

Author guide to submission and publication

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Preparing an article for submission

See the guide to *Writing articles for consideration by MUP journals*.

How do I submit my article?

- Ensure all co-authors have seen the final version of the article being submitted and agreed on the choice of journal.
- The corresponding author has the responsibility of liaising on behalf of all the co-authors. This includes:
 - Ensuring that all authors are kept informed of the progress of the article through the submission, review and publication.
 - Obtaining (email is OK) authorisation from the co-authors to transfer copyright or grant a licence to publish to the selected journal. See the section on copyright at the foot of this guide.
- Some journals welcome pre-submission enquiries, so if you are unsure about the suitability of the journal for your article, contact the journal directly as instructed.
- You should submit your article to one journal at a time – submit to another journal only if your article has been rejected.
- Read the journal’s guidelines for authors and make sure your article conforms to its requirements.
- Ensure that the focus of your article complies with the aims and scope of the journal.
- Submit your article as specified by the journal (by Email or online). Make sure the format you use for the article is acceptable to the journal (for instance, if you submit an electronic file, make sure it is in a format that can be easily opened and edited – e.g. Microsoft Word).

- Although this is not required by most journals, consider writing a short note for the editor that includes any information the editor should be aware of – for example if you have previously submitted your article elsewhere, if you will be away from the office for any period of time, or if there are any suitable reviewers or ones whose work is in conflict with your own and who should not be asked to review your article.
- Make sure you provide full contact details for correspondence – your name, affiliation, address, country, email, etc.
- Provide the full details (name and affiliation) of all co-authors.

The decision process – after submission

- When you have submitted an article, you should expect an acknowledgement – if you do not hear from the journal, contact the editor or the editorial office to make sure your article has been received. (If you have submitted online, you should receive an email in 1–2 days as the responses are automatic.)
- If the journal editors feel that your article is totally unsuitable (or needs substantial work to make it worth considering), the editors will immediately reject it.
- If not immediately rejected, your article will be sent out to reviewers – these are subject specialists in your area who will read the article and return comments to the journal about the article's acceptability.

Reviewing

- The purpose of reviewing is to provide the editor with expert opinions – the editor cannot be an expert in all areas. The reviewers will advise the editor of the strengths and weaknesses of an article and its suitability for publication. Reviewers are only advisers, however, and it is the editor who makes the final decision.
- Most journals send articles to two or more reviewers, selected by the editor. Some journals welcome suggestions from the authors, but the editor reserves the right to select the reviewers and may not use the author's suggestions.
 - If there are any persons or institutions that are either in competition or conflict with your research, then you can request that the editor does not use these individuals to review your article.
- For all MUP journals, the identities of the reviewers are not revealed to the authors, and in some journals the identities of the authors are not revealed to the reviewers. The reason for this is to avoid bias (e.g. a junior researcher reviewing an article of a more senior researcher). Individual journals use different systems based on their knowledge of their research community.
- Once the article has been reviewed the journal will reply to you, providing feedback from the reviewers – this may take several months.
- The reviewing process is often, unfortunately, a long process - this is usually because some reviewers take a long time to return their review due to their own workloads. Also, sometimes the reports they provide are unhelpful and the editor needs to send the article out to another person. Please be patient, but if you are concerned about the time, or if there is a specific date by which you want your article to be published, tell the editor.

First decision

After the article has been reviewed you will receive a first decision. This is likely to be one of the following:

- Accept with no changes.
 - This is relatively uncommon.
- Accept with changes.
 - The reviewers and the editor will suggest changes and after the authors have revised the article the editors will make the final decision or it may be sent out again for review.
- Reject but invite a resubmission after substantial changes.
 - The reviewers and the editor feel that the article needs substantial changes, but would welcome a resubmission from the authors after revision – the resubmission will be treated as a new article.
- Reject no resubmission.
 - The article is considered unsuitable for publication in the journal.

Revisions

It is unusual for any article to be accepted by a journal without some revisions being requested.

