

Getting published: understanding the process and avoiding the pitfalls

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Publishing in Academic Journals

- Opportunities to publish empirical and theoretical work in a timely fashion
- Peer-reviewed, thus your work is reviewed by fellow scholars
- National and international readership and recognition
- Personal career development
- Part of the process by which academic schools and universities are measured and assessed

This session




- To provide an overview to publishing in academic journals in the social sciences: submission, the peer-review process, best practice....
 - To provide an opportunity to discuss issues relating to journal publishing with experienced journal editors
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How to submit to a journal

Choose your journal carefully...

- 'fit' between paper and journal aims, debates, themes, editorial interests
 - journal's reputation and standing
 - seek advice
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How to submit to a journal

Read the specific submission guidelines for the journal carefully

- Who to submit to?
- How to submit (for example e-mail or Manuscript Central?)
- Word count and other 'rules' or guidance
- Formatting (title page, font, spacing, tables / figures etc)
- Referencing styles and conventions

The Peer Review process

- Peer review arrangements
 - Vary in terms of the role of editorial boards
 - Vary in terms of number of reviewers
- Common principles
 - Undertaken 'blind'
 - Match of expertise
 - Attempts to be impartial, critical and constructive

Peer review outcomes

Again, vary by outcome but usually include:

- Accept
- Minor revisions
- Major revisions
- Reject
- (and immediate reject)

Approximate distribution of outcomes *Sociology*

Accept (minor revisions)	30%
Accept (after major revisions)	32%
Reject (after review)	18%
Immediate reject	20%

Time taken for peer-review process

Sociology

Av. days from submission to first decision	48 days
Av. referee turnaround time (original)	23 days
Av. referee turnaround time (revision)	20 days
Av. time from submission to final decision	71 days



What happens when reviewers disagree?

- Decision by the editors

Or

- Goes out for further review.



Good Practices - submitting a paper

1. Read (and as appropriate refer to) papers that cover similar topics to yours in your target journal before getting too far along in the writing of the paper.
2. Provide a clear and focused summary of the main topic of the paper, its key contributions and why these are important in the introduction.
3. Prepare the manuscript to the specific journal style.
4. Ensure it has been spell checked and carefully proof read.
5. Do not submit the same paper to more than one journal at a time.
6. Choose a well regarded and internationally recognised journal; aim high but ask experienced colleagues for advice as appropriate.

Good practices – working with reviews

1. Read the reviewers' comments carefully (editors are also likely to provide advice).
2. Determine how you will respond to potentially divergent comments in a consistent manner (take particular care in interpreting comments and use editors' guidance).
3. Provide a covering letter to the editor with your re-submission explaining what you have done to revise your paper and why.
4. Provide a detailed response to reviewers one by one explaining how you have addressed their comments, or why you have not been able or it was inappropriate to. Reviewers understand that you may not be willing or able to meet all their expectations but they do not expect their (generally well intentioned) advice to be ignored.
5. Continue to write your paper, not the one the reviewers might appear to want you to write...

Good practices – dealing with rejection

1. It will happen to everyone, don't take it personally.
2. When you've calmed down (and it can take a while), take the positives from the reviews.
3. Be honest in your appraisal of your paper in the light of these comments - don't ignore valid criticisms and hope other reviewers won't notice the flaws.
4. Use the advice to re-submit the paper to a different journal as soon as you feel able.

Getting started....

- Some journals have sections for research notes and short articles
- Most journals have review sections – offer to review a book or write a review essay
- Co-authorship – with supervisor or fellow research team member
- Agree single authorship of paper that arises out of a collective project
- Look out for calls for special issues, current debate sections, rapid response sections – themes may be in your area of expertise
- Get into the habit of having your writing read and reviewed by colleagues and peers

Further advice

- Look out for publishing workshops, which are often good ways of getting help and advice in relation to specific papers
- Seek out specialist advice – is your paper suitable for a generalist journal (like **Sociology**) or a more specialist journal (like **Work, Employment, Society**)?
- Academic colleagues will have experience of journal editing and may be able to offer you tailored advice