

Presentation techniques & scientific writing

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OUC

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Overview (Sunday, 25th September - Thursday, 29th September 2016)

1. Introduction in presenting science
2. Rules on how to write
3. Guidelines on how to edit
4. Peer-review process
5. Rules and recommendations, summary and final examn

IV. Peer-review process

4. Peer-review process

- 33. Manuscript submission
- 34. What is peer-review?
- 35. Role of editor, referee & publisher
- 36. Stage 1- pre-selection
- 37. Stage 2 – in peer review
- 38. Stage 3 – in revision
- 39. Stage 4 – editorial decisions
- 40. Stage 5 – proofs
- 41. Stage 6 - published

Part IV

Peer-review process

33. Manuscript submission

What is needed?

- cover/submission letter
- author statement
- completed and formatted manuscript
- name and contact addresses of referees (**optional**)

Cover letter

Include:

- corresponding author's full name, affiliation and the address that can be used for correspondence (all in English)
- address the letter to the responsible journal editor (state name – “avoid “clear editor”)
- submission date
- manuscript title
- name of co-authors
- journal section where the manuscript should be published (if applicable)
- 2 sentences describing the manuscript (main findings)

Author statement

Include author statement to certify that:

- the work is all original research carried out by the authors
- all authors agree with the content of the manuscript and its submission to the journal
- no part of the research has been published elsewhere, unless it is fully acknowledged in the manuscript
- the manuscript is not being considered for publication elsewhere while it is being considered for publication in this journal
- any research in the paper not carried out by the authors is fully acknowledged in the manuscript

List of potential referees

- some journals ask authors to provide a list of 3-6 researchers that the authors would consider as suitable reviewers for the manuscript
- full contact details are needed
- no guarantee that these reviewer will be chosen
- suggested reviewers may not be in close relation to author or the published work

Suggest referees

- have published peer-reviewed themselves
- have knowledge on the subject
- not from your institute
- from different countries
- avoid people/friends/colleagues who know your work well

Submission rules

- submit a clear and clean manuscript
- editors see a correlation between the look of your manuscript and the quality of its content
- the original submission creates the first impression – there is no second chance

Confirmation

- after submission you receive a confirmation of receipt
- hard copy submission: up to two weeks
- online submission: same day
- manuscript handling number for all correspondence
- contact editorial office if you have not received a confirmation of receipt

34. What is peer-review?

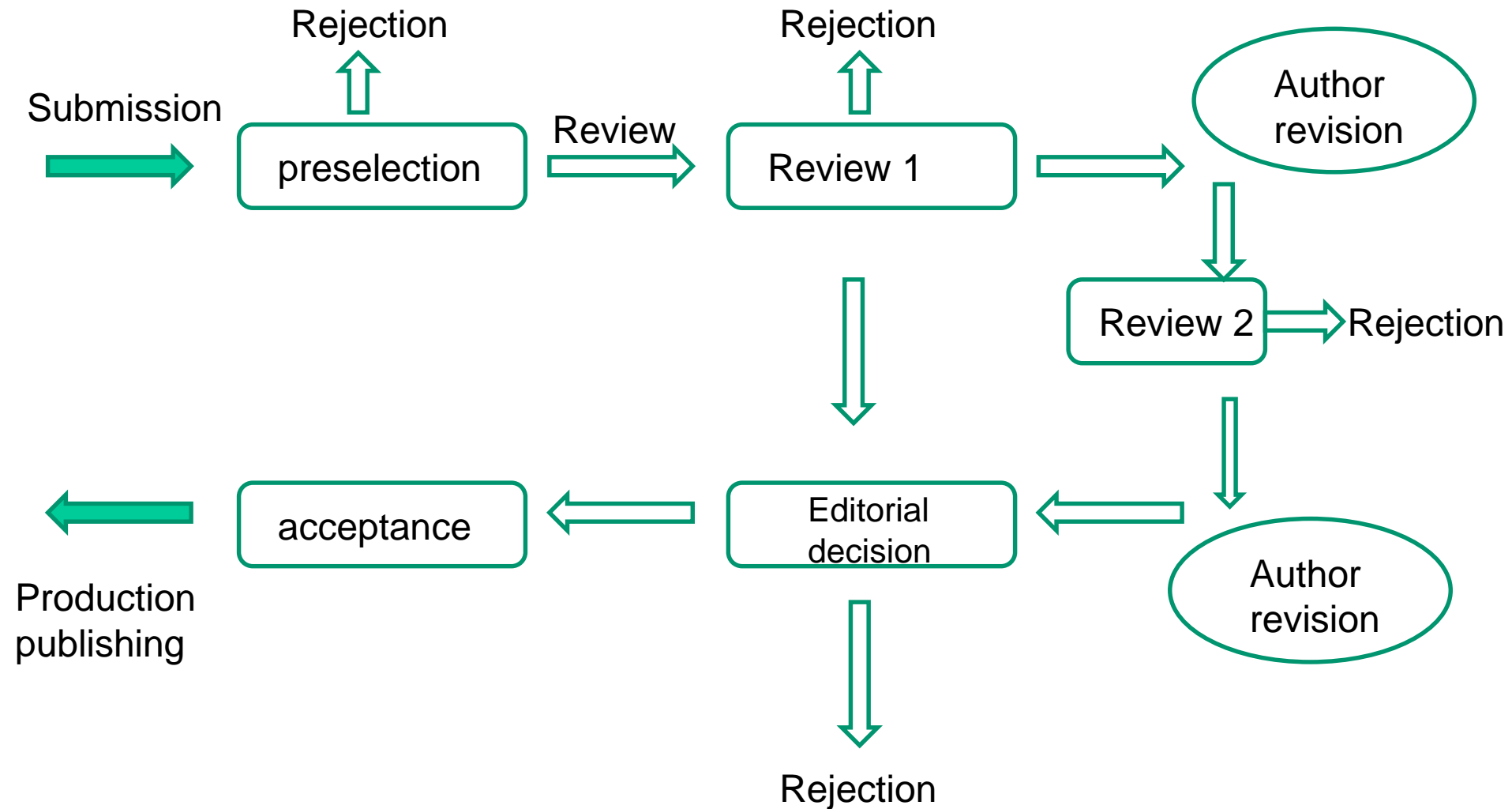
What is peer-review?

