Inspireurope+
Supporting Researchers at Risk

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Project acronym:	Inspireurope+
Project title:	Initiative to Support, Promote and Integrate Researchers at Risk in Europe PLUS
Call identifier:	H2020-MSCA-2021-R-01-01
Work package:	WP2
Deliverable:	D2.2_Interactive Training 1 for Researchers at Risk
Title of training	Publishing: How to select the right journal for your manuscript
Date of training:	20 Feb. 2023
Number of attendees:	12
Weblink:	https://sareurope.eu/sar-resources/publication-strategies/

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Description: Interactive Training Workshop 1 – Publishing: How to select the right journal for your manuscript

Training held: 20 Feb. 2023

Weblink: https://sareurope.eu/sar-resources/publication-strategies/

Training Workshop 1 – Publishing: How to select the right journal for your manuscript.

Date: 20 February 2023

Time: 10am – 11am CET (1 hour)

Trainer: Dr. Harry Shirley, Editorial Development Manager, Springer Nature

Participants: 12

- Gender split: the group of 12 participants consisted of 6 women (50%) and 6 men (50%)
- Countries of origin: The participants were originally from Afghanistan (4), Syria (3), Lebanon (1), Palestine (1), Ukraine (2), Iran (1).
- Career stage: 7 PhD participants, 5 early-stage career postdoctoral participants.
- Field of research: Chemistry (2), Sociology (2), Pharmaceutical Science (1), International/Corporate Law (1), Psychology (1), Computer Science (1), Social Work (1), Biology (1), Civil Engineering (1), Plant Protection (1).
- In line with the Grant Agreement invitations for the interactive training were shared with a number of current clients and recent alumni of programmes assisting researchers and scholars in Europe (PAUSE, PSI, SAR, Cara, SRF). Invitations were shared by each partner or associate partner with researchers from their own list of researcher-clients who had previously indicated an interest in further training/development opportunities relating to this topic
- 18 participants were initially identified and confirmed by organisations providing direct support to researchers at risk for this training through a direct nomination process to Cara. The number of participants on the day itself was 12. This was lower than the planned 18 participants, due to unexpected cancellations. However, the small group format allowed for active engagement by all participants.
- This modest numbers of participant for trainings is in keeping with the scale and significance of the project's contribution outlined in the Grant Agreement which aims to reach over 300 researchers over 3 years (2022 to 2025) through a combination of interactive trainings and webinars. The project's webinars are reaching high numbers of participants, while the interactive trainings seek to engage smaller groups of researchers in a more interactive exchange between the trainer and participants, and between participants themselves. Webinars for researchers at risk organised between September 2022 and April 2023 have already had 235 total participants (from 337 registrations) and reached participants from 27 countries of origin.
- In line with the Grant Agreement there will be opportunity for all clients (researchers at risk) supported by partner organisations within the consortium to participate in at least 1 interactive training over the 3-year project. For the in-person training associated with the project's annual platform if there is more interest than space allows, priority will be given to researchers in Germany for Berlin-based training, and researchers in France for the Paris-based training.
- Data gathered from training registrants included: personal data needed for the purposes of logistics of training registration (email, name, contact number); country of origin, gender; ideas for topics to address in future interactive trainings; researchers' career level ; discipline , broad research field.

- Before the training, participants were provided with Information Sheets and Consent Forms in an accessible language, and participants were provided with the contact details of the project Data Protection Officer in line with the project's Data Management Plan.
- **Format:**
- The interactive training was held online in a group format led by an experienced trainer. The format prioritised interactive and direct participation by each attendee and also allowed for attention to individual queries and contexts. The training was not recorded in order to encourage robust and unfiltered participation by all attendees and in consideration of the security of each scholar. This format was arrived at based upon previous experience shared by organisations within the consortium experienced in organising trainings and workshops for researchers at risk, including based on feedback from participants following past events.
- This format allowed all questions to be answered throughout the training session, with sufficient time for follow up questions.

Topic:

- The topic provided an opportunity for detailed and interactive follow-up training following the Inspireurope+ public webinar held in December 2022 on 'Publication Strategies for Researchers at Risk'. The webinar focussed on the broader topic of 'writing for publication in peer-reviewed journals', as listed in the preliminary topics under D2.4 in the GA. The interactive training built on the information provided during the webinar, and provided additional focus on how researchers at risk can approach journal selection. The trainer had also participated in the December 2022 webinar as one of the speakers and was identified as the appropriate trainer for a training session to lead on from the webinar, with a particular consideration given to the positive feedback from the webinar attendees.
- The trainer was provided by the Springer Nature Group, a German-British academic publishing company.