- Revisions may be minor (e.g. changes to the order of references) or major (e.g. 'methodology unclear').
- Seriously consider all revisions requested by the editor and make changes as advised – however if you disagree with any of the recommended revisions, contact the editor to discuss them, or make a clear argument for your decision when you resubmit the article.
- The revised article needs to be returned to the journal (some journals will ask you to re-submit using the online submission system, others will ask you to email). Do not delay in doing this – some journals have a rule that if authors delay beyond a certain time (e.g. two months), then the revised article will be considered a new submission and the process will start all over again.
- When you re-submit your article you should clearly state how and where you have responded to the comments from the reviewers. You may not agree with the comments made by reviewers, but if you do not, you should clearly indicate why not.
- If the revisions were substantial (major revision), the journal may send the article out for a second review.
- It is not uncommon for some journals to undertake several revisions of an article.
- It is possible that your article will be rejected after you have revised it – although this is unlikely unless you failed to revise the article satisfactorily.

Rejection

- Do not be disheartened to receive a rejection letter. There are many reasons for this:
 - The quality of the research may be below that expected by the journal.
 - The quality of English writing may be unacceptable to the journal.
 - The subject may be inappropriate for the journal.
 - The journal may have published so many articles on the same topic that it no longer wants any more. (This may seem unfair, but editors need to balance the coverage of their journal to meet all reader needs.)
- If the journal gives you reasons for rejecting the article, consider their comments seriously – other journals may have similar concerns.
- If your article is rejected you can submit it elsewhere – but you should review your article before re-submitting it (and remember to conform to the author guidelines of your newly selected journal).
- If you think the reasons for rejection are unfair or incorrect, you may appeal directly to the editor of the journal. In these cases you must clearly make your argument to the editor. All MUP journals have an appeals procedure that will be followed.

Acceptance

- When your article is accepted you may still be asked to correct some formatting issues (most commonly the reference style) and to add additional information (e.g. author biographies). It is important that you respond to these final (minor) points as soon as possible.
- You will also be asked to provide any artwork as high resolution files suitable for printing and online publication.
- When you submit the final version after acceptance be sure to include all required elements (check previous journal articles if you are unsure) – e.g. full author names, affiliation, biography, keywords, etc.
- Once your article has been accepted it will enter production and should be published in the next available issue – if there is a reason to publish it by a specific date (e.g. a conference) please inform the editor.
- Ensure you are aware of your rights regarding the article (see below).

The production process – after acceptance

- Once accepted by the editor your article will be edited and then typeset. You will receive a confirmation email to say when it has been sent into production.
- There may be queries raised during this process (e.g. missing references, clarification of your text, etc.). These may be sent to you before the article is typeset, or may be added to the proof.
- You will be sent a proof of your article to check and approve. At this stage you may not re-write the article, and any changes must be restricted to correcting actual errors and answering any queries. Note that your changes may be checked and approved by the editor.

- The proof is the last opportunity you have to make corrections on your article; therefore you must check the tables, illustrations, units of measurements, etc. to make sure they are correctly presented. You should also check that you have provided accurate data.
- You will be sent the publishing agreement with your proof – if this is not returned then the article cannot be published, so it is very important that you return the agreement with the proof.
- Note that if you do not return your proof within the time given the journal may proceed without your input – so ensure you do return your proof, even if it is to say that you have no corrections. If you know you will need additional time please contact MUP or the editor as soon as possible.

Publication

- Depending on the journal your article may wait for the issue selection to be published in print and online, or may be published ahead of issue selection as an ahead-of-print version (and then collected into the issue when this is compiled).
- You will be provided with a PDF of your article with an email alert to inform you when your article is published. If the article is published ahead of print you will be sent an email when this is published and again when it is selected and published with the issue.
- Once your article has been published you can draw attention to it by citing it in your subsequent works.
- If your publication is a result of funded research you should ensure that the funders receive a copy of the article.

See also the MUP guide *How to promote your articles*.

Citation

- Until your article is accepted you should cite it as 'in preparation'.
- Once your article has been accepted, you should cite it as 'in press' with the name of the journal.
- Once your article is published (ahead of print or within an issue) ensure that you cite it correctly – especially using the DOI which will provide an easy link to the article.
 - Note: the DOI is a unique identifier that will provide a stable link to your article both if it is published ahead of print and when it appears in an issue – the DOI remains consistent and will direct readers to the most current version of the article.

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