

UC Santa Cruz

Publishing Tips Series Season 1

Title

Season 1, Week 1 - How long does it take to get an article published?

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Publishing Tips Series – Season 1, Week 1

October 24, 2024

This is the first week of the Publishing Tips Series, Season 1, running from October 24 to December 5, 2024. This series addresses frequently asked questions on publishing from graduate students. This week's installment covers **"How long does it take to get an article published?"** Here are this week's takeaways:

- Publishing an article takes a long time,
- Budget this lengthy publishing timeline into your publishing goals, and
- Use these following tips to estimate how long it will take to have your article published.

Spotify link to listen

[Season 1, Week 1 podcast episode](#) (same content as the following text-based version, only in audio format)

How long does it take to get an article published?

In most cases, authors need to publish their article by a certain time, such as deadlines for inclusion within a dissertation, on CV, or in a tenure & promotion portfolio. Consider yourself lucky if publishing your article does not come with any deadline attached!

In either situation, it is helpful to know when to expect your article to be published, but it is not always easy to tell when that will be. On the flip side, it is common to see papers marked as "in submission" or "under review," on CVs, so all is not lost if your article is not yet published.

Here are some considerations for how long it takes to get an article published:

Consider all the steps that an article goes through to get published:

Time to publication varies widely. The reason for this variation is all the steps that an article goes through after writing and submitting it. Once you submit an article to a journal, the subsequent steps include: a desk review, peer review, possible revisions, possible additional rounds of peer review and revision, signing a publication agreement, copyediting, typesetting, and finally publication. Knowing where you are in the process can help you estimate how much longer it will take.

What is a good estimate for the length of time it takes to publish an article, from submission to publication?

Budgeting around a year to get an article published is the common best case scenario. A year assumes that the journal accepts your manuscript at the desk level, that your peer reviewers provide feedback in a timely manner rather than missing their deadlines, that you do not have to go through multiple rounds of peer review and/or revisions, and that there are minimal to no production hiccups. If your article is published in less than a year, you may consider that a bonus, or you may also be in a field or publishing with a journal that just moves faster.

What causes it to take longer to publish an article?

Ways that this process takes longer than a year include when your manuscript is desk rejected or rejected after peer review, meaning that you need to submit your article to another journal if you still want to publish it, which can add a significant amount of time. Another way that it takes longer is when you have to do revisions after peer review and resubmit, which is really common, and then sometimes going through an additional round of peer review and possibly an additional round of revisions, repeating until the peer reviewers and editor deem your manuscript ready. Yet one more way that publishing takes longer is if the journal has delays, which can be caused by circumstances like difficulty finding peer reviewers, editorial team turnover, production issues, such as formatting tables correctly, etc. Additionally, the publication frequency of a journal can affect when your article is available because journals may publish a limited number of issues a year (for example, only one or two) or they may publish on a rolling basis, which means your article would not have to wait for the next issue to be published. Lastly, many journal editors and reviewers are volunteers providing this service alongside their other jobs so moving manuscripts through the publication process relies heavily on their availability, and it is worth bearing this in mind when communicating with a journal.

Tips to optimize your publication timeline

- Ask your colleagues to read your draft and give feedback so that you are putting your best draft forward for peer review. Or turn in a rougher draft and anticipate more time spent on revisions.

- Be responsive and courteous to the editor(s). Sometimes journals let authors suggest reviewers, and it might help expedite the peer review stage if you do not leave this blank.
- Calendar reminders to yourself to check the status of your article in the author portal of the journal. Be aware of all submission-related deadlines, and be timely with responding to any requests from the journal.
- Do not submit to more than one journal at the same time. This may seem efficient, but it is considered unethical. If you do withdraw and resubmit your manuscript elsewhere, make sure that the journal at which you originally submitted your article knows that you are removing it from their consideration.

Putting it into practice

1. First, go to the journal where you may want to send your article, and find the “aims & scope” page, which you may read to make sure that your topic aligns with the journal’s coverage. Making sure that your topic matches the journal will save you the time of receiving a desk rejection (*more on this in a future week*) and then having to search for another journal to submit to.
2. Second, find the “about” page to see if the journal gives an estimate for the length of time for publishing or even just an estimate for the length of peer review. Check the journal’s publication frequency, too. Factor these estimates into your calculation for how long publication will take.
3. Third, find the submission guidelines for the journal and make sure that your article is formatted in the journal’s requested style (*more on this in a future episode, too*). This step will save you formatting revisions and also save the journal staff time.
4. Next, develop an estimate for how long you think it may take to publish your article with this journal. Ask yourself some questions to help with your calculation: *Have you incorporated feedback from colleagues into your manuscript, or are you submitting a rougher draft of your article, which may precipitate more revisions? Are there any external factors that may affect the publishing timeline for you or the journal (such as holidays, summer breaks, internships, etc.)? Does the journal offer any projected timelines, or did they provide an estimate when you submitted your article? Have any of your colleagues published with the journal, and if so, what was their experience?*
5. Fifth and finally, if it is the norm in your discipline or a practice in your lab (ask your advisor if you’re not sure!), consider making an early version of your article open access on a preprint server so that you can share your research sooner while the paper is still under review – this practice is more common in the sciences. Be sure to confirm whether the journal guidelines allow you to make an early version available before publication. (*In the fifth episode of Season 1, we will talk about support for open access at UCSC.*)

More questions? Contact the Library at research@library.ucsc.edu or [sign up](#) for a one-on-one Zoom meeting about publishing.

Talk with you next week about choosing a journal!

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