**Frequently Asked Questions about the NIHMS System, Compliance, & My Bibliography**

**Q: How do I obtain an eRA Commons login?**

**A:** The connectivity between all required platforms starts with an eRA Commons account. Email Nicole Foshey at [nfoshey@ucsd.edu](mailto:nfoshey@ucsd.edu) for Health Sciences or [era-commons@ucsd.edu](mailto:era-commons@ucsd.edu) for General Campus. More information can be found at:   
<https://blink.ucsd.edu/research/preparing-proposals/sponsors/federal/nih/index.html>

**Q:** **What is the NIH Manuscript Submission System (NIHMS)**

**A:** The NIH developed the NIHMS system to support the submission of peer-reviewed manuscripts to PubMed Central or PMC. Authors, PIs, and even publishers can use the system to deposit manuscripts.

**Q:** **What is the Author Manuscript?**

**A:** The author manuscript is the version of a paper that has been peer reviewed and accepted for publication by the journal. This version should include all changes made during the peer review process.

**Q:** **Which funders use the NIHMS system?**

**A:** The National Institutes of Health, of course, but 10 others including the Veteran’s Administration (VA), Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI), Food & Drug Administration (FDA), and the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC). For the full list, see <https://www.nihms.nih.gov/db/sub.cgi?page=funders>

**Q:** **How can I determine if the manuscript needs to be submitted?**

**A:** For NIH, the start date of the policy is April, 2008, and it must be a peer-reviewed manuscript resulting from NIH funding – in full or in part. Have one about which you are unsure? Get advice from NIH at  
<https://publicaccess.nih.gov/determine-applicability.htm>

**Q:** **What if I submit a manuscript and the publisher submits a manuscript?**

**A:** The NIHMS system will catch that and choose the publisher’s version over the author version. If uncertain if the journal will submit a PDF or manuscript, see this web page: <https://publicaccess.nih.gov/submit_process_journals.htm>

**Q:** **How Do I know if the publisher will submit the manuscript or the final version?**

**A:** You can look up the journal on the NIH website and determine if the publisher will do it or if the PI (or you) will need to do it. <https://publicaccess.nih.gov/submit_process_journals.htm>

**Q:** **What are the best practices for NIHMS Methods C & D** (The ones you & the PI will use)

**A:** Reminders: You can enter the citation of a paper into My Bibliography as a forthcoming paper as soon as it is accepted by the publisher. For compliance, within 3 months, a manuscript must be linked to the NIH award and PIs (or authors) must approve the PMC-ready version once they are converted. Gather a few other tips at: <https://publicaccess.nih.gov/Methods-C-D-BP>

**Q: Who can act as reviewer in NIHMS - that is, approve the materials as they are finalized for deposit in PMC?**

**A:** Only an author on the paper or, in cases where an author can't be found to do it, the PI can claim it to approve the manuscript as it moves through the NIHMS system.

**Q:** **Can I see how the submission system works?**

**A:** Yes you can. NIH has created several tutorials about the NIHMS system – from depositing files, to initial approval to final approval – for either the author (or PI) or for delegates.  
<https://www.nihms.nih.gov/db/sub.cgi?page=stepbystep>

**Q: I am the PI for a large training grant and am not an author on many of the publications that result from that funding. Do I need to include all of those citations and ensure they are compliant?**

**A:** Yes. As the PI you are responsible for ensuring all articles that are directly funded from that grant are compliant, whether or not you are an author.

**Q: One of my articles has a NIHMS ID number but has never been added into PMC and is past the 3 month deadline for needing a PMCID number. What is wrong and how can I fix it?**

**A:** This is probably happening because whoever was entered into the NIHMS System as *the reviewer has not responded to a request to review and approve the submission*. When publishers or delegates submit manuscripts to the NIHMS system, they will select an author or PI to receive emails asking for approval of what was submitted. If that person does not receive the email and follow the steps to approve the submission, it will never make it into PMC. Check with the PI or your co-authors to see if anyone received a message from NIHMS.

**Q: The manuscript is stalled in NIHMS and I cannot reach the depositing author. What do I do?**

**A:** Submitted manuscripts can be claimed by other authors or PIs. It takes a couple of weeks sometimes to make it happen, but once completed the claiming author move the process along.

**Q: Why is my publication showing as non-compliant? The paper was just published recently and I thought I had 12 months to submit it!**

**A:** The NIH Public Access policy stipulates that publications must be made available to the public in PubMed Central no later than 12 months after publication. However, new rules require the process gets started within 90 days. Articles should be submitted to NIHMS upon acceptance for publication in order to ensure that all tasks are completed before the deadline.

**Q: I need to submit to the NIHMS system, but I can't find the final peer-reviewed manuscript? Can't I just download the pdf copy from the journal's website and submit that?**

**A:** Unfortunately, that would be against copyright law. If you are in this situation, the NIH Policy experts recommend you contact the journal and request permission to upload the final published article (i.e. the PDF available on the journal website).  Once you have the rights, you can upload this version to the NIH Manuscript Submission system (NIHMS).

**Q: The journal I published in is listed as a Method D publisher, but it has been 3 months since it was accepted and My Bibliography is telling me it is not compliant (there is no NIHMS or PMC ID number).**

**A:** No matter what method the journal is listed as, the author/PI is ultimately responsible to ensure the article is submitted to PMC. If the journal/publisher has not submitted the article after 3 months following acceptance for publication, contact them and ask why they haven't. In the meantime, go ahead and submit the final peer-reviewed manuscript to the NIHMS System (instructions). If the publisher does so later, it will over-ride your submission, but this will ensure you are in compliance.

**Q:** **How are PMC and the NIHMS system related?**

**A:** PMC is the archive or repository. The NIHMS system is how authors can get their manuscripts into PMC.

**Q:** **When is a PMCID given?**

**A:** From start to finish, it usually takes about 6 weeks to generate a PMCID, and is given after the final approval by the author or PI.

**Q:** **Do I see anything in PMC before the embargo period is complete?**

**A:** You can see the citation details in PMC before the full-text is available. You may need to use a search filter for including embargoed articles.

**Q:** **What is the difference between a PMCID & a PMID?**

**A:** It is more than just a “C” – PMC is the full text archive of NIH funded research and PubMed is a citation database that includes the Medline database. Think C for compliance.

**Q: My journal wants me to pay a fee to submit my paper to PubMed Central. Do I have to pay?**

**A:** You never have to pay a fee to the publisher to get your articles into PMC. You always have the option to deposit the article yourself, using Method C.

**Q:** **What if I have more questions about PMC?**

**A:** The online PMC FAQ can help you troubleshoot those odd circumstances.  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/about/faq-auth/>

**Q:** **How is My Bibliography populated?**

**A**: It can be populated by finding the article citations in PubMed and adding it from there, or you can search from within My Bibliography for specific authors. You can manually enter citations into My Bibliography. Another option, particularly helpful for a very long list of citations or for ones not in PubMed is the upload a file option. This third option must be in a specific file type – either MEDLINE or RIS will work (common to citation management programs).

**Q:** **How does My Bibliography work with progress reports?**

**A:** For some reports, the citation list is pulled from My Bibliography, and only items there will be available for the report. Keeping My Bibliography updated is the best way to ensure new citations can be part of the progress reports.

**Q:** **What local (UC San Diego) resources are available?**

**A:** Both the Library & Research Service Core have online resources, and both Karen and Jill are available to meet with you (see footer for contact info).  
<http://libguides.ucsd.edu/nih>  
<http://blink.ucsd.edu/sponsor/rsc/training-documents.html>