**Writing your article: guidance notes**



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Ensure your article title reflects what your paper is about. Try to avoid the "quirky" title. If you feel unable to do this, please add a sub-title, e.g. "Can't see the wood for the trees? An analysis of education policy initiatives, 1997-2005".

Ensure that your article is correctly formatted and referenced. Some of our journals provide Word or LaTeX templates to help you.

* Read our instructions on how a manuscript should be prepared for [**peer review**](http://journalauthors.tandf.co.uk/review/peerreview.asp)
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* Ask a colleague to read your paper prior to submission.
* Look at previous papers to get a feel for what is accepted by the journal.
* Check the aims and scope statement again.
* Take note of the maximum extent (word count) of the submission.
* Quote from previous papers (show awareness of the literature).

Our journals consider all manuscripts on the strict condition that they have been submitted only to that journal and that they have not been published already. They must not be under consideration for publication or in press elsewhere.

The impact of all scientific papers, and the effectiveness of the search-and-retrieval capabilities offered by their electronic publication, will depend upon the care used by authors in preparing their manuscripts. It is essential that authors prepare manuscripts according to each journal's established format and style specifications.

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**Why articles may be rejected**



**Professor David Phillips (University of Oxford), former Editor of the *Oxford Review of Education*, has offered the following explanations of why articles are rejected:**

* The article is not ready; it is only a draft.
* The article is too parochial (it will not appeal to a wider, international audience).
* The article is written in poor English (if English is not your first language, seek help).
* The manuscript is poorly prepared.
* The article is too short or too long (check the article length specified in author guidelines).
* The article has been submitted to the wrong journal (the material will not be relevant to the readers - check the aims and scope of a journal before submitting to it).
* Nothing new is stated or found.
* The article is under-theorized.
* The article is under-contextualized.
* It is not properly a journal article and would be better suited to another form of publication.

Our journal editors point out some common mistakes.

**Advice from Professor John Evans, Editor of *Sport, Education and Society*:**   
*"The most common mistake is not to have looked at the journal, not to have appreciated, I think, what it is about. Essentially, it is a journal which is informed by sociology and educational theory and therefore submitting your work if it's got none of those things, it might be very good, but it just doesn't fit the remit. I think that the journal is very encouraging of different styles of writing, different forms of presentation, but even when those occur they need to be still rigorous and scholarly ... It's encouraging of different ways of writing, different ways of thinking. But it's a social science-based journal and that's what I think I would emphasize in considering whether your paper is for this journal or another."*   
  
*"I guess the second thing is to persevere. I'm sure there are people much younger than I who look to the journal and see articles that certainly take my breath away, they're fantastic, there's some brilliant writing in the journal and they might think 'I can't do that' but I'd say you are looking at the finished article. It's gone through a process and it wasn't in that pristine condition to begin with. So, perseverance is actually a very important part of publication and it means taking some knock backs ... So it's perseverance and taking advice from those around you. Our editorial team are part of the process so they respond as productively as they can and, you know, we want to see things published rather than want to reject papers for the journal."*

**Advice from Professor David Gillborn, Editor of *Race Ethnicity and Education*:**  
*"We really need the author to know what their point is. In lots of papers it's like the author hasn't really made their mind up, they've got three, sometimes four ideas and they're not quite sure whether the paper's about all of them or none of them. I think the strongest papers usually have one point to make and they make that point powerfully, with evidence, and they locate it within the field. Very often I'll get really interesting papers but they're not quite sure what they're saying and often those things just need to be started again because they're so disorganised that it's difficult to give clear advice on how you can change that. You know, you really need to sit down and work out what it is you're trying to say."*

**Advice from Professor Michael Reiss, Editor of *Sex Education*:**   
*"There's no doubt that as an Editor, when you first get a submission, what you're doing is two things: at one level you're simply filtering so, a fairly small proportion, we're probably only talking about twenty, twenty-five percent, do not get sent out by me for review, that's because they fall into one of a number of categories. Sometimes they simply fall outside the scope of the journal."*

**Advice from Professor Len Barton, Editor of *Disability and Society*:**   
*"Too often authors try to cover too many questions and issues in a single paper and they sacrifice depth of analysis for a more generalised, often unsupported set of statements, propositions or arguments. And it is important, people do need to give time and thought to careful consideration of the coherence and the integration of their arguments and particularly, I would also say, in thinking about a careful conclusion to a paper. We've had a number of papers recently where the conclusions have been, to say the least, brief and abrupt, and again, people need to think about that in terms of production of an acceptable paper."*

**Advice from Professor Stephen Ball, Editor of *Journal of Education Policy*:**   
*"I feel I'm having my time wasted when people send papers to the journal which patently don't fit in the journal at all. And they're wasting their own time because then they have to wait for us to read the paper and look at it and send it back to them and then they have to go through it again. I imagine there are some people who spend their life sending their papers to journals that don't want to publish them, not because they're not good papers but because they're just in the wrong place."*

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**Publishing your Ph.D.**



**We get many questions from authors about publishing a Ph.D. There are several ways you can publish the findings of your Ph.D:**

* as a book,
* as a journal article,
* as a series of journal articles,
* as a conference paper,
* as an internal university document, or
* as a specialist society publication.

**Publishing your Ph.D. as a book**

If you are thinking of publishing your Ph.D. as a book, there are several aspects to consider. You will need to tailor the research so that the story you are telling is in the foreground, with the research in the background. Readers will just want to see the key findings, not all the details that your supervisor needed. What was the real outcome of your research? Think about how time-sensitive your research is, and whether it is of specialist interest only. How international is the work and its audience?

When you are ready to choose a publisher, talk to colleagues and your supervisor, and also to others who have published in your field. What experience have they had with publishers? Which ones would they recommend? Can they give you contact names? Look at a publishing company's website to see what they publish. Does it look as though your book would fit within their portfolio? Do they have an appropriate book series that your book could be part of? Do you want your book to be marketed internationally? Consider the publisher's international sales network. Consult a guide in your library such as the *Directory of Publishing* (published annually by Continuum and the Publishers Association) or *The Writers' and Artists' Yearbook* (A & C Black).

Then, draw up a shortlist and prioritize. if you are going to send multiple copies out, tell the publisher (and please note that you are not allowed to do this with a journal article!). Send your proposal to a named individual – it may get lost otherwise. Please use email! Make it easy for the commissioning editor to contact you. A good proposal should be concise, to the point and consider who it's for as well as what it is. Remember that an editor will have other people within the business to persuade. Make it easy for them by being realistic and market-focused.

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Here are our top tips:

* Be flexible;
* Take external reviewers' comments on board … if appropriate;
* Don't send a full manuscript or thesis asking for "any ideas or advice";
* Don't suggest the book "will appeal to everyone";
* Don't be afraid of being critical of other books on the topic;
* Be realistic.

And remember, if your book proposal is rejected, it doesn’t mean that the publisher will never consider another one from you.

**Publishing your Ph.D. as a journal article**

If you decide that your Ph.D will make a good journal article or series of articles, please start with the advice for journal authors here:   
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