Description

Manuscript Preparation

While pursuing research, researchers should be aware of the steps that need to be followed to ensure that their study is published in well-renowned international journals. Publication in international journals is essential to advance a researcher's career in academia, acknowledge their contribution, and add to the existing knowledge in each domain. The initial steps towards this journey are compiling results and understanding the requirements for preparing an authentic manuscript.

In this section, we have shared some common questions early-stage researchers have when they are preparing their manuscripts for publication. Here, we discuss authorship-related issues, identifying journal requirements, tools for literature review, and similar topics.

FAQs (10 items)

How do you decide authorship for any manuscript?

Usually, a principal investigator (PI), graduate or undergraduate students, and technical staff are involved in any research project. Importantly, when reporting and publishing research findings in a scientific manuscript, all the authors, co-authors, and contributors should be mentioned in the manuscript depending on their involvement in a project.

Read_more

Moreover, most manuscripts have multiple authors who have contributed to a study so understanding authorship is very important.
Determining authorship is one of the most common causes of conflict during the publication process. Assigning appropriate authorship is critical to acknowledging the contribution of the individual researchers. Most journals expect authors to follow the guidelines established by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) criteria to assign authorship.
Accordingly, an author must meet all of the criteria outlined below:

- Make substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work
- Draft the work or revise it critically for important intellectual content
- Approve the final version for publication
- Agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work and ensure that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved

All those individuals/groups who do meet the criteria for authorship for a particular manuscript can be mentioned in the “Acknowledgements” section of the manuscript. Moreover, many journals have now made it mandatory for all authors to give their consent when the corresponding author is submitting the final manuscript.

Close

What are journal guidelines/instructions for authors?

Journals share guidelines or instructions with authors to provide clear and detailed information about the requirements that authors need to fulfill before submitting a manuscript for publication.

Read_more

Any authentic journal will have a dedicated section with the heading “Instructions to Authors/Journal Guidelines”. As the author, it is important for you to understand the requirements mentioned in the guidelines before drafting your manuscript.
Generally, the following aspects are covered in the author guidelines:

- Aim and scope of the journal and its target audience. Types of research articles accepted by the journal for publication.
- Word count limitation such as i) maximum number of words/characters for actual manuscript, ii) number of references in the end-list, iii) number of tables and figures, iv) font type and font size for sections of the manuscript.
- Guidelines for the structure and layout of the manuscript such as title, author names and affiliations, abstract, keywords, introduction, methods, results (statistical analysis) and discussion, conclusion, acknowledgements, list of references, and in-text citations.
- Instructions on margins, page numbering, legends for tables and figures, units of measurement, image editing, and language requirements.
- There could be other submission requirements (CONSORT, PRISMA, CARE, STROBE, etc., depending on the subject area of research and type of journal that is selected).
- Information on the format and type of supplementary material that may have to be included at the time of submission.
- Details of the complete online submission process, peer review process, and copyright/licensing policies.

Thus, following the instructions to authors provided by your target journal is critical as any deviations may lead to delayed/incomplete submission, which can lead to further delay in initial assessment, assignment of peer reviewers, or even rejection.

Close

What are style guides and what is their importance for journals?

A style guide is a reference book that provides rules for writing, such as those for grammar and syntax, in specific disciplines. These may include formatting instructions for citations and reference lists as well.

For instance, the AMA, MLA, Turabian, and Chicago style guides are recommended for subject areas ranging from humanities and social sciences to literature and natural sciences. On the other hand, the ACS, CSE, IEEE, AMS, APA, and AMA style guides are generally recommended for chemistry, biology, engineering, mathematics, social sciences, and medicine-related disciplines, respectively.

Authors are required to follow specific writing styles, formats, and guidelines based on the journal's instructions when submitting a manuscript. These are usually outlined in the "Instructions to Authors" (also referred to sometimes as "Guidelines for Authors") section of every journal. Thus, many journals ask authors to directly refer to style guides to ensure uniformity in the way content is described. Not adhering to author guidelines when preparing the manuscript is one of the most common reasons for journal rejection. [/show_more]

What is LaTeX and how do you write manuscripts in it?

LaTeX is a document preparation system based on a typesetting system called TeX. It is used for producing technical and scientific documents that consist of mathematical equations and figures.

Read_more

LaTeX is very helpful for authors whose research is related to physics, statistics, mathematics, engineering, computer science, economics, and quantitative psychology.
LaTeX can be used for any form of publishing and finds widespread use because of the following reasons:

- It can be viewed or edited with any text editor
- Its formatting is consistent and automatically employed once set
- It can be help write mathematical equations easily

For ease of writing in LaTeX, there have been multiple online platforms that have been developed. For example, *Overleaf* is an online platform powered by LaTeX. It is cloud-based system, requires no installation, and is a LaTeX compatible platform. It is designed for collaborative writing and can help authors directly submit manuscripts to journals. Note that it is important to ensure that authors follow

the steps mentioned in the journal guidelines for making submissions.

Close

What types of databases are used to find information on published studies?

Researchers need access to published research as this helps identify novel challenges or issues within a specific field of research. Additionally, access to published research is useful for preparing manuscripts at the time of submission.

Read_more

Currently, online databases are one of the most widely used platforms to identify and extract such information. These databases can be interdisciplinary or subject-specific and may require registration for complete access.
Some commonly used databases are listed below:

- **JSTOR:** It provides access to more than 10 million journals, articles, and other resources from different disciplines.
- **Web of Science:** It is a multi-disciplinary abstract and indexing database that provides access to about 33,000 journals, 7.4 million conference proceedings, books, patents, and other resources.
- **Scopus:** It is the largest abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed literature and provides access to more than 67 million records.
- **MEDLINE (PubMed):** It is a bibliographic database with access to more than 24 million references to journal articles in life sciences with focus on biomedicine.
- **CiteSeer^X:** It is a digital library with scientific literature focused on computer and information sciences.
- **IEEE Xplore:** It provides full-text access to technical literature in engineering and technology and includes journals, transactions, letters, magazines, and conference proceedings.
- **Embase:** It is a biomedical database that provides access to 32 million records in biomedical sciences.
- **Google Scholar:** Although not a database, Google Scholar is one of the most popular portals for identifying research-related information. There is some debate on the authenticity of the content reflected after a search on Google Scholar.

*Note: The above list is not exhaustive and there are other databases/repositories, which are specific to each discipline.

Close

What are reference management tools and how do you use them?

Researchers often gather lot of information during the course of their literature search and while doing their research. Importantly, these sources need to be mentioned when the actual manuscript is being written to provide appropriate credit to the group/researchers that conducted the original study.

Read_more

Reference managers help researchers sort and organize bibliographies, save relevant literature of different formats, import and change citations from websites or databases. Importantly, they make it easy to modify references into different formats such as Vancouver, Harvard, MLA, etc.

When choosing an appropriate reference manager, you should consider the features that are most important to you as a researcher, such as working on multiple computers, online and offline usage, and usage for sharing citations and facilitating collaborations. A good first step is to know what is generally used by other researchers. We have listed some popular reference managers below:

Features	EndNote	RefWorks	Zotero
Access	Desktop & web- based version	Web-based version	Plug-in for browser or Stand-alone version; Desktop version available
Work offline	Yes (Desktop version)	Yes	Yes
Annotate PDFs	No	Yes	No
Storage	5 GB	5 GB	300 MB

Close

How is excessive self-citation detrimental?

If the number of self-citations in an article is high, the number of external citations that the article may receive will be less. Often, first-time or early-stage researchers are not aware that self-citations is considered a bad practice within the academic community. Many authors tend to self-cite their previous studies when they are writing the introduction or literature review section of the manuscript.

Read_more

At the submission stage, many journal editors and peer reviewers are very particular about the previous research that has been cited in the study as this helps establish the fact that the study and methodology are reproducible and authentic.

However, journals get very skeptical of manuscripts that include too many self-citations as this may indicate that the author has not adequately conducted a thorough literature survey. The only possible exception occurs when very few research teams or no other research teams are working in a specific research area. Currently, most of the popular industry metrics incorporate procedures for detecting and eliminating self-citations.

Close

What constitutes supplementary information?

Supplementary material is used to support the information in the manuscript and is not included within the main manuscript. At present, regardless of the subject area, researchers tend to heavily rely on supplementary data to identify patterns, issues, or trends. It includes experimental details, data sets, chemical structures, images, tables, audio files, and videos.

Read_more

Supplementary information can be of the following types:

- Datasets of cell models, molecular models, mathematical models, etc.
- Large data tables that are practically difficult to include in the manuscript itself
- Additional information related to materials and methods used in the study
- Charts and graphs that are relevant to the study but not a priority for the main manuscript
- Genetic, biological, toxicological, or similar information that was considered for the analysis
- Multimedia (e.g., audio or video files)

You should follow journal guidelines for preparing and submitting supplementary material as the requirements vary across journals. Journals may require file submission in different formats (word document, images, audio/video files) and may recommend certain size limits.

Some journals may request that each supplementary material be submitted as a separate file. Other journals may prefer that all the supplementary materials be collated into a single file (either PDF, DOC, or ZIP). Importantly, authors can cite the supplementary information within the manuscript. Moreover, the supplementary information can be used by peer reviewers and journals to verify the data that has been cited in the manuscript and validate its authenticity.

Close

How can data visualization tools and techniques help in presenting research data effectively?

Data visualization provides a means to visually represent certain experimental findings. It helps researchers and readers make sense out of the data and to communicate the information effectively. Visualization techniques can be used for both qualitative and quantitative data.

