

IOP Publishing

RESEARCH PUBLISHING GUIDE

Making your publication a success

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YOUR GUIDE TO PUBLISHING WITH IOP PUBLISHING

This guide takes you through the research article publication process step-by-step, helping you to improve your chances of publishing your work with IOP Publishing, and making an impact in the global scientific community.

Did you know?

Last year articles published with **IOP Publishing** were downloaded over **78 million times**. And over **12 million of those downloads were of open access articles**.

Join our mission in advancing scientific knowledge across the globe, and publish your next article with us.

CONTENTS

Before you write your article	04
Know your audience	04
Factors to consider when choosing your journal	04
What else could affect your journal choice	04
Advice from established researchers	05
Writing your article	06
Your starting checklist	06
The structure of your manuscript	07
Available services to help you prepare	08
Read, review and edit	08
Accessibility	09
Figures	09
Figure captions	10
Article multimedia	10
Submitting your article	11
How to submit	11
Article tracker	11
Subscription, open access and funding	12
Journal Finder Tool	13
IOP Publishing's data availability policy	14
Peer review and reviewer reports	15
Types of peer review	15
Peer review at IOP Publishing	16
First decision and next steps	17
Ethics	18
Misconduct	18
Generative AI tools	19
Protecting your rights	20
Additional author support services	20
Maximize your article's impact	21
Top tips to promote your research	22

BEFORE YOU WRITE YOUR ARTICLE

Your research is complete, and you are on the first step to writing and publishing your paper. Consider which journal is right for you and who your target audience is. Getting these initial steps right is important because it can affect the reach and appeal of your published work.

Know your audience

Consider who your audience is and how they might understand your research. Is your audience policy makers, fellow researchers or a non-specialists? Understanding this will help you know how to write your article.

Factors to consider when choosing your journal

Consider where your audience is and which journals they are reading to help you decide on where to publish. Once you have identified this, you can then look at your chosen journal's specific guidelines and criteria to understand how to format your article.

What else could affect your journal choice



Peer review: considered a stamp of quality in the research community. Check whether a journal provides a rigorous peer review service.



Speed of publication: if fast publication is important to you, check the publication times for the journal.



Open access options: open access accelerates the discovery of your research, which makes it immediately and freely available online for anyone to read, download and share. Authors, research institutions or funding organizations may fund the costs of publishing. Check with your institution whether there is funding available.

Another thing to consider when deciding on which journal you should publish in, is if your institution has a transformative agreement with IOP Publishing, and which journals are included. These agreements cover the costs of open access publishing by funding the article publication charge (APC). Find out more about open access funding options on page 11.

TIP

Once you know which journal you want to publish with, check out the type of research and papers already published in it to get a feel for how you should present your work.

Advice from established researchers

Writing your paper and getting published can be daunting, but it is also very rewarding, and your published work can help develop scientific breakthroughs. Here are some top tips from peers in the scientific community:



Writing skills are your Swiss Army knife to succeed in the process to publish your paper. Editors and reviewers demand high quality papers, but they also enjoy manuscripts nicely and clearly written, the same as the readers.

In order to publish innovative literature, you have to be aware of the state-of-the art in your field. Read, read and read more, especially the journals you would like to publish in.

Dr Eden Morales Narvaez

Biophotonic Nanosensors Laboratory, Centro de Investigaciones en Óptica A. C, Mexico



Publishing is the essence of scientific work. Any piece of work that is not published or disseminated to the community simply does not exist. Hence, if you want to give visibility to your work, you have to publish it.

Professor Caterina Cocchi

University of Oldenburg, Germany

TIP

Investigate whether the journal has any article publication discounts which could help with funding, such as APC waivers.











More on our **website**

WRITING YOUR ARTICLE

You know your audience and what journal you want to publish in, and you should be aware of any journal-specific criteria. It's now time to start preparing your article.

Your starting checklist

-  Gather your results and important data beforehand (notes, references, figures) – this will help you to organize your thoughts and plan your article outline.
-  Identify the main point/research question of your paper and structure your writing around this. A good research paper addresses a specific research question.
-  Use evidence to back up your message and create a logical discussion with this in mind.
-  Remember your audience when you are thinking about your style of writing.
-  Make your title and abstract clear and relevant to make it easier to discover.
-  Include keywords and key search terms that reflect your content.
-  The abstract is the second advertisement for your research article. Make sure it captivates your target audience and includes key terms.
-  The secret of getting ahead is getting started. The secret of getting started is breaking your complex, overwhelming tasks into small manageable tasks, and then starting on the first one.

