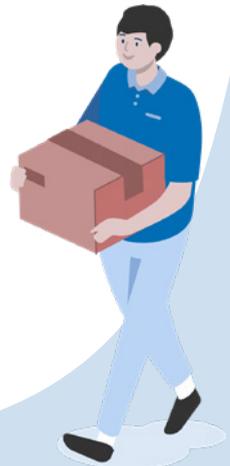# Article submission and peer review

Your complete guide to submitting your research paper and navigating the peer review process

Contents

Introduction

Once you've written and refined your research paper, it's time to take the plunge and submit it to your chosen journal. If it passes an initial desk assessment, it'll then go through the peer review process.

This guide explains everything you need to know about submitting your paper and navigating peer review – from writing your cover letter to knowing what to do when your paper is accepted or rejected.

▶ SUBMISSION AND PEER REVIEW CHECKLIST

Making your submission

- ◎ **Prepare your paper for submission**
  - ◎ Review instructions for authors and editorial policies
  - ◎ Anonymize your paper (if required)
  - ◎ Write your cover letter
  - ◎ Check your formatting
  - ◎ Select the right keywords
  - ◎ Make sure you're identifiable with an ORCiD
  - ◎ Have any open access funding information ready
- ◎ **Get to grips with the submission system**
- ◎ **Make sure you're following the right data sharing policy**
- ◎ **Run through the 'ready to submit' checklist**

Peer review and beyond

- ◎ Understand the different types of peer review
- ◎ Learn about the peer review process
- ◎ Understand how to respond to reviewer comments

If your article is accepted:

- ◎ Sign the license agreement
- ◎ Select your open access options
- ◎ Check proofs
- ◎ Access your published article
- ◎ Create an impact with your research

If your article is rejected:

- ◎ Understand why your paper has been rejected
- ◎ Carefully consider where to submit to next
- ◎ Find out whether transferring your manuscript is an option

Making your submission

Finally hitting 'submit' on your research paper is a big achievement, but can also make you feel apprehensive in case you've missed anything. To help make sure you've covered everything you need to do, follow the key steps below to get your manuscript submission-ready.

Preparing your paper for submission

Once you have your final draft manuscript ready, you'll need to follow these steps:

1 Review instructions for authors and editorial policies

Hopefully, by now you should be very familiar with your chosen journal's instructions for authors (IFAs) and editorial policies. IFAs are an individual set of requirements for a journal that help guide potential authors to construct their article in the correct way and prepare it for submission.

They will tell you exactly what the journal's editorial board expects to see in articles submitted to the journal. And the IFAs will also include details of specific processes to follow to ensure there are no problems during production should your article be accepted.

Ideally, you should have been referring to them throughout the writing process. But now's the time to re-review them and ensure you've definitely covered everything specified.

Editorial policies can cover everything from how a journal conducts peer review to the process for submitting your article.

In addition to the journal's own policies, you may need to review the policies of the publishing group. For example, at Taylor & Francis, we have **a number of editorial policies** that apply across our whole portfolio of journals.

2 Anonymize your paper (if required)

Depending on the type of peer review your chosen journal uses, you may need to anonymize your paper so that you and any co-authors can't be identified as the author(s). This is required when the journal uses double-anonymous peer review – which we'll explain in more depth in the peer review section (see p18).

You can find out what type of peer review your target journal uses by looking at the aims and scope of the journal.

If you do need to anonymize your paper, you will have to prepare two copies of the manuscript for submission. One file with all your author details included and one that's been anonymized. Both versions should include the title, abstract, body, and references.

Tips for anonymizing your manuscript:

- ○ Don't mention any grants or acknowledgments in the anonymous version of your manuscript. You can provide these in the non-anonymous version, and you may also be asked to provide funding information separately during submission.

- ○ Don't add any page headers or footers that could identify you.

- ○ Avoid, or try to minimize, any self-citation. If you have cited your own work, make sure you've referred to your own references in the third person, e.g. write "Smith and Black (2007) have demonstrated", not "We have previously demonstrated (Smith & Black, 2007)".

- ○ If you're unable to avoid referring to self-cited work in the first person, then delete the author names, or other identifying information (such as your institution) and replace it with [author(s)] in the text. In the reference list, delete the citation, and use a placeholder [author(s)].

- ○ Remove any clinical trial numbers and registration dates from the anonymized version of your manuscript.

- ○ Remove your data availability statement from the anonymized version, unless you have deposited your data in a repository which preserves anonymity. For example, Figshare's 'private sharing link' and Dryad's 'private for peer review' options.

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You will need to check that all identifiers have been removed from files such as Microsoft™ Word® documents. To remove identifiers from MS Word, do the following (make sure to do this in a **copy** of the original manuscript):

- In the copy of your original document, click the *File* tab, and then click *Info*.
- Click *Check for Issues* and then click *Inspect Document*.
- In the Document Inspector dialog box, select the checkboxes to choose the types of hidden content that you want to be inspected.
- Click *Inspect*.
- Review the results of the inspection in the Document Inspector dialog box.
- Click *Remove All* next to the inspection results for the types of hidden content that you want to remove from your document.

Don't forget to also provide a non-anonymous version of your manuscript containing: author details (names, institutions, and email addresses); acknowledgments; funding information; details of any clinical trial registrations; and complete references. This will be needed for publication.

3 Write your cover letter

Cover letters are required by many, but not all, journals – to check whether your target journal asks for one take a look at the instructions for authors.

