

EPC II Style Guidelines

Revised April 5, 2006

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**Highlight of Changes to the
Required Components of AHRQ-Sponsored Evidence Reports
and Technology Assessments**

- **Limit structured abstract to 400 words. (See revised template for sample format.)**
- Eliminate standalone summary—replace it with an executive summary of less than 2,500 words that is printed as part of the full report.
- Provide statement of financial disclosure and conflicts of interest.
- At the end of the Discussion section, add a Future Research section followed by a Conclusions section.
- Move List of Excluded Studies to Appendixes.
- Eliminate bibliography.

Required Components of AHRQ-Sponsored Evidence Reports and Technology Assessments

Evidence Report

The following listing of components for the EPC Reports represents general guidance. Certain topics may require adjustments to the content of the components. Requests for changes in format will be handled on a case-by-case basis through Task Order Officers and Publishing staff at AHRQ.

Evidence Report—Synthesis (Print and Web)*

IMPORTANT: The reports will be one volume and must not exceed 150 pages. (See pages 6-8 for proper order and placement of the following report elements.)

Front Matter:

Title page. Please list the investigators (authors) clearly and separate from others who assisted in the development of the report. This is an essential criterion that the National Library of Medicine (NLM) staff looks for when indexing the report.

Suggested Citation. The authors listed here must match exactly the list of investigators on the title page, in adherence to NLM indexing requirements.

Financial Disclosure Statement (*see Revised Disclosure Form*). All investigators should list any affiliations or financial involvement (e.g., employment, consultancies, honoraria, stock ownership or options, expert testimony, grants or patents received or pending, or royalties) that conflict with material presented in the report .

Acknowledgments (if any). If longer than one page, please include as an appendix.

Preface. Please do not include an extra statement in the first paragraph, if the report was sponsored by AHRQ. This statement is meant only to acknowledge sponsorship/funding by Federal agencies other than AHRQ.

Structured Abstract (<400 words) (*See revised template for sample format.*)

Table of Contents. Please list the Appendixes by name but without page numbers.

Executive Summary (<2,500 words included in the report; no longer standalone)

Introduction

Methods (include Analytic Framework as appropriate)

Results

Discussion

Future Research

Conclusions

References

Figures

Summary Tables. Should contain key data found in the text that is essential for the reader

Required Components of AHRQ-Sponsored Evidence Reports and Technology Assessments (cont'd)

Appendixes--Electronic Submission Only*

Appendix A: Exact Search Strings

Appendix B: Sample Data Abstraction Forms

Appendix C: Evidence tables

Appendix D: List of Excluded Studies

Appendix E: Peer Reviewers

*(see page 3, **Notes to Required Components.**)

CD-Rom.* A separate CD is required under the database task of the work assignment or task order.

Notes to Required Components

Evidence Report—Synthesis (Print and Web)

Structured Abstract: limit to 400 words or less (*See revised template for sample format.*)

Objectives
Data Sources
Review Methods
Results
Conclusions

Synthesis: It is **essential** that the text of the Evidence Report be presented as a synthesis of the evidence, **not** a listing or rote description of all articles reviewed. The document should be developed in a way that is similar to developing a journal manuscript.

Methods: The Methods section of the main report should contain:

- Analytic frameworks (if used).
- Search strategy (including databases searched, version of software used, key search terms, time period covered and any restrictions based on language of publication).
- Inclusion and exclusion criteria (including whether data not published in peer-reviewed literature – i.e. “grey literature” – was included).
- A description of the process used to assess the validity of studies (grading system), the process used to abstract data.
- A description of the methods used for statistical analysis (if a quantitative analysis was performed), and any software used.
- A brief description of the peer review process.

References: Reference all cited articles described in the report and any articles that are included for the reader’s consideration. (For example, Of six studies meeting inclusion criteria,²⁴⁻²⁹ three reported outcomes beyond six months.^{24,25,26} (**Note:** use reference format described in this style guide on pages 9 and 15.)

