Researcher Academy

How can you shorten your path to publication?

—

Researcher insights from submission to rejection

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About the speakers

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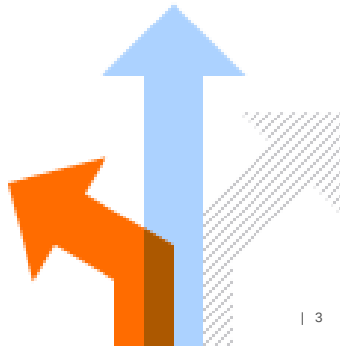
Before we start…

- Acceptance by your **first-choice** journal is ideal but not always possible.
- Leverage every opportunity, **even in the face of rejection**.
- View initial rejections as **constructive steps** towards your goal. Often, **you're closer to publication than you think**!
- Being **well-prepared** and **informed** can help you in navigating the publication process **confidently** and **effectively**.



Agenda

That's why we're here today to share valuable tips and strategies across three key stages of the publication journey, to help you successfully shorten your path to publication:

1

Pre-submission

How to be realistic about publishing your paper?

By Rohan #JournalSelection #RightExpectations

2

Post-submission

How to value expert feedback during peer review?

By Eleanne #ReviewProcess #AuthorBenefits

3

Post-rejection

How to submit to the next journal?

By Elena #NextSteps #DecisionMaking

Q&A

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Part 1

How to be realistic about publishing your paper?

—

Editor insights for the pre-submission stage

Rohan Chakrabarty

Choose the right journal for your submission

Start by **finding a suitable journal** that closely aligns with your research. This increases the likelihood of acceptance and ensures your work reaches the appropriate audience.

When choosing a journal, there are three important factors to consider:

1 **Scope**

2 **Impact**

3 **Speed**

Three questions to ask yourself before you submit

1 Scope

What type of journal is appropriate for my paper?

- Assess journal expectations and fit
- Understand subject-specific vs. broad-scope journals

2 Impact

Am I aiming too high?

- High Impact Factor could mean high rejection rates
- Aim for well-respected journals with a reasonable acceptance rate

3 Speed

Do I want to publish fast?

- Determine what's more crucial for your research, speed or impact
- Look for journals with fast turnaround times

Assess journal expectations: Reviewer mindset

Some common questions asked by reviewers are:

- Are the **research questions and objectives** clearly stated?
- Are the most relevant pieces of previous work **cited and compared**?
- Are the **methods used** the most appropriate?
- Have the authors **speculated beyond** the data?
- Do the results **conflict** with those of other researchers?

Assess journal expectations: Editor mindset

Some considerations by editors while making a decision:

Before peer review:

- How close is the present state of the manuscript to the **standards of the journal**?
- Although the study is interesting, is it perhaps **too preliminary**?

After peer review:

- What is the **nature of the revisions** that would be required?
- Are the revisions so **extensive** as to practically constitute a **new** manuscript?
- Are the main conclusions being **questioned** by the reviewer?

Understand journal type

Subject-specific journals

- Cater to a **specific** field
- More specialized audience
- **Concentrated scope** and specific criteria
- Significant **impact** within the specific field
- Special issues on **emerging topics** within the field

Broad-scope journals

- Cater to a **wider range** of readers across disciplines
- More **general scope** and review criteria
- High potential for **visibility** and broad impact
- Submission process can be easier in some cases, e.g., **for interdisciplinary research**, because of the broad scope

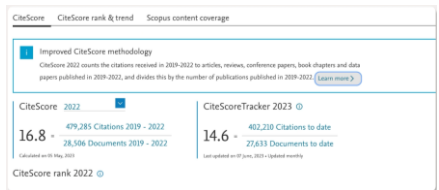
Assess journal fit

- Use resources such as **ScienceDirect** and **Journal Finder** to find journals
- Check journal **aims and scope** to ensure alignment with your research
- Browse journal guidelines and **recent issues**

Leverage journal metrics

Think beyond the Impact Factor:

- Databases such as **Scopus**
- Other metrics like **CiteScore**
- Field-specific reputation – some journals may hold more **prestige** in your specific field
- Publishing timeline, especially if you have **time-sensitive** research



Roadmap to publication

- A comprehensive overview of the publication process can help to set **manageable goals** and **embrace feedback**.
- Revisions and rejections are **common**.
- View **feedback** as an **opportunity** to improve your paper.
- This mindset **reduces** stress, maintains motivation, and aids in achieving **publication quickly**.

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Part 2

How to value expert feedback during peer review?

—

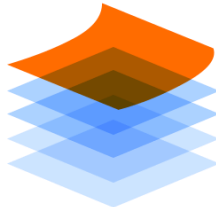
Editor insights for the post-submission stage

Eleanne van Vliet

Purpose of peer review

The validation process of academic work serves the purpose of…

- Maintaining **scientific and publication standards**
- Improving **quality** of published research
- Determining **importance of findings**
- Assessing **originality and significance**
- Ensuring **previous work** is acknowledged
- Identifying any **methodological issues** and conclusions not supported by results
- Underscoring **ethical concerns**
- Facilitating a **collaborative environment** within the community



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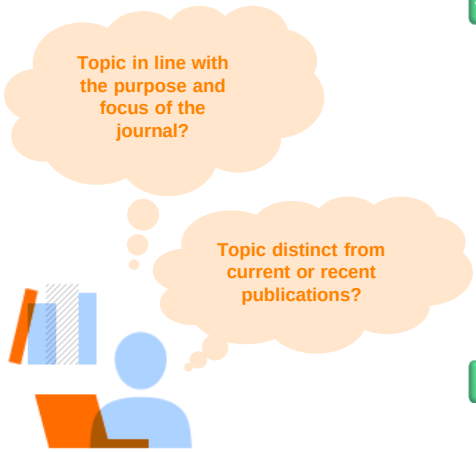
85% of researchers believe without peer review there is no control in scientific communication.