Read_more

As the amount of data generated during research has increased in volume and preciseness, it has become more important to use visualization techniques (ranging from tables to the more complicated

data density maps). When using these techniques and tools, researchers should consider the following:

- Choose the type of data representation format, i.e., figures, tables, charts, graphs, density plots, scatter plots, and more
- Ensure the background (axes, gridlines, or borders) is light in colour to highlight coloured data
- Use shades of the same colour to make figures easy to understand
- Use contrasting colours to show differences
- Use colour gradients to distinguish between higher and lower values

Researchers can use different tools such as Tableau, Many Eyes, Datamarket, or Google fusion tables to visualize data. The choice primarily depends on the data type and the information to be conveyed.

Close

What can you do to make your article more discoverable?

Every year, ~4 million articles are being published in international peer-reviewed journals. As a researcher, it is becoming very challenging to ensure that your research is being read by the right audience.

Read_more

Often, researchers tend to believe that publication in high-impact-factor journals is the only way to effectively promote a study. However, the visibility of any research article can be increased by following these suggestions:

- During preparation, choose your keywords effectively and try to include them in the abstract, title and literature review sections of your manuscript.
- You can also opt for an open access journal to increase the visibility and discoverability of your article.
- You can archive the post or pre-print version for immediate access to the academic community.
- Share your data through OA or institutional repositories like DYRAD and figshare.
- Create your profile on online platforms such as Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, Mendeley, ResearchGate, Academia.edu, and more.
- Create a unique researcher ID on platforms such as ORCID, PubMed, and ResearchGate
- Use social media networking platforms such as Twitter or LinkedIn to regularly share updates related to your work.
- Track the progress of the impact of your research by using platforms such as ImpactStory or Altmetrics

Close

Manuscript Formatting

After submission, ~21% of manuscripts get rejected outright even before reaching the peer review

stage. This rejection rate is because of a combination of factors such as the formatting of manuscripts and incorrect journal selection. Thus, it is important to effectively articulate and present your research work based on the journal guidelines to ensure that the submission meets the journal's requirements. This can also help increase the chance of acceptance during submission.

In this section, we address some common questions authors have for formatting their manuscripts. Here, we discuss topics such as the need for the IMRAD format, how each section can be structured, avoiding issues for image manipulation, and explain the different parts of a manuscript.

FAQs (14 items)

What does IMRAD stand for?

IMRAD is the acronym for Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion. It describes the typical structure of an original research article. Most journals require articles to be submitted in this format only.

Read_more

Additionally, non-conformance to this structure can lead to rejection of manuscripts, i.e., if the content relevant to the Introduction is mentioned in the Results section and vice versa. It is not mandatory to follow this format for certain types of manuscripts; therefore, always refer to the journal guidelines to understand the exact requirements before drafting the research paper.

A typical manuscript usually consists of the following sections:

- **Title page**: It includes the title of the paper, authors' names and affiliations, and the date of submission
- **Abstract**: It is a summary of the research paper and each journal enforces a specific limit on its length. It usually consists of the objective, key findings, and implications along with relevant keywords
- **Keywords**: These words are key concepts and terms that would be searched by the academic community
- **Introduction**: It describes the scope, rationale, and significance of the research conducted. It includes background information on the current state and introduces the research question that answers the gap in the existing knowledge
- **Materials & Methods**: It provides information on the materials and methods, characteristics of the study subjects (if any), inclusion and exclusion criteria, data collection methods, and statistical analysis techniques used in the study
- **Results & Discussion**: It describes the key findings, their statistical significance and relevance to the research question. A detailed summary of the key results, their interpretation and significance to the academic community is mentioned here

- **Conclusion**: It reiterates the objective/research question of the study and discusses the implications of the key findings with scope for future work

Close

What is the difference between a research article, a review, and a rapid communication?

Scientific work needs to be disseminated to the scientific community not only for exchange of ideas but also for external validation of research.

Read_more

The three most common types of research articles can be described as follows:

- **Rapid communication**: It is often placed at the beginning of a journal issue. It consists of original preliminary results that are likely to have a significant impact in the respective field. Often, journals place limitations on the length of the article and therefore it is typically shorter. Therefore, authors are encouraged to publish a detailed follow-up research paper. However, many journals discourage the fragmentation of the body of work into a number of short publications.
- **Original article**: It reports a study conducted by the researchers. Because these articles describe advancement in a particular field, they are assessed on the basis of originality, quality of the content, and contribution to the existing knowledge base. Original articles are expected to follow the IMRaD format.
- **Review article**: It summarizes and evaluates the current state of a research area. It typically indicates trends or future implications in a field that is rapidly advancing or is of high interest. A large number of previously published articles are analyzed to identify patterns or research gaps. The audience for these reviews includes decision makers, scientific experts, research scholars, and scientific bodies.

Close

What are the do's and don'ts of writing an impressive title?

The title is the first thing that readers look at when they open your research article. Therefore, every title should grab the reader's attention, be relevant to the article, and encourage readers to read further. Additionally, it should contain appropriate keywords to increase discoverability in database searches.

Read_more

Research titles can fall under any of these categories:

- Declarative – states the main findings or conclusions of the article
- Descriptive – describes the context of the article, but leaves out the findings/conclusion
- Interrogative – the context of the article takes the form of a question

It is important not to include following words/phrases in your title:

- Chemical formulae
- Roman numerals
- Acronyms & initialisms
- Vague terms & uncommon names
- Complex drug names (use generic ones, if possible)
- Numerical exponents
- Non-specific openings with a conjunction (e.g., “Report on”, “A Study of”, “Results of”, or “An Experimental Investigation of”)
- Shortened scientific names (e.g., *Escherichia coli* instead of *coli*)
- Taxonomic hierarchy of species of plants, animals, or fungi

Close

How to write an impressive title page?

The title page is the first page of your manuscript. This page includes all the information necessary to identify the article contents, its author(s), origin, and the article type.

Read_more

The title page contains all or a combination of the following elements:

Mandatory sections/elements:

- Article title
- Author names
- Author affiliations
- Corresponding author information

Optional sections/elements depending on the journal guidelines:

- Headers: Running title/head, name of first author
- Footnotes: Funding information, conflict of interest declaration (if any), authorship/contribution details, or statement of author death (if any)
- Keywords
- List of Abbreviations: A comprehensive list of all the shortened forms of words. Generally, standard abbreviations such as ”DNA” are not included in this list

- Miscellaneous information (Word count or article type)

*Note: The specific requirements for the contents within the title page are mentioned in the journal guidelines.

Close

How to create an effective graphical abstract?

A graphical abstract is a visual summary of the central theme of your research manuscript. These abstracts help readers quickly understand the main idea of your article and determine if the article is of interest to them.

Read_more

To create an effective graphical abstract:

- Make sure it is not a copy of the figure inserted in your content
- Know your target audience
- Take tips from good examples of graphical abstracts
- Start with a sketch to know the important elements of your message
- Summarize your article in 2–3 main points and try to depict the same with a figure
- Follow journal guidelines for style, resolution, and file format
- Use colours and design elements to make it appealing
- Use key words/phrases in your figure
- Follow a sequence to depict your main idea: Top to bottom or left to right
- Based on your level of proficiency, select an appropriate graphics platform such as Adobe Illustrator, ImageJ, or GIMP.

Usually, authors do not use graphical abstracts in their manuscripts. However, researchers can use creative and effective graphical abstract as a promotional tool to engage their readers.

Close

How to write an abstract for your manuscript?

An abstract is a concise description of a research article in 150–300 words. You need to ensure that you check the journal guidelines to understand the word limit and structure that needs to be followed.

Read_more

A structured abstract, besides providing a concise summary, also incorporates the following structure:

- Objective: Summarize in 2—3 sentences what is already known, what gap area is your research

addressing and how your research will add to the existing knowledge.
- Methods: Write a brief description of the methods used to address the objective. This section should not have the same information as the “Material & Methods” section.
- Results: It should describe the key findings of your study, main differences observed in the study groups (if more than one), and statistical significance of those findings.
- Conclusion: This section of the abstract should briefly outline the implications of your key findings.

Write all abstracts using relevant keywords in the abstract for discoverability and avoid repetitive words/phrases to restrain the word count. Avoid the use of acronyms or any information that has not been discussed in your manuscript as well as in-text citations in this section.

Close

How to plan and write your manuscript?

Preparing manuscripts involves the following three phases: searching the literature, writing, and proofreading.

The first phase requires browsing, reading, taking notes, and organizing the information. Once, you gathered all the recent and relevant information, check if you are able to accurately summarize and accurately summarize and convey the intended message to your target audience in your own language.

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You should then start writing the first draft of your manuscript. You can complete writing different sections of your manuscript in multiple sittings.

While writing, focus on the technical information, structure, and the format as outlined in the recommended style guide by the journal. Once your draft is ready, edit and proofread the manuscript with attention to detail and incorporate the necessary changes.

Usually, the basic structure of the paper will include:

- Introduction: It identifies a problem and narrows down the scope of the study into a specific research question
- Methods: It outlines how the research was conducted
- Results: It describes the outcome of the research
- Discussion: It presents the impact and future implications of the research

Importantly, before you start writing your manuscript, it is best to gather all the data that you have acquired for your study. After that, it is advisable to review the journal’s author guidelines first before initiating the actual drafting process.

Close

How to write an effective introduction section?

Introduction is an important section that appears at the beginning of the research article. This section provides readers with the context, significance, and relevant background information for the current study.

Read_more

For writing an effective introduction section, follow these tips:

1. Discuss the importance of the work and the additional knowledge that the current study will be adding to the existing research area
2. Add a relevant summary of the latest published research. This literature review should help readers understand the need and importance of the study
3. Describe your objective clearly to define the gap in the current research. Additionally, discuss how the study aims to fulfill that gap
4. This section can be organized into 3–4 paragraphs to make the flow logical and interesting

- Establish the importance of the topic.
- Discuss previous and/or current research in the field.
- Identify the problem and explain the approach taken to address it.
- Briefly describe the present paper.