Example: Smith MB. Viral infections in pregnant women. JAMA 1986;25;341-56. Small sample size, not RCT.

Summary Evidence Tables: Prepare key tables that summarize the evidence described and reflect specific information discussed in the text. The summary tables may be embedded throughout the report or placed at the end of the chapters and may include data from more than one report. More detailed tables should be provided in the on-line appendix material.

Notes to Required Components (continued)

Appendixes—Electronic Submission Only

More detailed information on methods will generally be contained in an on-line Appendix. This should provide sufficient detail to enable someone to replicate or update the review. Information should include:

Note: Please list all Appendixes in the Contents but without page numbers. Please use page numbering that is independent of the printed report, such as A-1, A-2, etc.

Appendix A: Exact Search Strings

Exact search strings used (for each database if different terms used)

Appendix B: Sample Data Abstraction Forms. Provide blank sample forms used in data abstraction.

Appendix C: Evidence Tables: Detailed evidence tables that depict the criteria used to determine validity for each study. (It is at the discretion of the EPC which evidence tables to include in the body of the main report versus the Appendixes as long as the report confines to the page limits outlined in this style guide). **Include an alphabetized reference list for all studies included in tables.**

Other Appendixes

D: Excluded Studies: Include as an Appendix an alphabetized listing of studies excluded at the full-text level. Use a reference citation format and provide the reason for exclusion at the end of each citation. **To avoid a lengthy list, a coding system may be used. Include a key to the coding system as a footnote to the reference list on the first page.**

E: Peer Reviewers: Listing of technical experts/peer reviewers. If EPCs choose to publish the comments/disposition of the peer-reviewers (delinked from reviewer names), they should be included in this appendix. Although publication of peer review comments is optional at the discretion of the EPC, submitting the disposition of the peer reviewer comments to the TOO is still required.

Details of meta-analytic techniques used. (if meta-analysis was performed)

Summary of Process for EPC II Reports (Excludes Task Force EPCs)

1. AHRQ will no longer edit the final evidence reports.
2. AHRQ will print final reports as single-spaced documents.
3. The electronic files for the final reports will be available as downloadable PDF files from AHRQ's Web site.
4. AHRQ will also arrange to have the final files SGML-coded for NLM to be uploaded to HSTAT.

Peer Review will be a crucial step in this process:

1. Peer Review will be the only point at which the Office of Communications and Knowledge Transfer (OCKT) will provide comments on possible problems with the report, e.g., adherence to Government Printing Office (GPO) style, missing elements, sections that are too lengthy.
2. EPCs should look for the OCKT peer review comments and be sure that all issues have been addressed before finalizing the report.

Task Order Officers must provide draft evidence reports to OCKT as soon as possible after they are received.

IMPORTANT: EPCs will become guarantors of the completeness and accuracy of their evidence reports. AHRQ will direct inquiries regarding report content, references, etc. back to the EPCs for resolution.

Submission of Files--Instructions for EPC Reports and Supplements

1. Submit the entire final report single-spaced in hard copy (the number of copies of the final report to be delivered will be specified in the contract). **DO NOT BIND THE FINAL REPORT.**
2. Submit a disk or CD of the entire final report as it appears in hard copy. **.PDF files are not acceptable submissions.**
3. Include the title page, citation, preface, and acknowledgments in one document called "front matter". Name the remaining files separately, i.e., structured abstract, table of contents, executive summary, chapter number, evidence table number, appendix number, references, etc.

Text Figures and Tables can **either** be incorporated into the document or placed at the end of each chapter. If they are placed at the end of the chapter, name the file according to the table or figure number. If they are incorporated into a chapter, they do not need a separate file-naming convention.

The intuitive naming convention will assist users. OCKT staff will only open the final electronic files to make a cursory check for agreement between the content of the manuscript and the electronic file; therefore, appropriate naming will enable us to ensure that the electronic submission is complete (See Table for naming samples).

