Publishing: A Behind the Scenes Look, and Tips for New Faculty

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A Typical Journal Review Process

Initial submission to Editor

Screened for fit/quality

Sent to Co-Editor or Associate Editor

“bounce”
(desk rejection)

Sent to Referees

Referees reports to Editor/Assoc. Editor

Reject

Accept

Revise & Resubmit

Re-reviewed …

R & R can end up as R & R again

“coach”
Definitions re the Reviewing Process

- **Double-blind refereeing**
  - Author does not know names of Referees
  - Referees do not know name of Author

- **Single-blind refereeing**
  - Author does not know names of Referees
  - Referees do know name of Author

- **Special Issues or Invited Papers**
  - Author papers are refereed
  - Referees often include special issue editor(s)
  - Journal may share name(s) of referees with Author

- **Single vs. double/multiple submission**
  - Journals in the sciences may allow you to submit to multiple journals at once for the same paper; social science & humanities journals do **NOT**.
Top Ten List: Journals & other pubs

1. 1 idea, 1 paper.
2. Know the journal.
3. Style is important.
4. The Introduction is crucial to the paper’s success.
5. Don’t overdo it. Save words for the main text.
7. Revisions: Do not lengthen the paper! In a separate Letter to the Editor, specify clearly to the Editor(s) and Referees about changes requested and completed.
8. Consider journal special issues.
1. 1 idea, 1 paper.

- Relate your research to an open question being discussed or debated in the “discipline”[s].
- Editors and referees want to read a paper that is novel, engaging, interesting, current.
- Editors want research that is focused: clarity, clarity, clarity.
- Your title should be a clue. Does it sound like it is focused on supporting one, clear conclusion?
2. **Research** selected journals for “fit”, quality.

- What topics have been published in the last 5 volumes?
- Would the journal be open to your scholarship?
- Are you aiming too high? too low?
- Types of journals:
  - A general journal
  - A field journal
  - A journal reflecting a particular theoretical perspective
- Are scholars like you likely to read that journal regularly and cite articles from that journal?
- Your list of journals for your paper may change/evolve as you are writing the paper!
3. **Style is important.**

- Keep to the journal’s specified length (shorter is better).
- Follow the journal’s style guide & manuscript submission guidelines. Editors and referees want to know that you aren’t “phishing” around for any journal.
  - Section Titles, and format
  - References style
  - Footnotes or Endnotes
  - Policy on data, models, and regression analysis
  - Are acknowledgments allowed? If you don’t see them in print, don’t use them.
- The paper title should be informative, not wordy.
- The paper must be organized. Editors will skim the paper to see if it is well organized.
4. The Introduction is key.

- Editors will read the introduction first. They may stop reading there if …
- The typical paper opens with why the topic is important and your key contributions.
  - Some journals expect a paragraph summarizing how the manuscript is laid out. Others don’t.
- Do not include a “second introduction” with a background or history of the topic.
- Headings lead the reader through the manuscript.
- Do not necessarily fall into the hackneyed [commonplace]:
  1. Introduction
  2. Literature Review
  3. Results
  4. Summary and Conclusions
  • The structure must be appropriate to the journal and your paper.
5. Don’t overdo it.

- Journal articles are getting shorter. 10,000 → 7,000 words.
- Do a literature review, but keep it brief. Embed previous findings where appropriate:
  - In historical or theoretical presentation
  - In methodology or theory section(s)
  - In results section(s)
  - Even in summary and conclusions
- Save words for the main text, not an overly long list of references.
  - It’s important to show that you read the literature, but reference lists are getting shorter.
  - Do not play games of citing authors that would be friendly to the paper; editors easily catch onto this.
- Every word or word-equivalent in a table or chart counts as a word against the word limit!
  - A journal article does not have 15-20 tables.
  - Information presented in tables should stand alone, and every table included should be summarized.
  - Remember: 1 idea, 1 paper.
6. **Edit, edit, edit** for high-quality English.

- Don’t depend on the journal employing a copy editor.
- Make it easy for referees and readers across the globe to understand your paper.
- Referees are frustrated with argument flow when the manuscript is poorly written.
- After you think you’re ready to submit, leave it aside for a few days. Then look again to be sure.
- Remember to ask colleagues to read your manuscript before you submit it. Then thank them for their assessment.
7. Revisions: length, letter

- Few articles are accepted in the 1st round of reviewing.
  - Most Authors receive Revise & Resubmit letters, so be prepared for this; allow for this in your career advancement timeline.

- In a revision, do not lengthen the paper.
  - The only exception to the word-limit rule: when the Editor has allowed more words, this will be specified by the Editor in a note to the Author.

- Write a separate letter to the Editor.
  - Specify clearly to the Editor (page number, paragraph) what changes were requested are where changes were made.
  - If a change was not made, explain why.
  - Outline any other changes in terms of argument, ideas, results, etc.
  - Rarely, if ever, complain to the Editor about a decision or ask that the paper be sent to an additional referee.
  - Any questions about referee comments or conflicted recommendations? Write the Editor.
8. Consider journal special issues.

- Special issues have special, named editors.
- Special issues are highly cited.
- Sometimes, they have a higher acceptance rate than a regular issue.

- Volunteer to discuss papers at a conference and referee for a journal/conference paper.
- You are joining a community of scholars. And you learn a lot.
- Be a good discussant/referee:
  - Meet deadlines
  - Write high-quality reports that are unbiased, not derisive
  - Make overall suggestions (big picture) as well as specific suggestions for improvement
- When you referee a lot for a particular journal and your reviews are high-quality, you may be asked to join the Editorial Board.

- Books can develop from selected conference papers or special issues.
- Working with an Editor(s) is fun.
- Can lead to being invited to edit your own book someday.