- mode of assessment by experts in the field
- used for:
- assessing papers before publication
- awarding research funds
- assessing universities & research institutes

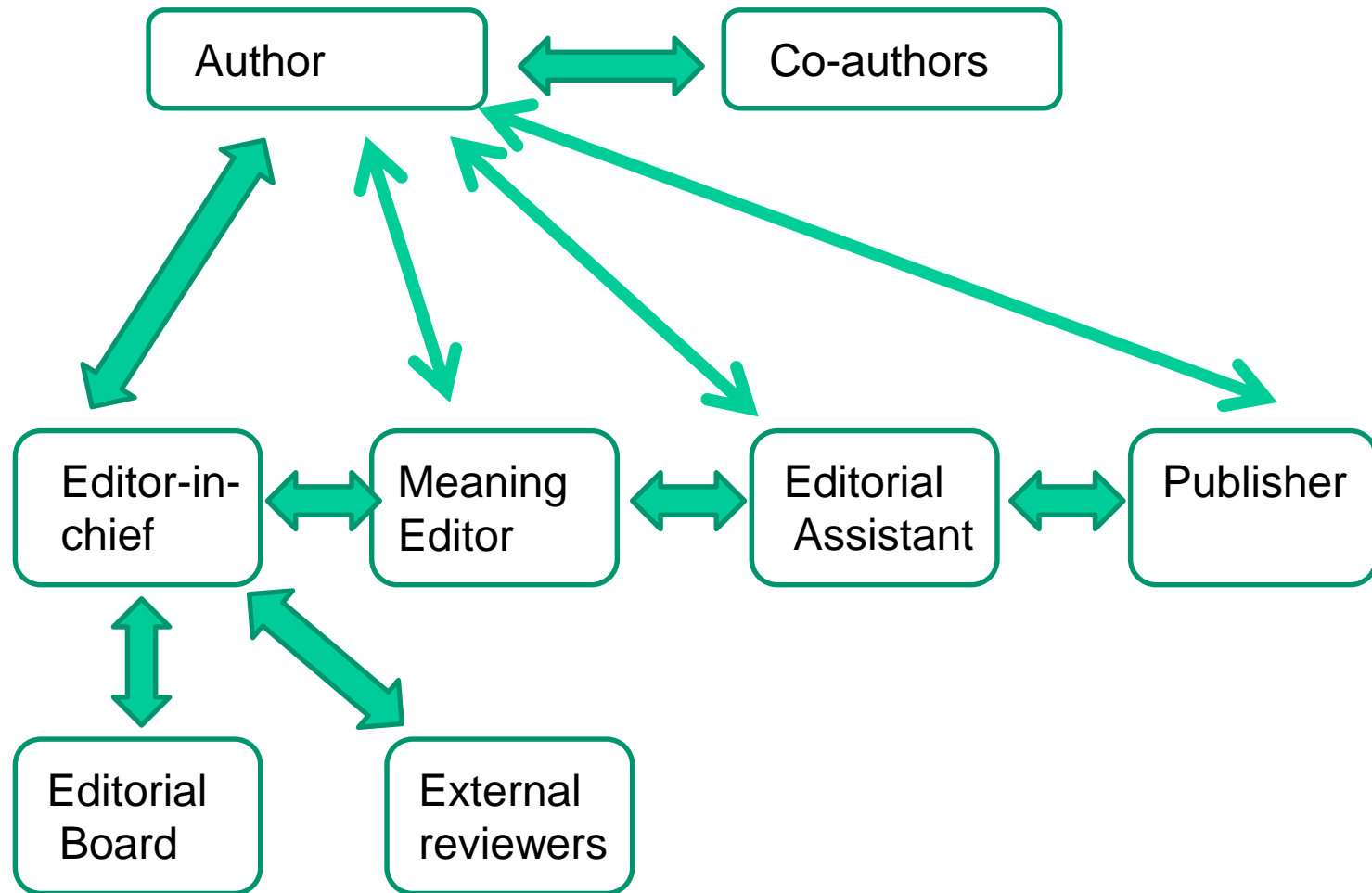
Purpose of peer-review

- improve quality of a manuscript
- get judgment from independent experts
- quality control & quality label
- safeguarding quality of journal
- safeguarding of institution based on publication record
- assessment of work of a researcher from where s/h publishes

How peer-review works



What is involved?



35. Role of editor, referee & publisher

Joint vision

- Publisher, editor & referee:
- to publish good-quality research
- to inform scientific community about the progress in their field
- to enable individual and collective advancement in scientific research

Who is the publisher?

- most cases: professional enterprises
- sometimes: academic associations or universities
- about 2,000 academic publishers:
- Elsevier (35%)
- Springer (10 %)
- Wiley-Blackwell (5%)

Role of publisher

- publishing
- advertising, marketing
- indexing in databases
- copyright protection
- reputation
- ensures access to manuscript (digital & paper)
- cooperation with libraries
- provide electronic services

Who is the editor?

- appointed by the publisher, journal advisory board or academic community
- scientist in the field of the journal subject
- mostly has a regular academic job and the editorship on top of regular duties

Role of editor

- editor is not author's enemy
- reads on behalf of all readers
- editor's job is to acquire publishable work, not to produce it
- to separate poor from good manuscripts
- to decide whether to accept or reject manuscripts
- to ensure fairness & quality control
- find most suited reviewer for manuscript
- for each manuscript on average 8-10 hours
- all communication with author, referees, publisher
- reading & editing manuscripts

Who is the referee?

referee
=
reviewer

Peer of the author
=
Expert in the field

- external and independent expert
- appointed by journal editor
- can be suggested by the author
- has academic job and does reviewing on top of regular duties

Role of referee

- to evaluate the scientific quality of a manuscript according to the criteria provided by the journal and the academic community
- to encourage the author to improve a manuscript
- to assist the editor in deciding whether to accept or reject a manuscript
- to give reasons why a manuscript is considered as not suitable for publication

36. Stage 1: preselection

Purpose of preselection

- editor makes preselection once the manuscript is received by the editorial office
- only manuscripts that fulfil the preselection criteria are sent to peer-review
- filter process

