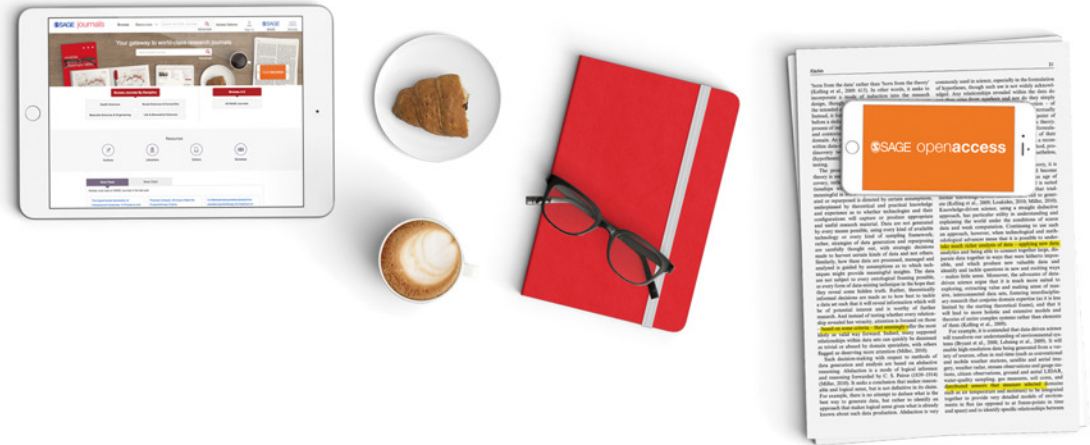# How to Get Your Journal Article Published

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

Why should you consider publication?

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

High- vs. low-risk submissions

- High-risk submissions: a conversion of a big report or monograph, a paper that has been previously published elsewhere, a paper that is 30% over or under the recommended word count, or a paper that does not fall in line with the journal's focus.
- Low-risk submissions: papers written for the journal, i.e., it fits with the genre and scope of the journal, engages with the debates, and/or refers to previous work published in the journal and related publications.

What should you consider when choosing a journal?

- Does your research fit the journal's aims scope, and subject area?
- What types of submissions does the journal accept?
- Does the journal have a good reputation in the field? Are the Editor and Editorial Board high profile?
- What journals do you read and cite often? Could they be good fits for your paper?
- What are the journal's key metrics? Is it indexed in Journal Citation Reports, Scopus, or elsewhere?
- Does your institution have any restrictions on where you can submit articles?
- What is the journal's acceptance/rejection rate and publication speed?
- Who reads the journal? Will they be interested in your research?
- Try using the **SAGE Journal Recommender**, a search tool that will help you find a journal based on the subject and content of your manuscript. Enter keywords and the title of your manuscript to search over 1,000 SAGE journals and compare those most relevant for your research.

Tips before submitting

- Read the journal's aims and scope.
- Read the journal's articles and TOCs on the **SAGE Journals website** to familiarize yourself with the content.
- Consult with colleagues.
- You may wish to discuss your paper with the journal Editor.
- Beware of predatory publishers.

Write

Submit

Review

Revise

Re-submit

Acceptance

Online publication

Print publication*

*Print publication where applicable

What should you do to prepare your manuscript?

- Read the **manuscript submission guidelines**. The SAGE website hosts manuscript submission guidelines for all of our journals.
- Make every effort to improve the quality of the manuscript before submission, ensuring the research is complete and the manuscript is well-written.
- Be as objective as possible about your work.

Manuscript submission guidelines checklist should include the following golden rules:

- Have you used the right referencing style, e.g., Harvard, APA, Vancouver, or Chicago?
- Have you stayed within the word limit?
- Have you formatted your article (and all included tables, figures, etc.) correctly?
- Have you ensured there are no identifying features in your manuscript (to best facilitate anonymized peer review)?
- Have you conformed to the conventions of academic writing?
  - title, abstract, and keywords – please refer to the information on how best to title your article, write your abstract and select your keywords by visiting SAGE's **Journal Author Gateway** guidelines on how to help readers find your article online,
  - introduction with a clear, compelling statement of purpose,
  - conceptual grounding/literature review,
  - hypotheses/research questions that are clear, meaningful, answerable, inter-related, and flow logically from the introduction,
  - methodology, appropriate sample, procedures/measures that offer enough information for replicability/trust,
  - analysis and discussion – should be systematic and sensible,
  - tables and figures that speed comprehension,
  - results, discussion of results, and key findings,
  - conclusion: don't merely repeat results, include directives of research and practice and awareness of limitations; don't go beyond the evidence.