Introduction is an important section that appears in the beginning of the research article. This section provides readers with the context, significance, and relevant background information for the current study.

Close

How to write a good literature review?

A literature review is often a part of a thesis, dissertation, or a research article. Literature reviews can be descriptive, can critically analyze previously published research, and/or address the gaps in the current knowledge area.

Read_more

Sources for literature review can be different, including electronic (journal) databases, books, conference proceedings or papers, dissertations, theses, encyclopedias, government publications, etc. You can use tools such as RSS feeds, Google alerts, journal or database alerts to get the most recent

update/information on your topic of interest.

A literature review should include the following aspects:

- Context: What is the current body of knowledge and how does your research fit into that?
- Key concepts: What key concepts or variables apply in your area of research and what is the relationship between these concepts or variables?
- Scope for further research: What are the inconsistencies, gap areas, opportunities, lack of evidence, or alternative methodologies to drive further research in that area?

Make sure to include an annotated bibliography and eliminate bias when writing your literature review. You can also contact your librarian, supervisor, or subject experts to help you guide through this step.

Close

How to write methods section effectively?

Research articles communicate the findings of a study and the methods section describes how the study was conducted to obtain those key results/findings.

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Usually, depending on the journal guidelines, this section is referred to as experimental procedure, experimental setup, materials and procedures, or materials and methods. Usually, this section consists of following information:

- Overview of the experiment
- Information on the population/sample studied
- Location and duration of the experiment
- Restrictions/limiting conditions
- Sampling technique
- Inclusion/exclusion criteria (if any)
- The manufacturer or supplier's information (name of the supplier, state, and country) for the materials used is usually mentioned along with the name of the material, and the name/model number of the equipment used.
- Statistical tests/analysis

Authors should also cite any sources from which they have adopted certain methods/procedures to ensure reproducibility.

Close

How to write results & discussion section constructively in your manuscript?

Many journals may require you to combine the results and discussion sections. The difference between these sections is that the results section presents your key findings and observations, whereas, within

the discussion section, the implications, challenges, and future impact of the study are discussed.

Read_more

Unless specified in the journal guidelines, you will be required to write these sections together. The results section usually consists of figures and tables along with the text to convey the results in a logical sequence without interpretation. When compiling results, do the following:

- Avoid experimental data/details that the reader may not find useful or may find confusing.
- Summarize the important information in tables and figures depict without explaining every data point. Moreover, additional tables and figures can be added in the supplementary information rather than to this section.
- Organize this section based on the sequence of the tables and figures included in your manuscript.
- Avoid repetition of data in different formats for clarity.
- Do not present raw datum when it can be expressed as a mean or percentage.
- Report (never conceal) negative results; these may result in further investigation or studies.

The discussion section in the article should compare your results with the already published data. This section should thus explain the meaning and significance of your results in context with the proposed hypothesis and existing knowledge. When writing the discussion section, do the following:

- Use contrary results to discuss the differences and describe the reasons.
- Ensure this section retains the same sequence as that used in your results section.
- Avoid introducing new information or results that have not been presented earlier in the article.
- Discuss what future experiments can be designed to further your observations.
- Use p-values when discussing statistical results and avoid overusing the word “significant(ly)”.

Close

What are some of the useful tips to avoid image manipulation?

Images play a critical role in presenting results of your research. Authors can use various tools and platforms to create images/figures (e.g., ImageJ, Inkspace, GIMP, and Cytospace).

Read_more

However, modifying images in an unethical manner can cause distortion of information, thereby leading to (unethical) image manipulation. Such manipulation is one of the leading causes of research misconduct. To avoid image manipulation, a researcher can follow these tips:

- Always save your original, unedited image files. Make changes to images only on copies of the original images.
- Do not combine multiple images into one field or splice together pieces of one image to make

them appear congruent.
- Do not manipulate the background colour.
- Images with bands (e.g., Western blots or DNA gels) or other features that are present in the original image but not part of the data being described must be visible and not erased.
- For experiments containing more than one image, such as those with a control and a treated group, ensure that the brightness and contrast adjustments have been made to all of the images exactly in the same manner.
- Adjustments to the brightness, balance, or contrast of the image is only permitted if the entire image is adjusted equally.

Currently, many journals use forensic tools like Forensic Droplets, ImageJ, and Adobe Bridge to detect potential image manipulation. In case you are not clear of the extent to which images can be changed, you can contact the journal with a pre-submission query or cross-check the journal guidelines for more details.

Close

How to write an effective conclusion?

Conclusion is a complete and concise summary of the research article; it appears towards the end of the paper. Generally, in this section, you do the following:

Read_more

- State if you have achieved the objective of your study in terms of accepting/rejecting the proposed hypothesis (if any)
- Provide a brief summary of the key information in your paper
- Restate the major findings or outcomes of your study

Usually, conclusion section is very brief.

Close

What information can you include in acknowledgments?

Acknowledgement is an optional part of your research article. In this section, you can credit or acknowledge the contribution of different stakeholders involved in the project/study

Read_more

(for instance, assistance in supervising the study, writing and editing, acquisition of funds, technical

editing, proofreading, support in handling animal subjects, and more).
Close

Journal Selection

With >28,000 international peer-reviewed journals to select from, selecting the right journal for any manuscript is a very daunting task for researchers. This step is probably the most important step of the publication cycle as incorrect selection can lead to immediate rejection if the manuscript does not fit the aims and scope of a journal. So, to narrow down this search, authors need to increase awareness of important factors such as the type of article they want to publish, the target audience for the study, and the quality of the journal. Moreover, the differentiation among a traditional, open access, and predatory journal is critical to ensure that the study is available to the right audience.

In this section, we address issues related to selection of journals. Here, we discuss the different types of peer-reviewed journals including open access journals, factors determining journal quality, journal metrics, and also identify predatory journals/publishers.

FAQs (10 items)

What different types of journals are available to publish your research?

Research journals are one of the established means for disseminating information. Scientific innovations and advancements are regularly shared with researchers, industry experts, policy makers, and society as a whole.

Read_more

Journals help in maintaining intellectual output, archiving and preserving the research results, facilitating communication, and providing a platform for validating the research output through peer-review processes.

Journals can be broadly classified as follows:

- **General or broad scope journals** contain elements of important social, political, and economic issues. They are usually designed for a wider target audience.
- **Review journals** contain the current state of knowledge or practice in a particular field. They provide background information to those who want an overview on the status in a field.
- **Research journals** are predominantly devoted to reporting original investigations, including research in the basic sciences. Specialists in a field usually read them.
- **Clinical or practice journals** primarily document the state of current practice. This is done through the publication of case reports, discussions, commentaries, etc.

Close

What is the difference between a broad scope and a specialized journal?

When finding the right journal to publish your research, it is important to know the scope of the journal and your target audience. Based on these two criteria, journals can be generally categorized as broad scope or specialized.

Read_more

Broad scope journals reach out to a wider and varied target audience leading to higher visibility and dissemination. These journals usually have higher impact factors as they publish research that has broad application in various related fields. Because the volume of submissions is comparatively higher, the acceptance rates are often lower for such journals. Examples include *PNAS, Nature, Cell*, and *Science*.

Specialized journals on the other hand have a more focused target audience and publish research that has an impact in a particular/specific research area. Because such journals reach out to a specialized audience, the number of submissions is comparatively low, leading to higher acceptance rates. These journals can help in receiving more focused feedback from the readers or reviewers. Examples include the *Journal of Tropical Ecology* and *Surgical Laparoscopy Endoscopy & Percutaneous Techniques.*

When choosing between these two types, consider the following:

- Whether your research will have an impact in multiple areas or have broad inter-disciplinary applications
- Whether your research will be of interest to technical or non-technical audience
- Whether your research will add to knowledge in any specialized or multi-disciplinary field

Close

What is the difference between a traditional and an OA journal?

Research journals are one of the established means to disseminate scientific information. In traditional journals, individuals or libraries pay subscription fee to access the articles published in that journal.

Read_more

Additionally, the copyright license signed between the author and the journal governs the sharing and distribution rights for the article content.
In open access journals, the content is available online and is free from paywall and permission barriers. Usually, the author pays article-processing charges (APCs) to provide free access to the readers. OA journals can be further bifurcated into two categories depending on APCs. OA journals

without any APCs are called gold no-APC journals and those that charge APCs are called gold APC journals.

Furthermore, hybrid journals are emerging rapidly. These traditional journals not only charge subscription fee from individuals or libraries, but also charge APCs from authors to make their article open access.

The choice between traditional and OA journals depends on the visibility of the content (OA articles usually have higher visibility), cost associated with publishing (OA journals have lower publishing cost, however, exceptions do exist) prestige/reputation of the journal (OA journals are new and may not have impact factors like traditional journals; however, other journal metrics can be used for further assessment) and and the timeline from submission to publication (usually OA journals need less time to publish articles after the acceptance stage).

Close

What are the different types of OA journals?

OA journals provide immediate and unrestricted access to published content. However, variants of OA journals exist.

Read_more

The following list outlines various types of OA journals:

- Hybrid OA journals: These are subscription journals but can offer OA on article basis after payments of APCs. Major biomedicine journals published by prominent publishers fall into this category
- Delayed OA journals: These journals require a subscription fee for access. However, they make the content freely available after an embargo period which can range from 6 months to several years
- Megajournals: These are broad-scope journals with objective peer-review. They are generally low-cost and high-volume. For example, PLOS ONE, BMJ Open, and SAGE Open
- Flipped journals: These are the journals that have converted from subscription to OA. For example, *Nucleic Acids Research, Nature Communications,* and *Stem Cell Research*
- Cascade journals: These journals are used as tests for optimizing the OA strategy while protecting the main journals. For example, *Journal of Nutritional Science.*

Close

What are the different factors that need to be considered while choosing a journal?