A cover letter is your opportunity to really sell your research. You can use it to highlight to the journal editor what makes your research new and important. And it gives you a chance to explain why your paper is a perfect fit for their journal and will be of interest to their readers.
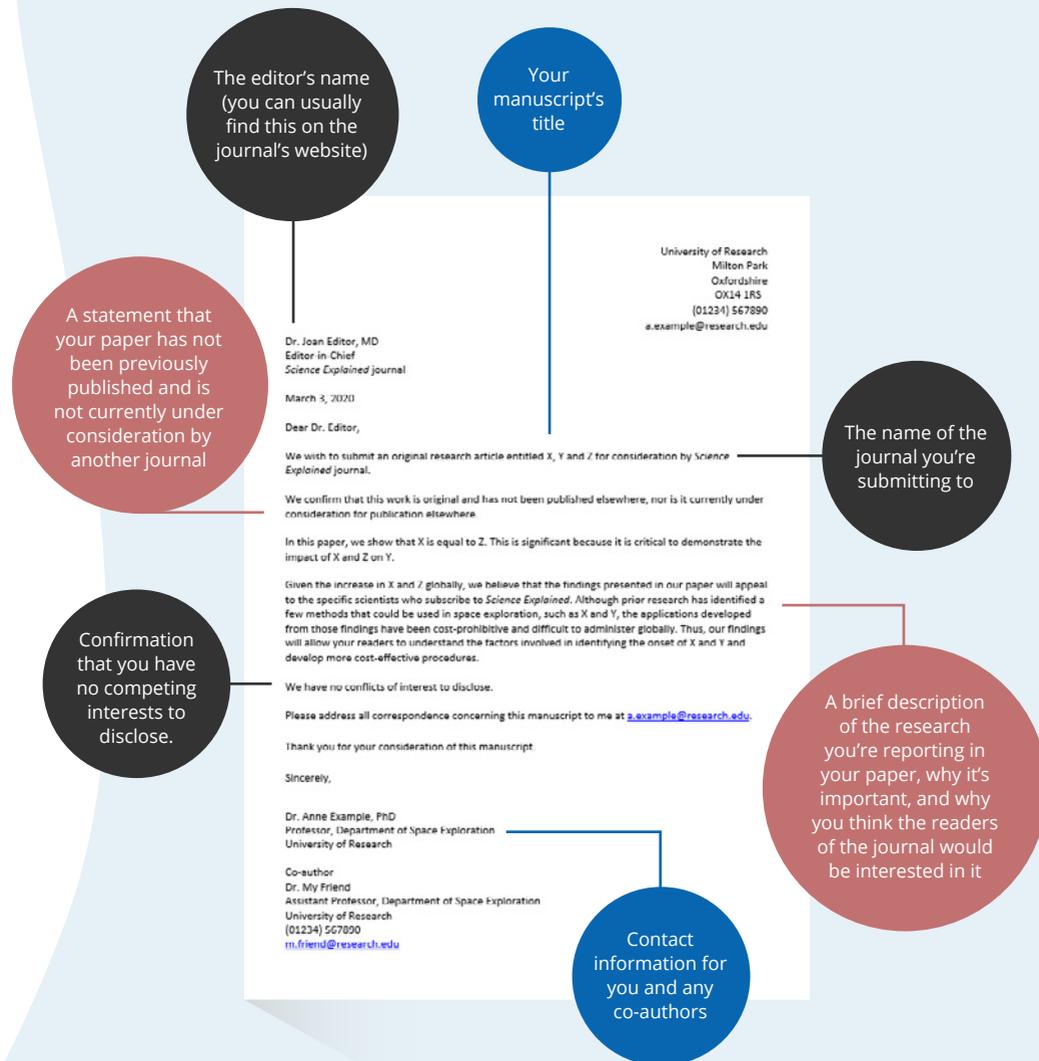
A well-written cover letter can help your paper reach the next stage of the process. So it's worth spending time thinking about what to include and how to phrase it.

What to include in your cover letter

The IFAs for your chosen journal will tell you if there's any specific information you need to include in your cover letter. For example, you may need a list of relevant articles written by you or your co-authors that have been or are currently being considered for publication in other journals.

In addition, you should also include:

The editor's name (you can usually find this on the journal's website)

Your manuscript's title

A statement that your paper has not been previously published and is not currently under consideration by another journal

The name of the journal you're submitting to

Confirmation that you have no competing interests to disclose.

A brief description of the research you're reporting in your paper, why it's important, and why you think the readers of the journal would be interested in it

Contact information for you and any co-authors

University of Research
Milton Park
Oxfordshire
OX14 1RS
(01234) 567890
a.example@research.edu

Dr. Joan Editor, MD
Editor-in-Chief
Science Explained journal

March 3, 2020

Dear Dr. Editor,

We wish to submit an original research article entitled X, Y and Z for consideration by *Science Explained* journal.

We confirm that this work is original and has not been published elsewhere, nor is it currently under consideration for publication elsewhere.

In this paper, we show that X is equal to Z. This is significant because it is critical to demonstrate the impact of X and Z on Y.

Given the increase in X and Z globally, we believe that the findings presented in our paper will appeal to the specific scientists who subscribe to *Science Explained*. Although prior research has identified a few methods that could be used in space exploration, such as X and Y, the applications developed from those findings have been cost-prohibitive and difficult to administer globally. Thus, our findings will allow your readers to understand the factors involved in identifying the onset of X and Y and develop more cost-effective procedures.

We have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

Please address all correspondence concerning this manuscript to me at a.example@research.edu.

Thank you for your consideration of this manuscript.

Sincerely,

Dr. Anne Example, PhD
Professor, Department of Space Exploration
University of Research

Co-author
Dr. My Friend
Assistant Professor, Department of Space Exploration
University of Research
(01234) 567890
m.friend@research.edu

Things to avoid in your cover letter

Your cover letter is your first chance to catch the eye of the journal's editor. It's about selling your research in your own words. With that in mind, it's important to avoid:

- Copying your abstract into your cover letter – instead explain in your own words the significance of the work, the problem that's being addressed, and why the manuscript belongs in the journal

- Too much jargon or too many acronyms – keep language straightforward and easy to read

- Too much detail – keep your cover letter to a maximum of one page, as an introduction and brief overview

- Any spelling and grammar errors – ensure your letter is thoroughly proofread before submitting it.

