

How to Get Your Journal Article Published

This document sets out handy tips on how to get published. Standards are high and getting published is not easy, but there are certain things to think about to improve your success rate at getting an article published in a SAGE journal.

Why should you consider publication?

- Do you have contribution to make? ie the conventional wisdom is mistaken; this is theory extension / filling a gap; this is novel, innovative work. Questions to ask yourself: Who's going to be interested? How does it build on what we already know? How significant is your message? How sure are you of your findings?
- It is important for your career
- Publication is integral to the academic's role

Tips before submitting

- High risk submissions: conversion of a big report or monograph or doctorate thesis; straight conference paper, not focused for the journal, not formatted for the journal and it might be published elsewhere in the conference proceedings
- Low risk submissions: papers written for the journal, ie it fits with the genre and scope of the journal, engages with the debates, refers to previous work published in the journal and related publications

Which journal should you submit to?

- Does your research fit the journal's aims and scope?
- What type of submission is it? Empirical research, review paper, brief report, thought piece, book review. Does the journal publish these kinds of papers?
- Does the journal have a good reputation in the field? Are the Editor and Editorial Board high profile?
- Check the references to see in which journals the research you are citing mainly falls.
- Is it ISI ranked or ranked highly with other metrics, eg h-index, ABS, ERIH, ERA
- Does your institution have any restrictions on where you can submit articles?
- What is the acceptance/rejection rate?

Tips before submitting

- Read the journal's aims and scope
- Read the journal's articles and TOCs on SAGE Journals Online to familiarise yourself with the content: <http://online.sagepub.com>
- Consult with colleagues
- You may wish to discuss your paper with the journal Editor.

What should you do to prepare your manuscript?

- Read the manuscript submission guidelines. The SAGE website hosts manuscript submission guidelines for all our journals.
- Make every effort to improve the quality of the manuscript before submission.
- Be as objective as possible about your work

Manuscript submission guidelines checklist should include the following golden rules:

- Have you used the right references, eg Harvard, APA, Vancouver, Chicago?
- Have you stayed within the word limit?
- Is it single/double blind review? If so, ensure there are no identifying features in your manuscript.
- Have you conformed to the conventions of academic writing?
 - title, abstract and keywords– please refer to the information and guidance on how best to title your article, write your abstract and select your keywords by visiting SAGE's Journal Author Gateway Guidelines on how to help readers find your article online: <http://www.uk.sagepub.com/authors/journal/readership.sp>
 - introduction with a clear, compelling statement of purpose,
 - conceptual grounding/literature review,
 - hypotheses/research questions that are clear, meaningful, answerable, inter-related, flow logically from the introduction,
 - methodology, appropriate sample, do the procedures/measures offer enough information for replicability/trust
 - analysis and discussion – they should be systematic, sensible analyses
 - tables/figures that speed comprehension
 - results, discussion of results, key findings
 - conclusion: don't merely repeat results; directives of research and practice; awareness of limitations; don't go beyond the evidence.
- Has permission been obtained for use of copyrighted material from other sources (including the Web)?
- Have you proofread it before submitting?
- Have you provided a cover letter? Keep it short and highlight the salient features in the letter.
- Have you considered including supplemental data? Will it add value to the content?

When you think it is ready and you have ticked off the above checklist, submit your article. Is there an online submission process or should it be sent direct to the Editor/Managing Editor? CHECK THE SAGE WEBSITE! www.sagepub.com



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What happens next?

Depending on the journal, your article will be considered by the Editor/s and/or Associate Editors and 2-4 reviewers, often from the Editorial Board. If it is submitted to an online system, you will receive an acknowledgement and a reference number. Please use this reference number if you need to follow up on your manuscript.

There are four possible outcomes:

Desk reject* – ie, your paper will not be sent out for review.

Conditional accept with major revisions – depending on the level of revisions, it may need to be resubmitted as a new manuscript. This may be due to several factors.

Conditional accept with minor revisions – these papers generally do get accepted, provided the minor revisions are adhered to

Accept without change – this outcome is extremely rare.

*Reasons for a desk reject may include: poorly focused and/or 'fit' with journal objectives; obviously speculative paper/another journal's rejection; inadequate literature base; weak methodology; poor analysis/contribution; not well rounded, ie beginning, middle and end; poor English; not formatted for the journal.

When can or should I contact the Editor?

Again, check the website. It might stipulate how long the review process takes. Some manuscripts may take longer to review, particularly if they are niche areas and it is difficult finding good reviewers. It is reasonable to chase up your paper if you feel it has exceeded the stated guidelines.

Handling revisions

- Cover issues raised point by point. Don't rush!
- Demonstrate what you have done
- Provide a point by point covering note to each referee and page number citations
- If you cannot meet all criticisms, point out why
- Be positive/constructive
- Note – the process can take 2 -3 iterations

Handling rejections

- Don't over-react. The criticisms are there to enhance your paper
- Carefully read referees' report and Editor's letter
- Try to focus on why. Ill focused? Wrong journal? Fundamentally flawed? Specific problem?
- Try and re-work the paper
- Submit to an alternative journal
- But write for a journal

What happens once your paper has been accepted?

Once your paper is accepted for publication, it will be forwarded to the production team for processing. You will need to sign a contributor agreement form, or if the journal is on the online system, SAGEtrack, you simply click a button. SAGE does the following:

1. Copy-edits your paper into the journal style
2. Creates a PDF of proofs to be sent to you for final review
3. Corrects any errors you have identified
4. Sends the final copy to the printer
5. Posts the article on SAGE Journals Online for access to journal subscribers
6. Dispatches the journal to subscribers
7. Provides authors with access to a PDF of their final article. We additionally provide the corresponding author with a complimentary copy of the print issue in which the article appears (up to a maximum of 5 copies for distribution to co-authors).

For more information, go to the SAGE website and click on the link to Journal Editors/Authors on the right hand side: www.sagepub.com

Good luck!

