Cochrane Fast-Track Service
Information for Authors

Summary

Cochrane has launched programme to pilot a fast-track editorial process for high-quality, high-impact review submissions.

As part of this pilot, authors may submit their completed review directly to the relevant Cochrane Review Group to enter the editorial process, as long as there is a protocol for the review that meets the criteria listed below.

The threshold for acceptance for these submissions will be high, and Cochrane standards enforced rigorously. We expect submitted manuscripts to be of publishable standard and to meet the criteria listed below. Consequently, authors can expect a higher rejection rate than with the non-Fast-Track submission process. We will be assessing submissions according to the associated Rejection Policy (Appendix 3 of the paper).

Our aim is for a three-month turnaround from submission to publication, but the feasibility of this will be tested as part of the pilot.

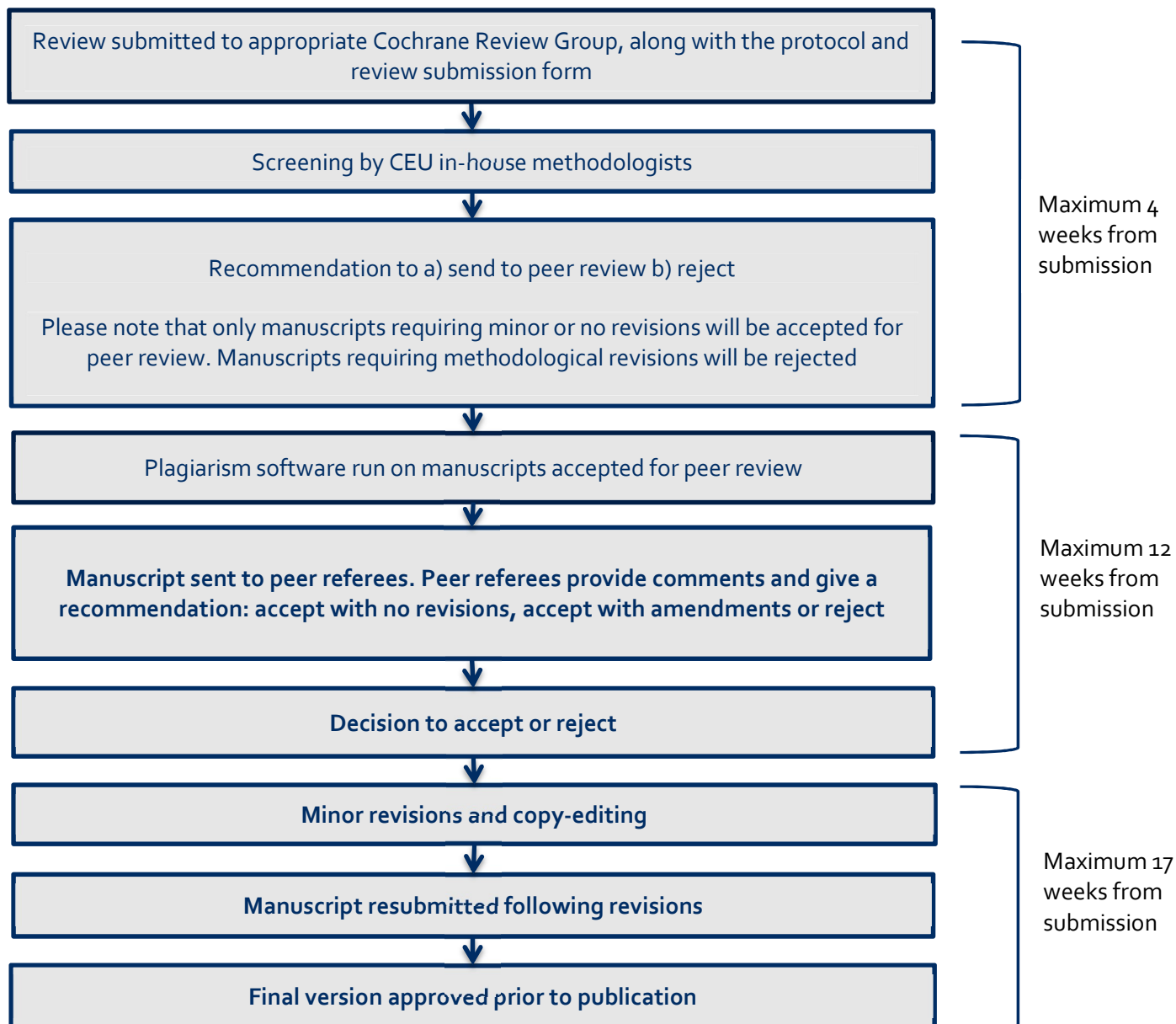## Criteria for reviews and protocols

- Standard intervention reviews are our main target, but we will accept other types of reviews as long as the author team have the required methodological expertise.

- Reviews must be written in English, submitted in RevMan, adhere to the Cochrane Style Manual and comply fully with the MECIR standards.

- Author teams should include methodologists and content experts in the field of the review topic (for example health professionals or informed consumers). At least one member of the team, either the lead or contact author, should be an experienced Cochrane author.

- Submitted reviews must be accompanied by a research protocol which may be - but does not need to be – a published Cochrane protocol.

- The review protocol must clearly state the research question, inclusion criteria and methods to conduct the review and provide sufficient detail to demonstrate that the protocol is consistent with the MECIR conduct standards for protocols.

- The protocol must be pre-registered in PROSPERO and may have been published elsewhere.

- The review topic area must be relevant for Cochrane, with clear justification of relevance to one or more external stakeholders.

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- Submitted reviews should require minor or no amendments. Any review requiring significant methodological revisions will be rejected.

- Reviews will be assessed according to the Rejection Policy (Appendix 3 of the paper).

Editorial Process and Timeline

Editorial process for the Cochrane Fast-Track Service.

Review submitted to appropriate Cochrane Review Group, along with the protocol and review submission form
Screening by CEU in-house methodologists
Recommendation to a) send to peer review b) reject Please note that only manuscripts requiring minor or no revisions will be accepted for peer review. Manuscripts requiring methodological revisions will be rejected

Maximum 4 weeks from submission

Plagiarism software run on manuscripts accepted for peer review
Manuscript sent to peer referees. Peer referees provide comments and give a recommendation: accept with no revisions, accept with amendments or reject
Decision to accept or reject

Maximum 12 weeks from submission

Minor revisions and copy-editing
Manuscript resubmitted following revisions
Final version approved prior to publication

Maximum 17 weeks from submission

Please direct any enquiries to Karla Soares-Weiser at ksoares-weiser@cochrane.org or Helen Wakeford at hwakeford@cochrane.org

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