Cover letter template

If you need help writing your cover letter, you can **download and use our sample standard cover letter template** as a guide.

4 Check your formatting

Although many journals have basic elements of style in common, each journal will have its own specific formatting. This defines how an article will look when it's published online or in print.

To make it easier for you to format your paper correctly, many journals provide article templates (for example in Word or LaTeX). If you're publishing with one of our journals, you can find links to the article templates on your chosen journal's homepage on **Taylor & Francis Online** under the instructions for authors. Each version of the template has its own instructions file, which explains how to save and use it.

You can also focus on your research and save time. Consider using experts to help you meet deadlines and make sure your manuscript complies to your target journal's requirements.

Find out more about Taylor & Francis **manuscript formatting service**.

Format-free submission

Over 350 Taylor & Francis journals now accept manuscript submissions without any specific formatting requirements – known as format-free submission. This means that, as long as you use a consistent citation format and include everything necessary for review, you can submit work without needing to worry about formatting your manuscript to meet that journal's requirements. **Find out more about format-free submission**.

5 Select the right keywords

Ideally, you'll have chosen keywords for your article before writing it. This will ensure the whole text has been optimized for search engines. When you submit your article you'll usually need to specify the keywords you've chosen. These will be used to index your article on the journal or publisher's website, as well as on search engines like Google Scholar.

Keywords will help others find your article quickly and accurately. But they aren't just about improving your article's discoverability – a strong correlation exists between the online hits an article receives and the subsequent number of citations it receives. So picking your keywords wisely is worth your while.

How do you choose your keywords?

- Think about how you search for articles yourself and what words or phrases you put in.

- Think about your own article and what keywords are most relevant to the focus of your work.

- Once you've drawn up a shortlist, try searching with them, to ensure the results fit with your article and so you can see how useful they would be to others.

- You can also check and compare specific keywords on Google Trends to see which are the most used.

- If you're still unsure, check the keywords used in your field's major papers.

To find out more about search engine optimization take a look at **our online guide**.

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6 Make sure you're identifiable with ORCiD

An ORCiD is a digital identifier that distinguishes you from every other researcher. It ensures you and your research activities can easily be identified, meaning you get the credit for all the work you do. It's free to register for one and takes just 30 seconds to do.

Read **our guide on how to include an ORCiD** in your online submission.

7 Have APC payment information ready (if publishing open access)

If you're submitting to a fully open access journal, you'll need the information about the person or body funding the article publishing charge (APC). You can use our **open access cost finder** to find out how much the APC will be.

APC discounts and waivers

Taylor & Francis wants to make the option to publish in open access journals available to as many researchers as possible. That's why we offer a range of waivers and discounts on article publishing charges. **Find out whether you qualify and how to request a discount or waiver**.

8 Ensure you have information about research funders available

You should include with your submission the details of any research funding you and your co-authors have received. As well being part of the process for declaring potential competing interests, funder information you provide may be used by the publisher to advise whether the journal you've selected meets the publishing policies of your funder(s).

Using submission systems

Academic journals use a variety of online submission systems that allow editors to quickly access your submitted work.

Submission systems at Taylor & Francis

If you're submitting your paper to a Taylor & Francis journal, you can find out which system your chosen journal uses on **Taylor & Francis Online** (simply search for the journal and click on the green "Submit an article" button). Then take a look at our guides to help you get everything ready to make your submission.

- **Guide to using ScholarOne Manuscripts**
- **Guide to using Submission Portal**
- **Guide to using Editorial Manager**

What do you need to hand when submitting your manuscript?

When you submit your manuscript you'll generally need to have the following to hand:

- Your manuscript (including a title page with the names and affiliations of all the authors and co-authors)
- The main document file with abstract, keywords, main text, and references. Note that if you're submitting to a journal that uses double-anonymous peer review you'll need two versions of this – one of which is anonymized. (See 'Anonymize your paper' on p7.)
- Figure files
- Table files
- Any extra files such as supplemental material or biographical notes

When you use Taylor & Francis rapid technical review service you'll receive constructive feedback from experts to improve areas you may have overlooked in your article.

If your journal article includes artwork it's important to ensure that all images are in the correct file format and resolution, and all fonts, labeling, and captions are appropriate. If you're submitting to one of our journals, you can take a look at our **downloadable guide on submitting electronic artwork**.

Data sharing

Research data varies by discipline and subject area. It doesn't just mean data files or spreadsheets, it can take many forms such as video, transcripts, questionnaires or slides. In other words, research data is the underlying evidence which the claims made in your article rely on.

Why share data?

> "In general, authors should consider data sharing as an opportunity to connect a reader of that single study to the larger research agenda. If data are published on a project that also directs readers to a main page where other study data sets are kept, the research can have an even greater impact."
>
> – **Jon E. Grahe,** *Editor of The Journal of Social Psychology*

Some funders now make data sharing a requirement and it's become increasingly commonplace for some subject areas to make data available to everyone.

There are several reasons why sharing data is worthwhile:

- Sharing data publicly improves the robustness of the research process, supporting validation, research transparency, reproducibility, and replicability of results. This can, in turn, advance discovery and knowledge.
- Sharing data can lead to re-use and discovery, with greater opportunities for carrying out meta-analyses and the extraction of new knowledge.
- Depositing data in a repository that mints a permanent identifier such as a DOI, allows authors and others to cite the data set, so you can get appropriate credit for your work.
- Data deposition supports the preservation of data long term.
- Wider public availability of research data supports the translation of research into practice.

Read more about the benefits of sharing data.