Mark Twain, American writer

The structure of your manuscript

Although not all article types are structured the same, here is a typical example you can follow:

• **TITLE**

- The article title is the most visible part of the article
- Concise yet informative, and draws attention
- Include keywords so your audience will understand what it is about
- Ensure your title translates well for an international audience. It's better to clearly say what the work does than add humour that might be misunderstood

• **ABSTRACT**

- Check journal length requirements for abstracts (~200 words)
- Summarize the key points of your research
- Mention the work and methods you undertook
- Claim your key findings

• **INTRODUCTION**

- State why the problem you address is important
- Reference relevant results of previous published work to contextualize your work within the academic field
- Discuss the goal of your work, its scope and the main advances you are reporting

• **METHODS**

- Specify the study design and data collection
- Outline the analysis methods
- Give sufficient information to allow other researchers to use your findings for future research

• **FIGURES**

- Figures should be representative, clear and well designed
- Figures should have a self-contained caption

• **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

- Explain the results and emphasize significant findings clearly
- Discuss the impact and importance of results compared with recent relevant research
- Make sure your graphs and tables are clear and organized

CONCLUSION

- Summarize the key points made in the other sections
- Conclude overall discussion of article
- Link this section to the introduction

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Recognize the contribution of funding bodies and anyone who has assisted in the work
- Acknowledge individuals who do not qualify for co-authorship but have contributed to your article intellectually, financially or in some other manner

REFERENCES

- List relevant papers referred to in the other sections, citing original works, both historical and recent

TIPS

- Focus on your title, intro and summary last.
- Use key terms in the title and abstract to enhance the discoverability of your research article.

Available services to help prepare

You can access a range of free services and tools from our [Publishing Support pages](#) to help increase the chances of your paper being accepted.

Visit our online publishing support author services. Here you will find:

- [Article templates](#) – we provide both article templates for ‘double anonymous’ and ‘single anonymous’ peer review models. More on those two models can be found on page 14.
- [Editage](#) – language and figure editing services to help you prepare your paper ready for submission.
- [Paperpal Preflight](#) – a free pre-submission feedback service that checks for and highlights issues before you submit your paper.
- [Submission checklist](#) – check you have covered everything before submitting your paper.

Read, review and edit

Once you have written your paper, ensure you and your co-authors read it thoroughly to identify any errors or mistakes. You could also ask colleagues for a second opinion.

ACCESSIBILITY

Accessibility in author guidelines is a crucial aspect of creating inclusive and user-friendly content.

By incorporating accessibility principles, authors ensure that their work is accessible to a diverse audience, including individuals with disabilities. This not only enhances the readability and usability of the content but also promotes equality and inclusivity.

TIP

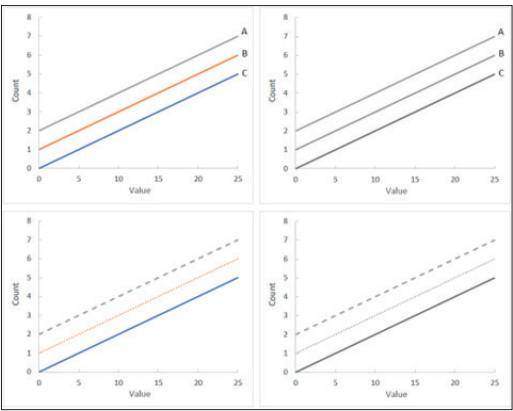
Accessible author guidelines help in breaking down barriers, allowing everyone to access, understand and engage with the content effectively.

We encourage you to adopt the following key accessibility points when writing your paper:

Figures

Carefully chosen and well-prepared figures, such as diagrams and photographs, can greatly enhance your article. You are encouraged to prepare figures that are clear, easy to read and of the best possible quality and resolution.

To make your figures accessible to as many readers as possible, try to avoid using colour as the only means of conveying information. For example, in charts and graphs use different line styles and symbols.



Where colours are used try to ensure that:

- There is good contrast between adjacent colours.
- Colours are distinguishable if the figure is converted to greyscale.
- Different line styles, fill styles, symbols or labels are used in addition to different colours.

It is not always possible to follow these guidelines, for example with figures that use colour gradient scales to convey information, or for photographic images.

Figure captions

As with all figures, it is important to use the figure caption to describe the information conveyed by the figure:

- Captions should be included in the text and not in the graphics files.
- Figure captions should contain relevant key terms and be self-contained (avoiding acronyms) so that a reader can understand the figure without having to refer to the text.
- To make your figures accessible to as many readers as possible, include the main points that the figure demonstrates in the caption.
- Figure captions should also reference the source of the figure if the figure has been reused from elsewhere, including any permission statement required.

