

Development in Practice questions and answers

QUESTIONS	RESPONSES
1. Getting Started with Academic Publishing	
What are the key stages in the journal publishing process, from submission to publication?	Submission/editor evaluation/revision/peer review/revision/second-round review/revision/acceptance. Then editing/proofreading/publication. Manuscripts are pre-published then assigned to a volume/issue.
What kind of structure and study design do journals generally expect from first-time authors?	introduction, literature review, methodology, results, discussion, conclusion. Some journals will place more emphasis on technical analysis, but it is always important to indicate what your study contributes to the field.
What are the most common mistakes that new authors make when submitting their first paper, and how can these be avoided?	Not following the instructions to authors. Not checking aims & scope. Not including up to date literature. Not tying their findings back to literature/making a case for article's contribution.
How can early-career or unaffiliated researchers access guidance and resources if they don't have institutional support?	If you want to read something, it can help to write directly to the author, expressing interest in their work. They may share a copy with you. It also helps to write to the editors of journals. Publishers, such as Taylor & Francis, run workshops for authors; see: https://authorservices.taylorandfrancis.com/events/
2. Choosing the Right Journal	
How can new authors identify reputable journals and avoid predatory ones?	look at the articles you cite and where they publish, check SJR, avoid cold calls directly to you from strangers about publishing in their journal, SI calls are ok, create email alerts for your fave journals
How can I choose the right journal if my research is interdisciplinary or doesn't fit neatly into one field?	DS is interdisciplinary by nature, so check all DS journals as well as disciplinary journals in related fields - Anth, Sociology, HGeo, sustainability, etc
What are the key factors to consider when matching a paper to a journal's scope and audience?	you've read the aims & scope of the journal; there are other articles on same/similar topic or geographic area; you are contributing to a conversation within the journal;
Are there differences between publishing academic research articles and policy papers or briefs?	Audience; style of writing;

Development in Practice questions and answers

3. Writing and Positioning the Paper	
How can authors make their manuscripts stand out to editors without overcomplicating the writing?	avoid high falutan language - just be clear and direct. Interesting and catchy title, a well crafted abstract. Clear statement of how findings contribute to the literature.
What are editors and reviewers really looking for in a strong submission?	manuscripts that respond to the scope of the journal and follow the instructions to authors, that offer something novel even if on an age-old topic, correct referencing and lack of typos goes a long way. Up-to-date literature. See slide 3 of PPT.
How can a descriptive paper be developed into a more critical or analytical piece?	Turn statements into questions and revise your paragraphs to respond in a critical manner. Use the literature to engage in competing positions, and contested concepts.
In transdisciplinary fields like Development Studies, how should authors approach writing when their results don't fit easily within existing theoretical frameworks?	I don't agree with the premise of this question. If your data contests a particular theory that in itself is interesting and grows the body of knowledge. Is it an opportunity to refine or create new theoretical position?
Is it better for first-time authors to write alone or collaborate with colleagues?	Both. Co-writing journal articles with your supervisors or peers is an excellent way to build a track record and multiply your outputs. Eg. You can lead on one article and your colleague can lead on the second article and you can be working on them at the same time! It is also good to get some single authored articles published - look closely at the guidelines of where you want to publish it and observe the structure of articles in that journal.
4. From Thesis to Journal Article	
What's the best way to turn a Master's or PhD thesis into a publishable article?	Can you divide the thesis into discrete research questions and make papers from those? Can you create a systematic or scoping literature review on a section of your thesis? Can you write an interesting novel methodology paper from your research?
How can I "extract" a paper from my dissertation without simply repeating it?	see above.

Development in Practice questions and answers

When publishing from a completed thesis, should I list my former university as my affiliation, or use "independent researcher"? Is there any bias against independent researchers?	former university would make sense if you have not got a new affiliation since completing your PhD. No there's no bias, but as you conducted the research as part of a uni, you should use that as your byline.
5. The Submission and Review Process	
What are the essential components of a strong submission package (cover letter, abstract, keywords, etc.)?	all of those - cover letter, title, abstract. Abstract is particularly important and should be clear, interesting, and accessible.
What is an appropriate way to follow up during the editorial process?	a short polite letter to the managing editor if your paper has been with them for several months and you've not heard if it's been sent out to review yet e.g., Just politely requesting an update as to where the paper is in the review stage...
Is it possible for a paper to be accepted without revisions?	yes, but very unusual
How long does the peer review and publication process usually take?	we strive for two to three months... but reviewers are volunteers with busy schedules and it can take several attempts to find reviewers and several emails to remind the reviewers to submit their review. Often reviewers agree and then go missing.
Is it always necessary to respond to every reviewer comment?	Yes, but you can reject a suggestion as long as you provide grounds for why you are not taking on the reviewer's advice and you should always do so politely. Remember they too are scholars and they are volunteering their time to provide constructive feedback on how to improve your paper for publication.
6. Handling Rejection and Revision	
What should authors do when their paper is rejected, and how can they stay motivated?	Breathe. Take a few days to absorb and reflect on the feedback as to why it was rejected (if it wasn't a desktop rejection). The feedback will no doubt strengthen your paper if you can put aside the anger/hurt/resentment and respond without all the emotion.
How can feedback from one journal be used to improve a submission for another?	Take on the feedback from one rejection and use it to strengthen your manuscript and submit your revised article to the next journal on your list. Make sure you observe the submission guidelines for the new journal.
7. Open Access, Copyright, and Fees	

Development in Practice questions and answers

How can authors identify which journals charge publication fees or offer fee waivers?	Write to the editors. Look at the journal website. Big publishers, such as Taylor & Francis, Sage, etc., will have information on whether a journal is Open Access or hybrid (some articles behind a paywall) and will usually have links to fee schedules for open access.
How should authors decide between different copyright or open access options?	Authors affiliated with institutions may fall under Read & Publish agreements. Usually, the author would retain copyright, unless there are third-party issues--in other words, a reason why someone else should retain copyright.
Are there costs associated with publishing in <i>Development in Practice</i> or its special issues?	No. But if you want to publish open access, there may be a charge, depending on whether your institution is covered by a read and publish. Authors should note that there is always a charge for publishing viewpoints/practice notes in open access in DiP .
8. Building a Research Profile	
What's your advice for postgraduate and early-career researchers on building a publication record before completing a PhD?	If you have an Honours or Masters thesis that you can publish from then you should definitely try to. In this age of PhD scholarships, it is more competitive than ever. A publication, especially in a ranked journal will bode well.
How can researchers increase their chances of acceptance in high-quality (Q1) journals?	observe the guidelines and scope, make a compelling case for how your article fits with the journal - does it contribute to a series of articles already published in the journal, does it offer a new fresh perspective, or something really innovative? Manuscript must be of excellent presentation - no waffle, typos, incorrect referencing, etc
How can publishing contribute strategically to career development within or beyond academia?	in academia it gives you a profile, you can cite the citations of your article to show impact, you can use it to then publish in The Conversation, or on a blog about the article's key findings, or media outlets might pick up your findings and want to interview you on radio. Also useful for seeking work in the sector as a practitioner (NGOs, managing contractors) or policymaker (FCDO, International Commission for Aid Impact, ODI)