4. AHRQ will add minimal front matter information to the reports (See Table for instructions).
5. Paginate the report consecutively, according to the Table of Contents, with the exception of the Appendixes, which should be numbered independent of the report, such as A-1, A-2.
6. "Delink" all databases (such as Endnote) from the final electronic files. Ensure that any data that would be pulled from a data base is included in the final submission. Endnote can generate a final stand-alone reference list. In addition, please ensure that any other internal or external links are deactivated.
7. Check all reports for copyrighted materials. Be sure to include a copy of any permissions received to use copyrighted material, with the final report.

Very important: Be sure that all copyrighted material includes attribution to source.

8. Submit a completed and signed "Final Checklist for Submission of EPC Reports" (attached) with your final submission.

Note: The use of Reference Management Software, such as Procite, Endnote, or Reference Manager, is required for all EPC reports.

Sample File Naming, Placement, and Pagination--EPC II, Evidence Report
(An electronic template is supplied with this style guide.)

Report Component	File Name .txt or .doc, etc	Page numbering	Notes
Covers 1, 2, 3, and 4		N/A	AHRQ will supply.
Title Page	Front Matter	i	This page begins the small Roman numbering of the report. It is counted as "i." However, the page number is not shown. AHRQ will provide report and publications number. See sample report or template for necessary information. (See page 1 about listing authors)
Suggested Citation	Front Matter	ii	Enter all author names by last name and first and middle initial, e.g., Smith JD, Jones A. The page number should be shown from this page on.
Preface	Front Matter	iii	AHRQ will supply.
Acknowledgments	Front Matter	iv	If the acknowledgments are longer than 1 page, they should be placed in an Appendix.
Structured Abstract	Abstract	v-vi	Please limit to 400 words to avoid truncation by abstraction services and libraries. (See revised template for sample format)
Contents	Contents	vii	The contents page must be numbered with a small Roman numeral and must begin on a right-hand, odd numbered page. NOTE: List chapter titles plus two levels of headings only in the Contents. List Figures and Tables under their own heading.
Executive Summary	Summary.	1 Consecutive numbering from this point on	2,000-2,500 words. This begins the actual Arabic numbering of the text pages, must begin on a right-hand, odd numbered page.
Divider Page--Evidence Report	Include with Chapter 1 File	This page will always be right-facing (odd numbered) and	Divider page must start on a right-hand page. It is counted as an odd-numbered page, but the

Report Component	File Name .txt or .doc, etc	Page numbering	Notes
		followed by a blank page, and then Chapter 1 begins.	page number is not shown.
Chapters	Chapter1. Chapter2. Chapter3. Chapter4. Etc...		Page numbering depends on length of preceding text. All chapters must begin on right-hand, odd-numbered pages. Blank pages are not numbered but count as if they were a numbered page. Each chapter has its own file.
References	References.		Must begin on a right-hand, odd-numbered page. Format 2-column in 9 pt. type
Acronyms	Acronyms.		<i>Optional</i>
Glossary	Glossary.		<i>Optional</i>
Figures and Tables	If Figures and Tables are not embedded in the Chapter, name files: Figure1., Table1. Figure2., Table2.		Number text figures and tables consecutively throughout the document—regardless of their placement in the document.
Divider Page— Summary Evidence Tables	SummEvTabs.		Divider page must start on a right-hand page. It is counted as an odd-numbered page, but the page number is not shown.
Summary Tables	Summtab1. Summtab2. Summtab3		Per instructions, summary tables should be included in the report. More detailed tables should be placed in an Appendix. Begin first table on a right-hand, odd-numbered page. Contents must list all Table titles .

**Sample File Naming, Placement, and Pagination—Appendixes
(Electronic Submission –Only)**

Report Component	File Name .txt or .doc, etc	Page numbering	Notes
Descriptor Page	Appendixes.		Use a page to provide the name of the report and any other information to identify and link this on-line submission with the print report.
Appendix A: Exact Search Strings	Appendix A.	A-1	Number pages consecutively.
Appendix B: Sample Data Abstraction Forms	Appendix B.	Consecutive numbering.	Page numbering depends on length of preceding text.
Appendix C: Evidence Tables	Because the Evidence Tables can be large, name each table separately and number consecutively as Evtab1. Evtab2. Evtab3 Each Evidence Table file can be included within a folder named Appendix C.	Consecutive numbering.	Page numbering depends on length of preceding text.
Appendix D : List of Excluded Studies	Appendix D	Consecutive Numbering	
Appendix E: Peer Reviewers	Appendix E.	Consecutive numbering	Same instructions as provided for Appendixes, above.