Data sharing policies

When submitting your article, check the instructions for authors for your chosen journal to find out what data policy applies. You should also check if your funder has a policy. If the data sharing policies for your funder and journal differ, you'll need to follow the more progressive policy – in other words, the policy that encourages a greater level of data sharing.

Learn more about the **data policies we use at Taylor & Francis**, and use our **handy table to compare the different policies** and what they mean for you as an author.

Data repositories

A data repository is a storage space for researchers to deposit data sets associated with their research. If you're required to comply with a journal or funder data sharing policy, you'll need to identify a suitable repository for your data.

Speak to your institutional librarian, funder, or colleagues at your institution for guidance on choosing a repository that's relevant to your discipline. You can also use **FAIRsharing** and **re3data.org** to search for a suitable repository – both provide a list of certified data repositories.

Ideally, you should select a data repository that issues a persistent identifier, preferably a Digital Object Identifier (DOI), and has established a robust preservation plan to ensure the data is preserved in perpetuity.

Get further guidance on choosing a data repository.

Ready to submit checklist

Once you think you're ready to submit, run through this checklist to make sure you've covered everything you need to:

Choosing a journal

- ☐ Is your article a good fit for the target journal?
  - ℹ *Make sure you read the aims and scope of the journal.*
- ☐ Have you read the instructions for authors (IFAs)?
- ☐ Does the target journal offer the right open access option for you?
  - ℹ *Our open access cost finder is a useful tool to research what's on offer. It has information on licenses and embargoes too.*

Writing your paper

- ☐ Is your article easy to read?
  - ℹ *Check that your article has a logical structure with clear writing and accessible language. This means it meets international scholarly standards.*
- ☐ Is your article formatted following the journal's guidelines?
  - ℹ *Experts in formatting will make sure your article meets your journal's instructions for authors.*
- ☐ Have you identified 5-6 appropriate keywords?
- ☐ Have you written an effective title and abstract?
- ☐ Have you written an effective cover letter?
- ☐ Have you cited sources appropriately to support any claims made in the article?
  - ℹ *Make sure you avoid accidental plagiarism by taking a look at our policy on citations.*
- ☐ Are you compliant with the Taylor & Francis Editorial Policies?

Submission checklist

- ☐ Have you registered for an account for the journal's submission system?
  - ℹ *You can find submission system information in the IFAs. We've created guides on using the different systems that walk you through the process.*
- ☐ Have you prepared your research data ready to share (if you need or want to)?
- ☐ Have you included all references in your reference section?
- ☐ Do you have the correct files ready to upload?
- ☐ Do you have written permission for any third-party materials you've included?
- ☐ Have you included the name and affiliation of any co-authors?
- ☐ Have you included your ORCiD?
- ☐ Have you included a disclosure statement and declared any competing interests?

Read our free guide on **choosing a journal** to double check you're targeting the right one before making your submission.

Explore our free guide on **writing your paper** to help you construct a great article.

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What happens after submission

> "As an editor, when you first get a submission, at one level you're simply filtering. A fairly small proportion does not get sent out by me for review. Sometimes they simply fall outside the scope of the journal."
>
> – **Michael Reiss**, *Founding Editor of* Sex Education

When you submit your manuscript, the initial step taken by any journal will be an editorial assessment – either by the journal's editor or editorial office. At this stage, they will review your work with some key questions in mind to determine whether they feel it's suitable for the journal...

- ◉ **Is this the right journal for this article?** Does the paper cover a suitable topic according to the journal's aims and scope?
- ◉ **Has the author followed the journal's guidelines in the instructions for authors?** They will check that your paper meets the basic requirements of the journal, such as word count, language clarity, and format.
- ◉ **Has the author included everything that's needed for peer review?** They will check that there is an abstract, author affiliation details, any figures, and funder information.
- ◉ **Does it make a significant contribution to the existing literature?**

You can see from the questions above just how important it is to check your paper against the aims and scope of the journal and ensure you've followed the instructions for authors.

If your article doesn't pass these initial checks the editor might reject it immediately. This is known as a 'desk reject' and is a decision made at the editor's discretion based on their substantial experience and subject expertise.

Having this initial screening in place can enable a quick decision if your manuscript isn't suitable for the journal, which means you can then reassess and submit your article to another journal.

If your article does pass the initial assessment it will then be moved onto the next stage – peer review.

The reasons for desk rejection are often within your control. Read this guide to learn what they are and how to avoid them. **Tips to avoid desk rejection.**

Navigating Peer Review

Once your paper has passed the initial editorial assessment, it will be sent out for peer review. This important step ensures that articles published in academic journals are of the highest possible quality, validity, and relevance.

In this section of our guide we'll take you through everything you need to know about peer review, and your role in it.

What is peer review and why is it important?

Peer review is the independent assessment of your research paper by experts in your field. Its purpose is to evaluate your manuscript's quality and suitability for publication.

Even for very specialist journals, the editor can't be an expert on the topic of every article submitted. So, the comments of carefully selected reviewers are an essential guide to inform the editor's decision on a manuscript.

As well as being a form of quality control, peer review is also a very useful source of feedback, helping you to improve your paper before it's published. It should be a collaborative process, where you can engage in a dialogue with your peers and receive constructive support to advance your work.

In fact, 91% of respondents to a **Sense about Science peer review** survey said that their last paper was improved through peer review. A **Taylor & Francis study** supports this, finding that most researchers, across all subject areas, rated the contribution of peer review towards improving their article as 8 or above out of 10.

Types of peer review

Peer review takes various different forms and each type has its pros and cons. You should always check your chosen journal's peer review policy before you submit, to make sure you know what to expect and that you're comfortable with your paper being reviewed in that way.

Single-anonymous peer review

In single-anonymous or single-anonymized peer review, the reviewers know you're the author of the article, but you don't know the identities of the reviewers. The anonymity of the reviewers is intended to make it easier for them to give full and honest feedback on an article, without fearing that the author will hold this against them.

