

A Scientific Editor's Tips: getting your paper published and finding a job in publishing

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Scientific Editor

Cell Reports

Cell Press

CellPress

A bit about me

New College
THE HONORS COLLEGE of Florida



Overview

Writing and submitting a paper

What happens to a paper after submission

Reviews and decision letters

Author and publication ethics

Getting your paper noticed

Jobs in publishing

Q&A

Writing and submitting a paper

Choosing the right journal

- Ensure your paper is not rejected without review
- Aim to reach the intended audience for your work.
- Is it widely read by the people you want to see the paper? Do you read it?
- Supervisor and colleagues can provide good suggestions.
- Check your reference list.
- Consider sending a pre-submission inquiry



Choosing the right journal

- Investigate your shortlist:
 - Aims
 - Scope
 - Accepted types of articles
 - Editors and board members
 - Recent papers
 - Handling times
 - Impact factor



Preparing your manuscript

- The Guide for Authors

The image shows a screenshot of the Elsevier website for the journal Life Sciences. A 'Help' dropdown menu is open, with 'Guide for Authors' highlighted. An arrow points from this menu item to a separate navigation menu on the right side of the image. This menu contains the following items: Guide for Authors, Submit Your Paper, Track Your Paper, Order Journal, and Access Full Text. The background website shows various sections like 'Special Issues', 'Recent Articles', and 'Most Read Articles'.

How to build your article

Title & Abstract

Conclusion

Introduction

Methods

Results

Discussion

Figures and Tables (your data)

Abstract

- A clear abstract will strongly influence whether or not your work is considered by a journal and whether it is read after publication
- The Abstract is: the known, the unknowns, what you did, and why it matters
- Make it interesting and understandable.
- Make it accurate and specific
- Keep it as brief as possible
- Get feedback from others- inside and outside of your field of expertise



The cover letter

- An opportunity to put the paper's contribution in context and discuss potential implications
- Reviewer exclusions are allowed; for Cell Press it should be no more than 3 people
- Reviewer suggestions are allowed, but not required, and editors may not use them
- Include copies of related work submitted or in press elsewhere

Results and Figures

- Be sure your figure format is consistent with what is published in your target journal and your field.
- Include only the essential information in the figures; leave the rest for supplemental figures.
- Be careful with loading controls and “beautifying” images and blots.
- Many journals are now scanning figures of accepted papers to identify manipulation.
- Include clear and useful figure legends, which state how many replicates were used

What happens to a paper after submission



Initial assessment

- Each paper is read carefully by a scientific editor
- Editors often discuss papers with each other, and may seek external advice
- The editor decides whether to send the paper for in-depth review
- If it is sent out, the editor selects expert reviewers, typically 3 people
- If it is not sent out, the editor writes to the authors explaining why.



What editors look at

- Does the paper fall within the journal's scope?
- Does it address an interesting and important question?
- How much do the findings advance the field above the current literature?
- Will the findings be of interest to scientists outside the immediate field?
- Are the experiments presented appropriate for the conclusions drawn?



Out to review

- Securing the right reviewers
- Reminders
- Chasing late reviewers

Reviews and decisions



When the reviews come in

- The editor reads the reviews carefully
- Reviewers often have varied opinions
- Editorial decisions are based on the points made overall, not a simple 'vote'
- The editor may discuss the paper again with colleagues and/or the reviewers
- The editor sends the authors a letter outlining the overall decision



Decision letters

- Read the decision letter and reviews carefully and digest the points that the reviewers and editor have made
- Did the editor invite, or mention, resubmission?
- For a revision, address the criticisms raised as well as you can, prepare a point-by-point response letter, and resubmit

Revisions: Responding to Reviewers

- Read the comments carefully and consider how each can be addressed in a revision.
- Begin drafting a response letter
 - Be polite and respectful
 - Be thorough: address every comment (even if you don't add new data).
 - Answer with evidence, especially if you do not agree with the reviewer.

Revisions: Responding to Reviewers

- Other tips:
 - Include all of the reviewers' comments in your response
 - Consider including a marked copy so the reviewers' job is easier
 - Consider discussing your revision plan with your handling editor

Rejections

- Read the letter and comments
- Step away for a bit and then read them again
 - Consider each comment critically and carefully
- Re-write and re-submit
 - Never submit the same version of the article elsewhere
 - Always use the reviewers comments



Rebuttals

- If the editor did not invite or mention resubmission, the paper has been declined
- If the reviewers raise substantial valid criticisms, it is often best to submit the paper elsewhere
- New data are more effective than arguments alone
- Be realistic – only appeal if you really think you have a valid case



Final tips

- Editors are there to help, but they are busy, and handle a lot of papers
- Be concise in your communications
- Focus on scientific points at all times
- **Wait at least 24 hours before sending any response!**

Publication Ethics

Authorship Guidelines

- Don't leave out authors who have contributed to the work
- Don't include authors when they did not contribute significantly
- Corresponding author: contact for all matters relating to the paper; best to be PI
- Disputes must be resolved by Authors; editors cannot adjudicate or act as judge
- Any changes before or after publication requires agreement from all Authors with justification
- Any changes may delay publication

Key author responsibilities

- Report only real, unfabricated data
- Originality; be sure to reference work
- Declare any conflicts of interest
- Submit to one journal at a time
- Save all the relevant data from your published article.