Type Specifications for Camera-Ready or Web Manuscripts Evidence Report/Technology Assessment

Periodically contractors are asked to submit materials to AHRQ for publication as a final camera-ready manuscript or for publication on the Web. Web manuscripts are HTML coded to the level of their headings. The following addresses style for manuscript submission.

These type specifications are for Word processed documents only.

Type faces

All body text in 12 pt serif (Times Roman)

All headings (except run-ins) are sans serif (Helvetica or Arial)

Front matter

Preface (heading) 16 pt Helvetica or Arial

Structured Abstract (heading) 16 pt Helvetica or Arial

Run-ins 12 pt, bold, Times Roman

Contents 16 pt (heading) Helvetica or Arial

List chapter titles plus two levels of headings

List all figures and tables

Report body

Text 12 pt Times Roman (1-inch margins—top, bottom, right, left)

Paragraph indent .25

Headings

Note: All headings are initial cap each word, bold, unless otherwise specified.

Chapter – 18 pt Helvetica or Arial, flush left, all chapters open
right

Level 1 – 16 pt Helvetica or Arial, centered

Level 2 – 14 pt Helvetica or Arial, flush left

Level 3 – 12 pt Times Roman, run-in with period (initial cap first
word only), paragraph indent

Level 4 – 12 pt Times Roman, paragraph indent run-in, italic with
period (initial cap first word only), paragraph indent, no bold

References and Bibliography – 9 pt Times Roman, 2 column

Table and Figure Headings – 9 pt Helvetica or Arial, bold

Table and Figure Text – 10 pt Helvetica or Arial, bold

Footnotes – 9 pt Times Roman

Table headings – Table 1. Initial cap first word of title (begin
caption flush left at the margin)

Questions that may appear in body of report – 12 pt bold or ital
Times Roman (your choice)

Table footnotes – Use superscript symbols or superscript lower-case alpha in 9 pt Times Roman for numbered references.

Sample Headings

These sample headings are for word processed documents only.

Chapter Heading (18 pt, Helvetica or Arial, flush left, bold)

Chapter 1. Introduction

Level 1 Heading (16 pt, Helvetica or Arial, centered, initial caps, bold)

Origins and Folklore of Garlic

Level 2 Heading (14 pt, Helvetica or Arial, flush left, initial caps, bold)

Fresh Garlic and Condiments

Level 3 Heading (12 pt, paragraph run in, Times Roman, bold, with period, initial cap first word only, paragraph indent)

Dehydrated preparations. One of the most widely used forms of commercial garlic is garlic powder, which may or may not be enterically coated.

Level 4 Heading ((12 pt, paragraph run in, Times Roman, italic, with period, initial cap first word only, paragraph indent)

Enterically coated preparations. A number of enterically coated preparations are available today.

Quick Reference Guide to Editorial Style

Style

The listing below provides some general guidance on style. AHRQ follows the *U.S. Government Printing Office Style Manual*, which is available electronically at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/stylemanual/browse.html>. You may also refer to the *American Medical Association Manual of Style* for general style guidance and the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* as a social science reference. However, please follow the *AHRQ Publishing and Communications Guidelines* for reference format.

Please note: The overriding principle for editorial style is internal consistency. The following tips highlight GPO style requirements that are often overlooked.

