

i-mean workshop on publishing (April 2015):¹

Questions by the panel organizers

When is the 'right' time to start to publishing?

- If your work is good, it's never too early; don't hold back. If in doubt, ask your supervisor or senior peers. BUT:
- don't shoot your powder: don't go for easy and fast publication at the expense of quality
- make sure the publication can fulfill its function for a career later on: it should be a peer-reviewed journal or book (series); the publisher has to be solid with a good reputation; 'open access' if possible

Tips and strategies for novice researchers for getting papers accepted for publication

- make a list of journals in which you would like to see your work appear
- then choose the journal that you read most for your own research as it will be read by people who will be interested in your work as well
- read articles in that journal with respect to style; develop a feeling for academic writing; 'the way things are done' in this journal
- don't submit to more than one journal/publisher at the same time because the journal will have to find reviewers to give feedback; indeed, many journals have that as a requirement (you need to ascertain it is not under review elsewhere)
- don't hesitate to ask your supervisor or more senior people with respect to experience with a particular journal [sometimes the process can be very long]

- don't try to write up your entire PhD in one article; focus on a manageable sub-question
- make sure your argument is coherent (Research question? Data? Ethics? Methodology? Match of data with method? Results? Discussion? Outlook?)
- take the technical requirements seriously for in-text referencing and the presentation of examples/tables/figures as well as the reference section (use endnote, citavi, etc.)

- never submit your paper without having received feedback from peers with respect to content and language
- if you publish in a language that is not your mother tongue, make sure that a native speaker checks your language

- "don't waist reviewer's time", i.e. make sure that you have done your job carefully so that you don't use the reviewers as a sounding board for rough ideas only or make their reading experience difficult by not paying attention to technical requirements

¹ This (incomplete) list was provided by Miriam Locher for a workshop at the i-mean conference in 2015 at the University of Warwick.

- don't be offended when criticism is returned and you're asked to revise: this happens to all of us and is part of the academic dialogue; sleep over it and approach the points with a fresh mind; the paper is guaranteed to be better afterwards
- if a journal rejects your paper, you can submit it to another journal; however, you should make sure to revise it first as it can happen that the new journal picks the same reviewers

Can you offer advice for good co-authoring – how to work effectively together on a paper?

- only work with people who you know you can get along with
 - ideally, you have the same understanding of how to deal with deadlines
 - write with a particular journal in mind (target audience, style)
 - start by sketching the paper in its rough shape (sections, aims, etc.); then assign who does what -- > try to make allowances for your different strengths
 - set clear dates for the steps: who has to have done what by when; always fix the next date for a meeting
 - allow enough time for steps that take longer: e.g. transcribing; establishing categories for qualitative coding and coder agreement, etc.
 - be constructive and nice: many academics are thin skinned
 - if the sequence of how the authors should be named is an issue, then either make sure that you write at least two papers together and alternate the sequence; or keep the sequence open and decide at the end who should go first
-
- Publishing with your supervisor: In some disciplines this is common practice and even required (in the case of funded joint projects), in others it might be frowned upon (check with your supervisor)
-
- Career planning: Make sure that your publication list will also show clearly that you can work on your own as well as in a team. A hiring committee will want to know what parts of your publications are due to your input.

Further thoughts

- At the latest when you're going for jobs, make sure that you have an up-to-date website that lists your publications and academic activities and provides a CV. If you do not plan on publishing your PhD as a monograph (as is required in some parts of Europe and common practice in many parts of the US), make sure that it becomes clear what you have worked on.
- Make your work available to readers by providing downloads either through the repository of your institution or by uploading your papers to your personal website; however, make sure that you're not violating copyright agreements with the publishers. Publishers will let you know which documents can be made open access (e.g. the pre-reviewed version, or the post-review version, or the revised version; a pdf of an entire book, or pdfs directly from the edited collection or the journal itself are usually not allowed; if in doubt, check with your publisher)