[We provide further information and examples on this page.](#)

Article multimedia

To make multimedia files accessible to as many readers as possible, the caption accompanying the file must include a description of the key points demonstrated by the video/audio.

If the time duration of a video is long enough, we encourage authors to add a voiceover describing the key points illustrated.

If the video already has audio, try to record your description in spaces where the original audio is not crucial to the information in the file.

SUBMITTING YOUR ARTICLE

Ready to submit your article? Here are the next steps.

How to submit

You will find the 'Submit an article' link on every homepage of an IOP Publishing journal. You will need to make sure you have an account in our manuscript submissions system: ScholarOne.

You will first be asked to select an article type for your manuscript, to enter the title and abstract, and to select some keywords. Please note that, if your article is accepted for publication, these keywords will feature on the published article, and they will help with its discoverability.

Article tracker

By entering your manuscript ID you will be able to see the progress of your manuscript, how long it will typically take in each stage and what you need to do next.

[Find the tracker here](#)



Do you have WeChat?

Authors from China can submit the article ID in the official account, and immediately obtain the status information of the article. If you have a WeChat account, you can use this to check the status of your article during the publication process.

Scan the QR code to access our WeChat account.

Subscription, open access and funding

If you have submitted to a hybrid open access journal, you can choose between publishing under a gold open access licence or on a subscription basis.

If you have submitted to a fully open access journal, then you will publish under a gold open access licence.

Gold open access: authors can make their final published article immediately free to read and citable by others in all of IOP Publishing's primary research journals and many of the journals we publish on behalf of our society partners.

Funding for open access: the costs associated with high-quality open access publishing in IOP Publishing's journals are covered by APCs. These can be paid by organizations, funders or researchers. There are APC waivers and agreements for authors in certain countries and institutions. We advise authors to check institution and funder policies on open access before submitting an article. Applications for discretionary waivers for authors from other countries who are unable to pay an APC will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

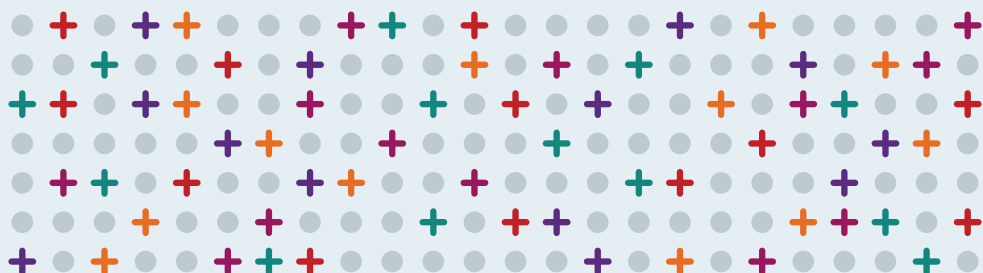
You can find all the countries listed for the discounts on our website [Publishing Support](#).

Subscription publication: if you publish under a subscription model, your article will be protected by copyright and will only be available to subscribers of the journal. There is usually no fee for publication on this basis, although a limited number of journals have page charges.

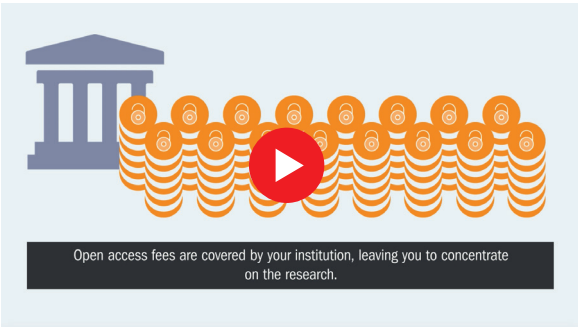
Green open access: authors publishing in one of IOP Publishing's subscription-based journals can archive the accepted version of their article on a personal website immediately or on an institutional or subject repository 12 months after publication. A preprint of the article can be posted at any time on non-commercial repositories or preprint servers such as arXiv.

Open access through transformative agreements

- Your institution may cover the cost of your APC if it has an agreement in place with us.
- You can find a list of all our agreements, including member institutions and eligible journals on our [website](#).
- You submit your work as normal and then if you are eligible, our publishing team will get in contact with you.
- We have a frequently asked questions section on our [website](#).
- We have agreements with more than 700 institutions across 28 countries worldwide.



