

Getting Your OAPS Paper
Published
in an Academic Journal



Run Run Shaw Library

香港城市大學
City University of Hong Kong

Introduction

The **Outstanding Academic Papers by Students (OAPS)** project started out as one of the Library's institutional repository initiatives in 2005 with an aim to showcase the best student works at **CityU**. The Library has been playing an active role in outreach and engagement with academic units by encouraging paper nomination. The awarded papers are deposited in the Library's **Outstanding Academic Papers by Students (OAPS) Collection** for open access.

In alignment with the University's **Discovery-enriched Curriculum (DEC)**, the OAPS project encourages quality research and showcases students' discovery, innovation and creativity. The Library intends to create, through the Project, a platform to enhance scholarly communication among students and beyond. To further foster the scholarly development of OAPS students, the Library inspires and encourages them to submit their OAPS papers to academic journals or present their research in international conferences. This concise guide to selecting journals and preparing manuscripts for journal publication, targeted mainly at OAPS authors, provides fundamental information on publishing in scholarly journals and recommendation on resources for further exploration.

To access CityU's OAPS Collection, visit: dspace.cityu.edu.hk/handle/2031/2. If you have any questions or comments about OAPS, please send to: lboaps@cityu.edu.hk.

Why Publish Your OAPS Paper?

- *Enrich Your Learning Experience*
- *Increase Impact and the Visibility of Your Paper*
- *Enhance Your Communication Skills across Diverse Institutions*
- *Gain Recognition, Strengthen CVs and Establish International Profile*
- *Contribute to Knowledge Creation and Dissemination*
- *Achieve Self-actualization When Complete the Intellectual Challenge*

Contents

Introduction • Why Publish Your OAPS Paper?	i
Part 1 Selecting a Journal to Publish Your OAPS Paper	1
1.1 Searching for Potential Journals on Your Topic	1
Databases	1
Periodical Directories	1
Tools of Academic Publishers	1
Undergraduate Research Journals	2
1.2 Choosing the Appropriate Journal	2
Journal Impact	2
Journal Scope	3
Acceptance Rate	3
Open Access	4
Indexing Services	4
Referred (Peer-reviewed) Journals	4
Editorial Board Members	4
Time to Publication	4
Part 2 Submitting Your OAPS Paper to a Journal	5
2.1 Preparing the Manuscript	5
The General Structure of a Journal Article	5
Formatting and Editing the Paper	5
Copyright Permission	6
2.2 Submitting the Manuscript	7
Pre-submission Enquiry	7
Cover Letter	7
Peer Review Process	7
Reasons for Journal Rejection	8
Appendix 1: Selected Resources on Publishing in Scholarly Journals	9
Appendix 2: Links to Information and Services of Major Academic Publishers for Journal Authors	10

Part 1

Selecting a Journal to Publish Your OAPS Paper

Selecting a journal for publishing your paper is a crucial decision. You may identify appropriate journals by **consulting with your supervisors, mentors or people in the field**. The following are some approaches on identifying journals for publishing.

1.1 Searching for Potential Journals on Your Topic

Searching periodical databases, directories, and tools are common methods to identify journals that publish in your research area. You can also find suitable journals by examining the **bibliographies of your own paper** or related articles.

Databases

Use Library subscribed [subject-specific databases](#) or multidisciplinary databases such as [Scopus](#), [Web of Science](#), [ProQuest Databases](#) and [EBSCOhost Databases](#) to identify the journals with subjects or topics relevant to your paper.

Open Access (OA) Journals: If targeting for OA journals, search databases offering a **search/filter option for “open access” journals** such as [Web of Science](#), and databases of OA journals such as the [Directory of Open Access Journals \(DOAJ\)](#) which indexes and provides access to over 10,000 OA peer-reviewed journals.

Refine Your Search:

Use different keywords and variations in keywords in finding potential journals when searching in databases.

