



the

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To Publish Is to Prosper

Getting an edge on the hiring, promotion, and tenure process

Anyone who has spent time in the university setting has heard the adage "Publish or perish." Despite the familiarity of the idea, a surprising number of graduate students remain unaware that their long-term success at a major research institution depends as much upon their publishing record as upon their teaching. Graduate students—the future faculty—who understand the process can get a headstart on both while still in graduate school.

The long-term career goal of many doctoral students is to become tenured professors. During the Ph.D. process, candidates focus on completing their research. They may think that preparing paper other than their dissertation for publication is more than they can manage. They may believe that with their lambskin in hand and excellent teaching evaluations from their department, they will be successful in their job search. They are probably right. However, articles published during their graduate studies give them a greater edge in the hiring, promotion, and tenure processes.

How do postsecondary institutions hire, promote and tenure professors on their campuses? Records of teaching, research, publishing and service to the campus community are vital components in the decision-making process. Each institution ranks these components in their preferred order of importance and uses these rankings to judge candidates. At the typical four-year undergraduate college, good teaching is very important and service activities are essential, whereas research and publishing may play a lesser role. On the

other hand, in a major research university—a doctoral degree granting institution—teaching graduate students as well as undergraduates is requisite and success in research and publishing is imperative.

Graduate students seeking careers in major research institutions improve their chances by publishing while in graduate school. To remain competitive in academe, faculty members must continually prove that they are good teachers and constantly work to gain local, national, and even international recognition by publishing.

What You Always Wanted to Know About Publishing and Were Afraid to Ask

Professor Susan Clarke, Political Science, and David Davis, a recent Ph.D. graduate in Political Science, conducted a workshop for the Graduate Teacher Program on how to publish as a graduate student. In their presentation, they discussed the importance of publishing, the need to know how journals are ranked, and the usual process for corresponding with an editor.

Clarke reminds graduate students that having good ideas is not enough: "You need to be able to communicate your idea, to disseminate the idea—to publish." She urges graduate students to see themselves as members of a local, national, and even international community in their field. Clarke believes that given the competition in the job market, graduate students who want to make their curriculum vitae stand out in the selection process need to publish.

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Tooter's Publishing Tips



1. Know the journals in your discipline.
2. Look for publishing opportunities in papers written for classes, presentations, conferences, and your dissertation.
3. Ask colleagues to read the paper and to offer their suggestions.
4. Conform to all guidelines, formats and style sheets, and meet all deadlines.
5. Be patient and keep trying.

Graduate students must excel in their studies, teach effectively, and take time to publish. The situation may seem to be a classic Catch-22. To get around this difficulty, Clarke suggests that students turn a dissertation chapter into an article. This effort not only increases a student's output but also elicits valuable feedback for the dissertation.

Davis used this approach during his graduate studies on the Boulder campus. His articles began as seminar conference papers, or as sections of his thesis. He also asked professors and friends to critique his work and to help him decide where to submit various articles.

Choosing a Journal and Submitting an Article

Knowing where to submit articles is the first step in the process. Academics are known by the articles they write. The type of journal in which their article is published plays an important role in this recognition. To judge the importance of a particular journal within its discipline, a graduate student needs to be familiar with all the journals in the field.

A faculty member can help the student determine how various journals are ranked. One article in a major journal may be worth two or more articles in a minor journal. However, it is still better to publish in a minor journal than not to publish at all.

Determining journals' procedures for reviewing articles may help narrow the field. Both the ranking of the journal in the discipline and its review process reflect the difficulty a prospective author is likely to encounter.

Journals are often referred to as *refereed*, *major*, or *minor*. The selection process of a refereed journal tends to be more rigorous, although a second-tier journal may

be as picky about the material it accepts as first-rate journals are.

Submissions to refereed journals are reviewed by a panel of experts in the field. Sometimes one or more editors make editorial decisions. In a blind-review process, submissions are read by a panel of reviewers who do not know the identity of the author.

The number of reviewers influences the time required for a response and the difficulty of getting an article accepted. The more reviewers on the panel, the more readers who must agree on the article's quality. Most reviewers write critiques and return these recommendations to the author. If the author revises according to the suggestions, the article will be stronger and more likely to be accepted for publication.

All journals issue guidelines, preferred formats, and style sheets. For example, the *Publication of the Modern Language Association of America* (PMLA) is a prestigious journal in the field of literature and foreign languages. PMLA's editorial policy is stated clearly in the journal along with the guidelines for interested contributors. PMLA policy states that each article is sent to at least one consultant reader and one member of the Advisory Committee. At the initial reader's request, the article may be sent to the members of the Editorial Board. The author's name is withheld from the reviewers until the Editorial Board and the editor make the final decision. Needless to say, authors whose articles are published in *PMLA* experience a sense of achievement.

To prepare an article, a graduate student needs to become familiar with all the journals in the discipline, the work currently produced in them, and the current articles on their subject by reading extensively. Without this knowledge, the student may waste time attempting to publish ideas that are already in print or submitting an article to an inappropriate journal. Further, a student needs to learn the style and stance of the journal since the views expressed in an article may not coincide with the views of the journal. In that case, even an excellent paper may be rejected.

