

Want to Publish in PLOS Journals? Here's What You Need to Know

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“Getting rejections from top tier journals is very frustrating because publication is key to getting your findings known, as well as for obtaining grants,” says Yvonne Fondufe-Mittendorf, a researcher at the University of Kentucky, USA.

Surely, most researchers would agree. Publication is key to the progress of a scientific career. Publications add weight to the author's resume. Publications also support grant or job applications.

Most researchers [hope to publish in well-known journals](#) with high impact factors. Until now, the most high-profile journals have been traditional subscription journals. These days, however, more researchers are publishing in Open Access journals.

Open Access publication is on the rise. Plan S, for example, aims to get all publicly-funded research to be Open Access by 1 January 2021. However, Open Access is not new. Open Access journals [have existed for some time](#). Some of the most high-profile are the PLOS journals, the first of which was launched in 2003.

What is PLOS?

PLOS (Public Library Of Science) is a non-profit organisation that publishes seven peer-reviewed Open Access journals. Each covers a different area of science or medicine. [PLOS journals include](#) *PLOS ONE*, *PLOS Biology*, *PLOS Medicine*, *PLOS Computational Biology*, *PLOS Genetics*, *PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases* and *PLOS Pathogens*.

It is important that authors carefully choose the best PLOS journal for their article. The seven journals are editorially independent. However, all require the research they publish to meet the same high scientific standards.

Why Publish in a PLOS Journal?

PLOS journals also have fairly high impact factors. In 2018, the impact factor of *PLOS ONE* was 2.776. However, the importance of the impact factor is up for debate. It might be more useful to think about another system used by *PLOS ONE*. This is called Article-Level Metrics (ALM). This tracks the impact of individual articles, rather than a whole journal. ALMs use information on views, citations, saves, discussions and recommendations of an article. This could [give authors a better idea](#) of the likely impact of their paper.

Finally, PLOS articles are very visible, i.e., . PLOS articles can be easily found and read in a variety of ways, including through Google Scholar.

The Perks of Being a PLOS Author

If you succeed in publishing in a PLOS journal, what happens next? With other journals, you might consider your paper to be a stand-alone achievement. With PLOS, however, there are other benefits. For example, PLOS encourages the use of ORCID (Open Researcher and Contributor Identifier) numbers. These numbers tag a researcher wherever they are used: from the authorship of an article to a comment on a blog post. This allows researchers to take full credit for all of their work.

PLOS also keeps in touch with its authors. For example, the EveryONE blog profiles some of the researchers who publish in PLOS journals. This helps authors to [show their work to people](#) who may not have read their article.

5 Tips for Publishing in a PLOS Journal

So, you have decided to submit your article to a PLOS journal. Before you do, check these five important points:

Style and format

Check the submission guidelines for your chosen journal. Make sure you follow the journal's rules, including for language, length and reference style. PLOS encourages authors to use a [copy editing](#) service if they feel they need to.

Manuscript organization

Each journal has its own style. Don't assume that your article should follow the same format as your previous publications. For example, *PLOS ONE* requires a middle section containing Materials and Methods, Results, Discussion and an optional Conclusion. However, these can be given in whatever order the author chooses.

Submission content

The journal editor needs more information than just the article. For example, *PLOS ONE* requires both a full title and a short title. All authors must be listed, and their contributions must be detailed. Data sets can [either be submitted as a separate file](#), or placed in a public repository.

Extra information

Don't miss this section! It might seem less important, but disclosing any conflicts of interest helps to ensure scientific integrity. *PLOS ONE* also asks authors if their article disputes any previously published work. If it does, the author of the previous work will be invited to peer review.

Specific study types

If your study involved, for example, human subjects, clinical trials or animal research, check that you have followed PLOS guidelines. PLOS lists 14 specific study types, including common areas such as cell lines and antibodies, so it is definitely worth checking their policies.

Why Researchers Prefer *PLOS ONE* Among all PLOS Journals?

The name of each PLOS journal gives a good clue to the content, except for *PLOS ONE*. The motto of *PLOS ONE* is "All Science Deserves to be Published."

PLOS ONE [differs from other journals](#) in a few important ways. Firstly, it includes papers across all scientific disciplines. Secondly, the editors of *PLOS ONE* assess papers in an unusual way.

Often, one of the factors editors think about when considering a paper is the “significance” of the work. The result is that studies that produce positive results are far more likely to get published. In *PLOS ONE*, however, significance is not assessed. As long as the work achieves technical, scientific and ethical rigor, it will be published. This means that *PLOS ONE* could be a good choice for researchers who find their study has negative results, or that their hypothesis is wrong. After all, negative results do not mean that the science is poor. Publishing negative results also helps other researchers to avoid wasting time and money on the same study. Finally, by choosing not to evaluate significance, the publication process is shorter.

Ready to Submit?

Have you decided that a PLOS journal is right for your article? Hopefully, these tips will help you on your way to publication.

Have you had a paper published in a PLOS journal? Or is it something you are thinking about? Share your thoughts in the comments below.

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