The process of selecting an appropriate journal has become increasingly complex because of the proliferation of journals, areas of specialization, and emergence of interdisciplinary topics.

Read_more

Authors have to optimize various criteria and overcome several constraints before reaching a decision about where to publish.

- Content and coverage: Scientific journals publish numerous types of articles, including original articles, review articles, letters to the editor, editorials, news reports, commentaries, brief/short communications, and case reports. Journals reporting original research are more likely to report unique contributions to a field and are, therefore, selected more often than those containing only case reports.
- Readership/ accessibility: International peer-reviewed journals attract a wider readership than regional journals. Additionally, open access journals also provide higher visibility, wider audience, increased discoverability, and greater impact.
- Publication lag time and frequency of publication: Different journals have different lag times for acceptance (from the date of submission) and publication (from acceptance to print). This depends on the submission format, reviewing procedure, publication frequency, etc.
- Journal quality: The quality of most journals is evaluated using different citation metrics such as Impact Factor, SCImago Journal Rank, SNIP, 5-year Impact Factor, Eigenfactor, and Immediacy Index. You must assess the applicability and robustness of these indicators before coming to a conclusion. In addition, the robustness of the peer review process is an indicator of the quality of the research published in that journal.
- Abstracting & Indexing: The quality of the journal is also influenced by its discoverability in major abstracting and indexing services. Publishing in indexed journals does not necessarily guarantee career progression or citations. Nevertheless, it is an important consideration when you decide where to submit your manuscript.

Close

How to choose an appropriate journal for your manuscript?

The ratio of submitted to published manuscripts is large, especially for top-tier journals. One of the most common reasons for rejection is that the content of the article is not within the scope of the journal .

Read_more

When choosing an appropriate journal for the manuscript, follow these steps:

- List down the study field and related research areas
- Find journals related to that field by using online resources, by seeking help from a faculty member or librarian
- List and compare the journal characteristics and competitive factors such as open access publishing vs. traditional publishing, scope (broad/narrow), target audience and readership, types of articles accepted, coverage (regional/international), frequency of publication, time from

submission to publication, and different journal metrics
- Check the suitability of your article based on your objective for publication-whether you want to influence decision makers, introduce a new topic, or report findings in a super-specialized research area.
- Go through the author guidelines to learn more about the journal's requirements and copyright/licensing terms
- Once narrowed down, you can also write to the journal with a pre-submission query to verify your findings

Additionally, you can use various platforms like FindMyJournal™, Think.Check.Submit, and various abstracting and indexing databases to narrow down your options.

Close

What is the impact factor of a journal?

Introduced by Eugene Garfield, the impact factor (IF) of a journal is the average number of citations of an article, a proceeding, or a review published in a journal in the last two years.

Read_more

It is published in Journal Citation Reports (JCR). For instance, the IF of a journal in 2013 can be expressed as:
IF_{2013} = $Citations_{2012}$ + $Citations_{2011}$ / $Publications_{2012}$ + $Publications_{2011}$

If the IF of a journal is 10, it implies that on an average, an article published in the journal 1 or 2 years ago has been cited 10 times. It is published in the annual JCR and can be often found on the journal's website.

Although IF is the most often used journal metrics, it is shrouded with limitations and controversies. Many other indicators are used to assess journals. These include:

- The 5-year Impact Factor: Published in the annual JCR
- Eigenfactor: Published in the annual JCR
- SCImago Journal Rank (SJR): Published in the SCImago journal and country rank reports
- Source Normalized Impact per Paper (SNIP): Published twice a year on CWTS Journal Indicators

Close

Does the journal impact factor affect the decision to accept or reject your manuscript?

Introduced in the early 1960s, IF has been often misinterpreted as a research quality metric. IF only considers citations as an indicator of the quality of the published article and does not represent the whole picture.

Read_more

For instance, an article of clinical relevance could be read by many because of a new discovery but cited by few because clinicians may start implementing it rather than using it to publish further work. Moreover, a bad article will have the same IF as a very good article in the same journal. IF gets easily skewed even if a single article gets heavily cited as compared to others. Despite these drawbacks, IF is here to stay. It will continue to affect authors' decisions to publish their research.
Although the rejection rates are very high for prestigious or high-IF journals, the reasons are usually quite simple: a) limited publication space, b) scope of the journal, and c) quality of the papers. The space issue is particularly true for top-ranking and high-impact journals, which receive many more manuscripts than they can publish. Therefore, they usually have high rejection rates, but the scope and quality issues can also affect low-impact-factor journals. Just because a publication has a low impact factor, it does not have to publish all the manuscripts it receives. If some of them do not report good science or do not fit within the scope of the journal, the editors and/or referees may decide to reject those manuscripts.

Close

What are predatory journals?

Predatory journals are usually open access journals that make profits by offering fast-track publication of low-quality articles without following stringent editorial and peer-review processes.

Read_more

These journals usually charge an article processing fee. In 2014, around 400,000 articles were published in 8,000 potential predatory journals. You can identify predatory journals by looking for the following red flags:

- Unprofessional website with many errors
- Unclear or touched-up images in the previously published articles
- Website home page that speaks directly to authors
- No description of the publishing process
- Journal website asks for manuscripts to be submitted via e-mail (email or e-mail ?)
- Journal promises quick turnaround and publication
- No retraction policy
- No information on preservation of published content
- Lack of clarity on copyright/licensing policies
- Publisher's/journal's email is generic (e.g., Gmail)

Close

What are the different platforms/tools that can be used to select an appropriate journal?

It is important to match your manuscript optimally to the goals and characteristics of the journal. Researchers often feel overwhelmed by the sheer number of journals available to publish their research.

Read_more

However, several online tools/platforms can help researchers streamline the process and narrow down the options.

- Think. Check. Submit. is a campaign to help researchers identify trusted journals for their publishing requirements. It is a simple checklist that researchers can use to assess the credentials of a journal or publisher.
- The Directory of Open Access Journals, launched in 2003 at Lund University, Sweden, contains ca. 9,000 open access journals covering all areas of science, technology, medicine, social science, and humanities.
- FindMyJournal™ helps researchers select the most appropriate journal to publish their manuscript. It uses a mathematical and objective algorithm to shortlist the best-matched journals.
- Scopus is the largest abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed literature: scientific journals, books, and conference proceedings. It provides a comprehensive overview of the world's research output in the fields of science, technology, medicine, social sciences, arts, and humanities.
- Ulrich's Periodicals Directory is a source of bibliographic and publisher information on academic and scholarly journals, OA publications, peer-reviewed titles, popular magazines, newspapers, newsletters, etc.

Close

Manuscript Submission

Once you have identified your target journal and prepared your manuscript based on the target journal guidelines, it is time to submit! Journals use online submission systems to make the submission process quick and easy for both authors and journals. Thus, during submission, authors should ensure that the manuscript is submission-ready and other submission-related documents such as cover letter, supplementary information, and funding information are collated and organized as stated in the journal guidelines.

In this section, we address some key concepts that authors should be aware to avoid making incomplete and incorrect submissions to journals, which can lead to immediate rejection. Here, we discuss how pre-submission queries can be addressed, how cover letter should be drafted, how plagiarism is detected by journals, and how published content can be re-used by researchers.

FAQs (10 items)

What is a pre-submission query?

Authors often submit pre-submission queries to the editorial team of their target journal. Although, not a mandatory step, submitting a pre-submission query allows authors to initiate a correspondence with the editor and reduces the turnaround time to assess the fit of the manuscript to the journal's aim and scope.

Read_more

A pre-submission query should provide information on the significance, focus, and findings of the study to enable the editor to provide honest advice to the author.

A pre-submission query should include:

- A Cover Letter summarizing the research and its significance/novelty
- A draft of the manuscript providing details of the research findings
- Existing gap in the field of research and likely contribution to the current knowledge
- Details of the previously published/submitted work
- Any additional information that can help editors assess the suitability of the manuscript

The editorial team may respond within a few days/weeks. The manuscript could either be deemed inappropriate or invited for submission.

Close

What things do you need to consider prior to manuscript submission?

One of the most important steps in the submission process is to select an appropriate journal for your manuscript.

Read_more

Once the journal is finalized, you need to consider the following things to increase your chances of acceptance:

Ensure that the content has not been and will not be published in other journals

- Define the structure of your manuscript and write all the sections completely
- Follow the journal guidelines and instructions to authors on manuscript format and style (spacing, word count, margins, numbering of pages, file type style guide, etc.).
- Prepare a cover letter to describe the significance, impact, and originality of your work
- Write your title page and include authorship details, explanation of conflicts of interest (undisclosed finding or financial relationships, if any), and information on similar work published

previously
- Prepare supplementary files-datasets, multimedia files, or additional files
- Complete the authorship/contribution form
- Comply with the reporting guidelines in case of studies involving human and animal subjects
- Seek/compile written copyright permissions to reuse images, tables, or figures
- Proofread the manuscript content

Lastly, arrange the above flies in the order required for submission. Usually, the submission process is available online and the status of the manuscript can be tracked from time to time.

Close

How to write a good cover letter for manuscript submission?

A well-written cover letter is an important part of the manuscript submission process. Journals usually encourage authors to submit a cover letter and often provide guidelines on what to include in the cover letter.

Read_more

It helps authors communicate the relevant information about their research paper to the editor. In response, the editor can help authors assess whether or not, the manuscript matches the objective and scope of the journal. Firstly, determine the journal's cover letter requirements and make an outline consisting of the following sections:

- Address it to the editor (include the name, if known), include the date and name of the journal to which you plan to submit
- Introduce the manuscript title and type (review article, original research article, or case report). Briefly explain the significance, impact, and novelty of your study by providing the appropriate context and the research question/hypothesis you addressed. Make sure not to include excessive technical jargon
- Provide a concise summary of how the study was conducted and what were the key findings. You can also provide an overview of the significance and impact of your results with regards to a particular research field
- Mention why readers would be interested in your research, without over-emphasizing on this aspect
- Include statements that provide editors with information related to ethical compliance. For instance, include statements on the following:
- Whether the manuscript has been submitted to other journals/platforms
- Whether any part or related work has been published or has been considered elsewhere earlier
- Whether all other co-authors have a consensus on the manuscript content and submission

Close

What is authorship contribution/declaration?