Did you know in 2024, we published more than **6000 open access articles** through our transformative agreements.



Watch the video: Why publish under a transformative agreement?

Journal Finder Tool

Try our free tool to find journals that comply with your funder requirements, and see if you are covered by an institutional agreement.

IOP Publishing

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CLICK HERE

There are many benefits you will receive when you publish your paper as an open access article. Here are the top three:

- 1** Your work will be globally accessible, and therefore accelerate scientific discovery.
- 2** News, blogs and researchers on social media will be able to share your work.
- 3** Your article is likely to receive more downloads and citations than if you published non-open access.

Credits

There are additional opportunities for reduced APCs which include:

- A 10% credit that is available for reviewers who review articles for selected journals from our portfolio.
- Members of the Institute of Physics and certain affiliated societies are entitled to discounts for APCs. [More info here.](#)

IOP Publishing's data availability policy

Data availability statements provide information on where the data supporting the results reported in the article can be found including, where applicable, hyperlinks to publicly archived datasets analysed or generated during the study.

For any questions about an individual journal's policy you can contact the journal. For more information visit our [data availability policy](#).

Many research funders now require authors to make all data related to their research available in an online repository. Please refer to the policy for further information about research data, data repositories and data citation.

Did you know?

- Open access article downloads are on average **70%** higher than non-open access articles in the same journal.
- Open access article citations are on average **15%** higher than non-open access articles in the same journal.
- Open access article Altmetric scores are on average **19%** higher than non-open access articles in the same journal.

PEER REVIEW AND REVIEWER REPORTS

Once submitted, your article will be reviewed by expert peers in the field. They will conduct a quality assessment, then help the journal's editors make a decision on the publication of your article.

There are different types of peer review:

Single anonymous is where reviewers are anonymous to authors, but author identities are visible to reviewers.

Double anonymous is the default on all IOP Publishing journal titles. Reviewers do not know the identity of the authors, and authors do not know the identity of the reviewers. This has the potential to reduce bias with respect to gender, race and country of origin or affiliation, leading to a more equitable system.

Transparent peer review is when the reviewer's comments, author responses and editorial decision letters are published alongside the final published article, in citable form.

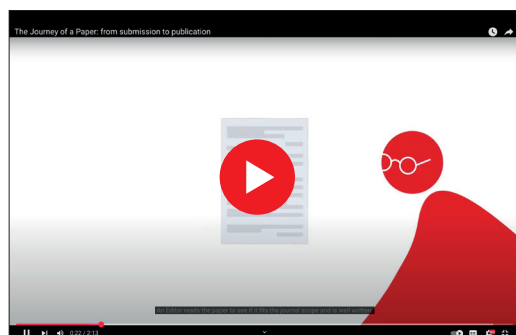
The article may have been single or double anonymously peer reviewed before publication. We hope that this greater transparency will improve the quality of the review process, give more recognition to the work of reviewers and help with the teaching of best practice in peer review.



You can see the peer review history on articles displaying a 'Web of Science Reviewer Recognition Service' badge.

You can find out more about the different peer review models on IOP Publishing journals on our [website](#).

The time of peer review varies from journal to journal. You can find this information on the journal homepages.



Watch the video:
The process of peer review

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Peer review and IOP Publishing **2025**

Click the boxes for more information



All statistics are for the full year of 2024 unless otherwise stated

First decision and your next steps

Rejected manuscripts

Don't worry if the first decision you receive is a rejection. It can happen to any researcher at some point in their career. It is important that you review the report carefully and understand why and how you can amend your paper to ensure it is suitable for re-submission.

Don't ignore any parts of the report – if you are not acting on any of the advice then give reasons why not.

Benefits of article transfer options

It may be suggested that your article is more suited for an alternative IOP Publishing journal, due to it being more in line with the scope and audience. The benefits of transfer options are:

- **Time saving:** you do not need to complete a new submission elsewhere.
- **You save effort:** your article, along with all relevant submission information and reviewer reports (if present), will be transferred to the new journal.
- **More likely to be accepted:** we only offer a transfer if we know the article has the potential to be published by another IOP Publishing journal.

It's important to note that a transfer is not a guarantee of acceptance. The editor on the new journal may decide that the article needs further rounds of review to ensure suitability for the journal.

Acceptance and publication

Once the paper is accepted, it can be available to readers online just 24 hours later.

Take some time to make sure that the final proof version you approve is exactly as you wish it to appear online, as it will be too late to make changes later. Any corrections after this must be done through a corrigendum or erratum, which is a separate publication.