Critics of single-anonymous review argue that reviewers might be influenced by knowing who the author is. For example, they could be more generous about a paper if they know it's been written by a respected researcher in the field.

Double-anonymous peer review

In double-anonymous or double-anonymized peer review, the reviewers don't know that you're the author of the article. And you don't know who the reviewers are either. This can avoid the risk of a paper suffering from the unintended bias of reviewers who know the seniority, gender, or nationality of a paper's author.

However, even if you've anonymized your paper (see p7) the reviewers may still be able to figure out who you are – especially if you work in a very niche field.

Open peer review

Typically, open peer review means the reviewers know you're the author and you will learn who they are at some point during the review or publication process.

Open review may also include publishing the names of the reviewers and even the reviewers' reports alongside the final article. And some open review journals also publish any earlier versions of your article, enabling the reader to see what revisions were made as a result of peer review.

An advantage of this model is that you might receive more constructive and polite reviewer comments if the referees know that a signed version of their report is going to be published. There are, however, concerns that researchers who are invited to review may be less inclined to do so under an open model, where their name and report will be published.

Post-publication peer review

In post-publication peer review, your paper may still go through one of the forms of peer review outlined above first. Or it may be published online almost immediately after some basic checks. Either way, once it's published, there will then be an opportunity for invited reviewers or even readers to add their own comments or reviews.
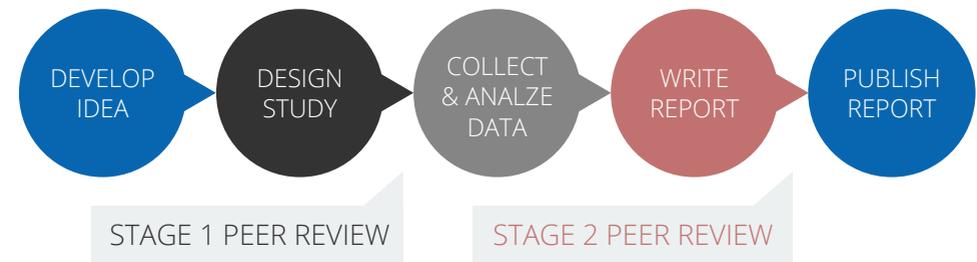
Post-publication review allows the opportunity to gather a wider range of perspectives on your paper. However, not every paper published in this way is guaranteed to receive reviews. And if your article is tackling a controversial topic, it may attract a large number of comments which won't always be moderated. There are also some concerns about the risks of allowing a paper to be published without any prior review, especially in areas such as medicine.
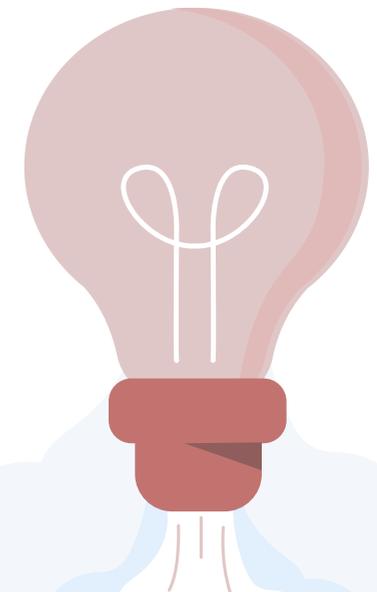
Registered Reports

The Registered Reports process splits peer review into two parts. The first round of peer review takes place after you've designed your study but before you've collected or analyzed any data. This allows you to get feedback on both the question you're looking to answer and the experiment you've designed to test it.

If your manuscript passes peer review, the journal will give you an in-principle acceptance (IPA). This indicates that your article will be published as long as you successfully complete your study according to the pre-registered methods and submit an evidence-based interpretation of the results.
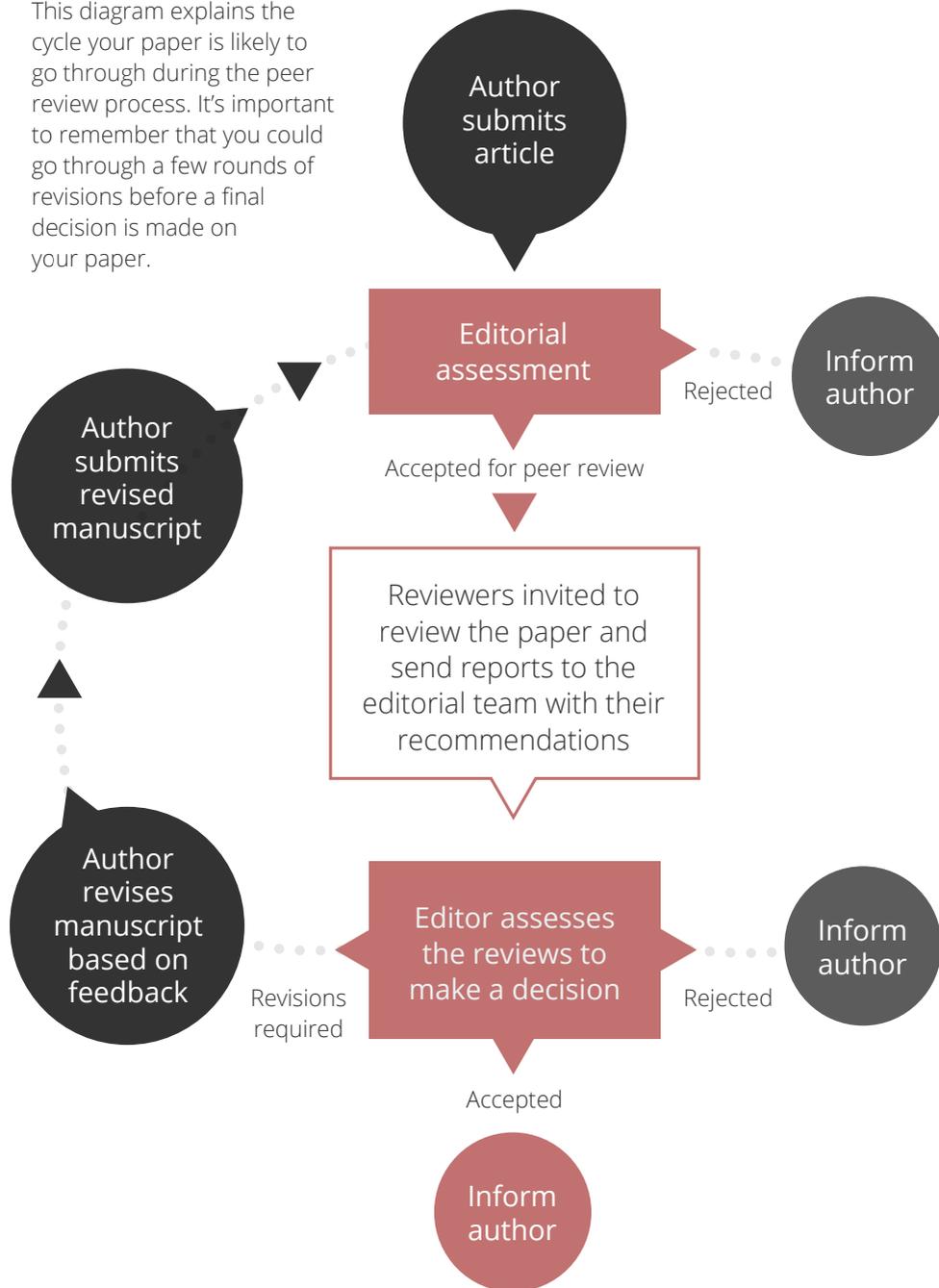
DEVELOP IDEA → DESIGN STUDY → COLLECT & ANALZE DATA → WRITE REPORT → PUBLISH REPORT