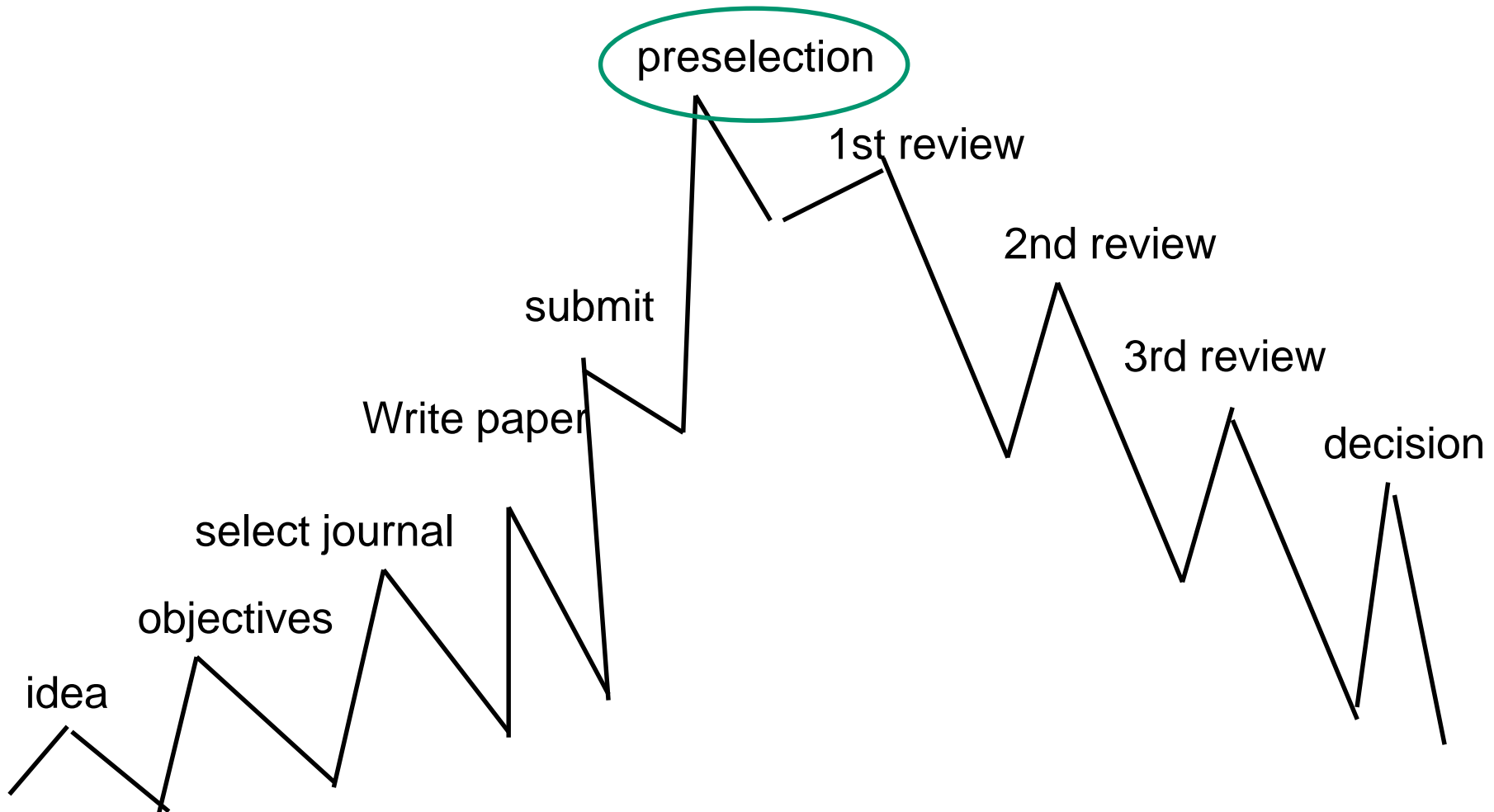
Preselection criteria

- formal criteria (submission complete, proper formatting of manuscript)
- within scope of the journal
- new and original contribution
- relevance for international audience
- sufficient quality



40-50% of papers fail already here: **rejected!**

Biggest hurdle!



37. Stage 2: in peer-review

Selection of referees

- Criteria:
- must have published peer-reviewed themselves
- ≥ 3 pages
- published in the field of the paper to review
- in no relation to author

Review criteria

- vary between subjects and journals
- 72% of journals have a standard set of criteria
- reviewer are asked to suggest additions or reductions
- most journals apply following criteria:

Review criteria

Scope		Clarity of results
Originality/novelty		Structure & organisation
Sound discussion		Appropriateness of theory
State-of-the-art		Clarity of objectives
International relevance		Quality of English
Clarity of methods		Appropriate length
Justification of conclusions		Clarity of figures tables

Other review criteria

- clarity of introduction
- Correct referencing
- quality of abstract
- clarity of title
- manuscript formatting
- quality of keywords
- ethical issues

What is a good review?