Assigning authorship for a research article ensures that individuals get credit for their contribution and are accountable for the published research.

Read_more

According to ICMJE, an individual who contributes significantly to the research, drafts and approves the content for publication, and agrees to be accountable for any queries related to the work is called an ‘author’.
Journals require submission of authorship contribution/declaration form during manuscript submission. The research team should assign names to the tasks performed by these individuals. The individual(s) who generated study idea and design, collected data, analyzed and interpreted data, drafted the manuscript and made revisions should get proper credit in that declaration. If not handled properly, authorship issues can lead to misunderstanding.

In case there is confusion around authorship and contributorship, researchers may approach the journal editorial team. Ideally, authorship should be resolved before making a submission. However, if a conflict or dispute arises after submission, the journal would require author(s) to submit a consent form for incorporating these changes. For investigating issues related to ethics, many journals and publishers follow the guidelines defined by COPE.

Close

What constitutes conflict of interest?

Many journals require authors to declare any form of conflicts of interest (COI). According to COPE, COI comprise those situations, which are not completely apparent but may influence the decisions of authors, peer reviewers, and editors.

Read_more

The COI can be financial, academic, personal, political, or commercial.

- Financial: Financial relationships with any organization or commercial entity that may influence the decision on the work submitted. Additionally, any funding sources or grants that are relevant your study must be disclosed
- Academic: Issues related to patents, copyrights, or loyalties (pending or issued)
- Personal: Relationships that could lead to bias and influence the judgment to publish the work. Usually related to editors and reviewers

- Commercial & political: Any stakes or vested interests in the positive outcome of the study because of interactions with commercial or political entities

These interests must be disclosed by the authors, researchers, or reviewers to the editor before or during the submission process. Sometimes, editors or reviewers also disclose any potential COI to the readers.

Close

How do manuscript submission systems function?

Authors submit their manuscript to the target journals using electronic/online submission systems through a fast and convenient process. For instance, ScholarOne is recommended to authors by SAGE and Nature Publishing Group (NPG), Editorial Manager by Springer, Wiley, and PLOS, and EVISE® by Elsevier.

Read_more

Generally, online systems follow the steps below:

- Prepare your manuscript based on the journal guidelines/ author instructions. Some journals even have templates for the different types of publications that you can download for your reference.
- Register and login for first time and several times after that to update manuscript-related information.
- Enter manuscript information such as title, authors, affiliations, abstract, cover letter, suggested reviewers (if any), conflicts of interest declaration, keywords, etc. At this stage, you must also inform the editor of any related manuscripts submitted or accepted by other journals.
- Upload your manuscript to the system in the specified format
- Provide any additional files or supplementary materials (images, video/audio files, or text) to the journal's database. In most cases, you will also be prompted to submit a completed copyright form provided by the publisher.
- Review and submit your paper to ensure that all the equations, tables, and special characters are clearly visible. Once submitted, your manuscript will be ready for the editor.

Usually, journals provide a tracking/reference number to the author. You can log into your account and track the progress of your manuscript. The status of the manuscript is described by some commonly used terms such as *Submitted to Journal*, *Technical Screening*, *With Editor*, *Reviewer Invited*, *Under Review*, *Required Reviews Complete*, *Decision in Process*, *Revised Manuscript Submitted*, *Completed – Reject*, *Completed – Accept, etc.*

Close

How can researchers avoid plagiarism?

According to ORI (Office of Research Integrity), intentional or unintentional, plagiarism includes both

the theft or misappropriation of intellectual property and the substantial unattributed textual copying of someone else's work.

Read_more

It does not include authorship or credit disputes. Thus, it includes using someone's work or idea (published or unpublished) without consent or acknowledgment in the literature.

You can avoid plagiarism by following these tips:

- Identify information to be cited: Any words or ideas that are not your own need to be cited.
- Understand and explain: Do not copy–paste the text verbatim from the reference paper. Instead, restate the idea in your own words for your target audience.
- Quote: Use small quotes to indicate that the text has been taken from another paper. The quotes should be exactly the way they appear in the paper you take them from. However, using too many quotes is generally not recommended.
- Cite your own material only when absolutely required—If you are using content from your previous paper, you must cite yourself. It may otherwise lead to self-plagiarism. Facts or common knowledge need not be cited. If unsure, include a reference. However, self-citing frequently to artificially inflate one's overall citations is not a good idea.
- Manage your citations: You can use reference managers like EndNote, RefWorks, or Zotero to manage the citations and references.
- Plagiarism Checkers: You can use various plagiarism detection tools such as iThenticate or eTBLAST to check for any inadvertent plagiarism in your manuscript.

Close

How to reuse and give appropriate credit to published data/images?

Authors often use published images, figures, or data in their own work. However, to reproduce/reuse any type of published research output, you should do the following:

Read_more

- Identify and understand the copyrights associated with the information (webpage, book excerpts, databases, images, tables, figures, etc.) you want to reuse
- Seek permission (if needed) based on copyright policies from the author, publisher, or creator
- Request permission to reuse that content as journals usually require you to submit a written consent form for reproduced images or data
- Reuse the content by citing the source in the text and references based on the style guide of your target journal

Close

Can a manuscript be rejected before peer review?

Often, authors face rejection before the peer review process. Although surprising for many, there are several reasons that could lead to such a situation.

Read_more

- Your manuscript did not match with the scope and objective of the journal
- Your manuscript did not conform with the journal style, format, or guidelines
- There was duplication or large overlap with existing work or apparent plagiarism
- The results were not novel or significant and only incrementally added to the existing knowledge
- The manuscript was too specialized or superficial in a particular research area
- Your manuscript would not have interested the target audience of the journal
- The research quality was poor
- Results and their interpretation were too preliminary or speculative
- The presentation and/or structure of your manuscript lacked clarity or cohesiveness

Authors can avoid rejection before peer review by addressing the above mentioned issues and seeking pre-submission review from colleagues or third party platforms.

Close

What happens after you submit your manuscript to a journal?

The timeline from manuscript submission to publication is usually quite long. The editorial and decision-making processes help validate the findings, refine the content and make the manuscript more readable.

Read_more

The editorial process usually comprises the following steps:

- Pre-submission query (if any)
- Initial check
- Peer review process
- Final decision

Once, the manuscript has been submitted online, it is ensured from the journal's side that the submission process is complete and in accordance with the guidelines. The editorial board then does an initial assessment of the manuscript to check the fit with the scope and objective of the journal. Reviewers are identified and the manuscript is sent out for peer-review. This entire process may take several weeks/months to finish.

The reviewers then make recommendations and comments to the editor. The editor collates the recommendations and makes a final decision to reject or accept the manuscript (with major or minor revisions). The author can also write an appeal or a rebuttal letter to the editor after rejection.

Close

Peer Review

Peer review is the gold standard of science and is critical to establishing the authenticity of the publication process. Ideally, peer review should ensure an independent, rigorous, and unbiased assessment of a manuscript on the grounds of originality, authenticity, and novelty of the research. The peer review process helps establish and maintain the quality of manuscripts published by a journal. To fulfill a peer reviewer's expectations, authors should be aware of the journal's and peer reviewer's expectations from the submitted manuscript. As the peer review process continues to evolve, multiple types of peer review processes are being explored by journals to overcome the challenges of the current peer review process.

In this section, we address common issues researchers face in addressing reviewer comments and concerns. Here, we also discuss the different forms of peer review, factors that affect reviewers' decision, common reasons of rejection during peer review, writing appeal letters, rebuttal letters, and more.

FAQs (11 items)

How do you know which peer review process is followed by tour target journal?

Peer review can fall into any of the two categories, i.e., traditional or alternative. The traditional form of peer review comprises the following:

Read_more

- Single-blind review: The author's identity is known to the reviewer but the reviewer's identity remains anonymous
- Double-blind review: Both the reviewer's and the author's profiles remain anonymous

Alternative forms of peer review comprise the following:

- Open review: The reviewer's as well as the author's identity are disclosed. Moreover, review reports are published along with the final and original manuscript.
- Transferable/portable review: A manuscript rejected by one journal are transferred to another journal with review reports for consideration by another journal belonging to the same publisher.
- Post-publication review: Published papers are reviewed by users on platforms such as PubPeer, Pubmed Commons, etc. after publication and users can post comments on the article.
- Collaborative review: Two or more reviewers work together to review and discuss the paper and submit a common report. This form of review is still very new and is not practiced by many journals.

Journals do provide information on the type of peer review process they use for different types of articles. It is usually in the "instructions to authors" section on the journal's website. In databases such as Web of Science/Scopus, you can identify a journal that is peer-reviewed. Importantly, if there is no clarity on the type of peer review process followed by the journal, it is possible that it could a predatory journal.

Close

What are the most common reasons for rejection?

The peer review process is an independent and impartial assessment of the manuscript on grounds of significance and originality.

Read_more

During this process, many submissions are rejected because of the following reasons:

- **Technical screening**: Article is incomplete in terms of information in different sections; the syntax, grammar, or style is not correct; references are not complete or cross-checked; the content is plagiarized in part or full
- **Incomplete observations or results**: Results are preliminary with incomplete observations; no discussion in relation to the other major findings in that research area
- **Methods or analysis is not appropriate**: The study lacks appropriate sample size or characteristics; no statistical significance included in the data section; techniques seem to be flawed
- **Poor language and structure**: Poor use of language and grammar with incoherent structure, leading to indecipherable information
- **Illogical conclusion**: The results, corresponding data, and conclusion do not align with each other

In order to avoid rejection, ensure perfect compliance with the journal guidelines. Additionally, after making your final draft, ask an experienced colleague to share his/her feedback with you and then

send the manuscript to the intended journal.