Furthermore, try to narrow or broaden your search, and use limits to refine the results if necessary. To learn more on search techniques, visit the Library Research Guide [Literature Review - Finding the Resources](#).

Periodical Directories

[Ulrichsweb](#) is a comprehensive bibliographic database providing detailed information on more than **300,000 serials** of all types, of which **over 85,000 are active English academic/scholarly journals**. The comprehensive search options enable you to find academic journals in subject areas of interest and identify refereed, indexed, online and/or open access journals.

[Genamics JournalSeek](#) is a free online database containing information and links to websites of over **39,000 journals** from more than 6,000 publishers. The Category Browser allows you to locate journals relevant to your research subject.

Tools of Academic Publishers

Use the publishers' journal finding tools to locate potential journals by entering the **abstract, keywords** and/or **article description**.

- [Elsevier Journal Finder](#) finds journals best suited for publishing scientific article from over 2,200 Elsevier journals. The search results contain each journal's impact factor, acceptance rate, production and editorial times, open access option and link to its homepage.
- [Springer Journal Suggester](#) can make suggestions for target journals from over 2,500 Springer and BMC journals.

Many large academic publishers provide journal lists by subject on their websites, such as [Elsevier](#), [Taylor & Francis](#), [Wiley](#), [Sage](#), [Oxford University Press](#), [Cambridge University Press](#), as well as [SpringerOpen](#) and [BMC](#) for open access journals.

[Undergraduate Research Journals](#)

The [Council on Undergraduate Research](#) (U.S.) provides a list of [undergraduate journals](#) covering a wide range of disciplines. Some of the journals accept undergraduate submissions from around the world.

1.2 Choosing the Appropriate Journal

[Journal Impact](#)

Assess the research impact of the potential journals in your research subject area using journal ranking tools. The following are some tools for evaluating the importance of journals based on citation data.

Impact Factor

The journal's [Impact Factor \(IF\)](#), indexed in the [InCites Journal Citation Reports \(JCR\)](#), expresses an average number of times the articles from the journal published in the previous two years have been cited in a given year. The InCites Journal Citation Reports (JCR) Science Edition and Social Science Edition provide annual citation data for over 8,000 journals and over 3,000 journals respectively. To learn how to identify journals in your subject discipline in JCR, visit the Library Research Guide [Measuring Research Impact: InCites Journal Citation Reports](#).

SCImago Journal Rank (SJR) Indicator

[SCImago Journal & Country Rank](#) is a free online resource developed from data in Scopus which covers about 34,000 journals. **SJR** measures the impact and prestige of journals that accounts for both (1) the number of citations received by a journal and (2) the quality of the citing journals according to how highly cited the citing journal is. SJR expresses an average number of weighted citations received in the selected year by the articles published in the journal in the three previous years.

SCImago Journal Rank (SJR) allows you to **generate a ranking list of journals by SJR on your research subject**.

Scopus's Compare Sources Tool

Scopus's "[Compare Sources](#)" tool allows you to compare up to 10 sources on parameters

including **CiteScore**, **SJR** (SCImago Journal Rank indicator) and **SNIP** (Source Normalized Impact per Paper).

- **CiteScore** calculates the average number of citations received in a calendar year by all items published in that journal in the preceding three years.
- **SNIP** measures the contextual citation impact by weighting citations based on the total number of citations in a subject field. It is defined as the ratio of a journal's citation count per paper and the citation potential in its subject field.

You may view a list of journal titles carrying **CiteScore**, **SNIP** and **SJR** in a specific subject field using Scopus "Sources" feature.

Google Scholar Metrics

[Google Scholar Metrics](#) provide the [top 100 publications](#) according to their five-year h-index and h-median metrics, based on the citation information in Google Scholar. It also provides a ranking of [highly cited publications by subject area](#).

Anne-Wil Harzing's Publish or Perish

[Publish or Perish](#), a free software for analyzing citations in Google Scholar, provides cites per paper, cites per year, h-index, g-index, etc. It is particularly useful for evaluating journals not covered in the prevailing tools mentioned above.