Agenda Overview:

1. **The training provided researchers at risk with information and tools on selecting the right journal for their manuscript, engaging with participants through Q&A and discussion on each of the areas below:.** Finding the most appropriate journal.

This part covered how to generate a shortlist of journals and how to evaluate shortlisted journals. Five key areas were discussed, with participants invited to share ideas on why impact factor is relevant.

2. Developing an efficient submission strategy.

Discussion focused on the importance of developing a submission strategy, how to formulate one, and how to evaluate options and proceed given the breadth of publishing opportunities.

3. Writing an impactful cover letter.

The focus of the final section was on how to communicate with and impress journal editors, as well as understanding the functional differences between an abstract and a cover letter.

Summary points:

- Several participants shared that additional support with cover letters would be welcomed. Several shared that they struggled with writing concise and effective cover letters for their journal

submissions. Some were unfamiliar with the role of journal editors and how little time editors are able to spend on reviewing each submission.

- Several participants shared that additional tools and resources would be welcomed for how to identify relevant journals for submission. Some participants demonstrated difficulty with formulating an effective selection strategy.
- Many participants shared that additional resources are needed on how to identify potentially predatory journals.

Evaluation/Feedback:

Feedback forms were sent out to all participants following the training session. 8 participants submitted the form.

- Four participants rated the training 'Excellent,' three as 'Very good,' and 1 as ''Good.'
- All agreed that the training advanced their knowledge about publication strategies for researchers at risk.
- Feedback was also invited on future topics of interest for Inspireurope+ researcher at risk training workshops. Suggestions included: networking and conference attendance advice, research methods, and grant writing.
- Feedback from trainings will be shared only in anonymised and aggregate form.

Short Participant Guide:

Researchers were also provided with a short participant guide on publishing strategies, including links to useful resources on indices, journal selection, metrics, and cover letter. This guide has kindly been made available for use in the Inspireurope+ project by Nature Research Academies.

nature research
academies

Participant Guide

Publishing Strategies

Workshop Overview

The Nature Research Academies virtual workshop was designed to offer accessible training for busy, early-career researchers across a broad range of disciplines. Through a combination of interactive group webinars and self-study exercises led by a Nature Research trainer, the workshop will help you to succeed in today's competitive academic landscape.

The goal of publishing a study is to ensure that the field understands the significance and impact of your research. Doing so will not only help advance the field, but also establish your reputation and influence amongst your peers. These webinars provide practical insights and strategies to help you achieve this goal.

Objectives for this virtual workshop:

- Select the best journal where to publish your research

- Evaluate and compare international journals with one another

- Create an efficient publication strategy to allow you to publish quickly and with impact

- Understand what journal editors are looking for in submitted manuscripts

- Write an impressive cover letter to the editor of your target journal

nature research
academies

Key Points

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Journal Selection

Journals act as a bridge to connect authors with the appropriate readers. To publish quickly and have impact in your field, you should choose a target journal before writing your manuscript.

- **Journal shortlist:** identify potential journals to publish your research from your readings, discussion with colleagues, databases and journal guide website

- **Journal evaluation:** Once you identify 10–12 potential journals, determine which 2 or 3 journals are most appropriate for you. Consider the following factors in your evaluation:

    ### Aims and Scope
    How broad or focused is the journal? Is the readership regional or international?

    ### Recent Publications
    Is the journal currently publishing research and review articles related to your topic? If so, that suggests the editor finds your topic relevant for their journal.

    ### Indexing
    Is the journal discoverable in citation/abstract indexes (e.g. Medline/Pubmed) or only on the publisher website? How easy is it for your target readership to find your paper?

    ### Publication Model
    Is the journal only accessible to academics (subscription journal) or also to the general public (Open Access model)?

    ### Publication Speed
    How long does the peer-review process take on average before a first decision is made?

    ### Impact
    How much impact will your research have? Top tier journals publish fundamental advances with broad impact. Mid-tier journals publish fundamental advances with narrower impact or incremental advances with broader impact. Lower-tier journals publish incremental research with narrow impact.

- **Create a strategy:** decide which journal to submit first, second, and third and optimize your manuscript writing (word & figure limits, structure) such that it is compatible with the author guidelines of all three journals.

Publication Strategy

As many authors are not accepted in their first choice of journal, always plan for a back-up journal.

