Tips for Finding and Writing for Appropriate Journals

- **Set aside time to work on your writing.**
  Writing for academic journals is a skill like any other that requires time to develop and takes practice. To become good at it, you must work at it. So, the first rule of writing is to write and write often. Set aside a regular, uninterrupted time when you can work on your writing. Get in the habit of writing something every time you sit down to write.

- **Learn about available journals in your field.**
  Talk with colleagues, and review the missions and submission criteria for popular journals in your field. In most fields, there is consensus about which journals are considered the top-tier journals in the field. Aim to get your work in the top-tier journals in your field. Attend sessions with journal editors at your professional association meetings to obtain excellent tips and suggestions for getting published in their journals.

- **Select an appropriate journal for a particular manuscript.**
  Select a journal that publishes manuscripts that are similar in scope, length, topics, etc. to yours. Match the content of your manuscript to the mission of the journal, i.e., send research papers to research journals and practical articles to practitioner journals. Look for journal theme issues related to your manuscript topic.

- **Ask someone else to review your manuscript prior to submission.**
  Another pair of eyes can often help to improve writing. Have a colleague read your manuscript and provide you with feedback and a critical review before you submit the manuscript to a journal.

- **Adhere closely to journal formatting requirements and common practices.**
  Follow all “rules” for the journal including submission guidelines, appropriate headings, specific sections needed, format required, writing style needed, readability of the paper, accurately cited references, appropriate conclusions for the study, limitations of the study, etc. Make sure that all tables, figures, diagrams, etc. are really needed for the manuscript. Make sure that the title is appropriate for the study and fits in with the types of titles used in the journal.

- **Be persistent.**
  Keep at your writing. Some days it will flow better than others. In the long run, persistence pays off. Many manuscripts are rejected when first submitted, and very few manuscripts are accepted for publication with no revisions. Don’t get dejected if you get rejected. Use the editor’s and reviewers’ comments to make improvements to a rejected or conditionally accepted manuscript, and either resubmit it or rework it to send to another, more appropriate, outlet. Don’t take feedback on a manuscript personally; focus instead on the areas needing improvement in the paper. The feedback you receive is often the best guide to turning your manuscript into a published article.
• **Don’t be afraid to stand up for yourself in the review and resubmission process.**
  While delays are common in the review and publication processes, if the process stretches on longer than what is usual for the journal contact the editor to determine the status of your submission. If you believe the feedback you received from an editor or reviewer is “wrong,” politely challenge it when responding to the editor by providing evidence to back up your position. If your rationale is solid and other issues are appropriately addressed, most editors will accept a revised manuscript that may not include every requested change. Some journals have page charges; don’t be afraid to ask to have them removed as a requirement for publication of your article.

• **Collaborate on writing with someone else.**
  Discuss your ideas with colleagues and look for opportunities to work together on a manuscript. Explore opportunities for working with someone outside of your field, which might lead to a publication in a venue outside of those in your own field. Consider teaming with a senior colleague who might enjoy the new points of view you could bring to a writing project.

• **Work on your writing.**
  Always strive to improve your writing in terms of the organization, style, grammar, and expression. Work to make your arguments clearer. Try writing in different styles or for different audiences. As your writing improves, your rate of publication success will likely increase.

• **Learn from what others have to say.**
  Here are a few references related to academic publishing that you may find helpful.
  
  
  
  