To learn more on journal metrics, visit the Library Research Guide [Measuring Research Impact: Impact of Journals](#).

Journal Scope

Make ensure your paper falls within the **scope** of your target journals and is the right **type** of paper for the journals. Read the "**Aims and Scope**", "About the Journal", or similar section of the webpage of the target journals, and **review the recent issues** to ensure that the subject, content, type and style of your paper matching the goal, focus and characteristics of the journals.

The three main types of journal article include:

- **Empirical (Original Research) article** contains original research such as scientific experiments or surveys.
- **Review article** summarizes the current state or the progress of a particular subject, with critical evaluations of studies previously published.
- **Theoretical article** presents original theory, or evaluates existing theories to formulate a new theory or develop own stance.

Acceptance Rate

Despite the journals with lower acceptance rates being commonly considered to be more prestigious, **inexperienced authors are advised to target less selective journals**. Some journals include the acceptance rates on their websites, e.g. the acceptance rates of Elsevier journals are available for journals located by the [Elsevier Journal Finder](#) and the rejection rates of the American Psychological Association (APA) and its affiliated journals are listed on the [APA website](#). You may try to contact the editor for the general acceptance rate of a journal.

Open Access

Publishing in open access journals can reach out to a **wider readership** and **maximize the impact** of your research. To support the open access scholarly publishing model, many OA journals levy **article processing charges**. The [Directory of Open Access Journals](#) provides access to more than 16,000 OA peer-reviewed journals, of which over 11,000 do not charge article processing fees.

Some large publishers applying OA:

- [BMC](#) – some 300 journals on biology, biomedicine and medicine.
- [Hindawi](#) – over 260 journals, mainly on science, technology and medicine.
- [Public Library of Science \(PLOS\)](#) – on science and medicine.
- [SpringerOpen](#) – over 200 science journals

Citation Impact of OA Journals:

To evaluate OA journals using citation indicators such as Impact Factor, CiteScore, SJR and SNIP, you may search in InCites Journal Citation Reports, Scopus, and SCImago Journal & Country Rank which offer filter option for targeting OA journals only.

Avoid potential or possible [predatory scholarly OA publishers](#). To learn more on OA publishing, visit the Library Research Guide [Open Access Publishing](#).

Indexing Services

Publishing in a journal indexed in scholarly databases or major indexing services facilitates the dissemination of your paper.

Referred (Peer-reviewed) Journals

Having your paper accepted in a referred journal is **reputable** as the paper must have passed the peer review process, in which experts in the same field evaluate the submissions. However, it usually takes longer time to publish in these journals.

Editorial Board Members

The prestige of the editorial board members is one of the **quality indicators**, particularly important for journals lacking impact factor.

Time to Publication

Consider publishing in journals with a more rapid turnaround time. The time to journal publication include (1) the time **from submission to final acceptance** and (2) the time **from final acceptance to publication**. Online journals generally have a shorter processing time than print journals as online journals have little or no backlogs awaiting publication.

Some journals provide the time to publication on their websites and/or articles. The editorial and production times of Elsevier journals are available for journals located by the [Elsevier Journal Finder](#). [SciRev](#) and [JournalReviewer](#) websites contain information on author experience with journal's review processes (including the time to publication). You may try to contact the editor for the average time to publication before you submit.

Part 2

Submitting Your OAPS Paper to a Journal

2.1 Preparing the Manuscript

Refine your OAPS paper to meet the **writing objectives** suggested by Dr. Robert Pollard (2004) in his paper [From Dissertation to Journal Article: A Useful Method for Planning and Writing Any Manuscript](#):

What the journal reviewers want to see that one is **knowledgeable (but briefly so) about the existing literature** in the topic area, that the **methods are reasonable** (and replicable if someone desires to try) and that the **results support the conclusions**. They also want to see that a manuscript **offers a contribution to the field**, although this contribution can be (and typically is) very small.