ETHICS

Ethical and author misconduct can have huge implications for the research community, research participants and the general public.

Misconducts

Here is a list of examples of ethical misconduct in research:

- Text overlap.
- Falsification/fabrication of data.
- Image manipulation.
- Paper mill.
- Submitting the same paper to more than one journal at the same time.

Here is a list of examples of author misconduct in research:

Authors are sometimes listed as co-authors, even if they have not contributed to the research and/or seen the paper. Some possible reasons include:

- Trying to improve publication chances.
- Trying to honour a colleague.
- Being compelled by a senior member.
- Using data they do not have rights to.
- Trying to mask plagiarism.
- Honest misunderstanding.

Sometimes authors neglect to list someone as a co-author who did contribute to the paper in a significant way.

TIP

When looking for a journal and a publisher, it is worth checking their ethical standpoint.

[Read our ethical policy for authors here](#)

Most publishers are signed up to the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), an independent organization that is interested in upholding standards in publishing and providing support to all stakeholders in handling conduct.

Generative AI tools

There are many responsible and appropriate uses for generative AI within scholarly research.

Authors should be transparent about their use of any generative AI tools in either the research or the drafting of the manuscript.

Here are a few things to consider when using AI:

- All AI-generated content must be checked to ensure it is accurate and free from plagiarism.
- Generative AI tools cannot be used to create, alter or manipulate original research data and results such as plots or measurements.
- Any generative AI tools used to create figures from data, such as graphs or charts, should be listed in the figure caption.
- In cases where text in a manuscript has been generated, authors must ensure that they have critically revised this work for important intellectual content in order to [meet the authorship criteria](#) followed by IOP Publishing.

Protecting your rights

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All sources used in a paper should be clearly cited and permission must be sought for the reproduction of large amounts of previously published material.

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Additional support services



[Altmetric 'donut'](#) – Altmetrics displays an 'Altmetric Attention Score', which is their high-level measure of the quality and quantity of online attention that a paper has received, including mentions from social media sites, newspapers, policy documents, blogs, Wikipedia and many other sources.



[Dimensions badge](#) - the citations that have been identified for a publication. You can use the Dimensions details page to find out which works have cited this particular publication.



[Web of Science Reviewer Recognition Service](#) – a free service which enables you to track, verify and showcase your peer review contributions.



[ORCID](#) – this ID/profile will link all your research together and link all your research with you as you engage in research, scholarship and innovation activities.

MAXIMIZE YOUR ARTICLE'S IMPACT

It is now time to promote your paper to the research community, elevating its reach and impact and therefore increasing its value and your profile as an author.

The true value and impact of your paper can be greatly enhanced by sharing it with your peers. The more people who read, cite and benefit from your research, the more valuable your paper becomes and the greater your esteem as an author. This is more important than ever given that the impact of research papers is becoming increasingly valuable to funders and institutions.

As a learned-society publisher, we are committed to ensuring your article reaches as wide an audience as possible. To complement the visibility that we provide, we recommend that you, as the author, follow some of these tips to help share your research with the most relevant audience for your work.

Top tips to promote your research:

- 1** Email people you have referenced in your paper, and other key colleagues in your field, with a link to your paper.
- 2** Use social media to tell people about your work through blogging or through other outlets such as Bluesky, Facebook, LinkedIn, WeChat and Weibo (don't forget to tag us in your post and use relevant hashtags so that we can share your post across our social media accounts).
- 3** Update your profile on professional and academic networking sites (such as LinkedIn, ResearchGate and Mendeley) with a link to your article or abstract as per the content-sharing guidelines of the networking site.
- 4** Update your institutional/departmental homepage and research group website with a link to your paper.
- 5** Contact your institution's press office with a summary of your paper and ask for advice about promoting it to the media.
- 6** Write a lay summary of your paper (with a link to the full version) and send to blogs in your subject area.
- 7** Produce a video abstract giving an accessible introduction to your article—this can help to encourage people to read your paper.
- 8** Use a service like Kudos to help more people find and understand your work.
- 9** Mention your publication at conferences when giving presentations, and have copies to hand out to colleagues.
- 10** Check major abstracting and indexing services (e.g. Web of Science and Scopus) to make sure that your published paper is listed with correct details.
- 11** Update any citations to your article on pre-print servers or in documents/presentations where you have referred to this work. The IOP Publishing citation style is: [Author list] [Year] [Journal name] [Volume] [Article/Page number].

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