

Academic Publishing

12. Academic Publishing

Introduction

Scholarly, or academic, publishing generally serves two purposes. It is the ground on which academic exchange, conversations and arguments are based. It is also a measure of professional productivity.

Professional Discourse:

Publications represent the work by means of which academics identify themselves. Through publishing, knowledge is disseminated, and thereby it advances and directs the discipline.

Professional Productivity:

There is the old saying 'publish or perish'. The interpretation is straight forward: not to publish leads to not being noticed, which again leads to professional stagnation. The expectation that graduate students have to have published before starting an academic job is now widespread. However, since not every student is fulfilling this expectation, any publication you have certainly helps differentiating you from your competition.

The thought of publishing is often scary to people, especially if un-experienced with the process. Journals serve as the gatekeepers and therefore as the authority to determine who is to become the leading heads in disciplinary standard setting. There is still the assumption that the publication process is following some secret formula, which – if only one knew it – would ensure success. While there is not really a secret formula to it, there are certainly some rules and suggestions that are worthwhile to follow. To some extent the same is true for publishers of books. Book and journal publishers have their own standards and specialties, so it is important to take those seriously and to comply accordingly to stand a real chance.

What to Publish

Publishing Your PhD as a Book

Choosing a Publisher

The following criteria should be considered while making your choice:

- Specialization(s) of the publisher: It is easier to approach publisher that have already published or are specialized in the area of your dissertation. To find out this information you may use the internet, bookstores, catalogues, or book displays at conferences.
- Marketing location: Determine whether the marketing is only on the US side of the Atlantic or also on the European side.

It is considered ethical to send your proposal to more than one publisher at a time. However, as soon as you get accepted, it is considered unethical not to inform the others right away.

Approaching a Publisher

Do not send an email. Send **everything** via mail.

Cover letter:

- Find out the name of the editor responsible for your area. It makes all the difference if you are able to address the person directly. This way, you ensure that the letter and the proposal actually arrive where you want them to; but it also addresses the editor in a much more personal manner, which is always preferable.
- If you have contacts in the publishing company, name them in the opening paragraph. This usually opens the door a little wider. If a faculty member or a member of another organization to which you are affiliated has suggested you contact this publisher, also say so in the opening paragraph.
- List those institutions you are affiliated with.

- **Briefly** outline your book. Also state how your book differs from others in the field (will it be too far off or will it fit roughly on the track), and how it will add value to the field (is it a repetition of existing books or does it add true value).
- Outline the planned readership for your book. Be realistic.
- Outline how your book in general fits into the books of this publisher.
- Attach a current CV, including your entire list of publications.
- Attach a book proposal.

The Proposal

Consider the following criteria:

- Do not exceed 6 pages.
- Outline the main argument of the book. Again, also demonstrate how it fits into the present state of art of your field.
- Content list.
- Introduction.
- Chapter abstracts. Perhaps one sample chapter.

Publishing a Research or a Practice Article

Choosing a Journal

There are always a number of journals that might be appropriate for your article. However, it is considered unethical to submit your article to more than one journal at a time. Therefore, it is extremely critical to establish a rank ordered list of journals to which you consider submitting your article.

The following criteria should be considered while making your choice:

- Scope/specialization of the journal: The general rule is, the longer the journal title, the more specialized the journal. This may also mean that it is easier to get accepted. The shorter the journal title, the broader, and, most of the time, the more established the journal. This may

mean that it is more difficult to get accepted.

- US or European journal.
- Journal's editor and governing board.
- Acceptance rate as well as submission rate.
- Determine your readership: intra- or interdisciplinary.
- Kind of peer review: single-blind or double-blind.
- Journal's web site: Does it give clear instructions as to the criteria how to submit an article? Are they clear about the manuscript review procedure?
- Turnaround time on a manuscript: High prestige journals usually have a higher volume of submitted articles and therefore tend to have a longer turnaround time. If the content of your article has only a short half life, you may want to consider a less prestigious journal. However, if you start submitting your article with a low prestigious journal because of the short turnaround time, and it is accepted, it is considered unethical to withdraw it and submit it at a higher ranked journal. In general, the turnaround time may well span from 3 to 5 months, sometimes even longer.

Revise and Resubmit

Unfortunately, oftentimes authors withdraw from the submission process the moment they receive a letter from the editor that gives detailed recommendations as to how to improve the manuscript so that it can be accepted for publication. Too often this letter is interpreted as a rejection, which in fact it is not.

