

Submitting a scientific paper and responding to editors

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Trelareg Consultants

... NEXT

This talk

- Submitting your paper
- The response from the journal
- Your response to the journal
- Some final thoughts

Your scientific paper

Remember:

- A scientific paper is not the same as a project report
- Target an appropriate journal and follow its style conventions
- Importance of the discussion

Preparing your paper

- Check the remit of possible journals
- Choose an appropriate journal

Which Journal?

Remember:

the editors and reviewers want to accept papers on topics relevant to their journal, but also have to maintain standards

Journal style

Structure of paper (section headings)

- unit conventions,
- statistics conventions,
- reference citation and format

create a positive impression

don't annoy the editor and reviewer

Discussion

The Discussion should aim to answer the question 'so what?'

The Discussion should provide:

- explanation (how the results came about, reasons for outliers etc)
- interpretation (what it means for the science and understanding of the topic)
- application (how the findings will be used)

References

Pay great attention to the references

- Cite correctly
- Cite in the journal style
- If you use reference software, choose the appropriate output format (some are downloadable)

Tables or Figures

- Decide on when to use a table and when to use a figure.
- Keep them clear and simple
- Check all tables and figures are referred to in the text

T.T.T.F.F.

- Despite MS Excel, published Figures have the legend at the **bottom**.
- Remember T.T.T.F.F.
- **T**ables have **T**itles at the **T**op, **F**igures at the **F**oot.
- Include error bars.
- State whether SD SED SEM LSD etc
- Check journal conventions

Before submitting

Check ALL the authors have:

- **Seen** the paper
- **Approved** the paper
- The senior or corresponding author will have to certify this

Before submitting

- **Check** the 'Instructions to Authors' again
- **Check** the journal 'style' again

**OBEDY THE
INSTRUCTIONS**

Submit

Electronic

- Provide all the information required
- Provide an email address that will continue to work for the next 6 months

Paper

- Send the correct number of copies

**OBEDY THE
INSTRUCTIONS**

The Journal's response

Journal Responses

- It takes time to review (referee) a submission
- You are unlikely to get an immediate acceptance
- The most usual responses are revision (minor or major) or rejection

Rejection

- If a rejection, check whether you have submitted to the most appropriate journal (e.g. is it agricultural science or agronomy or agricultural economics?)
- Have you submitted a paper or a report?

Rejection

- Don't be angry
- Learn from the experience
- Do better next time
- Attend a course on scientific writing

Minor revision

- This usually means the paper is basically ok
- The reviewers think there are some improvements or clarifications to be made and/or it is not in the required format
- This should not take too long

Major revision

- Sometimes termed 'Revise and Resubmit'
- This means the journal still wants a paper on this topic

BUT ...

Major revision

- You may need to provide further explanation of methods
- You may need to delete irrelevant portions
- You may need to re-interpret your results
- You may need to do more analyses

Major revision

So:

- Discuss with your co-authors how you will jointly revise the paper
- Senior author to collate changes and ensure consistency
- After the revision, get co-authors to approve the changes

For ALL Revisions

- Try to revise as soon as possible
- Respond to ALL the comments
- Many journals ask you to comment specifically how you have responded to each of the reviewers comments

**OBEY THIS
INSTRUCTION**

Revisions

- When you send the revision, you will need to confirm that all authors have seen and approved the new version

Further revision

Be prepared

- After 'major revision' often authors are asked to make 'minor revisions'
- This is mainly to bring the paper to a form that the editors can accept

Acceptance

Deep Joy

What happens next?

- Editorial office checks technical editing
- Editorial Office sends to production team
- Proofs

Proofs

- Paper or electronic
- Must respond quickly
- Read carefully
- Annotate proof using the system specified
- Return by deadline date

Proofs

- Order reprints?
- Return completed Copyright Form
(if not already done)

**OBEY THE
INSTRUCTIONS**

IMPORTANT BECAUSE

Any mistakes are now

YOURS

Publication

- Online – ‘forthcoming paper’ – often soon after return proofs
- Print version – often some months later
- Reprints – after the print version

Other thoughts

Reviews

- If you have done a PhD, consider rewriting the literature review with your supervisor and submitting as a review paper
- Target a journal that publishes reviews
- Note - rewrite

Impact Factors

- Each Journal has an Impact Factor, recalculated each year.
- Journals with high Impact Factors are more prestigious.
- Journals with higher impact factors have higher rejection rates.

Novelty

- Most journals demand 'Novelty' (it hasn't been done before)
- If you can say 'this confirms someone else's results' throughout your paper, it is unlikely to be novel findings and is likely to be rejected from an international journal.

Don't be shy

- Ask colleagues to comment on your draft
- Choose someone who is competent to give an opinion
- Choose someone who will give an honest opinion .

And Finally

Enjoy writing as much as
researching