Getting Published in Academic Journals

How to choose the right one

1. **Start by mining your bibliography.** Which are the journals you cite most frequently? These are good places to start when thinking about where to submit.
2. **Survey your field to get a sense of the publishing landscape.** How many journals cover your general subject area? Where do your closest friends and colleagues publish? Where did your advisors place their first publications? Which journals published your favorite articles?
3. **Get a sense of how different journals are regarded.** Some journals in your field may be very highly regarded, while others are much less so. One way to get a sense of this is to use the ISI Journal Citation Report database to access journal “impact factors.” Impact factors, which we discussed in this workshop a couple years ago, are highly problematic, but they can at least give you a sense of what’s out there.
4. **Think about your audience and professional identity.** To whom do you want to speak, and for what do you wish to be known? Where you publish now can shape how the world sees your work in the future.
5. **Talk to colleagues about their experiences with particular journals**. Some journals are responsive and well run, whereas others are not. The last thing you want is to submit a paper that lingers in editorial limbo for a year. In an era of widespread digital access, it’s often just as important to get your work out there as it is to place it in a particular journal.
6. **When making your submission decision, consider not only the particular piece but also where it fits in the broader scope of your work**. In which journals do you ultimately want to publish? And at which point in your career does it make sense to submit to each?
7. **Get feedback on your work before you submit it.** Any paper that goes in for review should have been workshopped one or more times beforehand.
8. **Read the journal before you submit.** The research and reading you do on and in the journal is just as important as the reading and research you do for your paper. Take heed. Also, be sure to follow the author guidelines as described on the journal’s webpage. It will be obvious if you come off as not understanding what the journal does.
9. **Include a letter to the editor with your submission.** This should describe the context for your work, and thank the editor for his/her consideration. (Some journals allow for queries prior to submissions; if so, it is wise to use this process.)
10. **Expect rejection**. Rejection is an inevitable part of the process. That doesn’t mean it doesn’t hurt. What it does mean is that you should be ready to adjust to events as they occur. If you don’t succeed with your first submission, take a short break from the work, take the comments seriously, and then figure out a plan B. Don’t let it languish.
11. **Add it to your CV.** You should generally not include works-in-progress on your CV—it looks like padding—unless their publication has some provisional guarantee, such as a book contract or a slot in an edited volume or special issue. Once you submit a work, however, you can include it in a section entitled “submitted” or “in review.” When the penultimate or final draft has been accepted for publication, you can move it to the “publications” section with the date listed as “forthcoming.”