Close

What do reviewers look for in your manuscript?

Peer review is a critical step in the publication process. Reviewers are expected to look at the accuracy, consistency, timeliness, and appropriateness of your manuscript.

Read_more

After this stage, manuscripts are made ready for publication (after the gaps highlighted by the reviewers are resolved). The peer review process helps improve the quality of content and increases readability (as reviewers report language/logical flaws). Thus, the peer review process helps address the following areas:

- Originality: Does the work add new value or knowledge to what is already known? Does it introduce a new concept in that research field?
- Importance to readers: Does it matter to the readers of the journal? If so, is the target journal selected by the author, the appropriate one?
- Scientific accuracy: Is the objective clearly defined and appropriately answered? Is the study design suitable? In a study focused on specific groups, are the participants adequately described and are they representative of the condition you were trying to study?
- Methodology: Are the proposed methods adequately described? Are the main outcome measures clear? Are the results relevant and answering the stated objective?
- Results/Conclusions: Are the interpretations and conclusions focused on and derived from the data? Are the references that have been provided current and relevant? Is the data or the interpretation biased?

Close

What should be considered when replying to reviewers' comments?

Peer reviewers are experts in relevant research areas, who are usually not part of the editorial board. Reviewers' comments can be related to grammar, structure, study design, research data, or more.

Read_more

Often, going through these comments can be overwhelming for authors.

Moreover, only after addressing the issues highlighted by the reviewers will the journal consider the article for publication. Therefore, when responding to the comments, consider the following:

- Read the comments thoroughly and do not start revising the manuscript right away as you can raise an objection to a flawed argument.
- Make notes of your response and requirements to make the necessary changes in the manuscript. Additionally, it is courteous to respond to each comment even if the response is repetitive.
- Consider comments that are simple and easy to fix first. Also, highlight your revisions in a different colour as it will help you see the changes more easily.
- If the peer reviewer's request is beyond the scope of your research, then provide the explanation for not making such revisions. If the experiments seem like something you would pursue in the future, you can inform the reviewer accordingly.
- In case, you disagree, explain why you disagree and support it with previously published literature, data, or explanation provided in the manuscript.
- Ensure that your revised manuscript and responses are error free and easy to read. Re-examine your responses before making a submission.

Close

What happens after you submit your revised manuscript after the reviewer's feedback?

Journals usually require you to track and highlight changes in the revised manuscript based on the reviewers' comments. If you have used an online system for the initial submission, then the revised version will have to be submitted using the same system.

Read_more

Journals may also ask you to submit a list of revised items and a rebuttal letter along with the revised manuscript. However, these instructions may vary based on the journal.
Journals re-check the revised manuscript as well as the required supporting documents and share the same with the reviewers. Journals will also provide the decision letter and the author's response to highlight the changes that were requested from them. The revised manuscript again undergoes peer review, but this time it is usually shorter than the first one. Moreover, there are chances that the manuscript can get rejected at this stage too. In such cases, it would be best to opt for a different journal. In very rare cases, authors can consider writing an appeal letter.

If, at any stage, an author wants to withdraw the manuscript, then it is the responsibility of the corresponding author to inform the editor. Only after the request has been confirmed, should authors proceed with the next steps.

Close

When to write an appeal letter to the editor?

Authors might face rejection because of many reasons. Usually, appeal letters are unsuccessful; therefore, authors should consider their case and decide if the appeal letter can help in presenting their views on

academic research or against a perceived bias/discrimination.

Read_more

If opting for such a letter, authors should clearly explain why they disagree with the reason for rejection and how they plan to address the issues highlighted by the editor and/or reviewers. Additionally, if they feel there was bias involved in the assessment of the manuscript, they should present sufficient evidence to support such a claim.
There are five basic guidelines for writing an effective appeal letter:

- Avoid emotional feedback and drive responses based on logical flaws
- Stick to the facts when presenting supporting evidence
- Make a point-by-point rebuttal and add new information/data wherever necessary
- Take time to re-explain key points
- Be respectful and avoid inappropriate language

Many journals have a policy in place for authors who want to write an appeal letter. So, it would best to cross-check in which scenarios can such letters be written.

Close

Is transferable peer review an option after your manuscript has been rejected?

The peer review process is usually the longest in the publication cycle. Once a manuscript has been rejected by a journal, authors have to approach a different journal and go through the submission process, which can lead to significant use of time and resources for the authors, editors and reviewers.

Read_more

For handling such requests in an expedited manner, publishers including Wiley and BMC have implemented a transferable peer review process. When one of their journals rejects a manuscript submitted by the author, the editor can suggest transferring the manuscript to another journal that is more suitable. Journals provide authors the option to transfer their manuscripts along with the review reports (if reviewers consent to sharing the review reports).

For instance, within the portfolio of journals of Wiley Neuroscience, there are 10 journals that have agreed to transferable peer review. Accordingly Wiley Neuroscience asks authors to select multiple titles when making a submission. So, if a manuscript is rejected by one journal, the editor may suggest submitting it to another journal (published by the same publisher) from a pre-approved list.

You can find out if your target journal has a transferable peer review process by reviewing its website.

Close

What are published peer review reports?

Traditionally, the peer review process has been either single-blinded or double-blinded. However, over the years, many publishers, institutions, and researchers have started supporting the idea of open peer review.

Read_more

Many journals such as F1000Research, PeerJ, eLife, and BMJ do publish the reviewer's and the author's comments. Moreover, the original manuscript is published along with the publisher version of the research article.

These review reports increase transparency and give credit to reviewers. However, it may not be useful for all research areas and permission from both the authors and the reviewers may be required to make these reports public. One study suggested that there was a growing co-operation between reviewers and authors increased as a consequence. Another recent study demonstrated that the transparency of the peer review process could be used to predict the quality of published research.

Elsevier and *Nature Communications* conducted studies to assess the impact and attitudes towards open peer reviews. For instance, the trial by *Nature Communications* varied across disciplines and the opt-in percentage ranged from ~45% (Atomic, Particle & Theoretical Physics) to ~75% (Ecology & Evolution). However, there are a few limitations to this approach and more comprehensive ways would be required to address concerns from both reviewers and authors.

Close

Are data sets peer reviewed?

Peer review of articles or conference proceedings is quite common in academic publishing. However, the quality of data sets (primary/original raw data from a research study) is often ignored.

Read_more

Ensuring the quality of these data sets can support the published key findings and increase transparency, traceability, and data reproducibility.

Many journals encourage authors to submit their data sets to data repositories such as Figshare and Dryad to enable easy and quick dissemination of scientific knowledge. There has also been significant evolution of data journals such as *Biodiversity Data Journal* and *Genomics Data*, where researchers can submit their data sets for review and publication.

Peer review of data sets is quite different from that of research articles. Some of the criteria to evaluate such data sets are mentioned below:

- Consistency
- Non-proprietary content (i.e., open-sourced/accessible)
- Plausibility
- High quality
- Handling & reuse (utility)
- Quality of collection methods
- Presence of any anomalies

Close

Are there any ethical guidelines for peer reviewers?

Peer review ensures the integrity and quality of a research paper. Therefore, authors, editors, and reviewers are required to follow certain ethical guidelines to maintain the highest standards in publication.

Read_more

Journals provide guidelines to conduct reviews and draft reports for articles. Moreover, COPE provides the following guidelines for peer reviewers.

- The peer reviewer should accept manuscripts from his or her area of expertise to provide an appropriate assessment.
- The reviewer should maintain confidentiality and should not release any information about the manuscript before and after publication (except for the details that have been made public by the journal).
- He/she should not use any information from the papers that he has assessed during the peer review process for his/her own advantage/disadvantage.
- He/she should not be influenced by the details that have been shared with him, i.e., reputation of authors, university, funding agency, etc.
- He/she should provide professional and unbiased opinion about the manuscript and the feedback should be objective and constructive.

Close

What is fast-track peer-review?

As the peer review process is one of the longest process in the publication cycle, many journals are offering fast-track peer review as an alternative.

Read_more

In this process, journals prioritize the publication of a manuscript and ensure that the paper is reviewed quickly and the decision to publish is shared with the author promptly. Moreover, fast tracking might decrease the amount of time allocated for peer review and editing; at present, it typically cuts the overall publication time by 50%.

Note that journals have differing criteria for a manuscript to qualify for the fast-track peer review process. Some journals offer fast-track peer review for an additional fee, while others do it based on the perceived significance of the paper. Usually, journals share the eligibility criteria (and additional fees, if any) for fast-track peer reviews on their websites. For instance, if a paper is expected to have a very high impact, journals may select the manuscript for fast-track peer review. In addition, a journal may also choose to fast track a paper in order to publish similar research before a competing journal publishes similar findings or before the information is presented at a conference.

The scientific community, however, has legitimate concerns about the quality control component of fast-track peer reviews. Several studies report unequivocal results and emphasize on the need to make this alternative more efficient.

Close

After Publication

After a peer-reviewed manuscript has been accepted by the journal, researchers may be required to make certain minor changes before the final version get published. Journals usually require authors to check the final format of the published article both in print (if required) and online. Some journals may require authors to surrender thier copyright to ensure that the manuscript is not re-published without the journal's permission.

In this section, we discuss the probable timelines for an article to get published after acceptance. Here, we also discuss the expectations that journals have from authors, copyright-related issues, and how manuscripts can get retracted by journals.

FAQs (10 items)

What happens after a manuscript is accepted by the journal?

