The Journal Article: Publishing during your PhD

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Publishing

• A career in science, academia or research requires publication
• Science is shared knowledge, it only exists when shared
• Publishing is a complicated business
  – Editors
  – Peer review
  – Impact factors
  – Citations
• The best way to start publishing is to write with your supervisor
• Learn how to write well
Publishing during your PhD

• A PhD is not all about the Title ‘Dr’, it’s about your research articles and paving your future in publishing (unless you don’t stay in science/research)

• Competition for space in journals is fierce, excellence is paramount

• Choices:
  – Specialised versus multidisciplinary
  – High IF or moderate IF (time to publish)

• Publish your results – craft the paper with your supervisor (be sure to choose a supervisor who will support you with learning this process)
Publishing during your PhD

• Don’t expect your first paper to be world-shattering – start small
• Consider publishing your proposal or literature review as a critical review work (I did, it is my most cited paper!)
• Some universities want a thesis written as a series of papers
• Aim for at least one or two papers published before you submit your PhD
• Start early, a paper can take years (ask me about one that was re-submitted after 10 years!)
Why publish during your PhD? or your Honours or Masters!

• Publishable research counts!
• Will help you secure funding, shows others your research will have impact
• Builds relationships with collaborators, your network
• Shows your PhD examiner that your work has been subjected to peer review
• Gets your feedback from reviewers beside your supervisors (sometimes a good thing)
• Teaches you many things about writing
Authorship

- Talk with your supervisor upfront about the author list
- Often the journal wants you to list what each author contributed to the paper
- Sometimes an author needs to be added for strategic reasons
Tips and hints

• Writing takes time and lots of re-writing
• There will be many versions (most I have had was v_12)
• Have your paper reviewed by someone (not your supervisor) before you submit it
• Unless the paper is rejected by the Editor, if it goes for review, there will be revisions
• Learn how to respond to reviewers
Tips and hints

- Model how you write and shape your paper after publications you read in your topic of study
  - Title, authors, affiliations, abstract etc
- Often you will get two rejections for every one acceptance (keep trying)
- Format your paper to meet (exactly) the journal’s requirements
- Write a good, strong cover letter
Tips and hints

• Learn how to manage comments from multiple authors/supervisors
• Get consensus from all authors before you submit (signature form)
• One excellent paper is usually better than 3 weaker papers – plan carefully

Just for fun!
The journey

Think and plan
Read
Draft an outline with your supervisor, think about the target journal
Start preparing figures/tables and writing
Re-write / review
All co-authors contribute until everyone agrees it is ready to submit

Format article, write cover letter

Published
Galley proof
Accept
Feedback, revise, response to reviewers
Wait
Submit

Accept
Feedback, revise, response to reviewers
Wait
Submit

CSIR
our future through science
How will I feel while writing a paper?

- Excited, mad
- Nervous, hurt
- Worried, offended
- Frustrated (will this ever end?)
- Ethics of data analysis

Stay:
- Open-minded
- Write as soon as possible
- Focussed, don’t waste time
Post-PhD Publishing Tips

• Forge relationships with the best researchers in your field for strong, collaborative papers
• Sometimes a joint paper can be leverage for collaboration (cost of skin cancer in South Africa)
• Excellence is key!

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