

Scientific publishing is key to sharing your research with the community. Once the manuscript is written, then comes the lengthy process of submitting, reviewing, and publishing. This Info Sheet strives to break down the scientific publishing process and provide vital information so you can feel prepared in publishing your scientific manuscript.

Contact & help desk

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Overview



Scientific publishing is not always a linear process; however, in this Info Sheet, we break down the steps into a typical timeline. But be aware that this is only a starting point. Your journey from writing to sharing can look very different. Additionally, scientific publishing is changing and innovating quickly. We highly recommend talking to colleagues and mentors to ensure you are getting field-specific information.

Another important source of information that you should consult early and often is the author guidelines in your journal of interest.

But besides all the trouble and the amount of work that goes into scientific publishing, it remains one of the best ways to present and share your scientific findings with the world.

Write

Writing a scientific manuscript can be challenging. We've made a separate [Info Sheet](#) on scientific writing that includes tips, tricks, and resources to writing a scientific manuscript. Lib4RI also offers additional lectures, workshops, etc. Check our website <https://www.lib4ri.ch/trainings>

Select a journal

Tip:

Do you know the library [Search Tool](#) provides information on the Open Access Agreements? You can also find up-to-date information on funding options and opportunities.

Considerations:

- Topic/relevance
- Article type
- Target audience
- Funding requirements
- Open Access
- PI and co-author suggestions
- Length requirements

Don't know where to start?

- What journals have you been using and reading?
- What do your co-authors recommend?

Still don't know which journal to pick? Consider checking out Bison: <https://service.tib.eu/bison/> to find an OA journal that fits your article.

Papermills and predatory journals

Tip:

Need help determining if a journal could be predatory? Check out thinkchecksubmit.org for a checklist.

Scientific publishing is a profitable business with many players involved. The authors' interests are not always the publishers' main concern. Use common sense when judging whether a journal is a good fit for your publication. Important considerations can be:

- What is the quality of manuscripts already published in this journal?
- Do they promise a peer review that takes only a few days?
- Are their publication fees in line with other established journals?
- Do they use obscure impact metrics?

Submit

The manuscript is completed and ready for submission? Here's a quick checklist:

Tip:

Ideally before you start writing, consult the author's guideline in the journal where you plan to publish. These guides tell you what information your manuscript must contain, what information you need to provide during submission, and what other options you as an author have during the publication process.

- ☐ Read and follow the journal's guide to authors (as needed; first submissions often allow flexible formatting)
 - Format the text, figures and references accordingly
- ☐ Familiarize yourself with the submission platform ahead of your actual submission and gather all required information.
 - Your ORCID can be used as convenient login at most journals.
- ☐ Receive approval from all co-authors and incorporate the feedback
 - Compile all authors' information (e.g. ORCID, funding info, etc.)
- ☐ Organize data and code in a repository (as needed)
- ☐ Check the [OA possibilities](#) and requirements of your institution and funders
 - Inform yourself on what [CC License](#) you want to use - we recommend CC BY for scientific manuscripts
- ☐ Write the cover letter

Cover Letter

Cover letters can vary greatly based on field. We recommend asking a colleague for an example and edit according to your field, journal and manuscript.

Rejection?

Rejection happens to us all. It generally means your article was considered not a good fit for the journal. This is a great opportunity to think about the purpose and target audience of the paper, find a journal that fits that criteria, edit the paper, as needed, and re-submit.

Review

Typical structure of a review

Summary

The reviewer's summary of the manuscript's findings and contributions to the field, comments on whether the findings are interesting, well supported and/or novel, and their recommendation for the publication.

Major Revisions

The larger issues that the reviewer feels are important for the author to address. Typically bigger picture things that need to be clarified, expanded upon, tested, etc.

Minor Revisions

The smaller issues the author should address. Smaller points that need clarification, small figure adjustments, spelling or grammar mistakes, rephrasing of unclear sentences, etc.

Receiving reviews

Receiving the reviews can be daunting. But remember: peer review generally improves your publication, as your peers invest time and effort to improve and clarify your submission.

Don't take the reviews personally and remember that lots of revisions do not indicate a bad paper.

Responding to reviews

Short summary

Thank the reviewers and provide a short summary of the changes you made to the manuscript (1-4 sentences).



Respond to every comment

- We recommend using a different font style or colour to easily identify the reviewers comments and your responses.
- Ensure each reviewer section is self contained (do not assume that reviewer 1 will read reviewer 2 comments). This may mean repeating yourself.



Implementing the reviewer comments

- For small/minor changes like spelling and grammar edits, a simple "fixed" or "changed" is enough.
- Indicate where the change can be found (e.g. line numbers, sections, etc.) or include in response when appropriate.
- Examples:
 - We have added further clarification on XX in lines YY-ZZ.



Not agreeing with reviewer comments

- Provide a solid reason for not implementing the change.
- Examples:
 - This is a good suggestion. Unfortunately, due to [means/ scope of the study/limited funding/etc.] we are unable to do XX because of YY.
 - We considered XX but after YY.... We have added additional clarification in lines ZZ.

Tip:

First time responding to reviews? Ask an experienced colleague for help, especially if it is difficult to respond to the reviewer's comments.

Tip:

Want some examples of how researchers respond to reviews? Some journals publish the review files so you can see the reviewer comments and the response to reviews (e.g. Nature Communications, F1000Research).

Tip:

Extensive reviews? Other deadlines? Ask for an extension from the editor.

Publish

Editorial Proofs

This is the last chance for easy changes to the manuscript. Take your time and be thorough.

The journal's editorial office might give you only two workdays to finish this work. Ask them for an extension if this is not feasible for you.

Open Access and DORA

There are good reasons to publish Open Access (see below, Share). It can be an institutional policy or a requirement from a funder to publish Open Access, but it also increases the manuscript's visibility since anyone can access it. We offer several services to assist you on this:

- Our [Open Access](#), [DORA](#), and [Copyright & CC licenses](#) Info Sheets are an excellent starting point
- We offer [training courses](#) about these topics as well
- [DORA](#) is the repository for the four research institutes that also manages access rights and reminds you of options to make your publication open access

Celebrate publishing your paper!

Share

Publishing your work is already a success, but it's even better when people read your publication and your research makes a broader impact. Here are some ways how to help increase the visibility of your research:

Unique identifiers

There are many researchers and many publications. Make sure you and your work are not mistaken for someone/something else.

- [ORCID](#) is your unique identifier as a scientist. Also, you can use ORCID to show your previous positions, your fundings, your awards, etc.
- Use the standard version of your institutional affiliation -- not just the abbreviation. See [here](#) for your full institutional name.

Presenting your work

Presenting your work to other scientists remains an important part of the scientific process. This encourages discussion, creates connections and broadens your impact. This can be done by:

- Presenting at conferences
- Writing a review that links your work to the work of others
- Promoting your work on social media

Open Access

Open Access published manuscripts are directly accessible to everyone. This is reflected in higher citation numbers ([McKiernan et al., 2016](#)) and allows others to use your work.

Establish your brand

A consistent stream of good publications about a topic that is important to you will establish you as an expert. Increased visibility of yourself will also increase the visibility and citations of your publications.

Tip:

For a PDF version of this Info Sheet that contains all the relevant links scan the QR code or go: <https://www.lib4ri.ch/info-sheets-scipub>. Still have questions, reach out at publicationservices@lib4ri.ch

