A fast track for selected Campbell reviews

Overview

More rapid completion of Campbell systematic reviews is desirable, particularly for policy and decision makers. The Campbell Collaboration has therefore established a fast track for selected reviews: these will be conducted according to the same robust standards of the Campbell review process but within a more rapid time frame.

The fast track holds authors and others responsible for certain portions of the work, specifies funding requirements, and provides for rigorous and rapid editorial processes to reduce the time from submission to feedback and publication. It is expected that reviews that meet these criteria may be completed within 12-18 months.

Principles

The following principles underpin establishment of the Campbell fast track:

- **Transparency**: The existence of a fast track option and criteria for being included in the fast track will be publicly available on the Campbell (C2) website.

- **Editorial independence**: Funders and authors are advised that approval of documents for publication in the Campbell Library is based strictly on the merits of the work and is made in accordance with Campbell’s established guidelines and standards.

- **Capacity and fairness**: Funding for fast tracked reviews is provided from an external source, which allows Campbell to create adequate additional editorial capacity, so that there is no negative effect on the time available for unfunded reviews.

- **Avoiding conflicts of interest**: Any decision to fast track projects must be free from conflicts of interest. Those involved in the decision to give a project fast track status cannot be part of the team conducting the review under consideration.

Criteria for the fast track

1. A project may be eligible for the fast track if full funding is available for the C2 editorial process. Funders will provide resources that fully reimburse C2’s editorial costs for the fast track project. The funding allows Campbell to create adequate additional editorial capacity, so there will be no negative effect on the time available for other projects.
2. To qualify for the fast track programme, review teams must also meet the following criteria:

   a. Present a well-defined topic for the review.

   b. Have adequate expertise for the topic and methods proposed. Before agreeing to give a project fast track status, Coordinating Groups (CGs) will ensure that the team has the necessary expertise to conduct the review to C2 standards and the agreed time frame, based on the criteria outlined in the C2 guidelines (Sections 2.4 and 5.2.9). Fast track review teams are expected to have at least one member who has successfully completed a Cochrane or Campbell review. CGs may be able to assist review teams in finding needed expertise.

   c. Agree to a project-specific timetable for submission of protocol and review drafts at the time of title registration. The agreement on timelines will allow the editorial teams to schedule time in advance for reviewing manuscripts, and to identify suitable peer reviewers who are ready to respond when manuscripts are submitted.

   d. Agree to follow all established C2 guidelines and standards, including MEC2IR standards (required for all C2 protocols and reviews submitted after 1 October 2014).

   e. Agree to respond in full to all editorial suggestions provided in action letters, and submit documents only after they have been carefully proof read and edited, to minimize the number of drafts submitted before and after peer review. It is generally expected that the second draft will be ready for external review, and the third draft will be ready for publication.

The above criteria will be outlined in a contract between the review team, CG editors and Methods editors at the start of any fast track project. Fast track status can be suspended or removed if the study team does not comply with the agreement.

Provided authors meet these criteria, the Campbell CGs commit to return feedback on first drafts within 10 working days and action letters and peer review comments within 30 working days of submission of drafts ready to go to external review according to a proposed timeline.

*Commissioning fast track reviews*

For further information about the fast track review programme, and to commission a review, please contact us at <info [at] c2admin [dot] org>

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