

Scientific Writing

7. Submitting a Manuscript

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March 2010

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Prior to Submission

- Ethics more important than legal considerations
 - Your name & integrity are all that you have!
 - Don't plagiarize
 - Direct quotation or word for word transcription
 - Mosaic or mixed paraphrase and unacknowledged quotation
 - Unacknowledged paraphrase and/or use of ideas
 - Confidentiality agreements honored
 - Necessary approvals obtained
 - Conflicts of interest acknowledged
 - Approval of all co-authors
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What is Copyright?

- Is a legal barrier to duplicate publication
 - Applies equally to electronic and printed matter
 - Is owned equally by all authors
 - Is divisible & transferable
 - In the United States lasts for the life of the longest-living author plus 70 years
 - Must have permission from copyright owner if using copyrighted material in your paper
 - Is usually transferred to the publisher for scientific papers
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Copyright Transfer

- Copyright transfer form usually must be completed and signed by all authors
 - If copyright owned by an employer, then authorized representative must sign
 - If employed by U.S. government, copyright provisions are limited; employees of other governments must check local laws/rules
 - Forms may be required with submission, but usually must be returned with the proofs
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Originality

"Submission of a paper (other than a review) to a journal normally implies that it presents the results of original research or some new ideas not previously published, that it is not under consideration for publication elsewhere, and that, if accepted, it will not be published elsewhere, either in English or in any other language, without the consent of the editors."
(General Notes on the Preparation of Scientific Papers, The Royal Society, London)

ASM Primary Publication

A scientific paper *or its substance* published in a serial, periodical, book, conference report, symposium proceeding, or technical bulletin, posted on a nonpersonal website, or made available through any other retrievable source, including CD-ROM and other electronic forms, is unacceptable for submission to an ASM journal on grounds of prior publication. Work, or its substance, presented as a meeting poster and subsequently reproduced or distributed as a "company white paper" also is unacceptable for submission on grounds of prior publication. ... Posting of original material, including theses and dissertations, on a personal/university website does not preclude subsequent submission to, and publication by an ASM journal ... Ultimately, it is an editorial decision whether the material constitutes the substance of a paper.

Duplicate Publication

- Submit to only one journal at a time
 - Cannot publish data twice even if the text is rewritten
 - Inform editor of anything that might be considered prior publication
 - Publication in another language may be permitted, but always requires approval
 - Release of results to the press prior to publication violates many journals' policies (and may prevent publication of your manuscript!)
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Targeting an Audience

- What is the real audience for my message?
 - Or "So what?" will it lead to widespread changes? What concepts and practices may be altered?
 - Or "Who cares?" Specialists? A general group of specialists? Most practitioners in a field? Scientists in general? Non-scientists?
 - Be realistic in this assessment
 - Avoid salami science
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Selecting a Journal

- What is the right journal for my paper?
 - Circulation
 - Check for suitability of audience & content – look at some issues of the journal
 - Check speed & frequency of publication
 - Evaluate journal impact, usually Journal Citation Reports, but high impact usually implies a high rejection rate as well
 - Language
 - Query the editor if questions remain
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Improper Journal Consequences

- No review - immediate return
 - Reviewed - rejected as inappropriate
 - Poor or slow review; inappropriate revision requested
 - Manuscript published, but no one else ever reads it
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Instructions to Authors

- All journals have them
 - Where and how to send in
 - Review and publication process
 - Content of interest & types of articles
 - Deposition & sharing of data/strains etc.
 - Figure and Table guidelines
 - Conventions
 - Style
 - Format – text and references
 - Names, units and abbreviations
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Manuscript Preparation I

- Follow journal format - Instructions to Authors
 - If submitting a hard copy, type on one side of page and use good quality paper
 - Use a word processor and check spelling
 - Twelve point type, usually a serif typeface
 - Double space **everything** - text, legends, references, tables and title page
 - Number pages and lines
 - Indent paragraphs
 - Ragged right edge
 - Do not hyphenate
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Manuscript Preparation II

- May mark unusual characters and equations
 - Leave wide margins, at least 1 inch (2.5 cm) on all sides
 - Use proper headers and subheaders
 - Print hard copy on a laser (or ink jet) printer at 300+ dpi
 - Electronic submission – convert to proper format (usually pdf)
 - Proofread the manuscript
 - Have at least one colleague read the manuscript
 - Proofread the manuscript again
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Cover Letter - Original Manuscript

- Always include one, even with electronic submission
 - Spell names of journal and editor correctly
 - Specify journal and indicate why
 - Identify corresponding author and give e-mail, phone, fax and regular mail addresses
 - Suggest editor and/or reviewer(s)
 - Request relief from page charges, if necessary
 - Any particulars, *e.g.* revision of an earlier manuscript, companion manuscript
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The Submission Package Hard Copy

- Follow journal format – Check “Instructions to Authors”
 - Cover letter
 - Manuscript – Correct number of copies
 - Figures – Number and format
 - Computer diskette or CD – only if requested
 - Paper clips, not staples
 - Sturdy envelope(s) properly addressed
 - First class, air mail or courier
 - Never send the only copy!
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The Submission Package Electronic (Web-based)

- Follow journal format – Check “Instructions to Authors”
 - Use journal's web site for formal submission – almost never send in an e-mail to an editor
 - Submission process may be time consuming – plan for at least 30-60 minutes, even if everything is in hand
 - Cover letter
 - Manuscript with tables and legends – Correct file format
 - Figures – Correct file format and resolution
 - Have e-mails and other contact information for all authors
 - Assemble all pieces into a single file (usually a pdf) if requested
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An Editorial Bestiary

- Many different names for the same function
 - Managing editor
 - Copy editor
 - Editor-in-Chief
 - Editor
 - Editorial Board
 - ad hoc* reviewers
 - Goal is to publish good science in an understandable format
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Editors - Manuscript Receipt

- Format of manuscript assessed
 - Assigned to a corresponding editor
 - Letter (now often an e-mail) of receipt sent to corresponding author
 - Editor reviews for appropriateness
 - Reviewers selected
 - Manuscript sent to reviewers
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The Review Process

- Usually run completely by volunteers
 - Usually two or three anonymous reviewers
 - Length of time depends on the journal
 - 30 day minimum
 - 60-75 day average
 - 90+ days - contact the editor
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Editorial Decision

- Guided by the reviews
 - Solely that of the editor
 - Three basic responses
 - Accept
 - Modify
 - Reject
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