Wolfson Academic Skills
Publishing your Research

Researchers publish their work for many reasons including making a claim to an original contribution to knowledge, to create a record of research by making it visible, and for career progression. Making the decision about where and how to share research findings can be an overwhelming process; this guide highlights some key issues to consider.

Where to publish your research
You may be publishing initial findings part-way through a project or the summary of a long-term venture. Alternatively, you may wish to rework your thesis for new audiences to produce a monograph or divide it up and publish it as a series of journal articles.

Before starting you should consider:
- What are you trying to achieve?
- Who is the audience?
- What do your peers and supervisors consider to be important?
- How long is the publication?
- How much time do you have to produce it?
- How soon do you want to be published?
- Do you want an e- or hard-copy publication?
- Is there a cost involved?
- Are you ready for rejection?
- Is it important to you that the material is Open Access?

Open Access (OA) Research
These are freely outputs, equally accessible to all, irrespective of an institution's ability to pay or whether an individual is a member of an institution. It can be made available before coming out in a traditional journal format, thus sharing ideas more quickly and speeding up the creation of new knowledge.

As an author it increases exposure to your work on a global scale and across society. This enables practitioners to access apply your findings, potentially leading to policy implications. Within the academy you may find that increased availability leads to more citations.

Significantly, many funders now require that your outputs are OA, so it’s worth knowing how you can comply with this while also reaping the benefits.

You have the option of publishing in an OA journal and/or uploading an appropriate version of your research to Apollo, the University's institutional repository: www.repository.cam.ac.uk

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Turn over for more tips
**Publishing strategy**

Develop this in conjunction with peers and your supervisor and discuss potential targets for your publications. The university won’t advise you about where to publish. However, they do recommend that you carefully check the credentials of journals or publishers you are unfamiliar with to guard against predatory publisher.

They often prey on early-career researchers, promising an Open Access publication in return for a fee. They often solicit content for their journals by email, rather than you submitting an article. This might seem flattering but there are many negative impacts to your and research in general.

They claim services such as peer review, but don’t deliver, leading to poor quality publications with substandard writing and research. They will ask you to sign away your copyright so that cannot then publish that article elsewhere, with a more reputable publisher.

Here a useful checklist to help you make a judgement about publishers:

- Transparency - what are they telling you?
- Fees - what are they for? are they justified?
- Copyright - what can you do after publication?
- Peer review - is it? if so, by whom?
- Editorial Board - who is on the board? do they list this on their web profile?
- Association membership - do they have any?
- Website quality and information - do they compare with reputable publishers?
- Indexing - which databases do they appear in?
- Quality of previous publications - does it seem like rigorous research? Are there any metrics for the journal?

**Peer review**

This is a quality-control measure put in place by publishers to ensure that research is relevant, sound, original and clearly communicated.

Reviewers will assess your work and either accept it, ask you to revise and resubmit, or reject it. Most reviewers will always make suggestions for improvements to style or to incorporate wider literature.

To avoid immediate rejection:

- Check author guidelines supplied by the publisher. This includes styles of referencing and standardised spellings.
- Re-read for general spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Look at the structure and flow of argument.

**Claiming your work**

You may have noticed entries in your bibliography relating to the same person, but where their name appears differently. Equally you may see references by multiple authors who have the same name. This can make it difficult for you to track their publications and for the author to track their citations.

An ORCiD gets around this problem. This is a unique number that belongs to you throughout your career, regardless of whether you change your name or it is printed differently by a publisher.

Register for yours: [https://orcid.org/](https://orcid.org/)

**Promoting your research**

It is important not just to communicate your research through traditional routes, but also to promote it in alternative publications as more exposure may lead to higher citation rates or help find collaborators for future work. In addition, it lets people know about the research beyond academia, increasing the impact of your work. This is taken very seriously by universities as it is a significant element of the Research Excellence Framework.

To promote your work you could: use in-house publications such as Research Horizons or Spotlight and news pages on the University website or your departmental pages; talks at conferences and networking with delegates; blog posts or tweets (consider whether this will impact on the credibility of your research or if it will infringe copyright to reveal the findings in this way); use non-academic platforms such The Conversation; hold workshops with stakeholders; share photographs or produce an infographic from the research. Make links to any of these in your email signature.

If you are thinking of involving the media, contact the University’s Communications Team.