- constructive, helpful, insightful
- respectful to the right of different ideas
- mindful as a “gate keeper” but fair
- considers carefully all criteria of the review sheet
- four sentences are not enough: a full manuscript review needs at least one day work
- the author must be able to understand the arguments of the referee

Referee judgement

- Normally, four levels of reviewer recommendation:
- accept (very seldom)
- minor revision (sometimes)
- major revision **(most frequent)**
- reject (sometimes)

Minor revision?

- = only **small editorial revisions** and corrections that might require half a day or a maximum of a few days additional work

Major revision

- = requires **substantial changes** to the manuscript structure, state-of-the-art overview, data analysis, discussion or other changes that are more time consuming (a few weeks to a few months)

Review cover sheet

**The review cover sheet goes only to the editors – not the author.
You can provide confidential comments on this page.**

Title of manuscript:

Manuscript number:

Reviewer name:

Date:

General comment to the editor:

Evaluation:

- ☐ Acceptable in its present form
- ☐ Acceptable after minor revision
- ☐ Acceptable after major revision
- ☐ Unacceptable

Review sheet

Manuscript number:

1. Is the paper within the scope of the journal?

Yes	No	If no, comments:

2. Is it a new and original contribution?

Yes	No	If no, comments:

3. Does the paper exemplify an awareness of other research on its topic?

Yes	No	If no, comments:

Review sheet

Manuscript number:

4. Is the paper of relevance to an international audience?

Yes	No	If no, comments:

5. Does the title of this paper clearly reflect its content?

Yes	No	If no, comments:

6. Is the abstract sufficiently informative especially when read in isolation?

Yes	No	If no, comments:

Review sheet

Manuscript number:

7. Are the keywords informative?

Yes	No	If no, comments:

8. Is the statement of objectives of the paper adequate and appropriate in view of the subject matter?

Yes	No	If no, comments:

9. Does the introduction section introduce the paper subject, is the research context of relevance?

Yes	No	If no, comments:

Review sheet

Manuscript number:

10. Are the methods correctly exposed and sufficiently informative to allow replication of the research?

Yes	No	If no, comments:

11. Are the results clearly presented?

Yes	No	If no, comments:

12. Is a discussion provided that relates the findings of this paper to existing knowledge on an international level?

Yes	No	If no, comments:

Review sheet

Manuscript number:

13. Are interpretations and conclusions sound and justified by the data?

Yes	No	If no, comments:

14. Is the structure and organization satisfactory and is the paper clearly presented?

Yes	No	If no, comments:

15. Is the length appropriate to the content?

Yes	No	If no, comments:

Review sheet

Manuscript number:

16. Are the illustrations and tables all necessary and are the captions adequate and informative?

Yes	No	If no, comments:

17. Are the references adequate and in agreement with the Guide for Authors?

Yes	No	If no, comments:

18. Is the quality of the English satisfactory?

Yes	No	If no, comments:

Review sheet

Manuscript number:

19. Can you suggest changes or brief additions (words, phrases) that will increase the value of this paper or an international audience?

Yes	No	If no, comments:

20. Can you make any suggestions that will increase the value of this paper for the journal „XXX JOURNAL NAME XXX“

Yes	No	If no, comments:

21. Can you suggest any reductions in the paper, or deletions of parts?

Yes	No	If no, comments:

Review sheet

Manuscript number:

22. Have you made any annotations on the manuscript?

Yes	No	If no, comments:

General comments:

Specific comments:

Concluding evaluation:

38. Stage 3: revision

Positive signal



- your manuscript is not up to publishing standard yet
- but it is worth publishing and requested changes will help you on the way

Purpose of revision

- to bring your manuscript up to publishable standard
- up to editor to decide!

Guidelines: Revision

1. Address **all** comments made by reviewers. Reviewer comments are not a “wish list”.
2. Implement all requested changes as far as possible.
3. If you do not agree with requested changes, do **not ignore** them, but give reasons why you do not agree.
4. If you have been misunderstood, improve your argumentation in the manuscript so that it becomes understandable.
5. Don't expect reviewers to make identical comments
6. The conclusion “when reviewers don't make the same suggestion, they disagree” is wrong!
7. Reviewers focus on different aspects, because they have different areas of expertise
8. Read reviews as complementing each other not as contradictions and react accordingly

Guidelines: Revision

9. Reviewers can point out weakness in the manuscript, but it is your task to fix them.
10. You have to give evidence for all revisions you make (and for those you choose not to make).
11. Don't use excuses for not implementing a suggestion

Revision – time frame

Stick to the given revision deadline, if possible

Usually: Major = 3 months

 Minor = 1 month

Do not expand revision time without consent of editor –
may result in treating your manuscript as a new
submission

Author's response letter

- When getting back to the editor:
- include a detailed response letter
- indicate how you have responded on the editor's and reviewer's remarks

How to respond?

