

International Union of Crystallography

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Commission on Biological Macromolecules

Policy on Publication and the Deposition of Data from Crystallographic Studies of Biological Macromolecules

I. Preamble

1. Crystallographic analyses of protein, nucleic-acid and virus structures produce an extraordinary amount of information, and these results are widely recognized as having unique scientific value. Available information transcends that which can be recorded in usual scientific publications, and the Protein Data Bank is often used as a supplementary repository for such results. As in all science, it is imperative that sufficient information be made available so that the structural results can be reproduced and verified.

2. The importance of preserving the fundamental data and results from diffraction studies is recognized alike by producers and users of this information. There are, however, concerns that results from the early stages of analysis will be inaccurate in detail and that investigators should have the opportunity to complete the analysis and interpretation of their data. On the other hand, an open-ended protection of authors' interests conflicts with the general scientific good and it creates the risk that valuable data will be lost forever. Accordingly, the deposition policy promulgated below stipulates immediate deposition of atomic coordinates and diffraction data supporting publications on structure, but it provides for the possibility of a specified delay in the release of this information for public use.

II. Policy

1. The Commission on Biological Macromolecules of the International Union of Crystallography endorses a deposition policy for crystallographic studies to permit independent verification of the results and to preserve the primary data for future use. Scientific publications reporting results from crystallographic determinations of macromolecular structure should be accompanied by a deposition of atomic coordinates and structure factor information at a level appropriate to the description given in the paper.

Specific provisions of the policy are elaborated below:

(a) *Provisions for atomic coordinates.* Two different levels of description arise

with respect to the coordinates of macromolecular structures. In the case of chain-tracing descriptions, the α -carbon coordinates for proteins or phosphorus positions for nucleic acids are appropriate for deposition. If the interpretation presented depends on atomic details as shown in figures of side chains or numbers derived from atomic coordinates, then the full coordinate list should be deposited. Atomic displacement parameters (B values) and occupancy factors that are part of a model should also be deposited. Investigators might choose to flag regions of a structure that are judged to be particularly unreliable or subject to revision.

(b) *Provisions for diffraction data.* Native structure-factor magnitudes should be deposited to the limit of Bragg spacings stated in the paper. The deposition of additional data used in phase determination (heavy-atom isomorph data, Bijvoet mates, multiple wavelength measurements *etc.*) is also encouraged. In the case of structure reports that do not involve atomic models (*e.g.* low-resolution studies) both structure amplitudes and phases used in Fourier syntheses that are reported should be deposited.

(c) *Provision for publications in methodology.* The policy applies to reports on structural results. Those papers that describe purely advances in methodology are exempt from this policy even if diffraction data or structural results were required for their development.

(d) *Provision for manner of deposition.* The Protein Data Bank at Brookhaven National Laboratory is recognized by the Commission on Biological Macromolecules of the International Union of Crystallography as the appropriate repository for results from macromolecular crystallography. Accordingly, data should be deposited in machine form as instructed by the Protein Data Bank.

(e) *Provision for delayed release.* It is the intention of this policy that the deposition of data associated with a scientific publication should occur concurrently with publication of the article. Nevertheless, provision is allowed for the authors to request a delay in the release of the deposited data. For deposited coordinates this delay is not to exceed one year from the date of publication. For deposited structure factors, the requested delay can be up to four years from the date of publication.

(f) *Provision for enforcement.* The provisions of this policy require inclusion in the publication of a statement to the effect that 'the atomic coordinates and structure factor data described here have been deposited in the Protein Data Bank at Brookhaven'.

III. Journals

The Commission recommends that this policy be communicated to all the relevant scientific journals and that they be urged to adopt its provisions.

IV. User obligations

1. The Commission hopes that the practice of depositing coordinates used in structural description will be extended to publications based on spectroscopic data (*e.g.* nuclear magnetic resonance, EXAFS) and from theoretical and modelling studies.

2. Users of deposited data should cite the primary references, as well as the Protein Data Bank, when making use of the data.

Notes and News

Announcements and other items of crystallographic interest will be published under this heading at the discretion of the Editorial Board. The notes (in duplicate) should be sent to the Executive Secretary of the International Union of Crystallography (J. N. King, International Union of Crystallography, 5 Abbey Square, Chester CH1 2HU, England).

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Nominations sought for the Patterson Award for 1990

One of the four major triennial awards of the American Crystallographic Association, named after a major figure in structural crystallography and in the ACA, Arthur Lindo Patterson, will be awarded at the ACA New Orleans meeting in April 1990. The award is to 'recognize and encourage outstanding research in the structure of matter by diffraction methods, including significant contributions to the methodology of structure determination and/or innovative application of diffraction methods and/or elucidation of biological, chemical, geological or physical phenomena using new structural information'. The purpose of the award is not only to recognize achievement, but also to inspire further effort and research, and shall be given without regard to nationality, ACA membership or age.

Nominations should include a concise statement summarizing the work to be recognized by the award, including references. They should be sent to the Chair of the award committee, K. N. Trueblood, Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, University of California, Los Angeles, CA 90024, USA (BITNET address: TRUEBLOOD@UCLACH), or to any of the other members of the committee: Dr Helen Berman, Dr Philip Coppens and Dr Michael James.

The deadline for receipt of nominations is 1 December 1989.