

Writing articles for consideration by MUP journals

Writing your article

There are many online resources for authors, and it is worthwhile reading some of these before you start writing your article. The golden rules for scholarly authors are as follows:

- Have something new to say
 - Editors are not interested in republishing old knowledge, so you must have something novel to say: new research, new opinions, new evaluations.
- Structure your article clearly
 - The basic structure of scholarly articles is: title (clear snapshot of the article), abstract (summarising the article – the 'sales pitch'), introduction (why this article was written, what is already known), methodology (what you did), results (what you found), discussion (what it means) and references (acknowledging the resources used).
- Write concisely
 - Even if you have excellent research, if you do not communicate it clearly then your article will not be published, read and cited. Write in short sentences, be positive, be accurate. Do not obscure your information with overly long discussions and words. Aim for simplicity.

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Selecting a journal for publication

Ideally you should know which journal you want to submit to before you write your article as this will influence the type of article that you write, the length of the article and the style.

- Select a journal that already publishes in the same subject area as your article.
- Select a journal that publishes article types similar to the one you want to write.
- Read the journal's guidelines for authors – these should indicate not only the type of articles that the journal wants but also the style and formatting of the articles (it will save you time if you format everything correctly from the start).
- If you are required to make your work available open access (check your institution and funder policies) then ensure you select a journal that allows you to fulfil this mandate. See also the MUP guide to *Journals and Open Access*.

Authorship

The criteria for authorship provided by the ICMJE (International Committee of Medical Journal Editors) are generally accepted as the standard for all scholarly publishing (in all disciplines). It is very important to agree authorship before you write an article or even before you start your research, to avoid disagreements later.

The criteria for authorship are:

- Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis or interpretation of data for the work; AND
- Drafting the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content; AND
- Final approval of the version to be published; AND
- Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

See <http://www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/roles-and-responsibilities/defining-the-role-of-authors-and-contributors.html>

Any person who does not fulfil these criteria should be acknowledged as a contributor, usually in the acknowledgements section at the end of the article.

Ethics

All authors are expected to adhere to international ethical standards. These include ensuring that your research conforms to institutional and international standards with regard to confidentiality, data protection, plagiarism and rights, and that you have not fabricated any information. Please refer to the MUP Journals Publication Ethics Statement:

http://www.manchesteruniversitypress.co.uk/MUP_Journals_Ethics_Statement.pdf

Artwork

When you submit an article for consideration any artwork should be at a low-resolution. However, you must be able to provide high resolution versions when (and if) the article is accepted.

- Figures must never be submitted embedded in Word documents or other word-processing files, or PowerPoint.
- Final artwork should be in TIFF or EPS format, though high-quality JPEGs (minimum compression) are also acceptable. If created with an illustrator programme (Adobe Illustrator, Coral Draw) save as an EPS. If a graph created in Excel, send the XLS file (it is difficult to save an Excel graph as a high res TIFF, JPEG or EPS).
- Ideal resolutions:
 - 1200 dpi for line figures (600 dpi minimum).
 - 300 dpi for photographs/halftones.
- Figures should be provided at the same size or bigger than they are expected to be printed (with the resolution above) to allow for any resizing. If supplied smaller, they will lose clarity and detail when enlarged, or it may not be possible to enlarge at all.
- All journals are printed in black and white, but colour is used for the online version. Any graphs should not rely on colour to differentiate data, and should preferably use hatchings, dots, etc. if required for differentiation instead of different shadings of grey.
- Colour photographs should be saved as CMYK, not RGB.
- Figures (and tables) should be referred to/cited in the text, e.g. 'see figure 1'.
- All figures (and tables) need a caption and should include details of the source and copyright owner, if not the author.
- Suggestions for placement of figures are welcome, but cannot always be followed due to typesetting constraints.

Finalising your article

Before submitting a paper for publication, you should ensure that it is the best work that you can provide¹.

- Is the title accurate, informative and concise?
- Does your abstract (if you need one) correctly summarise the information in the article – is it easy to read, comprehensive and short enough (approx. 100-250 words is usual)?
- Are your study objectives or hypotheses clearly stated?
- Does your article say something new – does it add to the body of information in your subject area? (If it is a review article, is it sufficiently inclusive to represent all the arguments and give a fair and comprehensive review of the topic?)
- Is your article well organised? Have you used appropriate subheadings to separate the different sections of the paper for clear understanding?

¹ This section has been adapted from the INASP (International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications) resource handbook for editors, 2013 written by Pippa Smart.

- Is the text clearly written, is the standard of English (or other publication language) good enough to make the article clear and easy to read?
- Are the results correctly and clearly presented? Can they be understood easily without misinterpretation?
- Is the discussion clear, and does it include sufficient acknowledgement of different perspectives and interpretations?
- Does your reference list correctly match the citations given in the text? Have you provided sufficient citation to support your arguments, without too many unnecessary references?
- Have you used the referencing style specified by the journal you want to submit to?
- Are the references complete and accurate? Do they include the authors' names, article title, publication information including dates and page numbers?
- If there are any figures and tables, are they understandable without reference to the text? Are they required – do they add to the understanding? (Do not provide illustrations unless something cannot be easily explained in the text.) Are they clearly, completely and correctly labelled? Do they agree with what is said in the text? Also, have you ensured that you do not duplicate what is said in a figure or a table within the text?
- Have you asked colleagues to read and comment on the text? Seek opinions from friends and peers before you submit your article for publication, as they will give you suggestions for improvement.
- Have you acknowledged individuals and organisations that made substantial financial and/or technical contributions towards the publication of the article?
- Have you provided acknowledgement and obtained permission for any previously published content that you want to reproduce in your article?

Submission

To read about how to submit your article and what happens to articles after submission, see the MUP *Author guide to submission and beyond*.