- Be very specific
- Respond to all concerns
- Your duty to inform editors and referees where you have made changes – not their duty to find out!
- Always refer to line numbers in your original and your revised manuscript.
- Use colour marking, refer to reviewers' comments (numbers), refer to individual reviewers
- If you do not agree with a reviewer's comment, you need to provide evidence to underpin your position.

How to respond?

3 basic options:

1. Write a free-text letter
2. Insert your comments in review sheet
3. Mark changes in manuscript (in combination with 1 and 2)

Revision - avoid

- try to cheat or cover up
- saying “I have substantially improved the reference section” but you only added 1 new reference
- return a manuscript without a detailed response letter

39. Stage 4: editorial decisions

Final acceptance

- upon acceptance, the manuscript will be forward to the publisher's production department
- from now on, you don't deal with the editor but the publisher
- The remaining issues are of a technical nature and won't jeopardize your publication

Rejection

- no editor likes to reject a manuscript
- keep also in mind that most journals have a rejection rate > 50%
- different types of rejections and rejection letters

Rejection – what now?

Reason for rejection	What to do?
Poor quality/serious flaws in research design	May not be repairable if yes, try to remove flaws and resubmit
Not original/nothing new	May not be repairable if yes, remove shortcomings
Out of scope/not relevant for journal	Try another journal
Does not communicate/message unclear	Rewrite
Poor formatting	Submit to another journal follow author guidelines strictly

Rejection – what now?

- Two ways how you should not react on a rejection letter:
- deciding that this is the **final** judgement on your manuscript or talent
- deciding this is **no** judgement on your manuscript or talent

Rejection - reaction

- Decision of editor is final
- Not open for discussion
- But: You can ask for an explanation if you have not understood the motivation for the rejection
- Good editors will let you know why the paper was rejected, even in a very brief note.

40. Stage 5: proofs

What are proofs?

- typeset version of your manuscript
- follows the layout and style of the journal
- looks very similar to the final paper version
- may contain typing or other errors
- may come with a list of questions that the publisher wants you to address

What you proofs?

- Authors receive proofs about 2-3 months after manuscript acceptance
- sent as PDF document to corresponding author
- Authors are asked to correct the proofs and return them within very short time (often 48 hours)

Guidelines: proofs

- read the proofs as soon as possible after receipt
- Read very carefully
- Note corrections immediately when reading the first time



Also production department might have made mistakes when typesetting your manuscript!

Guidelines: proofs

- correct mistakes made by the publisher
- correct incomplete references
- update references quoted as “in press” (if published)
- you are not allowed to change your manuscript besides correcting spelling mistakes and other mistakes that first appear now
- correct quality, size and placement of figures
- quality in print will only be good if you provided high-quality figures & graphs
- get in touch with publisher if you have a complaint – this is the last chance to do so!

41. Stage 6: published

When is the paper published?

- when it appears in the online or hard copy version of the journal with its full referencing information
- volume no, issue no, page no.

What means “in press”?