Hardly any manuscript is accepted without revision. So don't be discouraged if you receive that letter from the editor. The editor takes on an active part in improving your manuscript in that he pulls together, and gives advice on how to act on, the sometimes contradictory referees' recommendations. It is essential that you stay in the cycle as an active part of the author, editor and referee triad. Sending you a Revise and Resubmit letter indicates that the journal somewhat commits itself to further considering your manuscript. Although this in itself does not guarantee that in the end, you will succeed and get the manuscript

published. It does, however, mean that you should commit to the process too so that chances for publication are largely increased.

The Rejection Letter

A rejection letter does not mean that your work is not worth being published, or that you are a bad academician. It simply means that your work will not be published by this particular journal of your first or second choice. Publication ratios for journals indicate that this happens all the time, and has most likely happened to every scholar. Rather than a source of intimidation, you should use the rejection as a source of information, as every rejection should be properly explained by the editor. It should also be accompanied with the detailed reports of the referees. If not provided with the rejection letter, you should certainly ask for this very specific and invaluable professional feedback. Whether or not you agree with what the referees say, whether or not you like it, it is professional feedback, which, and that is the beauty of it, is free advice.

Format

Journal Requirements

Journals usually have their own requirements for length and style. Check on the journal's website, and/or review the journal in the library. Make sure you absolutely comply with the journal's requirements; otherwise editors will be put off.

Citation Styles

The following link provides a good overview of the different citation styles: <http://www.liu.edu/cwis/cwp/library/workshop/citation.htm>. The most commonly used are:

- APA: used by psychology, social sciences and education

- MLA: used within humanities, literature and arts

- CMS: for all subjects in non-scholarly publications

Make sure you understand which citation style is recommended by the

journal.

Recommendations for Your Writing

- Define the purpose of your manuscript.
- Be clear about your readership and adapt your language accordingly.
- Write your introduction when you are done with the rest of your manuscript.
- Include hooks in your introduction, so that the reader wants to go on reading.
- In your conclusion, write more than only a summary. An outlook for future research, for example, may be something that leaves the reader excited about your manuscript. Put together the puzzle pieces (i.e. the single findings/conclusions), so that an entire picture can emerge. You may also link them to adjacent areas to demonstrate the scope of your results.
- Be short and concise. Do not repeat the same idea in different words. Do not use filler words.
- Use direct verbs wherever possible. Indirect phrasing makes any text dull and tedious to read.
- Avoid using the same words over and over again.

Recommendations for Your Mindset

Here are some things to keep in mind that may make your writing and your life while you are doing it a little easier:

- Be realistic: Of course you have to do your best in presenting your idea and your work and discuss its strengths and weaknesses. However, there is no such thing like a perfect publication.
- Use your 'oddity': Get to know what you need in order to write efficiently. Whatever it is, rather than fighting it do this. There is no ideal way of doing the writing. Write in the middle of the night, eat herring, whatever it is that makes you function, allow yourself to do it.
- Talk to your supervisor/mentor which journal they would recommend. Read the journals, check their web site and their publication quota and

citation index. Make a careful choice and rank the journals of your choice in the order you want to approach them. Put the one which is hardest to get into number one.

- Have a clear idea as to the journals' mission (research vs. theoretical works, etc.), the readership, what and what not to include, how to write, what citation style to use, etc. Strictly follow all the submission guidelines.
- Remember: Every writing piece has a beginning, a middle part and an end. Yours too.
- Only one submission at a time!
- Get feedback: Choose one or two friends/peers/colleagues to show them your work and ask for their very honest feedback. Do not take this feedback personal. It is generously given for your professional growth, not to put you down. Give people enough reading time, so that you are not putting them under pressure, and so that they stay willing to provide you with this invaluable input.
- Revise and resubmit: Do not take this personal! If you receive such a letter, do precisely that. Stay in the process!
- Rejection: Do not take this personal! Try the journal next on your list. Remember to adjust your manuscript to the next journal's submission specifics.
- Plan your writing: Write down any idea that comes to your mind for publication. Establish a plan when to do what paper. You could write a second paper while the first one is in the review process.
- For book proposals: Approach publishers unofficially about your idea and check its feasibility; check successful proposals.
- Adjust your language spelling and grammar with respect to the country you intend to publish in, i.e. UK vs. US.

References

Bucholtz, M. (2004). [Tips for Academic Publishing](#).

Taylor, D. (2001). [Turning an Academic Essay Into a Research Article](#).

Tomlins, Ch. (2003). [Your Name in This Space: The Mysteries of Scholarly Publishing](#).

Howard S. Becker. [Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish](#)

Your Thesis, Book, or Article

How to Write Academic Articles for Publication (2001).

Turning your Ph.D. into a Monograph (2004).