Once, the manuscript has been accepted, it goes into the production cycle. The publisher ensures that the language is clear and free from errors, the manuscript is of accepted length, and the tables and figures are edited effectively. The manuscript also gets cross-checked for adherence to the journal's style guide.

Read_more

After the journal has made changes, the author has to approve of the edited and formatted manuscript, which is then sent for typesetting. The authors and co-authors accept/modify the galley proof at this stage These proofs are circulated between the production team and the author for finalizing the version. The paper is then scheduled for printing and/or online publishing; moreover, some journals provide instructions and guidelines for reprints or self-archiving in repositories too.

Additionally, if the article is published in print, the author may get some copies of the printed article for distribution among his colleagues or network.

Close

What is the usual acceptance to publication time?

The time from submission to acceptance and acceptance to publication may vary from journal to journal. In fact, many journals do mention their review time on their respective websites.

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It depends not only on the number of articles a journal receives but also on the production cycle followed by each journal.
A recent study found that the time from submission to acceptance varied from 3 days (journals offering rapid/fast-track publication) to more than 100 days. For instance, the median review time for *Nature* has increased to 150 days and that for *PLOS ONE* to 125 days over the decade. Similarly, the median time between acceptance and publication (production time) has decreased to less than 25 days because of technological changes. Another study found that for journals with IF > 3.00, the production time was found to be 174.5 ± 50.7 days. Moreover, Björk and Solomon reported a mean duration of 5.78 months and 1.80 months respectively (for OA) from acceptance to publication.

Importantly, the duration varies from discipline to discipline, i.e., the mean time was 4.18 months for Chemistry, 4.82 months for Biomedicine, and 6.96 months for Business/Economics.

Close

What is a typical production cycle post-acceptance of your manuscript?

Once your manuscript has been accepted with or without revisions, it enters into the production phase for both online and print publication.

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During a typical production cycle, the below steps are followed:

- Copyediting: In this step, manuscripts are checked for spelling, language, format, and style. For instance, your reference list and in-text citation style can be corrected based on the style guide.
- Typesetting: Manuscripts undergo typesetting and processing so that they can be published online. In addition, the content of the manuscript is enriched and converted with tagging, i.e., metadata is added for the manuscript.
- Image quality check: Image quality has to be assessed before publication as they may contain critical information for readers. Authors can be requested to provide better quality images and the image can be resized and placed according to the journal's layout.
- Article proofs: After the typesetting is complete, proofs are generated for authors to proofread. Queries can also be included in these proofs to seek clarification before the manuscript is finalized. However, there are limitations on the extent of correction and major changes may require approval from the editorial team.

Close

What things do you need to consider when reviewing changes in galley proofs?

Galley proofs are the final versions of manuscripts just before online and print publication. Therefore, when they are sent to authors, utmost care is taken to ensure that the content is correct and it is in the recommended format.

Read_more

Authors need to review these proofs carefully before sending them back to the publisher.
A galley proof usually contains notes or queries (from the production staff and editors) that need to be addressed by the author. It informs the author of changes with clearly marked text.

The deadlines for this approval/revision are very short, usually ranging from 24 hours to 72 hours, as this process is directly related to the publication of the paper. An email with instructions is sent to the corresponding author when the proofs are ready to review. All revisions must be made on the proof document; the manuscript itself is not available at this point, and any major revisions suggested by authors are subject to approval by the journal's editorial board. The corresponding authors have the option to make suggestions using an online form or provide a separate PDF document with the corrections.

At this stage, only critical changes such as corrections of typographical errors in data or changes to author names (e.g., adding a middle initial) should be made. The corresponding author is expected to obtain consent from all the co-authors on any changes.

For any publisher, a delay in obtaining revised galley proofs from the author could postpone the publication of the issue or postpone the publication of the paper. So, ensure the following when reviewing galley proofs:

- Pay close attention to deadlines; late submissions can delay publishing
- Always check author names and affiliations
- Make only critical changes that might affect conclusions (e.g., typographical errors in data)
- Update any “in-press” citations if published at the proof stage
- Do not make extensive text changes or move blocks of text

Close

Why is copyediting required after the manuscript has been accepted?

High-quality research papers present good science and are comprehensible as well as coherent to the readers. Copyediting thus plays a major role in communicating science effectively, by offering the following benefits:

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- Helps readers (who are not from the related field) to understand the research easily
- Represents and defines scientific/technical terms accurately and consistently
- Improves language quality, clarity, readability, and logical flow of text
- Helps authors bring more clarity to the content of the paper

Most journals have a copyediting team that works directly with the authors. Authors are consulted for any minor/major changes that may be required to improve the language quality of the manuscript. Any major changes, however, are sent to the editor for approval. During this stage, manuscripts sometimes get reallocated to the next publication issue.

Close

What are the existing policies sharing your pre-print/post-print versions on other platforms?

Journals usually work with three versions of your manuscript, i.e., pre-print, post-print, and final/publisher’s version.

Read_more

- Pre-print: It is the original (unreviewed) manuscript, which is not corrected/improved for language, formatting, or technical accuracy.

- Post-print: It is the peer-reviewed version of the manuscript wherein changes get incorporated based on the reviewer's comments. However, it may not have been formatted or typeset for final publication.
- Publisher's version: It is the final version of the manuscript that is ready for both online and print publication.

The policies to share any of the three versions of the manuscript are governed by the journal's copyright and licensing terms. You can find journal policies related to self-archiving on SHERPA/RoMEO. RoMEO has described the archiving policy of publishers based on the following colour scheme:

RoMEO Colour	Policy	% of publishers
Green	Archive pre-print and post-print	41 (987)
Blue	Archive post-print (final draft post-reviewing)	33 (776)
Yellow	Archive pre-print (pre-reviewing)	6 (151)
White	Archiving not formally supported	20 (471)

Additionally, license terms for personal use and sharing are dictated by the copyright transfer agreement (CTA), which can be found on the respective journal's website.

Close

Can you share your research data before your research paper has published?

Experimental data are invaluable research outputs. Fair use and sharing of data promotes innovation, helps validate the findings, reduces cost and effort in duplication, and improves transparency and accountability.

Read_more

Sharing research data is based on the following aspects:

- Ownership of data: Depending on the working terms or contractual agreements between the publisher, funder, and researcher, the ownership and sharing of the data is determined.
- Completeness of data: Provide labels, description of variables and their values, explanation of codes/acronyms, and reason for missing values
- Copyright/licensing terms: Ensure to understand the copyright and distribution terms of data repositories to ensure permanence and data security
- Many journals and funders require authors to share their research data in data/institutional repositories or platforms such as Dryad, Figshare, GenBank, UniProt, openICPSR, and more. You can find all registered data repositories at re3data.org, which is a global registry of research

data repositories that covers different academic disciplines. Moreover, Datacite provides persistent identifiers (DOIs) to research data and helps make datasets citable and discoverable.

Close

What are publication charges/APCs?

In the open access model, the revenue source switches from subscribers to authors who are willing to pay article processing fees (APFs) or article processing charges (APCs) to make their research freely accessible under open access.

Read_more

Although a one-time fee, APC covers costs for the following aspects:

- Editorial review
- Technical work
- Production-related work
- Customer services
- Promotion of research

As the popularity of the OA model continues to grow, institutions have started to fund the APCs from a general budget line rather than expecting individual researchers to pick up the tab from individual project or personal budgets. The actual amount of these fees varies considerably across journals from different publishers, associations, or learned societies. The average APCs for gold-APC, no-APC, and hybrid were estimated at $1418, $2097, and $2727, respectively.

Close

When is a paper retracted?

The International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) makes a distinction between three types of responses to questionable articles or papers:

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- Corrections: It may contain typographical errors in mathematical calculations or statistical analysis. These are assumed as author's errors and the corrected article or paper is re-published with a link to the original article.
- Expressions of Concern: It is used when there are concerns related to the integrity or authorship of the work. Any article with this label is an indication that the journal has started an investigation into the veracity of the work; however, because such investigations can take time to near

completion, the label serves as a warning for other researchers before they read or cite the study.
- Retraction: It is a formal withdrawal of a previously published article from a journal. A "retracted" watermark gets stamped on the online PDF version. Retraction notices are used to make readers aware of the flawed or erroneous data/literature reported in research papers. Moreover, a retracted paper is a discredit to all the authors publishing the paper.

According to COPE guidelines, a paper can be retracted by the journal in following situations:

- The results are not reliable because of misleading data (can be unintentional human error or research misconduct)
- *Human error:* Data collection or classification errors, problematic statistical analysis, and information that is unverifiable
- *Intentional research misconduct*: Simultaneous submissions to multiple journals, conflicts of interest claims, identification of fabricated or manipulated data, compliance failure with research protocols, claims of plagiarism
- The results/findings have been duplicated from previously published work without justification or citation

Close

Does the publisher or the author retain the copyright to the submitted manuscript?

Usually, journals sign publishing agreements with authors to define copyright and licensing rights related to the dissemination of their original work. These agreements define for both the author as well as the publisher the appropriate rights to share, distribute, or possibly reuse the content.

Read_more

In open access journals, these rights are governed by the Creative Commons licenses. Reviewing the target journal's copyright and licensing terms helps avoid issues related to infringements.
The main CC licenses are:

- Attribution (CC-BY): This license requires that appropriate credit be given to the original work, i.e., anyone using the study's content must obtain the necessary permission. Under this license, the user must also provide a link to the license and indicate if there were any changes made.
- ShareAlike (CC-SA): The terms of the CC-SA license are the same as those for the CC-BY license, except that this license also allows users to share and modify the work, as long as they distribute the modified work on the same terms. For any different terms, prior permission is necessary.
- NonCommercial (CC-BY-NC): The terms of the CC-BY-NC license builds on the other two with the same terms, unless the NoDerivatives option has been chosen. The CC-BY-NC license allows users to modify and use the work for any purposes other than for commercial reasons unless they get prior permission.
- NoDerivatives (CC-BY-ND): This license builds again on the previous three, but the user must

use the study in its original form and may not modify the work without prior permission.

