

# Guidelines for Contributors



**Welcome to *Mentor Magazine*.** This is a monthly magazine which publishes articles and artwork aimed at prospective healthcare students. It includes a variety of written work, including educational articles, accounts of personal experiences and opinion pieces. We aim to prepare students for further, healthcare-related study, challenge readers' opinions and develop worthwhile pursuits in the healthcare professionals of the future. Our quarterly issues, released in September, December, March and June, are larger, printed anthologies, and our monthly issues, released in the interim months, are online.

We're excited to hear about your ideas and start working with you! **Before you get started, please carefully read this document in its entirety** that we have prepared to give you more information about the contribution process. These guidelines will provide you with everything you need to know about how to prepare and submit an article to *Mentor* magazine

## General Submission Guidelines

- We are pleased to accept and review ideas for submission from current school students, undergraduate students and professionals from any healthcare discipline, provided that the submissions are relevant to our target audience of UK prospective healthcare students.
- Please write your articles using Google Docs
- Our maximum word limit is 1,500 words, excluding tables and figures. Articles may be rejected on the basis of being too long.
- Font size 12 throughout, 1.15 line spacing and in an easily readable font (ideally Calibri).
- All figures should be included at the end of the article, with in-text markers to indicate their intended print position.
- All submissions must be original. This means that they should not have been previously published in any other format, in any other publication, in whole or in part.
- Check that you are referring to sources correctly and include a bibliography at the end of your article. See the section on referencing for further details.
- *Mentor* publishes articles on a rolling basis; we are unable to allocate issues to either the smaller, monthly online issues or the larger, quarterly print anthologies based on contributor preference.

## Steps & Timeline

Please find below an outline of the general process for producing content for *Mentor Magazine*:

1. Contributors will contact [mentormagazine@medicmentorfamily.org](mailto:mentormagazine@medicmentorfamily.org) to confirm their idea for submission.
2. Contributors will complete a plan, which should include:
  - Your agenda – what are you discussing and (if applicable) on which side of the argument will you fall?
  - A basic structure – what are the main points in your article and in what order will you address them?
  - If applicable, an idea of which sources you may draw on for information.
  - A rough idea of length and any additional material, such as artwork or diagrams.

A good plan is detailed enough that a stranger reading it could have a go at writing a first draft. For example, if your article is about diabetes mellitus, it is not enough to write 'explore different treatment options for diabetes'. You should write - at a minimum - 'explore different treatment options for diabetes, including lifestyle measures (specific diets and exercise), pharmacological treatments (metformin, sulphonylureas, SGLT-2 inhibitors, insulin), and bariatric surgery'.

3. We will confirm your plan within 7 days, offer any feedback or suggestions and ask you to write your first draft.
4. Contributors will submit their first draft within 14 days. Please see earlier in the document for submission guidelines via a Google Doc with your name in the title of the document.
5. We will return your draft with comments and suggestions within 10 days. Following this, there will be a period of back-and-forth between the contributor and editors to polish the article and make it ready for finalising.
6. Once your article has been finalised, it will go through a peer review process by healthcare professionals.
7. Once past peer review, we will be in touch to confirm publication of your article, which issue it will be in, and a link to either the online issue or to purchase a printed copy of the anthology. We can also provide you with a contributor certificate upon request.

The editing process is an inevitable fact of writing. The final version of your work is one which both you as a contributor and we as editors are happy with. Once your article is finalised, we may make small spelling and grammar changes but will not change anything more significant without your consultation.

After this, your hard work is done! For any queries regarding subscriptions and receiving copies of the magazine, please contact the admin team by using the Airtables form accessed through the bottom of this webpage: <https://medicmentor.co.uk/how-to-become-a-doctor-contact/>

Please note that working with an editor through any of these stages does not guarantee publication. While we try to publish as many of your articles as possible, whether your article is published or not will largely depend on you staying polite throughout the process and your ability to respond to feedback.

## Writing Your Article (Post Planning Stage)

- All submissions should be saved and sent as a Google Doc with your name and article title.
- Font size 12 throughout, 1.15 line spacing and in an easily readable font (ideally Calibri).
- Feel free to use italics as you wish. Do not use any bold font or underlines.
- It is hugely helpful if you take note of the points below. It ensures a smoother and more efficient editing process.
  - No double spacing after full stops. There should only be a single space after full stops, commas and other punctuation.
  - Do not use double punctuation or ellipses(!?) ...
  - Spell check using an English (UK) dictionary (fewer Z's and more U's).
  - No caps lock (except for acronyms, which should be explained at first use)
  - If there are sentences you are unsure about, highlight them and let us know we need to review them with extra care.
- Don't forget to proofread before submission. It does not create a good impression if your work is littered with easily corrected spelling and grammar mistakes.

