

Publishing my Research

The ultimate goal of research is to publish your results in a peer reviewed journal. It's becoming increasingly common for undergraduate students to publish the results of their final year project, either in a departmental journal or a national journal. You must discuss this option with your supervisor before you begin the process.

Should you publish?

- **Speak with your supervisor.** Your supervisor will be able to advise you whether or not your research is publishable. You will ultimately need help structuring, writing and editing your paper and your supervisor will have plenty of experience in this field.
- **Is your research novel?** This is one of the main criteria for publishing, and it's important to demonstrate that your research hasn't been conducted before.
- **Who developed the research question?** There may be "ownership" issues if you weren't directly involved with developing the initial research question.
- **Larger picture.** Is your research stand-alone or does it form part of a larger picture? If it's the latter, it may not be possible to publish the results on their own.

Where should you publish

- **Departmental/University journal.** These are becoming more prevalent and allow a relatively large number of students to publish the results of their research. The time taken from submission to publication is generally greatly reduced compared to more established scientific journals.
- **Traditional journals.** Discuss and agree with your supervisor what journal you should send your research to. In many cases your supervisor will be a co-author. Although you should aim for a high impact journal, you must ensure that the subject of your research is covered by the journal of your choice.

Publishing process

- **Instructions for authors.** Each journal specifies how the paper should be written, and it's essential you comply with these instructions. These are available through the journal's website or on each copy of the journal.
- **Submission.** Generally papers may be sent via an electronic submission page, email or post, but check specific journals for more detail.
- **Refereeing.** The editor of the journal will send your paper to at least two experts in the subject area, who will comment on the paper and give a recommendation regarding its acceptance or not.
- **Corrections.** The editor will decide if your paper will be accepted, accepted pending corrections or declined. It's very unlikely that your paper will be accepted with no corrections, so be prepared to modify your paper according to the referees suggestions.
- **Publication!** Depending on the popularity of the journal, in some cases may take in excess of 2 years from the day you submit your manuscript to the paper being published. In some cases it is much quicker!