Source: 2019 Quality, Trust, and Peer Review Study by Elsevier and Sense about Science https://senseaboutscience.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Quality-trust-peer-review.pdf

Deciding whether to send for peer review



If yes, the editor may further evaluate for:

- Depth and scope of the topic
- Writing quality
- Logical flow of ideas
- Novelty of the topic
- Ethical issues (incl. plagiarism)

✓ If OK, the editor will invite reviewers.

If no, the paper *may* be rejected, ***however***...

Benefits of peer review for you as an author

Expert feedback helps authors reach journal's editorial criteria.

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90% of researchers believe peer review helps **improve the quality of research articles**.

Source: 2019 Quality, Trust, and Peer Review Study by Elsevier and Sense about Science https://senseaboutscience.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Quality-trust-peer-review.pdf

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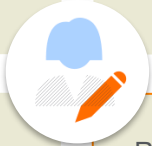

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Reviewers' comments inform authors' approach to future research.

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Revisions lead to improved, more impactful (and citable) contributions to the scientific community.

Reviewers' comments inform authors' approach to future research.

Recognizing the valuable insights from experts who review your work can be highly beneficial!

Even in the event of manuscript rejection after peer review…

Revisions informed by peer review are critical to your next steps. Submitting your revised manuscript to the next journal can…

Increase access to peer review insights

Help editors make informed decisions & increase visibility of your work

Strengthen your research & accelerate your publication journey!

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Part 3

How to submit to the next journal, if your paper is rejected?

—

Editor and author insights for the post-rejection stage

Elena Brusamarello

Next steps after manuscript rejection

If your initial submission isn't successful, below are some options you may consider:

- **Appeal** the decision – keep in mind that most appeals are not successful unless invited
- Submit it to **pre-print servers** (e.g., SSRN), while you improve your manuscript
- Revise and re-submit your manuscript **to same journal**, but this option is not always possible
- Revise and then **submit your manuscript to another journal of your choice** or **transfer your manuscript**

Submit yourself or transfer your paper?

Submit to another journal of your choice

- Freedom to choose any preferred journal
- Easy if you have a clear alternative
- Submit from scratch (with the possibility of major changes to your manuscript)
- Always possible, regardless of whether you receive a transfer offer or not

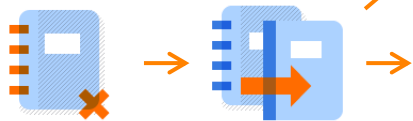
Transfer your paper to a recommended journal

- Smooth transfer process
- Opportunity to revise your manuscript
- Tailored editorial suggestions or data driven recommendations
- Potentially increase your chances of acceptance and reduce the time to publication

More on the next slide

Transfer your paper to a recommended journal

Tailored editorial suggestions or data driven recommendations



Rejected submission

Article transfer

1) Journal Editors reject manuscripts and use subject knowledge to make recommendations for transfers

2) Scientific Editors, in-house subject-matter experts who analyze manuscripts, offer guidance and recommend suitable journals

3) Matching technology leverages learning algorithms to assess data on topics, citations, acceptance rates, and more to identify suitable journals

Transfer your paper to a recommended journal

Potentially increase your chances of acceptance and reduce the time to publication

Our data* from 2022 and 2023 indicate:

The acceptance rate for papers submitted to the suggested journals in our transfer offers is about **60% higher** than for papers submitted elsewhere.

The average time from submission to acceptance for transferred papers is about **2 weeks faster** than for all papers.

** Individual outcomes may vary. The destination journal will assess and make the final decision on your transferred submission.*

Author story #1

Chemical engineering author

Desk rejected (out of scope)

Rejected after peer review and **offered a transfer**

Accepted after revision

*"The Article Transfer Service helped us to reach our destination, though not exactly where we initially intended. However**, time was an extremely crucial factor** for the publication since we used this paper as a foundation for writing two academic projects, which helped maintain my research momentum in my field."*

↪ Reason for transferring

"There was no time or intention to search for any alternative journals independently."

↪ Outcome of transferring

Author story #2

Chemistry author

Desk rejected (lack of novelty) and offered a transfer

Transferred and sent for peer review

Accepted after revision

*"Making this recommendation to the authors often saves time, because the editors thought our work would be better in a different journal, which would **prevent an inappropriate submission process again**."*

↪ Reason for transferring

*"This transfer service provides a **smooth process** during the submission and **reduces the workload**."*

↪ Outcome of transferring

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Thank you.

We are happy to answer any questions!

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Resources

- Scopus
- Elsevier's Article Transfer Service
- Researcher Academy modules:
  - Finding the right journal
  - Going through peer review
  - Research metrics
- Elsevier Connect Authors' Update blog:
  - Manuscript rejected? Five insider tips to see you to success
  - The surprising benefits of rejection