Course guide | Getting it Published

Instructor

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Core Competency
Ability to publish your work in national or international refereed publication outlets in Public Administration and Political Science

Key Learning Objectives
After completing this skills course you will be able to:
1. More effectively schedule the remaining period of your PhD appointment by working toward publications as in-between milestones and building blocks of your final thesis
2. More strategically position your research to increase the interest of peers, publishers, and future employers.
3. More effectively craft manuscripts for specific publication outlets, and anticipate and respond to referee comments in a way that increases your chances of getting published.
4. Formulate an authentic, critical position in the "publish vs. perish" debate, and a vision on how to meaningfully distinguish between research quantity and quality (output vs. outcome).

Course Description
The ability to publish your work is an essential element of successfully finishing your PhD project and a prerogative for a viable academic career in a highly competitive international (academic) job market. While recognizing some of the downfalls and negative side effects of the "publish vs. perish" culture in academia nowadays, this skills course takes the position that publishing high quality work in a selective set of reputed journals is a key asset in becoming a successful academic.

Developing a holistic publication strategy will help you to think strategically about the role and importance of publishing your work as an integral part of your daily activities as a PhD candidate. Nowadays, your dissertation is often the integration of high-quality publications rather than simply the only or final publication. Crafting a viable and adaptable publication plan during the first two years of your PhD appointment will help you to deliver publications in year three and year four. Such in-between products often provide extra motivation to finish on time and ensure important parts of your work have passed the test of peer review before your defense.
"Getting it published" is a skill that can be trained. It is as much about strategic and political deliberations as it is about quality thresholds. Thinking carefully about potential outlets and "writing for the journal" will greatly increase your chances of getting published.

This hands-on, "how to" skills course covers all the facets and elements of the publication process, and includes several in-class exercises. It centres around eight key topics:

1. How to make a viable and dynamic publication plan, especially related to your PhD research.
2. How to target different types of publication outlets, such as (national and international) refereed and non-refereed journals, books and book chapters, professional publications, book reviews, conference papers and proceedings, contributions to media, newspapers op-eds, etc.
3. How to decide which journal 'matters most' to you, given your topic, peer circle, career plans, rankings and ratings, and expectations from colleagues.
4. How to deal with the review process as an author.
5. How to deal with the review process as a reviewer
6. How to improve your chances and develop a strategy that maximizes the chance of getting your work published.
7. How to design your PhD writing process more efficiently and ensure you stay motivated throughout the process by approaching it from a "getting it published" angle.
8. How to survive within the prevalent "publish or perish" culture while focusing on the quality and content of your research rather than just the "numbers game"

This skills course provides you with many tips and tricks and rich personal experiences from the instructor, in his various roles as former PhD candidate, author, editor, reviewer, and research manager.

Assignments

1. A specific publication plan in which you outline how many and which kind of publications you aim to realize during your PhD appointment based on your dissertation research, divided by year (max. 1 page A4; in table format); this assignment, in combination with a 2-pair share in-class discussion of the publication plans, will test key learning objectives 1 and 2.
2. A short account of your personal experiences in dealing with (tough) reviews, real or imaginary: how did you (or would you) craft your response to maximize your chances of "getting it published" (max. 250 words); this assignment, in combination with plenary in-class sharing of review experiences, and a 2-pair share in-class discussion as a response to a referee report presented by the instructor, will test key learning objective 3;
3. A short position statement on the "publish vs. perish" culture based on your readings of the three articles in The Guardian, Times Higher Education, and University World News (max. 250 words). Links are provided below. Pay attention to a) why this culture is desirable or not, b) how a different research culture may look like, and c) how you as a senior research manager would contribute to your ideal culture (either/or) this assignment, in combination with plenary in-class discussion, will test key learning objective 4.
   Assignments have to be submitted to the instructor by e-mail 2 weeks before the skills course is scheduled. We will discuss all three assignments during the day and the instructor will return assignments 1 and 2 to each participant in hardcopy with light written feedback.

Literature and sources

Please read before coming to class:

Belcher, W.L. (2009). Writing your Journal Article in 12 Weeks. A Guide to Academic Publishing Success. Thousand Oaks: SAGE. Selected chapters. About 60 pages.

See also: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ng6OEckCpPY

Van de Walle, S. & van Delft, R. (2015). Publishing in Public Administration: Issues with defining, comparing and ranking the output of universities. International Public Management Journal 18 (1): 87-107.

Please review for assignment 3:

http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20140424173116328
http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/411323.article
http://www.theguardian.com/science/2011/sep/05/publish-perish-peer-review-science

Credits
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