



You Want to Submit a Paper for Publication: A Few Important Tips to Remember!

You have written your paper and have chosen the journal you wish to submit your paper to. Here are four tips to help your submission to be successfully reviewed.

1. Read the author guidelines carefully. Most journals now require authors to submit their papers within an online system. Follow the online screen questions carefully. You will have several questions to answer. A submission will bounce back if all questions are not answered.
2. Label and number all your files correctly. A pdf is created based on what you have uploaded. For example, you want the Title Page to come before your Manuscript, before your Tables.
3. Many people don't pay much attention to the Cover Letter. For example, they might write, "I am submitting my paper entitled "xxxxxx" and not much more. This is a mistake. The cover letter is very important. It is your opportunity to speak directly to the reviewers about your work. You want to sell your work. You want to explain why your work is so important. Reinforce the novelty. Don't commit the cardinal sin or just repeat your abstract. In a condensed way, show that you have done the research. Explain why you are submitting to this particular journal. Why does your work fit within the aims and scope of the journal. Show the Editor that you have thought carefully about this and why it would fit properly in this journal.
4. If you encounter system problems – the key thing to do is to contact the editorial contact (versus the editor in chief who is dealing with the science not administrative process). That is the job of the editorial staff at the journal and they are usually very happy to help you.

What happens after you submit your paper?

The first thing that will happen is that the editorial office will check whether your paper meets the author guidelines (if all author information, required documents, recommended reviewers were included). The editorial office will check on the administrative details/ issues before the manuscript is sent to the Editor in Chief.

Potential outcomes after you submitted your paper.

First, the paper may not be deemed suitable for the journal and rejected immediately. Don't get too discouraged. When this happens quickly, you are not wasting months waiting for the reviews to come back. It just may be that your paper is not a good fit for this journal, or that there are many similar papers submitted (and/or a great deal of competition). This would happen immediately so as not to waste your time. That doesn't necessarily mean that your work is poor, but more that this journal is perhaps not the right avenue/fit.



The next possibility is that the Editor feels the paper may need work before it goes out for peer review (English language, formatting incorrect) and will suggest that these issues be addressed before it goes out for peer review.

If the paper is deemed appropriate for review, the paper is usually assigned to an Associate Editor who will send your manuscript to a number of reviewers for peer review. Once the reviews come back, the Associate Editor will make a recommendation (whether the paper needs minor or major revisions or should be rejected). The Editor in Chief will make the final decision and this decision will be sent back to the corresponding author/authors. Authors will receive all the reviewers' comments. If the recommendation is for a minor or major revision, each of the reviewer comments needs to be addressed. More to come on this!

A final word of advice is that your paper can be rejected for publishing purposes – have a Plan B and a Plan C and take rejection in stride. If you have written a solid paper, provide a good cover letter, with a strong abstract, and your paper is formatted correctly, you have a very good chance of having your paper receive peer review. The comments that come back will help lead to having an accepted paper in the end.

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