

HIV Prevention Trials Network (HPTN)

HPTN Manuscript Review Committee (MRC) Charter

Version 2.0

Effective Date: 05 March 2025

1. OVERALL RESPONSIBILITIES

The Manuscript Review Committee (MRC) is responsible for reviewing manuscripts and abstracts related to the objectives of HPTN studies or the scope of HPTN work in general and providing recommendations on whether to move forward with journal or conference submission.

The MRC Coordinator will facilitate the review and response by the MRC members ensuring the MRC Chair(s), Network Central Resources (Leadership and Operations Center (LOC), Statistical and Data Management Center (SDMC), Laboratory Center (LC)), and other appointed reviewers, review the documents, as appropriate. Chairs of the HPTN Science Committees (SC) and Working Groups (WG) will be called upon to review manuscripts, as subject matter experts, as needed.

Manuscripts and presentations developed from public use data sets do not require HPTN oversight or MRC review.

In general, the MRC will return recommendations and comments to **manuscripts** within **10 working days** of submission and **abstracts** within **3 working days**. For major scientific conferences (e.g., CROI and IAS), abstracts will be submitted to the MRC in batches which may add a few additional days to the review process.

If an abstract is submitted for MRC review after the stated review deadline, the MRC will proceed with the review according to HPTN policies. However, the author will be required to retract the conference submission if the MRC finds the abstract to be unsuitable.

2. REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

All abstracts submitted to conferences must be reviewed by the MRC prior to submission. If accepted as a poster or oral presentation, review of the final product is the responsibility of the authors.

The primary focus of the MRC manuscript review is original research manuscripts presenting results based on data from HPTN-funded research. The MRC receives submission-ready manuscripts after all author and protocol review committee reviews have been completed.

Reviewers should consider the **quality of the analysis, validity of conclusions, interpretation of findings, and quality of the writing**. Reviewers are not expected to copyedit abstracts/manuscripts but should communicate to authors if that is needed prior to final submission.

All submissions will be accompanied by an **MRC Submission Form**. The information provided in the submission form will help the MRC Coordinator and MRC Chair determine the priority tier (described below) and review pathway. It will also ensure that authorship, acknowledgements, and other Network requirements have been properly considered.

3. REVIEW OUTCOMES

Following review, the MRC will communicate back to the MRC Coordinator, who will forward to the LOC CRM or staff for appropriate distribution. The MRC will not “approve” any submission but instead, provide recommendations to the author on whether to move forward with submission. The possible MRC review outcomes are:

- Recommend for submission
- Recommend for submission with consideration of comments
- Not recommended for submission in its current form (with comments from reviewers)
- MRC review not required

Comments can be made in the margins of the document using the Word comment feature, or in the MRC submission tracking tool. The MRC will re-review a manuscript or abstract only at the request of the author(s) or if significant changes are made to the analysis or outcomes.

4. PRIORITY TIERS

Tier 1

Tier 1 Priorities are those that report the results of primary and key secondary study objectives (as determined by the protocol team) as described in the study protocol.

Tier 2

Tier 2 Priorities are those that report findings based on HPTN data, specimens or resources where the analysis is focused beyond the primary or key secondary study objectives. These may include findings from other secondary objectives, tertiary/exploratory objectives, baseline data, laboratory studies developed by the LC, SDMC methodology research, modelling manuscripts, ancillary studies, or results from more than one HPTN study.

Tier 3

The HPTN generates manuscripts of many types that do not involve study data, such as viewpoints, ethics guidelines, community engagement, position/white papers. All manuscripts are submitted to the MRC to facilitate tracking of HPTN scientific output and to ensure appropriate acknowledgements however, MRC review is not required. At the request of the authors, a formal MRC review can occur. If study data are included, MRC review is required.

5. REVIEW PROCESS

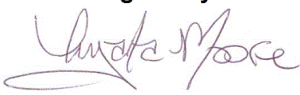
When a submission and submission form are received, the MRC coordinator will contact the MRC chair(s) to determine the review pathway. After this determination is made, the MRC coordinator will notify the full committee of the submission and identify the assigned reviewers. The assigned reviewers have **3 days (for abstracts)** or **10 days (for manuscripts)** to review and upload their comments to Teams. Other members of the committee may review, if desired however, this will not prolong the review period.

If the primary reviewers from the central resources are not able to meet the review deadlines, review will be delegated to a back-up reviewer, as specified by the primary reviewers.

Priority Tier	Review Pathway
Tier 1:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• MRC chair(s)• SDMC primary reviewer• LC primary reviewer• LOC primary reviewer• HPTN PIs (only for primary results)• SC/WG chair, as needed (only for manuscripts)• Standing committee member(s)
Tier 2	MRC chair to determine need and review pathway (notify author within three days if review is required) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If current study (fewer than 4 years since the primary manuscript), review by chair and at least 2 MRC members with relevant expertise• If technical statistical or lab data, limit review to chair and technical expert(s)• If historic data (more than 4 years since the primary manuscript), the MRC chair may assign reviewers or rely solely on a journal peer review

Tier 3	Submitted but not reviewed by MRC unless requested by author(s) or contains study data (then follow Tier 2 process)
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The MRC charter was developed in collaboration with HPTN leadership (Principal Investigators, LOC, LC, and SDMC) and the MRC chair(s).

DocuSigned by:

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Ayana Moore
Scientist II, Director, Clinical Research Operations
HPTN LOC

Certificate Of Completion

Envelope Id: EE12F41E-4D40-462D-85C6-B76B84DBA735
 Subject: Here is your signed document: HPTN MRC Charter_V2_05Mar2025.docx
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 Certificate Pages: 2
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Electronic Record and Signature Disclosure:
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In Person Signer Events

Signature

Timestamp

Editor Delivery Events

Status

Timestamp

Agent Delivery Events

Status

Timestamp

Intermediary Delivery Events

Status

Timestamp

Certified Delivery Events

Status

Timestamp

Carbon Copy Events

Status

Timestamp

Ayana Moore
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Witness Events

Signature

Timestamp

Notary Events

Signature

Timestamp

Envelope Summary Events

Status

Timestamps

Envelope Summary Events	Status	Timestamps
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Certified Delivered	Security Checked	3/4/2025 11:15:33 AM
Signing Complete	Security Checked	3/4/2025 11:16:27 AM
Completed	Security Checked	3/4/2025 11:16:28 AM

Payment Events

Status

Timestamps