events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2a</td>
<td>Manuscript written/substantive edit</td>
<td>Draft of product is written by the programs or materials are provided for use by contractor or OC staff writers in developing a draft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2b</td>
<td>Program review</td>
<td>Program revises document internally. Programs may circulate document to the AHRQ director or peer reviewers within or outside of Agency for comment. Documents prepared by OC managing editor or outside contractors are submitted for program review. OC and program negotiate production schedule. Files are submitted in paper and electronically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2c</td>
<td>Revisions incorporated, draft made final</td>
<td>Program/or OC managing editor reviews and incorporates comments of outside reviewers, as appropriate, and the document is revised to create final draft. If managing editor is working with an outside contractor, the editor provides feedback for revisions and ensures the contractor will submit deliverable product according to agreed-upon specifications, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Copyedit, queries resolved</td>
<td>Managing editor copyedits the document and resolves queries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step</td>
<td>Process Description</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Program/author reviews and approves edited manuscript. Program staff and managing editor meet to review editorial comments or author reviews and responds independently. Changes can be incorporated on electronic file either by author or by editorial staff. Corrected manuscript is proofread against editorial review to ensure accuracy. Final manuscript is circulated to any AHRQ or outside reviewers, as required. Any changes are incorporated. Program reviews and approves manuscript.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Desktop publishing. Document is sent electronically to desktop publishing for composition according to series layout and design. Document layout is proofread and examined for introduction of new errors and for format. All changes are marked and returned to desktop publishing for corrections.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Final review, courtesy copy provided. Managing editor reviews final changes and provides courtesy copy to program staff, strategic planner, and Deputy Director of Operations (Publishing) for review.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Printing preparation. Managing editor requests that desktop publishing staff submit final materials for printing through GPO. Desktop publishing staff prepares necessary printing forms that include job specifications (as agreed in step 2, above), such as paper stock, ink color, binding, quantity, distribution plan, and mailing instructions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Web preparation. Managing editor requests txt and pdf files of the manuscript from desktop publishing and e-mails them to “AHRQ WebAdmin” with context statement, directory/subdirectory placement, and any specific directions to the Web team. Web team codes the materials and provides test page for the editor to review. Material is then posted in accordance with releasing plan. Web-only documents do not have to be typeset and can be sent from managing editor to the Web team for coding and loading.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Distribution. Printed publications are mailed/shipped according to distribution list or distributed on the Web.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note about timelines.** The amount of time required for each step in the process depends on the size of the document, the complexity, and the level of editing required. Timeframes are also subject to negotiation at the beginning of the job and may need to be renegotiated if milestone target dates are missed by either the program client or OC for good cause.

**Explanation of levels of editing.** OC uses three levels of editing: Level 1—Production editing: usually proofreading with light copyediting; format, design, and layout; and printing and Web production. Level 2—Copyediting: usually includes everything in Level 1 PLUS a review for grammar, punctuation, style, content agreement, accuracy, reference citations, formatting. Level 3—Substantive Editing: usually includes everything
in Level 1 and Level 2 PLUS a significant amount of re-writing of the content of the document. Original writing is separate from Levels of Edit.

**Additional Information**

To discuss specific issues or to obtain additional guidance on publishing style specifications, contact:

Randie Siegel  
Deputy Director  
Office of Communications  
Email: randie.siegel@ahrq.hhs.gov  
Phone: 301–427–1852

Karen Fleming-Michael  
Director  
Division of Print and Electronic Publishing  
Office of Communications  
Email: Karen.Fleming-Michael@ahrq.hhs.gov  
Phone: 301–427–1798