The General Structure of a Journal Article

1. Title / Author
2. Abstract
3. Keywords
4. Introduction
5. Conceptual grounding / Literature review
6. Research Methodology
7. Results / Key findings
8. Discussion / Conclusion
9. Acknowledgements
10. References

Formatting and Editing the Paper

Adhere to the **submission guidelines** outlined on journal website (usually in the **Instructions for Authors**). Basic requirements include:

- Manuscript length / abstract length
- Citation style
- Line spacing / font size (use the specified document template if provided)
- Requirements for tables, figures, captions and other supporting information (SI)

For some **commonly used citation styles**, visit the Library Research Guide [Citing Sources of Information](#).

Consult a recent issue of the journal to get familiarized with the style, layout and conventions used.

Abstract

The abstract should adhere to the length limit specified by the journal and **contain the basic ingredients** for different disciplines. For example, a **social science abstract** usually include **background/objective, method, result** and **conclusion**. The abstract should not contain citations or references. Some journals require specific **structured abstracts**.

The [structured abstract for Emerald journals](#) includes four mandatory sections: (1) Purpose, (2) Design /methodology/approach, (3) Findings, and (4) Originality /value, and other three sections if applicable: (1) Research limitations/implications, (2) Practical implications, and (3) Social implications.

Keywords

Journals often ask for keywords for indexing and for database retrieval purposes. Choosing appropriate keywords can increase the likelihood of your paper being discovered by other researchers. Repeat the key phrases/terms in title, abstract and keyword fields to **optimize for search engines**.

[Wiley](#) and [Sage](#) gives examples of well-optimized title/abstract for search engines.

Literature Cited

Ensure that the literature cited is **up-to-date**. If necessary, add new works to the **Literature Review** section of your OAPS paper that has been written a considerable time ago.

Paper Length

Most OAPS papers are students' final year projects, which generally contain more information on the research process as to show the students' understanding of the course contents or their ability to explore research problem. Hence, reframe your paper for journal article, exclude heavy process-focused information and **condense the paper to meet the length limit**.

American Psychological Association provides approaches to **trim the length of dissertations for journal articles** in the [Supplemental Material of its Publication Manual – Converting the Thesis or Dissertation into a Journal Article](#).

Copyright Permission

Obtain copyright permission for published works (e.g. **figure, illustration, chart, table, image, etc.**) in your paper.

[Wiley's Author Guidelines for Copyrights and Permissions](#) list the materials that generally require permission, and provide information on how to clear copyright permissions for any work reproduced in your paper, and a [sample permissions request form](#).

2. 2 Submitting the Manuscript

Pre-submission Enquiry

Prior to full submission of your manuscript, you may try to make a pre-submission enquiry to the potential journal to **solicit rapid feedback on the suitability of your manuscript for the journal**. Include an abstract or a summary highlighting the originality and significance of your study in a pre-submission enquiry.

Some journals have specific requirements on presubmission enquiries, e.g. **PLOS Computational Biology**.

Cover Letter

Include a cover letter when submit your manuscript. A typical cover letter includes:

1. The article title / name of the journal / names of the authors and their affiliations
2. The **significance and novelty** of your work/findings, and how they **relate to the scope** of the journal and **the interests of the journal's readership**
3. Potential conflicts of interest / originality statement
4. Correspondence details
5. Suggested reviewers (if requested)



Information for Authors:
Writing a Cover Letter
(American Journal Experts, 2012)

Some journals or publishers have specific requirements for the cover letter, e.g. **Taylor & Francis**.

