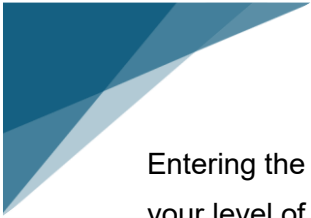





# A Note on Publication





Entering the professional academic world can feel daunting as a graduate student. No matter your level of practical experience or the number of degrees you have completed, academia is a different type of experience with its own set of expectations and social and professional norms. While there are distinctions between disciplines, there are some common themes throughout academia. This essay provides information, guidance, and advice on the general path to publication, the primary entry to academia and the output which you, as an academic, tend to be measured by.

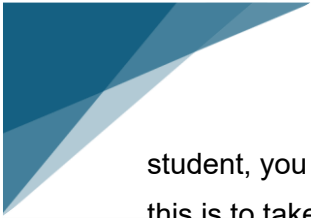
An important consideration as you begin your academic career is to find an academic/research mentor. Mentors can help you better understand the social and professional norms of your discipline as well as which skills are most important for academics in your field including collaborative scholarship and networking. They can also help you better understand that rejection is common in the publication process which can help you, as a new scholar, avoid feelings such as imposter syndrome.



**REJECTION IS COMMON AND  
NORMAL. ACADEMICS MUST  
DEVELOP A THICK SKIN.**

In academia, you will find that scholars tend to have a research agenda/path/program where they focus on an area of interest in their field. Developing a research agenda early on helps to direct your future research and aids in the process of becoming an expert in an area of your field. Some of you may begin by following the research of your primary mentor/professor. This can serve as a good entry to research and publication, allowing for socialization into the world of academia and research, but it will be important to develop your own research agenda as well. Something to remember is that the research agenda you begin at the start of your academic career is likely to change, whether it's the specific focus area or your overall agenda. This is not uncommon; your first research agenda does not have to be your last or only research agenda.

If you aren't sure where to start in building your research agenda, don't worry. As a student you may not be entrenched in your field enough to know what exactly you want to focus on for the start of your academic career. That's okay. There are a few things you can do to commence in the development of your research agenda. The first is to become an avid consumer of research articles. You're probably required to read some of these for your classes, but as a graduate



student, you are expected to work on being a master of your discipline and a good way to do this is to take time to read and understand research articles beyond those you are required to for class. In addition, attending seminars and conferences related to your field can show you contemporary topics that are being researched. These also provide opportunities to network with other scholars and academics. You may also want to consider looking into articles about different methodologies and research strategies to give yourself a solid background on different ways to engage in research.

Finding a mentor and understanding the direction you want to take with your research agenda are two general first steps. After this, much of what you do will be discipline specific. The subject matter, hypothesis building, data collection and the like will be centered on your field and so is something a general essay such as this cannot address. However, there are some other points that can be shared.

When choosing a research topic, consider the following.

- Is the size of your topic manageable?
- What is the timeframe of your research (at each step and overall)?
- What resources/budget will you need, and will you be able to get those resources?
- Can you collect the data within your timeframe and resource restrictions?

When choosing a publication to submit your work to, consider the following.

- Is the journal a good fit for your topic? Look over current and past issues of the journal.
- What is the journal's acceptance rate?
- Do they allow a cover letter? If so, don't overlook it.
- Follow author guidelines for format and submission closely.
- Not all journals take random submissions and will instead request a letter summarizing your qualifications and that provides an overview of what the research will be about. Then they will decide whether to accept your submission to begin the review process.
- Peer review is considered an essential part of publication, so it is best to avoid submitting to journals that do not have a review system in place.
- Some journals avoid publishing student work so you might want to avoid including your title on your submission.



## Additional considerations:

- Do you want to co-author? If so, try to be the first author when possible.
- Develop your writing voice by writing and rewriting often.
- Practice on communicating to a broad audience especially when scientifically focused. You're not always sharing your results with other scientists when publishing, so learn to share information with the public through your writing.
- You may want to limit the number of articles you publish before entering an academic job. Most jobs will only allow you to count publications completed during your employment toward your tenure and promotion requirements. Hold a few back so that you have publications to work on early in your career.

## Bibliography

Alvarez, B., Bonnet, J.L., Kahn, M. (2014). Publish, not perish: Supporting graduate students as aspiring authors. *Journal of Librarianship and Scholarly Communication*, 2(3), eP1141. <http://dx.doi.org/10.7710/2162-3309.1141>

DeVaney, S.A., Wilmarth, M.J., Lee, Y., Delgadillo, L.M., and Spangler, A. (2019). Helping graduate students develop a research path. *Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal*, 47(4), 384-394. DOI: 10.1111/fcsr.12308

Hoover, K.B., and Lucas, K.T. (2024). Mentoring graduate students: A study on academic rejection, the pressure to publish, and carer paths. *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, 35(1), 195-217. DOI: 10.1080/10511253.2023.217792

Johnson, E.A., and Fankhauser, S.C. (2018). Engaging in the publication process improves perceptions of scientific communication, critique, and career skills among graduate students. *Journal of Microbiology & Biology Education*, 19(1), 1-8. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1128/jmbe.v19i1.1429>

Maitland, B.M, Cooke, S.J., and Poesch, M. (2015). Finding the path to a successful graduate and research career: Advice for early career researchers. *Fisheries*, 40(8), 399-403.

Morris, M. (1998). Publishing perils, and how to survive them: A guide for graduate students. *Cultural Studies*, 12(4), 498-512. DOI: 10.1080/09502386.1998.10383117

Pasco, A.H. (209). Should graduate students publish? *Journal of Scholarly Publishing*, 231-240. doi: 10.3138/jsp.40.3.231

Rich, T.S. (2013). Publishing as a graduate student: A quick and (hopefully) painless guide to establishing yourself as a scholar. *PS: The Profession*, 376-379. Doi:10.1017/S104909651300005X

Zou, C., Tsui, J., and Peterson, J.B. (2017). The publication trajectory of graduate students, post-doctoral fellows, and new professors in psychology. *Scientometrics*, 117, 1289-1310.