Tips

- Use the serial comma (example: dog, cat, and bird).
- Spell out percent in the text. Use % in tables and figures.
- Combine as one word decisionmakers, decisionmaking, policymakers, policymaking, database, followup (unless saying something like “the doctor will follow up with you in a few days”) and words beginning with “anti,” “non,” or “co.”
- Use numerals for time and measurement and numbers 10 and over. Write out everything else. (examples: 7 years old, 3 weeks, 1 hour, 10 cm; six cats, nine oranges, 10 patients).
- Define all abbreviations and acronyms in the text (at first mention in each chapter) and in tables.
- Capitalize the words Federal, States, Nation, and Federal Government. Do not capitalize statewide, local, or federally.
- Capitalize words that are four letters in a title (examples: With, From, Between).
- Capitalize Web site and make it two words.
- Avoid long strings of capitalization, bold, and italics in text.
- In headings capitalize each word in the hyphenated term with initial caps (example: Off-Label Use of Drugs).

References

For more information on references, see pages 13-17.

- Provide a source/attribution for all statements of fact.
Example: “Only two studies^{1,2} showed a positive outcome for this treatment approach. OR “Only two studies (Brown, Davis, and Green, 1990; Smith, 1987) showed a positive outcome for this treatment approach.”
- Alphabetize works of multiple references by first author when listed in parentheses (example above).
- Every reference cited in the text **must be** listed in the reference list.
- Every reference in the reference list **must be** cited in the text and listed in the bibliography (if a bibliography is required).

Copyright permission

AHRQ requires a copy of the written permission for any copyrighted material used with the final report. Provide credit to the copyrighted source in a footnote. For example:

“Source: World Health Organization, 1990. Used with permission.”

Include the complete citation for the source of the copyrighted material in the reference list. If a table or figure is compiled from data from a number of sources, list each of the sources in a footnote and provide the complete citation in the reference list. Indicate whether you have adapted a table or figure.

AHRQ Recommended Citation Style for Reference Lists (Modified Vancouver Style)®

In-text citations: References may be cited using either the superscript number (preferred) or author, date style.

Journals

- Author name(s) followed by initials (no periods). List up to three authors and then add “et al.”
- Full title of article.
- Title of journal, abbreviated in Index Medicus style. Use *List of Journals Indexed in Index Medicus, 1998* (or most recent issue). Available from the National Library of Medicine. NIH Publication Number 98-267.
- Year (month optional).
- Volume, issue (optional, in parentheses), and page numbers.

Standard journal citation

Kleinman JC, Kopstein AN. Who is being screened for cervical cancer? *Am J Public Health* 1981 Nov 7;71(24):73-6.

Alberts ME. Immunization [editorial]. *Iowa Med* 1989 Oct;79(10):489-93.

Translation

Massone L, Borghi S, Pestarino A. Localizations paimaires purpuriques de las dermatite herpetiforme [Purpuric paimar sites of dermatitis hepetiformis]. *Ann Dermatol Venerol* 1987;114(12):1545-7. (Fre).

Books

- Author name(s) followed by initials (no periods). After three authors, use “et al.”
- Title.
- City of publication, publisher, and date. For the State, (used only when location of city is not clear), use the two-letter Postal Service abbreviation.

Book with individual or institutional authors

Perrin PG, Smith GH. *The Perrin-Smith handbook of current English*. Chicago: Scoff, Foresman; 1962.

Beth Israel Hospital. *Obstetrical decision making*. Philadelphia: B.C. Decker; 1987.

Part of book

Cassidy JT, Pefty RE. *Textbook of pediatric rheumatology*. 2nd ed. New York: Churchill-Livingston; 1990. Chapter 3, Basic concepts of drug therapy.

Rombeau JL, Caldwell MD, eds. *Parenteral nutrition*. Vol. 2, Clinical nutrition. Philadelphia: Saunders; 1986.

Merritt CRB. Breast imaging techniques. In: Putnam CE and Ravin CE, eds. Textbook of diagnostic imaging. Vol. 3. Philadelphia: Saunders; 1988. p. 2118-20.

Scientific and technical reports from government agency

- Author name(s) (use “et al.” after three authors).
- Title of the article and/or individual publication within the series.
- City of publication.
- Agency or organization responsible for the series.
- Date of publication.
- Name of the series.
- Publication or acquisition number.