Peer Review Process

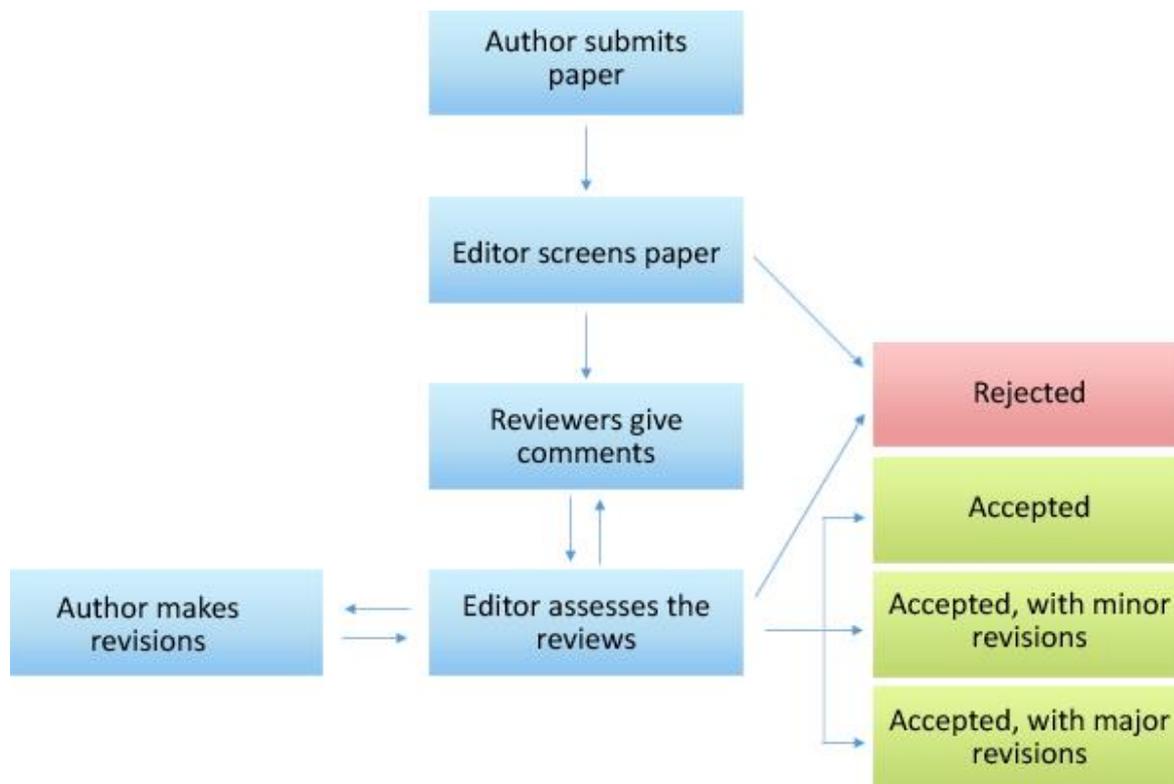
“**Peer review**, also known as refereeing, is a collaborative process that allows independent experts in the same field of research to evaluate and comment on manuscript submissions. The outcome of a peer review gives authors feedback to improve their work and, critically, allows the editor to assess the paper's suitability for publication.” (editorresources.taylorandfrancis.com)

Most common types of peer review:

- Single blinded: The reviewers know the identity of the author, but the reviewers remain anonymous.
- Double blinded: Both the author and reviewers remain anonymous.
- Open review: The identities of both the author and reviewers are known to each other.

Wiley lists pros and cons of each peer review model.

For double blinded review, ensure that your manuscript does not contain any clue to your identity.



Typical Peer Review Process (adapted from [Peer Review, The Nuts and Bolts](#), 2012)

Respond politely and promptly to any revision requests. List all the changes you have made and how you addressed the reviewers' comments in a cover letter. Provide solid reasoning for any reviewers' point that you have not followed.

Reasons for Journal Rejection

The main reasons for journal rejection (provided by undergraduate journal editors):

"... lack an **argumentative** thesis ...It is also very important for the author to back up their claims and to cite their sources."

"... lack of a **critical lens** or an insufficiently critical stance towards secondary sources."

