

Submitting a journal article: ethics for authors

What to think about, and why it's important

Be clear on authorship

Have you included all the contributors to your article (in the right order), and are your acknowledgements up-to-date? Agree with your co-authors which journal you are submitting to, and tell them when you submit.

 Agreement makes getting published easier

Disputes on authorship can slow down peer review and publication, so make sure decisions have been made together and everyone is aware.

Who checks?

Editors and reviewers will look for similarities to other published articles, as part of the peer review process. *CrossCheck* is used by Taylor & Francis to check papers against a database of over 40 million published articles.

Avoid plagiarism (and self-plagiarism)

Have you checked you've cited your own, and others', work correctly? You'll also need to have written permissions for any reproduced figures or tables.

Double check your data

Using datasets gathered by someone else? Check you have permission to use them in your work. Plus, if a statistician helped with data analysis make sure you acknowledge this.

Include everything: check the Instructions for Authors

Some journals may need supplemental data to be submitted along with your article. Check the journal's Instructions for Authors to make sure you've including everything you need.

Transparency is essential

Relevant interests and relationships that could be seen as influencing your findings (whether financial or otherwise) must always be declared to the journal editors, reviewers or readers.

Declaring any interests

Make sure you've declared any funding, and the role of the funder, in your cover letter.

Upholding standards

Describing experiments or procedures? Make sure you include warnings of any hazards that could be involved in replicating these (including any in instructions, materials or formulae you've mentioned). You'll also need to cite any relevant standards or codes of practice, and include a reference to them.

Evidence you've followed procedure

National and international procedures govern experimentation on people and animals. Statements of ethical approval, trial registration and informed patient consent will all be needed with your submission.

One at a time

Remember to submit your article to just one journal at a time, so it is only ever being considered by one editor and one set of reviewers. If you decide you want to send it to another journal, you can always withdraw your paper.