- Has permission been obtained for use of copyrighted material from other sources (including the Web)?
- Have you proofread it before submitting?
- Have you provided a cover letter? Keep it short and highlight the salient features in the letter.
- Have you considered including supplemental data? Will it add value to the content?
- Have you adhered to all forms of publication ethics, including listing authors and acknowledgments and disclosing any conflicts of interest?

When you think it is ready and you have ticked off the above checklist, submit your article. Is there an online submission process or should it be sent direct to the Editor/Managing Editor? Visit your chosen journal's homepage and click on the manuscript submission guidelines link.

What happens next?

Depending on the journal, your article will be considered by the Editor/s and/or Associate Editors and 2-3 reviewers, often from the Editorial Board. If it is submitted to an online system, you will receive an acknowledgement and a reference number. Please use this reference number if you need to follow up on your manuscript.

There are five possible outcomes:

Desk reject – i.e., your paper will not be sent out for review. Common reasons for a desk reject include poor fit with the journal, poor presentation (e.g., includes grammatical errors or incorrect formatting), and weak methods or literature base.

Reject after review – there are a number of reasons reviewers might reject a paper, including poor grammar and writing style, flaws in methodology, or insufficient conclusions.

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

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

Accept without change – this outcome is extremely rare.

When can or should I contact the Editor?

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

Handling revisions

- Consider reviewers' and editor's comments carefully. Don't rush!
- Follow the timeframes requested for review.
- Demonstrate what you have changed point by point.
- Address each referee point in a separate document.
- If you cannot meet all criticisms, point out why.
- Be positive/constructive.
- Be aware that the process can take 2-3 iterations.

Handling rejections

- Don't overreact. The criticisms are there to enhance your paper.
- Carefully read referees' report and Editor's letter.
- Aim to understand why. Was the topic ill-focused? Is it the wrong journal? Is the research fundamentally flawed? Was there another specific problem?
- Try and rework the paper.
- Consider submitting to an alternative journal.

What happens once your paper has been accepted?

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

SAGE does the following:

1. Copyedits your paper into the journal style.
2. Creates a PDF of proofs to be sent to you for final review.
3. Corrects any errors you have identified.
4. Posts your finished paper Online First ahead of the issue publication (if desired). It can then be read and cited by journal subscribers, or if open access, it can be read online.
5. Sends the final copy to the printer.
6. Dispatches the journal to subscribers.
7. Provides authors with access to a PDF of their final article. We additionally provide the corresponding author with a complimentary copy of the print issue in which the article appears (up to a maximum of 5 copies for distribution to co-authors).

Promoting your publication

Social media

Social media aids discoverability of your research and allows users to engage with your publication – it allows for a two-way conversation rather than one-way communication.

The Conversation

The Conversation brings a unique combination of academic rigor and journalistic flair to the world of academic research. Articles published on the site are authored by academics with the help of experienced journalists to ensure research is accurately reflected within the media.

Blogs

Blogs are a valuable tool for driving traffic to your content. SAGE runs a variety of blog sites to share topical and thought-provoking articles, interviews, videos and features to engage with the academic community. If you think your research would be a good fit, contact your editor.

SAGE Perspectives blog focuses on highlighting topical and interesting research published in SAGE books and journals. The blog includes posts from authors across a wide range of subject disciplines and research areas.

The online social network **Social Science Space** features blogs with the most current thinking from key players in social science. It is an active forum for discussions, a resource center with free videos, reports and slides that support these discussions, as well as funding and job opportunity notices.

The purpose of the online community **MethodSpace** is to connect researchers to discuss methodology issues and controversies, discover and review new resources, find relevant conferences and events, and share and solve methodology problems.

Good Luck!

Further reading

Martín Eloísa (2014) How to write a good article. Current Sociology 62(7) 949-955

Becker L and Denicolo P (2012) Publishing Journal Articles, SAGE Publishing

Kitchin R and Fuller D (2005) The Academic's Guide to Publishing, SAGE Publishing

Epstein D, Kenway J and Boden R (2007) Writing for Publication, SAGE Publishing

Guide to approaching peer review from Sense about Science: **senseaboutscience.org/activities/peer-review**

Publication ethics for editors and authors: **publicationethics.org**

For more information visit the SAGE Author Gateway »

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