STAGE 1 PEER REVIEW   STAGE 2 PEER REVIEW

Find out more about Registered Reports.

AUTHOR SERVICES ▶ Article submission and peer review

The peer review process

This diagram explains the cycle your paper is likely to go through during the peer review process. It's important to remember that you could go through a few rounds of revisions before a final decision is made on your paper.

Author submits article

Editorial assessment

Rejected → **Inform author**

Accepted for peer review

Reviewers invited to review the paper and send reports to the editorial team with their recommendations

Author submits revised manuscript

Author revises manuscript based on feedback

Editor assesses the reviews to make a decision

Revisions required

Rejected → **Inform author**

Accepted

Inform author

Peer review with F1000Research

F1000Research, which is part of the Taylor & Francis Group, operates an innovative peer review process that is fully transparent and takes place after an article has been published.

Here's how it works:

1. Before publication, authors are asked to suggest at least five potential reviewers who are experts in the field and can provide unbiased reports on their article.

2. Submitted articles are published rapidly (the median time is 14 days), after passing a series of pre-publication checks to assess originality, readability, author eligibility, and compliance with F1000Research's policies and ethical guidelines.

3. Once the article is published, expert reviewers are formally invited to review it.

4. The peer review process is entirely open and transparent: each peer review report, plus the approval status selected by the reviewer, is published with the reviewer's name and affiliation alongside the article.

5. Authors are encouraged to respond openly to the peer review reports and can publish revised versions of their article if they wish.

6. An article remains published regardless of the reviewers' reports. Articles that pass peer review are indexed in Scopus, PubMed, Google Scholar, and other bibliographic databases.

What are reviewers looking for?

What reviewers are looking for when they read your paper will depend on your subject area, but they will be checking that:

- Your work is original or new
- The study design and methodology are appropriate and described so that others could replicate what you've done
- You've engaged with all the relevant current scholarship
- Results are appropriately and clearly presented
- Your conclusions are reliable, significant, and supported by the research
- The paper fits the scope of the journal
- The work is of a high enough standard to be published in the journal.

What happens when you're asked to revise and resubmit?

It's very common for the editor and reviewers to have suggestions about how you can improve your paper before it's ready to be published. They might have only a few straightforward recommendations – 'minor amendments' – or they may require more substantial changes before your paper will be accepted for publication – 'major amendments'.

If you're asked to revise your article, you'll need to amend it based on the reviewers' comments, resubmitting it with any or all changes made. (See the next section on 'how to respond to reviewer comments' for more on this.)

Once you resubmit your manuscript the editor will look through the revisions. They will often send it out for a second round of peer review, asking the reviewers to assess how you've responded to their comments.

At this point, you may need to go through the revisions process again or a decision will be made by the editor.

How to respond to reviewer comments

Reading criticism of your paper can be tough, as you've undoubtedly spent a lot of time and effort on the work. As much as possible, try not to take personal offense from any criticism of your article, although we know that can be difficult to avoid.

You may find it helpful to put the reviewer report to one side for a few days after you've read it for the first time. Once you've had a chance to get used to the idea that your article requires further work, you can more easily address the reviewers' comments objectively.

Then, take time to read through the editor and reviewers' advice carefully, deciding what changes you will make to your article in response. Taking their points on board will ensure your final article is as robust and impactful as possible.

It's important to address all the reviewer and editor comments in your revisions. To support this, it may be helpful to resubmit your article along with a two-column grid outlining how you've revised your manuscript.

On one side of the grid, list each of the reviewers' comments and opposite them explain the alterations you've made in response. This method can help you to order your thoughts, and clearly demonstrates to the editor and reviewers that you've considered all of their feedback.

What if you don't agree with the reviewers' comments?