Reports with individual or institutional authors

Cohen S. Sample design of the 1997 Medical Expenditure Panel Survey Household Component. Rockville (MD): Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality; 2000. MEPS Methodology Report No. 11. AHRQ Publication No. 01-0001.

National High Blood Pressure Education Program Working Group. Working group report on high blood pressure in pregnancy. Washington, DC: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, 2000. NHBPEP Publication No. 00-3029.

Grant or contract reports

- Author name(s).
- Full title of the report.
- Status of the report, if given (final, draft, preliminary).
- Grantee or contractor.
- Grant or contract number.
- City of publication.
- Agency for which the report was prepared.
- Date (year with first three letters of month).
- Publication or acquisition number.

Grant or contract report

Schachter H, Resiman J, Tran K, et al., Health Effects of Omega-3 Fatty Acids on Asthma. Evidence Report/Technology Assessment No. 91 (Prepared by University of Ottawa Evidence-based Practice Center under Contract No. 290-02-0021). Rockville, MD: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, July 2004. AHRQ Publication No. 04-E013-2.

Dissertations and theses

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

Dissertation

Youssef NM. School adjustment of children with congenital heart disease [dissertation]. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh; 1988.

Thesis

Devins GM. Helplessness, depression, and mood in end-stage renal disease [masters thesis]. Montreal, Quebec: McGill University; 1981.

Conference proceedings

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

Conference proceedings

Vivian VL, editor. Child abuse and neglect: a medical community response. First AMA National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect; 1984 Mar 30-31; Chicago. Chicago: American Medical Association; 1985.

In addition, papers presented at meetings should begin with:

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

Conference paper

Harley NH. Comparing radon daughter dosimetric and risk models. In: Gammage RB, Kaye SV, editors. Indoor air and human health. Proceedings of the 7th Life Sciences Symposium; 1984 Oct 29-31; Knoxville, TN. Chelsea (MN): Lewis Publishers; 1985. p. 69-78.

Conference abstract

Lunin LF. Organizing for information interaction in a radiology department [abstract]. In: Petrarca AE, editor. Information interaction. Proceedings of the 45th ASIS Annual Meeting; 1982 Oct 17-21; Columbus, OH. White Plains (NY): Knowledge Industry Publications, Inc.; 1982. p. 179-80.

Nonprint data

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

- Author name.
- Title.
- Type of medium.
- Source of data.
- Availability information.
- Data accessed if Web product.

Part of data base

Sestini P, Renzoni E, Robinson S, et al. Short-acting beta 2 agonists for stable chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews. 2002(4):CD001495.

Web site

Available at: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. Consumers and Patients. <http://www.ahrq.gov/consumers>. Accessed January 16, 2006.

EPC II Final Report Submission Checklist

Report Title: _____

EPC: _____ Date: _____

Required Components

- ___ Structured Abstract (<400 words)
- ___ Executive Summary (included as part of the report) (<2,500 words)
- ___ Evidence Report (<150 pages)
- ___ Reference List (1 per report)
- ___ Appendixes (Electronic submission only)
- ___ CD-ROM

Format

- ___ Manuscript is **single-spaced** on 8-1/2 x 11 paper (with a minimum 1" margin all around) and printed **single-sided**
 - ___ Disk enclosed (final submission)
 - ___ Disk and hard copy match (e.g., same version)
 - ___ Files are named by Chapter, Table, Figure, Appendix, References
 - ___ Each table and figure is in a separate file
 - ___ Investigators (authors) clearly listed on title page.
 - ___ Files are de-linked from data bases and all information is included (The electronic file generates an exact duplicate of the manuscript copy)
- ___ Itemized list of software used for tables and figures (if applicable)

References

- ___ Verified (all in-text citations are listed in the references)
- ___ Reference Management Software used (As of January 2002)

Copyright

- ___ A copy of permission to use copyrighted material is included

Signed: _____, EPC Director, PI, Other

Title: _____