Getting your paper noticed

- CrossTalk blog
- Tweet
- Facebook



CROSSTALK



Cell Reports @CellReports

26 Sep

Syllables of recorded time: clocks that run by moonlight and tide --
latest blog post, on biological clocks ow.ly/pfwbz

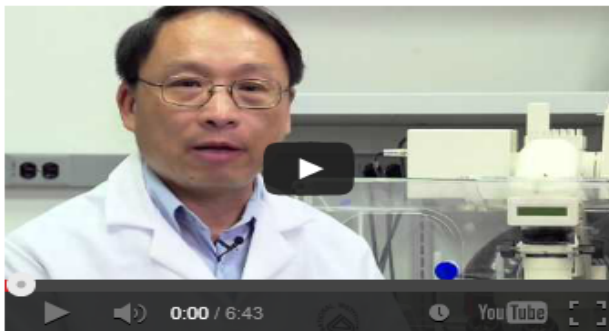
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At the Movies

We now feature video abstracts of some of the exciting papers published in *Cell Reports*:

Motile Axonal Mitochondria Contribute to the Variability of Presynaptic Strength



| [Read the paper by Sheng and colleagues](#)

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- Figure 360
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Podcast

Discussing evolution of bacterial motility and biofilms with Joao Xavier



In this month's *Cell* podcast, learn how pathogenic bacteria can evolve to become "hyperswarmers" that can move more freely, and how this involves an interesting evolutionary tradeoff. Then, read the [related paper by Xavier and colleagues](#).

Image: Joao Xavier



The *Cell Reports* segment of the podcast begins at 14:30.

Finding a job in publishing

Cell Press

- 15 Primary Research Journals (from Cell to Chem)
- 5 partner journals (e.g. EBioMedicine)
- 15 Trends Review Journals
- Cell Press is part of Elsevier (over 2500 journals)



The daily life of a scientific editor

- Reading papers
- Editorial meeting
- Finding reviewers
- Reading / evaluating reviews
- Sending decisions
- Reading point-by-point responses
- Appeals/Rebuttals
- **E-mail**



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Editorial extras

- Conferences and site visits
- Coordinating press releases
- Facebook
- CrossTalk blog
- Previews
- Innovation Projects
- LabLinks and Cell Symposia



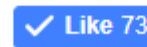
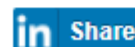
Biology of Cancer: Microenvironment
& Metastasis
Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory
October 10–14
Cold Spring Harbor, NY

Meet *Cell Reports* editor Shawna
Buttery

A whole lotta axolotl to love

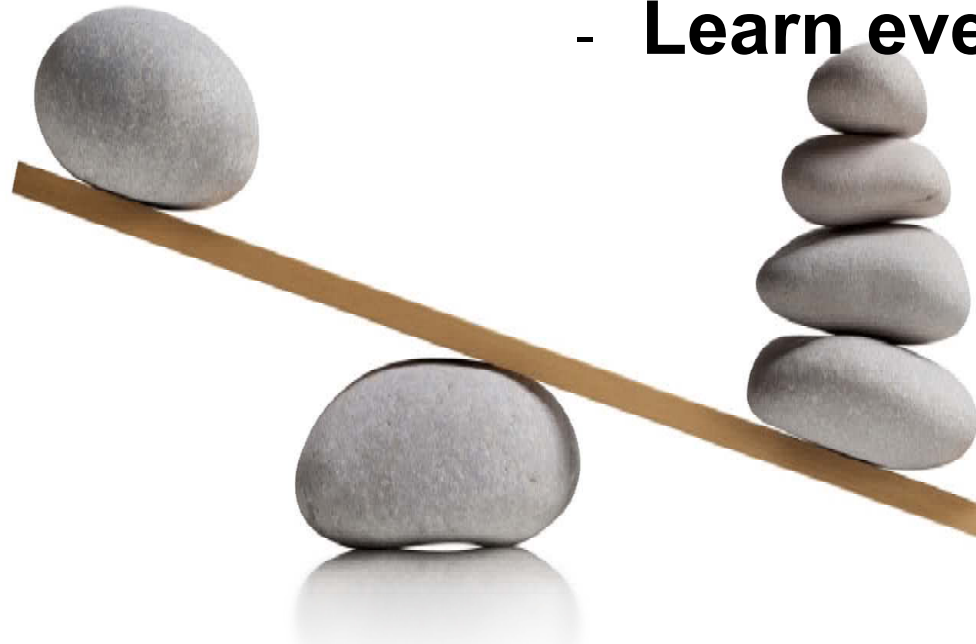


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Scientific Editor – the good and the not so good

- **Hectic days**
- **To-do-list never ends**
- **'Upset' authors**
- **Exciting science**
- **Fantastic colleagues**
- **Learn every day**



Be proactive

- Create a LinkedIn profile
- Know your resources (at your school/institute, local groups)
- Career fairs
- Conferences!
- Nature Jobs
- Cell Career Network

Cell Career Network





Develop your skills

- Be curious!
- Participate (leave the lab on occasion!)
- Write papers
- Review papers
- Read papers!



Editorial interview process

1. Résumé
2. Written test
3. Phone interview
4. Manuscript test
5. On-site interview

Thank you! Questions?

- Elsevier Publishing Campus
<https://www.publishingcampus.elsevier.com>
- Cell Press Blog: Cell CrossTalk
<http://www.cell.com/crosstalk>