Back-up journals
If your manuscript is rejected to all your three preferred journals, consider those journals as back-up:

- o **Mega-journals** that accept research with robust methodology, regardless of statistical significance of the results (e.g. *PLoS One* or *Scientific Reports*)
- o **New journals** in your field that have a higher acceptance rate, but will not be widely indexed online

Public repository

If you fail to publish your research in mega or new journals, it is important that you made your results available to others to avoid research waste. These last options unlike the previous ones do not have a peer-review process:

- o **Data repositories** such as Figshare
- o **Preprint servers** such as bioRXiv or medRxiv

Be aware that although public repositories accept all submissions, you cannot remove your work from it. This might be a problem when you want to publish the same research later in a journal as editors usually want the exclusivity of your work.

Editors who find your manuscript interesting but reject it for publication in their journal have the option to transfer it to other journals from the same publisher, using the transfer desk.

What editors are looking for

Most editors are professors and do not work full-time for the journal. Therefore, they have a limited time to assess the quality of a manuscript, receive many submissions every month to choose from and compete with similar journals for the best manuscripts. They are looking for manuscripts that are:

Suitable
Suitable for the journal scope and of interest to its readership.
- o Fundamental advance: for journals with higher impact
- o Incremental advance: for journals with lower impact

High quality
Papers that will have impact in the field will be highly cited. For research to be of high quality, it needs to:
- o address an important problem
- o not yet have been published
- o has a robust study design
- o have significant findings that strongly support the conclusion

Comply with editorial policies
Journals have strict international standards for publishing regarding:
- o ethical committee approval for the study
- o written informed consent for all participants
- o funding acknowledgement and potential conflicts of interest
- o data fabrication or manipulation
- o plagiarism

Cover Letters

The cover letter is your chance to make the best first impression to the editor. This is where you should highlight the suitability of your manuscript for the journal and its readership. Remember to include the following information as well as your contact information:

1. **Manuscript introduction**: Mention your manuscript title and precise your article type (e.g. research article, review, etc.). Do not simply copy and paste your abstract!

2. Study importance: Give some background information about the current state of the field and introduce the problem and your study objectives.

3. Findings: Briefly describe your methodology and summarize your key findings. Tip: avoid bullet points.

4. Relevance and suitability: Explain why your manuscript is interesting to the journal's readership. *Tip:* use keywords and readers from the journal's aims and scope.

5. Additional information: Include a statement on publication ethics, potential conflict of interests, funding sources and provide the contact information of reviewers to include and/or exclude.

    Peer reviewers to recommend
    Recommend international experts as referees to enhance the quality of peer review, increase the publication speed and your chance of acceptance. You can find them from your readings. Aim for mid-level scientists (Associate professors), not affiliated with your university and with whom you have not collaborated in the past five years.

    Peer reviewers to exclude
    Ask the editor to exclude (maximum 3) researchers as referees if they have a conflict of interest with your work (e.g., competitors) or do not have the technical expertise to evaluate your study.

Useful Resources
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Indices

Medline (free) – The US National Library of Medicine (https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/)
Web of Science (paid) (https://webofknowledge.com/)
Scopus (paid) (https://www.scopus.com/)
Directory of Open Access Journals (https://doaj.org/)

Journal selection

Journal guide (https://www.journalguide.com/)
Checklist for avoiding predatory journals (https://thinkchecksubmit.org/)
Transfer desk - Springer
  (https://www.springer.com/gp/authors-editors/journal-author/the-springer-transfer-desk)
Transfer desk – Biomed Central
  (https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/submission-guidelines/manuscript-transfers)
Public Library of Science (http://journals.plos.org/)
Scientific Reports (https://www.nature.com/srep/)
bioRxiv and medRxiv (biorxiv.org and medrxiv.org)
Figshare (https://figshare.com/)

Metrics

Journal Metrics – A Quick Guide
  (https://www.nature.com/npg_/company_info/journal_metrics_-_quick_guide.pdf)
Overview of journal metrics
  (https://www.springer.com/gp/authors-editors/journal-author/impact-factors)
  (https://authorservices.wiley.com/help/journal-metrics-overview.html)
Scopus metrics database - CiteScore, SNIP & SJR (https://journalmetrics.scopus.com/)
Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) statement (https://sfdora.org/)
What's Wrong with the Impact Factor in 5 Graphs
  (https://www.natureindex.com/news-blog/whats-wrong-with-the-jif-in-five-graphs)
Article-level metric - Altmetric (https://www.altmetric.com/)

Cover letter

Guidelines and submission checklist - Springer
  (https://www.springer.com/gp/authors-editors/authorandreviewertutorials/submitting-to-a-journal-and-peer-review/cover-letters/10285574)
Do's and don'ts of writing a cover letter – Nature blog
  (http://blogs.nature.com/methagora/2013/09/how-to-write-a-cover-letter.html)
Free cover letter template – life sciences (https://www.aje.com/en/arc/writing-cover-letter/