

Writing for Publication

Submitting your work for publication is an exciting time! There are many things to consider when finalising your paper for publication. Taking the time to be thorough and well-informed before submission can help make the publication process smoother and give you a better chance of getting your work published.

Choosing a Publisher

You need to approach a publisher that is suitable for your work, as well as considering which publishers may accept your work. Consider:

- Does the publisher have a specialty field or publish more generalised work?
- The reputation of the publisher
- The type of work the publisher usually publishes, e.g.: themes, theories, specific types of studies
- Where have your supervisors and colleagues published? Can they share their experiences?
- Where do the scholars who have informed your research publish?
- What are the publisher's aims and values?

Approach a publisher that is likely to see value in your work.

Publication Guidelines

It is vital to follow the publisher's guidelines. Editors do not read papers that fail to follow the required format. Ensure you are familiar with their submission standards such as:

- Correct referencing style
- The word limit for submissions
- Whether or not an abstract is required
- Whether they would like your biography or a blind, anonymous submission
- Single or double-spaced text
- Font style and size
- Alignment of margins

Your Paper's Title

Well-informed titles can include: names (of the problem, theory, subject you investigated, method you used); a verb or noun (showing what you did, e.g.: "an investigation...", "reflections on...", "a survey of..."); or reference to the result. Omit obvious words and phrases in your title.

Inclusions and structure

You have no doubt analysed a lot of data and existing literature! You need to find and use the relevant data that best supports your paper's message. Being thorough does not mean reporting everything; it means deciding what you need to include. For example, if you conducted a study and the data suggested a new hypothesis, you could redesign your study to include the new insights, or report only on the existing data but suggest that new insights are yet to be tested. Write about what you can show from your study or research.

Academic writing is highly signposted. Signposting refers to words that signal to your reader what you are thinking—like clues about how you feel, or a trail or map to guide them through your paper. This shows your reader how everything in your paper fits together.

Your paper will need to be logically structured and provide clear signals of structure and your position as the author (see tip sheet on transition words).

Things to Avoid

- Don't be wordy! Long, waffling sentences can often result in your sentence losing its meaning. Being concise and direct is usually the best way to go. For example:

"The results of this study showed that women prefer..." can be shortened to:

"We found that women prefer...." or "It was found that..."

- Beware of jargon and over-abstraction. Consider who your reader could be if your work is published. Would they prefer a clear, concise paper or a collection of pompous, long-winded statements?
- Consider cutting adverbs and adjectives as these may be weakening your important points. Think about the most important point you wish to make and practise writing it in the most direct way. If you need to build on it, then you can add more words, but often you'll have already said it concisely.
- Do not rush your ideas; make one point at a time.

Academic Learning Support offer free individual consultations and group workshops for HDR students. For more writing, study, and academic support contact learningsupport@newcastle.edu.au or call 02 4921 5350.