

FAQs about Writing for a Peer-Reviewed Journal

How to select a journal for your manuscript submission

Your article should be a good fit with the journal to which it is submitted, in terms of:

- Topic
- Theory/research preference
- Qualitative vs. quantitative focus
- Writing style (e.g., level of formality, first person/third person)
- Audience
- Length
- Recognition by your institution
- Adherence to authors' guidelines
- Review process
- Time frame from submission to publication

If the journal has had a recent change in editors, check current issues for its focus.

What is a peer-reviewed or refereed journal?

- Manuscripts submitted to the journal are reviewed and evaluated by experts in the field.
- Each reviewer is given a rating instrument for evaluating the manuscript on specific criteria, and then recommends whether the manuscript should be accepted, needs revision, or should be rejected. If revisions are recommended, the reviewer should provide suggestions for improvement.
- There is often an academic editor or leader reviewer who makes a final determination on manuscripts because of inconsistency among reviewers. He or she receives the manuscript and copies of all the reviewers' comments, and uses their input in the final decision.
- This review process ensures that the fate of your manuscript is not determined by just one person.
- If a manuscript has not been peer-reviewed, it often is regarded with suspicion and is not considered a reliable body of research and knowledge.

What is blind review?

Before the manuscript is sent to reviewers, all identifying information such as names, references to a specific institution, author biographies, photos, and contact information are removed. Therefore, reviewers do not know the author(s) of the manuscript when they read it.

Are journals generally receptive to manuscript submissions?

- Yes. Editors want to grow their pool of contributors and constantly need incoming manuscripts.
- Most editors will be glad to work with you because they can't afford too many disgruntled authors.

- Remember, however, that editors must heed the advice of their reviewers. If your manuscript is rejected, accept your rejection graciously. Don't burn your bridges with that journal

How should a manuscript be organized?

- Your manuscript should be professionally prepared using a word processing software.
- Pay particular attention to sentence structure, spelling, and punctuation.
- Include a cover letter.
- Submit it either electronically or by postal mail, depending on the journal's requirements, and include the required number of copies.
- Retain the original file.
- The manuscript should include:
 - √ Abstract
 - √ Clear Introduction
 - √ Strong conceptual framework
 - √ Succinct background/literature review
 - √ Concise methodology for research
 - √ Findings
 - √ "So what?" section
 - √ Conclusion
 - √ References

How does coauthoring affect the process?

Coauthoring can be done with:

- Fellow researcher(s)
- Field-based colleagues
- Students

Decide which author should be listed first, second, etc.

Reach agreement about subsequent use of the article content.

What should I do if I receive acceptance subject to revision?

- Let the editor know if you will be revising your manuscript.
- Let the editor know your time frame for revising your manuscript
- Revise according to the reviews, if you agree with the comments.
- When you resubmit your manuscript, provide a letter outlining the changes you made.
- If you do not make a recommended change, explain why not.

What are the ethics of publication?

- Your manuscript must be original work.
- Submit your manuscript to only one journal at a time.
- Be sure you receive any needed approvals before you commence your study.
- Recognize study sponsors.
- Acknowledge others' contributions to your manuscript.

- Be sure your data is up-to-date.
- Identify any strengths and weaknesses of your study.
- Acknowledge other articles that have been published on the same topic.
- Do not plagiarize from other publications.
- Include all appropriate references.