If there's a review comment that you don't agree with, don't ignore it. Instead, include an explanation of why you haven't made that change with your resubmission. The editor can then make an assessment and include your explanation when the amended article is sent back to the reviewers.

You are entitled to defend your position but, when you do, make sure that the tone of your explanation is assertive and persuasive, rather than defensive or aggressive.

What if you don't understand a comment?

If there are any review comments which you don't understand or don't know how to respond to, you should get in touch with the journal's editor and ask for their advice.

AUTHOR SERVICES ▶ Article submission and peer review

The decision is in:
the process after peer review

Following peer review and any rounds of revisions, you'll receive a final decision from the editor and your article will either be accepted or rejected. Whichever outcome you're facing, we've got some advice below to help you figure out your next steps.

What happens next if your article is accepted?

If your article has been accepted, congratulations! Take a moment to enjoy your acceptance, but remember the work doesn't stop here. The steps below will help you get up to speed with the article production process and beyond:

1 At article acceptance

Once your article has been sent to production, you'll be asked to do the following:

Decide whether or not you want to publish your article open access (if the journal isn't fully open access)

If the journal you're publishing with is not fully open access but does offer open access options – for example, Taylor & Francis Open Select journals – now's the time to decide if you want to publish open access. And if you do choose open access, you'll also need to provide details of the person or body paying the article publishing charge (APC) at this stage.

Sign a license agreement for your article

Copyright licenses detail the rights for publication, distribution, and use of your research. You must sign a license agreement before publication. And you'll need to read your chosen journal's author guidelines for details on the journal's specific copyright agreement.

For subscription articles
For subscription articles, you will either transfer copyright to the publisher with a Copyright Transfer Agreement (CTA) or grant the publisher an exclusive license to the copyright with an Exclusive License Agreement (ELA).

For open access articles
For open access articles, you will sign an Open Access Agreement with a Creative Commons license that allows you to keep the copyright.

Find out more about copyright and licensing.

2 Copy editing and typesetting

Your article will be copy edited by the publisher for style, grammar, and nomenclature, to bring the standard of the text up to the level expected by the journal. Your article will also be typeset to make it look great.

3 Checking proofs

After copy editing and typesetting, the article will come back to you. This is your chance to give it a last review before it's published.

What to look for when checking proofs
- Check for queries from the copy editor or the typesetter and ensure you respond to all of them.
- Check your proofs against the original text for accuracy and make sure all figures and tables are correct.
- Check your name and the names of your co-authors for accuracy.

It's important to note that the copy editor may have altered the spelling and punctuation in your article to match the journal style.

AUTHOR SERVICES ▶ Article submission and peer review

4 Your article is published

Once your article has been proofed and the corrections have been made, it'll be published and you'll be able to access it online. If you've chosen a print journal, it will also appear in print once it's assigned to an issue.

If you've published with a Taylor & Francis journal, you'll have access to our **Authored Works** site. This will give you and all other named authors perpetual access to your article, regardless of whether or not you have a subscription to the journal in question. And you'll also be able to **order print copies of your article**.

5 Creating an impact with your research

Taking the time to ensure your research has an impact can help drive your career progression, build your networks, and secure funding for new research. So, it's worth investing in.

To help you understand what impact means for you and your work, take a look at **our comprehensive guide to research impact**. It covers why impact is important, the different types of impact you can have, how to achieve impact – including tips on communicating with a variety of audiences – and how to measure your success.

What to do if your article is rejected

It's not a nice feeling to have your paper rejected, but take comfort in the fact that it happens to almost all researchers at some point in their career. It's important not to let the experience knock you back. Instead, try to use it as a valuable learning opportunity.

Take time to understand why your paper has been rejected

There are many reasons why a journal might reject your manuscript. Make sure you understand why your paper has been rejected so you can learn from the experience. This is especially important if you're intending to submit the same article to a different journal.

Try to ask yourself the following:

- **Are there fundamental changes that need to be made before the paper is ready to be published?** Your feedback from the editor and reviewers should help you to understand this.

- **Was this simply a case of submitting to the wrong journal?** If, ultimately, your paper was rejected because it wasn't the right fit for the journal, then you might be able to submit it elsewhere. (See the next sections for details on choosing where to submit to or transferring your paper to another journal with the same publisher.)

If you're unsure why your article has been rejected, then you should always contact the journal's editor for advice.

Carefully consider where to submit to next

When you made your original submission, you will probably have had a shortlist of journals you were considering. Return to that list and assess whether any feedback you've received or changes you've made to your article during peer review has changed your opinion.

It can be helpful at this stage to re-read the aims and scope statements of your original shortlisted journals to see whether you still feel your article would be a good fit for them.

Once you've selected which journal to submit to next, make sure that you read through its instructions for authors and reformat your article to fit its requirements. Use the feedback you received during the peer review process to help you rewrite and reformat the manuscript.
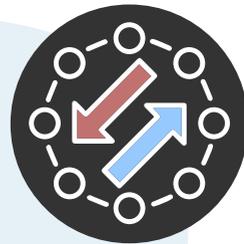
Find out whether transferring your manuscript is an option

A growing number of publishers offer a transfer or cascade service to authors when their paper is rejected. This process is designed for papers which aren't suitable for the journal they were originally submitted to.

If your article falls into this category then one or more alternative journals from the same publisher will be suggested. You'll have the option to either submit to one of those suggested journals for review or to withdraw your article. And if you choose to submit, you'll be able to revise the manuscript first.

Advantages of article transfer

- Helps you find the right home for your research.
- You won't need to enter all the details into a new submission system, so your research is published faster and can be accessed more rapidly.

Find out more about article transfers, including FAQs about the Taylor & Francis transfer process.

