



Publishing in Academia (PhDs and ECRs)

Professor Sheena Asthana

Outline

- Getting started
- Writing academic publications
- Submitting and publishing

Getting started

- What do you want to write about?
 - Break your PhD down into manageable bits – think about getting at least 3 publications out of your thesis
 - Think about your *story* – can you summarise this simply for a listening audience? If you can't, you are probably not sufficiently focused
 - Learn how to kill two birds with one stone (your publication plans should not detract from your PhD and vice versa)
 - If you have an idea, write it down and revisit it. Have trust in yourself.

Getting started

- Beware the writer's block!
 - What's going on? Procrastination? Fear? Isolation?
 - Identify your displacement activities
 - Get yourself ready emotionally
 - Ditch perfectionism
 - Develop space to focus – working parents need to learn how to do this in short, available bursts!
 - Don't try to do it alone (maintain contact with your supervisor, other PhD students, related researchers, mentors etc). Be willing to write with others. This is REALLY IMPORTANT

Writing academic publications

- Identify the paper's focus
 - Without abandoning standards, make sure your expectations are realistic
 - E.g. theoretical vs empirical papers
 - Learn how to *formally* review literature (see Cochrane/Joanna Briggs Institute criteria and less onerous scoping review guidelines) – done properly, you can convert this into a publishable output (see advice on doing systematic reviews on PIHR website)
 - How about doing a book review?

Writing academic publications

- Identify your outlet
 - Is there a case for publishing in a professional vs academic journal to get yourself going?
 - Identify your journal – does the library have an agreement that covers open access costs? If not, can you access funding to publish if these costs are required?
 - Identify your journal – look at previous articles. Does your material fit with the journal's focus?
 - Don't worry about impact scores at this stage. Getting started is more important
 - Be savvy. If your subject suddenly becomes topical, think about submitting a piece to a professional journal or newspaper

Writing academic publications

- Practical considerations
 - Don't try to cram your whole PhD into one paper!
 - Plan the broad outline and stick to it
 - Write – and avoid editing until later. You'll lose your flow!
 - Constantly ask yourself whether what you are writing reflects your aims (your abstract, and how you would describe your work in simple language)
 - Constantly reference articles in the same journal. Are you writing to the right style, level, topic etc?
 - Don't overstate what you have achieved
 - Be willing to edit your material – objectively and aggressively!

Submitting and publishing

- Follow the correct submission procedures
- Use your covering letter to maximise your opportunity (don't just repeat the abstract)
- Prepare yourself for rejection – it happens to all of us.
- Sometimes, it just means that you need to amend your article – if so, persevere, revise and resubmit (detailing how you have responded to reviewers' comments)
- Sometimes, you just need to start again. Use the reviewers' comments to reshape your paper.
- Be ready to pick yourself up and keep going!

Submitting and publishing

- Trial your paper at conferences (particularly those that may be attended by potential co-authors or editors)
- Blog about your paper. Try to get an audience outside traditional academic outlets
- Remember – all established authors have gone through numerous cycles of submission, rejection, resubmission and publication. Just keep on going!
- GOOD LUCK!