## Copyright & Plagiarism

- Plagiarism - using another's work and passing it off as your own - is a very serious ethical offense in publishing and academia. It is even possible to commit plagiarism by poorly referencing your work and using poor note-taking skills when researching your topic (e.g. by copy and pasting text from a website or online journal, then forgetting that this was not in your own words when you come to write up your article). We have a zero-tolerance policy for intentional plagiarism, and this will result in our editorial team ending our work with you. More minor, unintentional cases of plagiarism will be looked at on a case-by-case basis.
- Copyright exists on any original work, regardless of whether it is marked as copyright or not. Any work that is protected by copyright law cannot be reproduced for work for Medic Mentor. It does not matter if you own a copy of the work, or even the original (for instance, a painting) - you must seek permission from the creator for the right to use it for anything other than personal research.
- You can usually use data you find in books and on websites, and replicate their tables and graphs, but you cannot copy the graph or table itself, even if referenced.
- You cannot use images you find online or otherwise, even if you take a picture of the image, without the creator's permission in writing. Our graphic designer will have access to generic images that will supplement your article.
- You cannot copy large swathes of text unless absolutely necessary to make your point (it usually isn't). Any text you use that was written by someone else, no matter how much, must be referenced.
- Any figures or tables taken from someone else's work require permission to be obtained.
- Obtaining permission also applies to quotes, adapted material and any other content taken from previously published works or unpublished but owned by a third party. The original source should be cited in the figure or table caption.

## Referencing

Whenever you make a claim in your scientific writing that is not simply common knowledge (e.g. the heart pumps blood around the body), this will need to be backed up by evidence from sources that you have used in your reading for the topic. This is where referencing comes in.

You must ensure that the sources you use are reliable and have limited bias. For example, Wikipedia and websites trying to push an agenda are not seen as reliable sources. When referencing your sources, you should include in-text citations using Vancouver referencing (parentheses notation), as well as a bibliography at the end with all your references listed.

Please see the following example for how you should reference your scientific articles:

### In-text citation (from one of your article paragraphs)

Cannabinoids have been used previously for their muscle relaxant effects; their antimicrobial benefits may be proposed for future use in dentifrices (1). A review by Braithwaite *et.al.* (2) also showed varying efficacy of the substances for use in childhood epilepsy, pain, and as a sleeping agent.

**Bibliography (at the end of your article)**

1. Antoniou S. Cannabinoids - high expectations? *British Dental Journal*. 2021;231(2):70-.
2. Braithwaite I *et. al.* Medicinal applications of cannabis/cannabinoids. *Current Opinion in Psychology*. 2021;38:1-10.

In the sentences taken from a body paragraph, you can see the number of the reference in parentheses after the claim that was made. This is the first reference used, so it has the number '1' in brackets. The second reference should be written as (2) and so on. In the bibliography at the end of your article, you can see the references used in order, including the author's name, title of the reference and the date of publication. Supplementary information such as the journal/database that the reference was published on, the date of access, volume of the issue etc. is always useful.

We would recommend formatting your references in your bibliography using free referencing software, such as Mendeley (search online), or websites, such as <https://www.citethisforme.com/>. You may prefer to manually enter your references, but this takes time and is more prone to error. All figures, tables and graphs require labels and a short piece of information summarising their purpose.

For example, see the following table:

Food	ALA	DHA	EPA
Flaxseed oil, 1 tbsp	7.26		
Chia seeds, 1 ounce	5.06		
English walnuts, 1 ounce	2.57		
Flaxseed, whole, 1 tbsp	2.35		
Salmon, Atlantic, farmed cooked, 3 ounces		1.24	0.59

**Table 1** demonstrates various sources of poly-unsaturated fatty acids. The plant forms rely on conversion of ALA to DHA and EPA. Table recreated from Antoniou, S (1).

If using graphs or tables from a journal or website, please recreate them yourself, and do not copy and paste them into your own work. Any images included in your work must have written permission from the owner.

**The Style Guide**

This is a magazine for people considering healthcare-related careers, who are likely to be overwhelmed by information regarding application processes and how to succeed. Mentor Magazine instead offers a place to explore relevant but refreshing insights into healthcare and therefore welcomes a broad range of topics to foster the development of a well-rounded practitioner.

**All articles should therefore be written with our target audience in mind**, i.e. students of ages 14-18 who are considering a career in medicine, dentistry or veterinary medicine from a variety of educational backgrounds. To make your article accessible, do not assume a high level of scientific literacy. Any jargon will need to be explained. The magazine sections outlined below should give you an idea of the types of articles we're looking for. We are open to suggesting article ideas if you want to write but are struggling for a topic, but our list of topics is not exhaustive; we want to publish what you want to write.

This Style Guide gives you more detailed information about the structure of the magazine, outlining its sections and our expectations for articles and artwork.