Experience peer review from the other side:
becoming a peer reviewer

When you're not in the middle of submitting or revising your own article, you should consider becoming a reviewer yourself – and here's why…

Keep up with the latest thinking
As a reviewer, you get an early view of the exciting new research being done in your field. Not only that, peer review gives you a role in helping to evaluate and improve this new work.

Help to improve papers
Reviewing is often anonymous, with only the editor knowing the important contribution you've made. However, many reviewers attest that it's work that makes them feel good, knowing that they've been able to support a fellow researcher.

Improve your own writing
Carefully reviewing articles written by other researchers can give you an insight into how you can make your own better. Unlike when you're reading articles as part of your research, the process of reviewing encourages you to think critically about what makes an article good (or not so good). This could be related to writing style, presentation, or the clarity of explanations.

Boost your career
While a lot of reviewing is anonymous, there are schemes to recognize the important contribution of reviewers. You can also include your reviewing work on your resumé. Your work as a reviewer will also be of interest to appointment or promotion committees who are looking for evidence of service to the profession.

Become part of a journal's community
Many journals act as the center of a network of researchers who are in conversation about key themes and developments in the field. Becoming a reviewer is a great way to get involved with that group. This can give you the opportunity to build new connections for future collaborations. Being a regular reviewer may also be the first step to becoming a member of the journal's editorial board.

Play your part as a member of the academic community
Peer review is the bedrock of academic publishing. The work of reviewers is essential in helping every piece of research become as good as it can be. By being a reviewer, you will play a vital part in advancing the research area that you care about.

Read this guide for tips on h**ow to become a peer reviewer.**

Glossary

Term	Definition
APC	APC stands for article publishing charge. APCs are usually charged when publishing an article open access.
article templates	Journals often provide article templates (for example in Word or LaTeX) to help you submit your article in the right format.
article transfer	Article transfer is when a publisher offers you the option to 'transfer' your article submission to another of their journals. This usually occurs when your manuscript isn't the right fit for the journal you originally submitted to.
competing interests	A competing interest, also known as a 'conflict of interest', can occur when you (or your employer or sponsor) have a financial, commercial, legal, or professional relationship with other organizations, or with the people working with them, that could influence your research.
copy editing	Copy editing is the process of revising written material to improve readability and fitness for its purpose, as well as ensuring that text is free of grammatical and factual errors.
data repository	A data repository is a storage space for researchers to deposit data sets associated with their research.
Digital Object Identifier (DOI)	A Digital Object Identifier (DOI) is a string of numbers, letters and symbols used to permanently identify an article or document and link to it on the web
double-anonymous peer review	In double-anonymous or double-anonymized peer review, the reviewers don't know that you're the author of the article. And you don't know who the reviewers are either.
editorial policies	A set of guidelines from the journal and/or publisher that clearly lays out the expectations of the journal/publisher with regards to standards of reporting, ethics, use of third-party material, authorship, and more.
F1000Research	F1000Research, part of Taylor & Francis Group, is an open research publishing platform for scientists, scholars and clinicians offering rapid publication of articles and other research outputs without editorial bias.
FAIRsharing	FAIRsharing is a curated, informative and educational resource on data and metadata standards. It provides information to help you find appropriate data repositories.
format-free submission	An increasing number of journals allow format-free submission. This means that, as long as you use a consistent citation format and include everything necessary for review, you can submit work without needing to worry about formatting your manuscript to meet that journal's requirements.
Google Scholar	A publicly available search engine, providing a simple way to broadly search for scholarly literature, including articles, theses, books, and abstracts.
Google Trends	Google Trends is a website by Google that analyzes the popularity of top search queries in Google Search across various regions and languages.
IFAs	see 'instructions for authors'
instructions for authors	An individual set of requirements for a journal that help guide potential authors to construct their article in the correct way and prepare it for submission. Also abbreviated to IFAs.
keywords	Keywords are ideas and topics that define what your content is about. In terms of SEO, they're the words and phrases that searchers enter into search engines to find the content they're looking for.

Term	Definition
open access	Choosing to publish your research open access (OA) makes it freely and permanently available online. Anyone, anywhere can read and build upon it. OA also gives researchers greater reuse rights to build upon the work of others.
open peer review	Typically, open peer review means the reviewers know you're the author and you will learn who they are at some point during the review or publication process. It may also include publication of the reviewers' identities and even the text of their reviews.
ORCiD	An ORCiD is a digital identifier that distinguishes you from every other researcher. It ensures you and your research activities can easily be identified, meaning you get the credit for all the work you do.
peer review	Peer review is the independent assessment of your research paper by experts in your field. Its purpose is to evaluate your manuscript's quality and suitability for publication.
post-publication peer review	In post-publication peer review, your paper may go through another form of peer review first. Or it may be published online almost immediately after some basic checks. Either way, once it's published, there will then be an opportunity for invited reviewers or even readers to add their own comments or reviews.
re3data.org	**re3data.org** is a registry of research data repositories
Registered Reports	The Registered Reports process splits peer review into two parts. The first round of peer review takes place after you've designed your study but before you've collected or analyzed any data. The second round takes place once the study is complete.
search engine optimization	Search engine optimization (SEO) is the process of optimizing a paper so that it can easily be found on search engines like Google or Google Scholar.
single-anonymous peer review	In single-anonymous or single-anonymized peer review, the reviewers know you're the author of the article, but you don't know the identities of the reviewers.
submission system	Academic journals use a variety of online submission systems that allow editors to quickly access your submitted work.
supplemental material	Supplemental material can mean anything - from tables to presentations, video to audio files - that is included as a supplement to your main article.
typesetting	Typesetting is the process of arranging the text and images in an article, in order to prepare them for printing.

Where to next?

If you've found this guide useful, why not take a look at the next in our series of researcher guides which will help you learn how to make an impact with your research and promote your published work.

▶ Research impact: A guide to creating, capturing, and evaluating the impact of your research

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