Authoring Versus Co-Authoring

When preparing articles for publication, a graduate student may work as a single author, co-author with a peer, or co-author with a faculty member or research team. Although being published as a single author is prestigious, being listed as a co-author with a well-known faculty member provides invaluable recognition.

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Assistant Editors: Helen Lee, Peggy Dee Southard, and Laura Wils
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The question of authorial credit for work done jointly by a professor and a graduate student frequently occurs. For a project initiated by a professor, graduate students should ask if they will be listed as co-authors and clarify all arrangements before beginning the project. A graduate student who does the bulk of the work deserves credit as the main author or as co-author. If only some of the student's research or test results are used, the student may be listed as a co-author or a research assistant. The graduate student is responsible for making sure that roles, responsibilities, and designation of credit are clearly defined before the commencement of the project.

Taking the Plunge

Lori Gruen, a Ph.D. student in philosophy at CU-Boulder, has published in popular and scholarly journals for the past several years. She recently published a book review in *Hypatia*, a journal of feminist philosophy.

Having a personal interest in women's issues, environmental issues, and animal rights' issues, Gruen found writing and publishing an effective means for communicating her thoughts before she began her studies at CU. As an academic, she finds that publishing in popular advocacy journals provides useful experience and helps to shape her current attitude concerning the publishing process.

Unlike many novice writers, Gruen is not in awe of the publishing process. Instead, she views the process as a means to share her ideas and findings on a particular subject. She surmises that fear of rejection is the major obstacle facing the beginner. By regarding publishing as merely a business transaction, a student can take the sting out of the rejection letter. Often an article is rejected because of supply and demand rather than because of an unfavorable judgment of the author's writing—certain topics are just more in demand than others at given times.

Gruen suggests that writing a book review is the simplest way to gain entry into publishing. This approach requires knowing what books are new in the field and what topics are in demand. Once a book is chosen, the next step is writing a letter of inquiry to the editor of an appropriate journal. In the letter the aspiring book reviewer outlines the topic and states why the book is significant in the field. The letter should also request information about the journal's guidelines, such as length, format, deadlines, and response time.

Accepting Feedback

An excellent way to get valuable feedback on an article is to send it to the best journal in the field. Rejection letters from such journals are usually accompanied by valuable advice and comments. Even if the article is rejected, the editor's critique and suggestions are useful in revising the article for resubmission to the same journal or another. To follow this approach, the

author must be prepared to accept criticism and to rewrite, perhaps several times.

When considering feedback on an article, the writer needs to remember that reviewers are only human. They are often professors who are overworked, underpaid, or

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Words from the Wise

"Unknown to all round me, I have toiled in secret, often destroying what seemed to me to be ill written, and rewriting it . . . I was eager that the talent given me by Heaven should not grow rusty from neglect, and remain silent in my heart from apathy, but under the hammer of assiduous devotion should sound a chord of divine praise. If I have achieved nothing else, this alone should make my work of some value."

Hroswitha of Gandersheim (c. 935-1000)
Preface to Her Poetical Works

"If writing did not exist, what terrible depression we should suffer from!"

Sei Shonagon (c. 966-1013)
The Pillow-Book of Sei Shonagon

"I write when I'm inspired, and I see to it that I'm inspired at nine o'clock every morning."

Peter de Vries (b. 1910)

"Writing is a kind of lottery in this fickle Age . . ."

Susannah Centlivre (c.1667-1723)

" . . . how hard it is to make your thoughts look anything but imbecile fools when you paint them with ink on paper."

Olive Schreiner (1855-1920)

"Since writing is not only an art but a trade embodying principles attested by experience, we would do well not to forget that it is an expedient for making oneself understood and that what is said should at least have the air of having meant something to the person who wrote it as is the case with Gertrude Stein and James Joyce."

Marianne Moore (1887-1972)

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not paid at all. In addition, the article an author submits may challenge the work of the reviewer. Holding these realities in mind helps to keep the waiting period and rejection process in perspective.

Advice and assistance from faculty mentors is indispensable. Gruen suggests that graduate students ask fellow students or faculty to review their articles and provide as many comments as possible. To ask for criticism requires an open mind, a trust in the process, and a willingness to listen. If the reader does not understand the draft, the author needs to rewrite the paper. Gruen suggests that aspiring writers view writing as a service to their readers. Taking suggestions from others enables graduate students to write better papers and to prepare for a successful writing career.

The time required to prepare and submit papers for publication is worth the investment, as a publication record opens doors to opportunities. Although publication is generally not a degree requirement, it can enhance a graduate student's employment possibilities after graduation.

Rather than viewing publishing as a mysterious obstacle, graduate students should make publication a goal in graduate school. With this positive attitude, graduate students can begin to experience the challenge and satisfaction that draw talented individuals to a lifetime career in the academic community. ■

Tooter's Suggested Readings . . .

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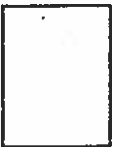
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Campus Box 360
University of Colorado at Boulder
Boulder, Colorado 80309-0360



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