## A Closer Look

This section invites articles with more depth which focus on a particular personal experience, educational point or recent research. For example, you might reflect on work experience or placements, or provide an insight into a specific area of healthcare which you find interesting.

1. Keep your audience in mind. Most of our readers are 14-18 year old students from the UK who are studying some science subjects and are applying or considering applying to university to study healthcare-related subjects. There will inevitably be a variety of pre-existing knowledge, so a short, general background can be helpful before launching into specifics.
2. Articles about complex academic topics should be both accurate and understandable. It's just as easy to manipulate the truth by describing something too simply as it is when describing it in full detail. Again, remembering your audience is helpful here, and the editors are happy to steer you in the right direction if you're unsure about depth.
3. If you do make a claim, be prepared to back it up with references (see section on referencing style). Very little in medicine is concrete, so it's best to avoid claiming infallibility. If you're unsure, say so – there's no harm in making a suggestion or drawing conclusions from tenuous evidence, as long as you make the reader aware of what you're doing.
4. Whilst it's nice to hear about other people's personal experiences, it can be difficult for the reader to engage if an article is simply an account of what happened. It is much more interesting if you can reflect on what your experiences taught you, whether anything surprised you, and advice you may have for others in similar situations (amongst other things!).

## Opinion

Healthcare is a wonderfully rich field for discussion and debate, and this is your opportunity to get your voice heard and practise subjective writing.

1. Give your reader some background knowledge first. Outline the issue and explain why its consideration is important.
2. Once you've given the facts, try to offer a critical analysis of the topic. This is the Opinion section, after all. Break the issue down into its parts and explain your stance. Acknowledging any biases or interests you may have can help you to deliver a more balanced and reasoned argument.
3. Opinion pieces and other such subjective writing should be persuasive but mustn't bend the facts to deceive the reader.
4. An article which argues for a particular viewpoint is much more compelling than one which simply outlines the 'for' and 'against' of an issue. It is important to be balanced in your discussion, but do commit to your opinion and defend it.

## News & Views

This section covers any recent, relevant news. This could be a report or commentary on a topic of interest or event.

1. Your reporting should be balanced and objective. You should avoid giving your own opinions; only those of relevant parties to the story are relevant (opinion pieces are a place where you could convey more of your own personal opinion).
2. Fully expand your points - if mentioning something the average GCSE science student has no knowledge of, explain it.
3. Reach out for response from organisations/people involved in the article, especially if they have been criticised or shown in a bad light.
4. Make it as clear and as easy as possible for people to read; avoid overlong and unwieldy sentences. The best writing is concise.
5. The tone is formal - no addressing the reader directly, don't ask the reader questions etc, avoid exclamation marks, no CAPITALISATION LIKE THIS.
6. The style of prose should be sober (think BBC News).
7. Avoid tongue in cheek comments or the use of irony.

## Features

Each issue of the magazine is centred around a different theme or central topic. Articles within the Features section should revolve around this theme – while the range of articles included in this section can differ somewhat in style, please see general pointers below.

1. The features writer should have researched and/or interviewed to tell a factual story about a person, place, event, idea, or issue.
2. Rather than solely repeating information from another source, try to interpret the material from a fresh perspective. Look to other sources and contact relevant figures for a personal opinion or more up-to-date (even

exclusive!) information.

3. Write for the lay audience and begin with a brief introduction/summary of the topic at hand. If any substantial blocks of information are essential to the reader's understanding during the remainder of the article, also include these. The design team may incorporate these as a red background box to break up the text and highlight information to readers.
4. While features are not opinion-driven, there is space for well-placed, opinionated analysis. They should be quote- and detail-oriented. Support your writing (especially if there are any opinions or claims) with valid research and evidence.
5. End your conclusion with a considered statement. You can come to a partisan conclusion as long as it recognises the opposing viewpoint. Avoid repeating previous statements from within your article word for word – be sure to rephrase them and use them in a different context.

## Spotlight

A section dedicated to showcasing a particular individual, group/organisation or event. This could take the form of an interview or a recent event report (for example, a unique event organised by a medical society).

1. The writer should write or obtain a short biography of the individual/representative group they are interviewing. This will form an introduction to the article.
2. It is the responsibility of the writer to make contact with potential interviewees and maintain professional contact throughout the article process.
3. When drafting the questions to be asked during the interview, try to make them creative and interesting. The editorial team will help to approve the list of interview questions.
4. When transcribing your interview, retain the voice of the interview while removing unnecessary words/fillers.

**If you have any further questions regarding magazine contributions that have not been answered after having read both the Welcome Guide and Style Guide in full, then email us at [mentormagazine@medicmentorfamily.org](mailto:mentormagazine@medicmentorfamily.org).**