
Introduction

This guide to getting published in academic journals draws on our experience as successful published authors, as teachers of courses in writing for publication, as reviewers of articles for academic journals, and as editors of peer-reviewed journals. We have also published research on scholarly publication more broadly.

Getting Published in Academic Journals is aimed, in particular, at graduate students and newly graduated PhDs who are wanting to but have not yet had their research published in peer-reviewed academic journals. It aims to help you gain an understanding of what you need to know and be able to do in order to get your work published in scholarly journals.

The book is written to be used in classes and workshops, especially as a supplement to the books in the revised and updated *English in Today's Research World* series (published by the University of Michigan Press). It can also be used as a stand-alone text for academic writers working by themselves.

Because we are passing on our experience in getting published, we have elected to tell some stories and refer to ourselves by our first names in the text.

Orientation

One highly regarded author had this to say about writing for publication: “As an academic more and more you live by virtue of your writing . . . if you don’t join that race, you might lose opportunities professionally and so on” (Carnell et al., 2008, p. 45). We completely agree with this point, especially when it comes to graduate students and newly graduated PhDs. You need people to get to know your work, beyond the institutional context of your dissertation, as early on as possible. This is crucial in today’s world where there is increasingly more competition for the academic and/or professional opportunities you are hoping your doctoral work will lead you to (see Chapter 2 for further discussion of this).

Writing for publication is a way in which people get to know you, and your work, before they meet you and, many times, instead of meeting you. Brian had exactly this experience when he submitted his first peer-reviewed article to an academic journal (Paltridge, 1992) before he had completed his doctoral studies. The editors of the journal at the time have since become strong supporters of his work even though he did not physically meet them until a good number of years after he had submitted that very first article to their journal. They have since gone on to be reviewers of his work for other publishers and have been referees for job and promotion applications. Of course, he didn’t imagine this would happen when he sent his paper to their journal, but that first step in “joining the race” became an extremely important one for him, even though he didn’t realize it at the time.

Why Write for Publication?

There are many reasons why you would want to write for publication. In her book *How to Get Research Published in Journals*, Abby Day (2007) lists some of these. The first of these is *clarity*; that is, the act of writing helps you to clarify your thinking about what you are doing. Writing also forces you to *revisit your ideas* and *re-examine* what you have done. It is also an opportunity for you to get *feedback* on your work, both from colleagues on drafts of your writing and

then from reviewers once you have sent your article to a journal for consideration.

Getting published in academic journals also provides *tangible evidence* of your capability in your particular field. It *enhances your reputation* in the field, especially if you publish in international peer-reviewed journals. Publishing also puts you in contact with other people in your field. You may never meet some of these people face to face, but through your publishing, key people will get to know you and your work.

Publishing in academic journals, then, provides a *wider readership* for your work. It is an important way in which you can inform other people about your work, as well as influence other academics and the field more generally. It is not always (or even often) the case that a doctoral dissertation will do this. In fact, far fewer people read a PhD dissertation than many students imagine.

In a review one of us conducted of doctoral research a few years back, we found it surprisingly difficult to get copies of the dissertations we wanted to read. Some were available online through the university library, but many were not. Some could not be borrowed, so we had to purchase them in order to read them. The message to new academic writers, then, is if you want people to know about your work, you need to publish it!

Academic institutions all over the world are increasingly being held responsible for their research output, and the number of publications by their faculty is one way that this can be measured. Academic institutions also use publications as part of their appointment and promotion processes as they provide evidence of a person's ability to succeed in this area of academic life.

Getting published in academic journals, importantly, *adds to the body of knowledge* that is part of your field of study. A field only grows because people add to it. Getting published is how you are able to let people know about your research, your findings, and your ideas. It is where you can start to become part of the professional conversation of your discipline. As Rocco (2011) argues, a lot of new knowledge can be lost because new writers often do not know how to "join the conversation" in their disciplinary community. Your writing and the ability to get it published shows that you are able to do this.

In some countries, such as Iran, China, and the Netherlands, it is a requirement that parts of a doctoral dissertation have already been published in order for a student to graduate. The PhD regulations at the University of Amsterdam, for example, say that the dissertation “is a single academic treatment of a particular subject or a number of separate academic treatments, some or all of which have already been published, which together provide a cohesive study of a particular subject” (Universiteit van Amsterdam, 2010, p. 20). This kind of policy is clearly a factor in the increase in recent years, of submissions of papers from writers in non-Anglophone countries to international peer-reviewed journals.

In some disciplines, the practice is to write a dissertation that is based on a compilation of publishable (and sometimes published) research articles, sometimes referred to as a “*PhD by publication.*” These PhDs are quite different from other sorts of dissertations in that the research article chapters are more concise than typical dissertations chapters, making them more easily submitted to academic journals as stand-alone pieces of work.

The pressure on graduate students and newly graduated PhDs to publish their work continues to grow. Once, it was enough to have a PhD to secure an academic appointment. Those days are gone, and today academic institutions typically look for a strong *research trajectory* when making academic appointments. A typical question an appointment committee member might ask when looking at a job

One of us has a friend who decided to do a PhD by publication. She had been an academic for some years (without a PhD) and had many publications, but had found that she needed the PhD to move to other jobs in her field. She didn't want, however, to stop publishing while she did the PhD because this would create a gap in her publications resume. So she decided to do her PhD by publication. She was, thus, able to maintain her publishing profile at the same time as gaining her doctorate. And, she went on to get the job she was after, and at a much more senior level than she would have otherwise been considered for.

application is: “Does this candidate have a five-year coherent research agenda?” Having your work published in academic journals is a way in which you can demonstrate an agenda. Equally, newly appointed faculty members who are in tenure-track positions face the “publish or perish” dictate, particularly in the first years of their academic appointment. Simply put, writing and publishing are a measure of career success within the academy.

There is, however, more involved in the process of getting published in academic journals than new authors imagine. It is not simply a case of sending a coursework assignment to a journal or taking a PhD dissertation apart and sending sections of it to different journals.

There is much more to this process than writers who are new to getting published realize, especially when negotiating the submission and review process that is key to successful publication. The aim of this book is to clarify some of these issues and to offer advice—based on our experiences of getting our own work published, reviewing the work of others, editing academic journals, and drawing on our research into the structure of journal articles—to help you navigate this important academic rite of passage. As has been said, writing is “a means of saying who you are, locating yourself in the world, and representing yourself in the world” (Carnell et al., 2008, p. 9). This book will help you do that.

As journal editors we have always been able to spot an article that has been taken from a dissertation without being revised for the new and different audience. Sometimes it is as simple as the author saying, “This chapter discusses . . .” Other times we can see from an out-of-date reference list that the article is based on a dissertation that was submitted several years earlier and the author is only now starting to publish his or her work without having updated the research on which it is based. In both of these cases the author might have the article rejected without review. Our advice is to publish from your dissertation as soon as you can, considering the new and different audience for your article as you do this (a matter we return to in Chapter 1).