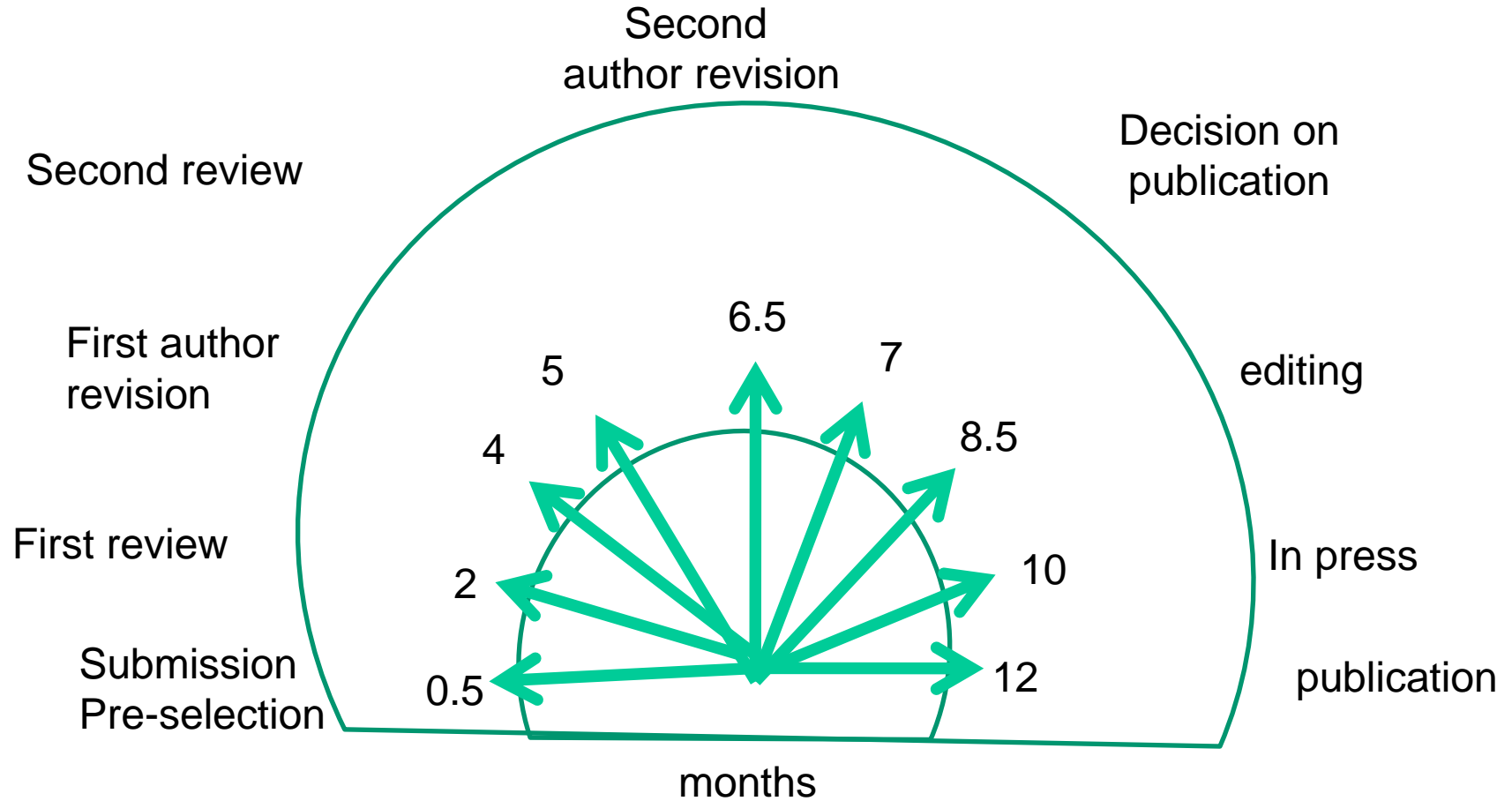
- paper is accepted for publication in a journal
- received confirmation from editor
- paper is in the production process or “in queue” for a slot in an issue
- referencing information not available yet
- often online available as “in press”
- DOL number available (www.doi.org)

How long does it take?

Until submission:

- preparation for publishing: 1-2 months
- writing process: 2-3 months
- revision before submission: 1-2 months
- can take longer if research is not completed, data not analysed and not enough time planned for preparation & writing

How long does it take?



Why it can take longer

- submission was not complete or poorly formatted
- reviewers are difficult to find (= busy, no interest, not responding, ill, field, work, travel, holiday)
- reviewers are delayed or reviewers are uncooperative
- additional reviewers are necessary to make a decision
- author requests more time for revision
- author does not address all reviewer comments and, therefore, additional review/revision round is necessary
- poorly designed response letter
- author delays return of author's proofs & copyright forms

Why it can take longer

- journal has **a long list of papers** in press that will be published before own paper
- paper is submitted to a **special issue**
- can be more difficult to find a publishing slot for a **long paper** than a short one
- restructuring of editorial process, journal policy or publishing process

What can you do?

- make sure your submitted manuscript meets requested standards of the journal/publisher
- respond timely on requests from editor/publisher
- **be patient!**