"... not follow the **proper conventions of the discipline**; ... not utilize scholarly sources; not written in a way that is accessible to people outside of the field; Research is not original or does not advance the field forward"

"...lengthy research studies that lack an **authorial voice** from the student. These studies also lack any **connection to our readers**."

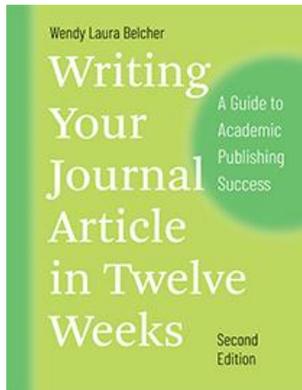
"Badly written, lack of **controls**, no **IRB*** **permission**, lack of **statistical confirmation** of observations, no **novelty** or **contribution** to the field."

***Institutional Review Board (IRB)** or appropriate committee approves, monitors and reviews biomedical and behavioral research involving human and animal subjects. For details of applying for **human or animal ethical review for research activities** conducted by CityU staff and students, click [here](#).

Appendix 1

Selected Resources on Publishing in Scholarly Journals

- **Writing your journal article in 12 weeks: a guide to academic publishing success** by Wendy Laura Belcher
(Circulation Collection [Z471 .B45 2019](#))



... a revolutionary approach to enabling academic authors to overcome their anxieties and produce the publications that are essential to succeeding in their fields. Each week, readers learn a particular feature of strong articles and work on revising theirs accordingly. At the end of twelve weeks, they send their article to a journal. This invaluable resource is the only guide that focuses specifically on publishing humanities and social science journal articles.

"A comprehensive, well-written and beautifully organized book on publishing articles in the humanities and social sciences that will help its readers write forward with a first-rate guide as good

company."

—Joan Bolker, author of *Writing Your Dissertation in Fifteen Minutes a Day*

(Excerpt from amazon.com)

- **Writing for peer reviewed journals: strategies for getting published** by Pat Thomson and Barbara Kamler.
(Circulation Collection [PN147 .T46 2013](#))
- **Write it up : practical strategies for writing and publishing journal articles** by Paul Silvia.
(Circulation Collection [PN146 .S553 2015](#))
- **Academic writing and publishing: a practical handbook** by James Hartley.
(online access from [ProQuest Ebook Central](#); Circulation Collection [PN146 .H373 2008](#))
- **A guide to publishing in scholarly communication journals** by Mark L. Knapp and John A. Daly.
(online access from [EBSCOhost](#); Shatin Storage [Z286.S37 K63 2004](#))
- **Publishing your psychology research: a guide to writing for journals in psychology and related fields** by Dennis M. McInerney.
(Circulation Collection [BF76.8 .M35 2001](#))
- **What editors want : an author's guide to scientific journal publishing** by Philippa J. Benson & Susan C. Silver.
(Circulation Collection [Z286.S37 B467 2013](#))
- **Writing for academic journals** (2nd Edition) by Rowena Murray.
(online access from [ProQuest Ebook Central](#); Circulation Collection [PN146 .M877 2009](#))
- **Publish, not perish** [online tutorial] by the University of Colorado Libraries. (2016).

Appendix 2

Links to Information and Services of Major Academic Publishers for Journal Authors

- [Cambridge University Press](#)
- [Elsevier](#)
[[Researcher Academy](#)]
- [Emerald](#)
- [Oxford University Press](#)
- [Sage](#)
- [Springer](#)
- [Taylor & Francis](#)
- [Wiley](#)

English Language Editing Services

- [Elsevier](#)
- [Emerald](#)
- [Sage](#)
- [Taylor & Francis](#)
- [Wiley](#)

This guide is produced by the Run Run Shaw Library of the City University of Hong Kong
OAPS website: www.cityu.edu.hk/lib/digital/oaps lboaps@cityu.edu.hk

May 2021