

Campbell Collaboration: fast track procedures



What is the Campbell Collaboration fast track?

Fast track is a process by which both study authors and Campbell Coordinating Groups (CGs) agree to adhere to pre-agreed timelines which are more compressed than those applied to other reviews. Adopting the fast track applies does not imply any change in the robustness of the Campbell Collaboration review process.

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 at a cost of approximately US\$10-12,000 for Campbell editorial services. This fee is paid to the Campbell Collaboration secretariat which will make payments to the relevant review groups and external reviewers.

Principles behind the Campbell Collaboration Fast Track

The following principles underpin establishment of the Campbell Collaboration fast track:

- *Transparency*: The existence of a fast track option and criteria for being included in the fast track is publicly available on the Campbell 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 required from an external source, which allows Campbell to create adequate additional editorial capacity, so that there is no negative effect on time available for unfunded reviews.
- *Avoiding conflict of interest*: Any decision to fast track projects must be free from conflict of interest. Those involved in the decisions to give a project fast track status cannot be part of the team conducting the review under consideration.

Eligibility Criteria for the Campbell Collaboration Fast Track

1. A project may be eligible for the fast track if full funding is available for the Campbell editorial process. This assumes a funder provides resources that fully reimburse Campbell's editorial costs for the project which are estimated at US\$10-12,000 per review (see budget in Appendix 1). The funding allows Campbell to create adequate additional editorial capacity, so that there is no negative effect on time available for other projects.

2. To qualify for the fast track, 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 CGs will ensure that the team has the necessary expertise to conduct the review to Campbell standards and the agreed time frame, based on the criteria outlined in the Campbell 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 Campbell guidelines and standards, including MEC2IR standards (required for all Campbell 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 and the Campbell Collaboration secretariat at the start of any fast track project (see Appendix 3 for draft contract). Fast track status can be suspended or removed if the study team does not comply with the agreement.

Provided authors meet these criteria 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 the proposed timeline outlined in Appendix 2.

Applying for fast track

Please notify the Managing Editor of the CG with which you wish to register your review that you would like to be considered for fast track, copying info@campbellcollaboration.org.

The application will be considered. If approved, an agreement is signed between the lead PI (or their institution) and the Campbell Secretariat (Appendix 3). An initial, non-refundable payment of US\$5,000 is made on signing. The balance is paid on acceptance of the final review.

Appendix 1 Budget for Campbell Fast Track process

The budget varies for:

Normal review (US\$10,000) – a relatively narrow PICO so the number of included studies is expected to be no more than 20. Included study designs are not expected to pose methodological challenges.

Complex review (US\$13,000) – a review which has any of the following characteristics: (1) broad in scope so expecting more than 20 included studies, (2) included study designs which may be methodologically challenging, (3) causal chain analysis incorporating non-effectiveness evidence.

The total costs and the breakdown of those costs is shown in the following tables.

Normal review					
	Editorial support		Reviewers	Secretariat	Total
	Methods				
	CG	Group			
Agreement and Title	1,000	-	-	500	1,500
Protocol	1,000	500	1,500	500	3,500
Review	1,000	500	1,500	500	3,500
Publication and PLS	-	-	-	1,500	1,500
Total	3,000	1,000	3,000	3,000	10,000

Complex review					
	Editorial support		Reviewers	Secretariat	Total
	Methods				
	CG	Group			
Agreement and Title	1,500	-	-	500	2,000
Protocol	1,500	1,000	1,500	500	4,500
Review	1,500	1,000	1,500	500	4,500
Publication and PLS	-	-	-	2,000	2,000
Total	4,500	2,000	3,000	3,500	13,000

Appendix 2: Timelines for Campbell Collaboration fast track

Campbell Fast Track: Editorial timelines		
Title		
	Title query	5 working days
	Editor review of 1st draft TRF	10 working days
	Editor review of subsequent drafts	5 working days
	Co-chair review of TRF accepted by Editor	5 working days
Protocol		
	Editor review of first draft	10 working days
	Editor review of subsequent drafts	5-10 working days
	External review by substantive experts	10 working days
	Methods group feedback (10 working days external review, 5 working days action letter)	15 working days
	CG production of action letter	5-10 working days
	Editor review of 1st revised draft	5-10 working days
	Editor review of subsequent drafts	5 working days
	Co-chair review of manuscript accepted/ with minor comments by Editor	5 working days
	EiC and MG final approval	10 working days
Review		
	Editor review of first draft	10 working days
	Editor review of subsequent drafts	5-10 working days
	External review by substantive experts	10 working days
	Methods group feedback (10 working days external review, 5 working days action letter)	15 working days
	CG production of action letter	5-10 working days
	Editor review of 1st revised draft	10 working days
	Editor review of subsequent drafts	5 working days
	Co-chair review of manuscript accepted/ with minor comments by Editor	5 working days
	EiC and MG final approval	10 working days

Appendix 3: Substantive text for contract

Fast track contract between Campbell Secretariat and xx (lead reviewer review project)

This contract outlines the conditions and procedures for fast track reviews supported by the Campbell Collaboration.

In signing this contract the CG and review team agree to follow the timeline outlined in Appendix 1. If drafts are not submitted at the agreed timeline the CG cannot guarantee turnaround times according to those outlined in the schedule. If submissions are delayed review authors must inform the CG managing editor at least 3 weeks ahead of the agreed submission deadline so that peer reviewers and Editors can be informed and attempt to re-schedule time set aside for conducting the peer review and writing action letters.

To qualify for the fast track review teams must ensure that submitted drafts are of a high standard and sufficiently developed for external review. This means that authors should follow the MEC2IR standards (Appendix 2) and prepare their manuscripts in accordance with C2 guidelines. Drafts should also be proofed before submission.

When review authors submit protocols and reviews revised according to the guidance provided in the action letter authors should respond in full to all editorial suggestions. All suggestions marked as 'Required Revisions' must be addressed.

Provided authors fulfil the conditions of the contract CGs commit to return feedback on first drafts within 10 working days, and an action letter and peer review comments within 30 working days¹ of submission of protocol and review drafts ready to go to external review as outlined in the timetable in Appendix 1.

If authors do not fulfil the conditions of the contract fast track status may be suspended. Specifically this includes submitting manuscripts that do not comply with the MEC2IR standards, failure to respond to Editors required revisions or failure to comply with the agreed timetable.

When the review manuscript is approved it will be published in the monograph series Campbell Systematic Reviews and covered by the Campbell Collaboration copyright and license agreement.

Appendix 1: Timeline from title to review publication

Appendix 2: MEC2IR (See <https://www.campbellcollaboration.org/campbell-library/campbell-policies-and-guidelines-series.html>).

¹ The turn around period is to allow time for the following three steps: 1) the CG to solicit comments from external substantive experts; 2) the Methods Editor to solicit comments from external methods expert and write an action letter; 3) the CG Editor to collate all the feedback and write an action letter with all required revisions and guidance on how to implement those revisions.