Another well-known CC license is the CC0 (or the “no rights reserved”) license, which is a public domain license.

Close

Research Promotion

As a published author, it is essential to ensure that your study is promoted to the various social media outlets, research databases, and made available on various scholarly networks used by researchers. Such promotion helps in increasing the visibility and impact of a research. Moreover, with the advent of social media, even traditional platforms like academic conferences are gaining a global outlook and help increase networking among researchers. Thus, promoting research not only helps increase readership but also the chances of future collaborations.

In this section, we help address some common challenges faced by researchers in understanding the concept of research promotion how they can increase the impact of their research using effective strategies. Here, we discuss the different platforms available for research promotion, the importance of conferences and press releases, the importance of creating effective posters, and many other factors that help improve the impact and importance of published studies.

FAQs (10 items)

Why is it important to promote your research?

It is important to promote your research outputs such as articles, conference proceedings, case reports, or images) as it helps to achieve the following:

Read_more

- Increased visibility of your work
- Higher impact of your study
- Increased odds of future collaborations and funding opportunities
- Boost to your career and overall research stature
- Increased influence on decision-makers' policies
- Increased coverage (regional & global) of your research profile

You can promote your research through various channels such as media, social platforms, web, and print. You should ideally plan on promoting your research when you have the shareable link to your published study, or your study research is about to get published in a journal or a conference, or when the clinical trial in relation to your study is underway.

Close

How can you promote your research?

By promoting your research, you are helping in increasing the discoverability of the study by the academic community. This will in turn, attract collaborators and readers who wish to cite, comment, or write about your work.

Read_more

Moreover, this practice will help enhance the chances of entering into collaborations. You can promote your research using the following platforms:

- Conferences: Presenting your paper at conferences can give you visibility among your peers and experts in that field. You can also network with potential collaborators during such events
- Online databases: You can archive your research article in open access repositories to provide access to a wider range of readers
- Social media: You can use various social media and networking channels based on your resources and time such as Twitter, Aademia.edu, Facebook, ResearchGate, or LinkedIn to effectively promote your research
- Press/News release: You can share your research work in form of an article or a video with different magazines, newspapers, online platforms. In fact, the university with which you are associated can help you coordinate with other agencies for the press release

Close

How can you measure the impact of your research?

Citation metrics provide a way to quantitatively measure the impact and significance of published research. Citation information (number of citations for any particular work) can be collated from various

databases such as Web of Science, Scopus, and Google Scholar.

Read_more

Because the citation count may vary by data sources, we recommend considering the citation count to make effective comparisons.

- Google Scholar: “Cited by” provides information on the number of citations
- Web of Science: “Times cited” provides how often an article was cited
- Scopus: “View all citing documents” provides information on the number of citations for a particular article
- PLOS Article-Level metrics: “Each page” in PLOS articles by the number of saves, citations, views, and shares.

Furthermore, author-level metrics such as h-index (available in Web of Science, Scopus, and Google Scholar), i10 index (available in Google Scholar), g-index, and Altmetrics can help in assessing the impact of your research.

*Note: All citation metrics have their own unique algorithms for calculating different parameters, so there can be a variance in their assessment.

Close

How can you use altmetrics to evaluate research impact?

Altmetrics is an alternative to the traditional citation metrics. They can include (but are not limited to) peer reviews, citations on Wikipedia and in public policy documents, discussions on research blogs, media coverage, bookmarks on reference managers like Mendeley, and mentions on social networks such as Twitter.

Read_more

Therefore, the data for calculating Altmerics is sourced from the web and can give an insight into the research output activity across various platforms as soon as your article is published.

Altmetrics attracts researchers because it offers a quicker way to demonstrate the potential impact of their work when compared to traditional bibliometrics. It also helps publishers to know whether or not, their published content is being read and shared on a wider scale.

Close

How can ORCID help you as a researcher?

ORCID stands for Open Researchers and Contributor ID and is a unique persistent (alphanumeric) identifier that is assigned to each researcher.

It offers a platform to help researchers link their contributions, publications, and achievements.

Read_more

Therefore, every time you receive funding or credit for your paper or share data sets such activities are automatically updated in your ORCID profile. It also provides APIs that allow automatic integration into publishing systems, which helps publishers and funding bodies track ORCID IDs in their workflow. In fact, many journals now require ORCID ID for submissions; moreover, the identifier can even be linked to major databases such as Web of Science and Scopus.

This ID removes any ambiguity associated with similar author names and helps track the accomplishments of each researcher by linking all research activities to the ORCID profile. In addition, because the ORCID identifier is not linked to an institution or field, researchers can independently maintain it throughout their career.

Close

How to use academic social networking platforms for promoting your research?

Academic Social Networks (ASNs) are platforms where academics can share or comment on others' work and network with fellow researchers.

Read_more

Some of the common platforms include Mendeley, ResearchGate, and Academia.edu, which allow you to create a public profile and share information on your research work, co-authors, and contributions.
Many researchers share their publications for other researchers to like, share, and comment. Through these platforms, you can also get analytics on who is reading and citing your paper. These platforms help researchers ~~to~~ find people from relevant research areas for direct interaction and future collaborations. You can also promote your research on these platforms, increase the visibility of your work, track the research activities and progress of your peers, and measure metrics of your profile performance. However, when sharing your research on such platforms, make sure to keep your profile updated and follow journal guidelines on copyright policies.

Academia.edu, for instance, connects over 55 million academics who have shared about 19 million papers on the platform.

Close

How can you make an effective poster?

Posters are one of the most common ways to share and present results of a study at conferences or symposiums. Posters are usually mounted in conference halls and presenters carry handouts and additional supporting material to address questions from the audience.

Read_more

When making a poster, it is essential to consider the following.

- Poster space: Find out the space allowed for your poster presentation. For instance, the board can be 4? × 8?, which can accommodate around twenty 8.5? × 11? pages.
- Design software: You can use any design software based on your proficiency such as PowerPoint, Adobe Illustrator, Corel, InDesign, and more.
- Content: You should display your content in a concise and effective way. Discuss your research question, addressing gap in current knowledge, the methods & data used, key findings and their relevance, and relation to other research works.
- Focus on 2-3 key messages
- Present information based on the knowledge of your target audience
- Paraphrase difficult technical sentences or statistical descriptions
- Use simplified tables & charts with high-quality images
- Describe correlations (and their magnitude). You can also include p-value to show statistical significance
- Design: Focus on the format, font type and size, and placement of your content
- The type size for the title should be bigger than the one for the remaining content and should be readable from up to 40 feet. The type size of credentials could be smaller than that of the title, but bigger than that of the main content.
- The most common font types include Times New Roman, Century, and Palatino (in italics or bold for emphasis)
- Use colours and contrast combinations judiciously—light coloured background and dark coloured text

Close

How to give a powerful presentation on your research paper/poster?

Researchers are often required to make oral presentations of their research at conferences, departmental meetings, or symposiums. These presentations provide an effective way to communicate and interact with your audience.

Read_more

Therefore, it becomes imperative to make an effective and impactful research presentation to share your research findings.

When making an oral presentation, you should consider the following:

- Audience: Depending on the type of audience you are working with, i.e., a gathering of specialists or interdisciplinarians, you can use technical terms but ensure to define whenever necessary
- Time limit: Make sure to stick with the time limit allotted to you. Based on the duration, divide important content to be delivered in time slots and identify key messages. Do practice to stay within the time limit
- Content: Share with your audience what interested you in this research area, what gaps and limitations you identified, and what were your main learnings
- Structure: Start by introducing yourself, presenting your research question and its significance, describing the methods used, and concluding it with the key findings
- Design: Do not make your slides too wordy or add confusing design elements/animations. Use contrast colours and font style to make the content readable

Close

How can you use conferences to promote and share your work?

Conferences are gatherings for scientific community to discuss and share the most recent impactful research in a particular subject area. Researchers present their work in the form of presentations or posters and receive feedback from the attendees.

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The papers in these conferences are later published in conference proceedings, which are published and archived by many journals.
Usually, conferences are based on a common research theme and the size and frequency of the event may vary depending on the organizers. Conferences are platforms to promote research and network with attendees.

- You can use this interaction to introduce people to your social/professional profile such as blogs or webpages
- You can also share your conference presentations on platforms such as SlideShare
- You can explore social media channels used to promote the conference and share your insights or research outputs by using official hashtags
- You can also share updates on your personal social media profiles about the conferences you are planning to attend

Close

How can you write a media/press release for your research paper?

With the advent of social media, sharing and networking has increased to a considerable extent for researchers. However, a press release is still one of the most effective ways to promote your research among a wider audience.

Read_more

For writing an effective press release, ensure the following:

- Check with your university's PR/marketing department whether or not, your research can be released as a PR or news article
- Identify potential outlets such as a science magazine/website, newspaper, local/global media, etc. for highlighting your work
- Outline the impact of your research on the general public/community

When writing a press release, you can run your draft with the concerned department for feedback and for identifying effective channels.

The PR can be structured as follows:

- Headline: Choose a headline that instantly grabs attention and effectively conveys the intended message of your PR
- First paragraph: Begin with an interesting sentence to introduce the main idea of your research
- Second paragraph: Write your research statement concisely and effectively by describing how and why the research was conducted. You can also add information on who funded the research or who were the collaborators.
- Third paragraph: Discuss the impact of your research and future directions along with a quote from the Department Head or Principal Investigator, providing support to your findings.

Additionally, stay in touch with the journalists for follow-ups, inform your funders and department of a potential PR, and provide valid correct contact details for correspondence.

Close

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