

## Tips for early career authors

This advice has been put together by Cambridge University Press to support early career scholars and encourage them to submit appropriate work as journal articles and books

### Getting articles published in law journals

#### What should I publish on?

- Read widely around your research area to see what is topical and what others are writing and presenting on
- Journals are looking for scholarship that says something new; is there an aspect of your research that is particularly innovative or adds a new perspective to the current literature. Make sure you clearly highlight the contribution of your research in the article
- Journals and reviewers want to be excited, only submit a paper that you feel excited about yourself
- Is there a topic you would like to test for a book; it is entirely appropriate to publish a few articles on a topic that will later become a book
- Discuss your ideas with colleagues and consider testing your topic at a workshop or conference before writing a full article

#### Which journal should I publish in?

- Ask colleagues which journals they recommend for your particular topic
- Read the scope of any potential journal carefully, if your article does not fit the scope of the journal it will likely be immediately rejected or time will be wasted when it could be being evaluated by a more appropriate journal; spend time looking at previous content published by the journal to evaluate your fit
- Consider what kind of audience you are hoping for – if a large audience is important than a generalist journal might be most appropriate; if you want to reach those most interested in your field, then a specialist journal may be the best way to go

#### How can I make my article more 'publishable'?

- Think about what the peer reviewers will be looking for; they want to be excited
- Be explicit about the something 'new' that your article is adding to the literature
- Write in clear English and if English is not your first-language consider using a professional editing service; ask colleagues to proof-read your work
- Pay attention to the title and abstract; the title should clearly describe your topic and make the piece easily discoverable online; the abstract should be a succinct summary
- Your article should present a detailed analysis rather than a simple narrative or commentary on a list of cases or legislation
- Make sure you make an arguable case and that your argument flows logically, using clear headings to break up the text
- Take time to check your citations thoroughly and ensure they are complete; ensure you reference the related literature accurately and completely and do not change its meaning to support your argument
- Be careful to make sure your article would be of interest to a global audience
- Ensure you are happy that your article is complete; do not expect to finesse your text or add additional material at a later stage

- Once you have chosen a journal to submit to, use that journal's instructions for authors or style guide to ensure the article is put into journal style
- Ensure you have adhered to any word limit for your selected journal (being over or under word count is likely to result in immediate rejection)
- If a journal requires work to be anonymised, please eliminate any author details and anonymise any citations that refer to your own work
- Closely follow the submission instructions for your chosen journal, for example, an electronic submission system like ScholarOne may be required
- If a journal has an exclusive submission policy, please abide by this. Finding out an article has been submitted to another journal at the same time is likely to frustrate the editorial team and discourage publication this time or in the future

### **What happens after submission?**

- Many papers are simply desk rejected without ever going to reviewers, a common reason is being out of scope of the journal
- Other articles will proceed to double-blind peer review (neither author or reviewer will know the identity of the other)
- Common decisions are reject, revise and resubmit, accept with minor or major revisions, very few journals give out straight accepts

### **How should I respond to a revise and resubmit decision?**

- Take seriously any revisions suggested
- Include with your revised manuscript a note on how you have responded to reviewer comments; if you have not made the suggested amendments say why

### **What should I expect if my article is accepted for publication?**

- Respond to any queries from the editorial team or any copyeditor promptly
- Expect your article to be edited by the journal's editorial team – treat these edits constructively, they have been made to bring the best out of your article
- Be ready to check proofs quickly (most journals give three to five days for this process)
- Proof corrections should be limited to typos and errors of law, substantial changes to your article are not allowed by any journal at this stage
- Expect to be asked to complete an author agreement and complete any documentation relating to this with care
- Check the re-use and self-archiving policy of the journal carefully before considering re-publishing or archiving in a repository
- Check if your institution has an agreement with Cambridge to enable you to publish Open Access: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/open-access-policies/waivers-discounts>
- Once published think about how you can help promote usage of your article, for example through social media

### **What is the best way to move on from a rejection?**

- Ask for reasons if you are not given them
- Try another journal but consider amending your article to respond to reviewer comments before you do; the same reviewers could easily appear on another journal and you do not want to insult them
- Do not be afraid to send a more suitable piece to the journal in the future

- Consider other types of submission such as writing a book review (a good way to show you are eager to write as well as increasing your profile and network of contacts)
- Become involved with journals as a board member or peer reviewer to learn more about the publishing process

### **Publishing a book**

#### **Five most common questions our book acquisition editors get asked**

1. **When to publish:** a book may not at all be your first publication. It's certainly true that there may be a wisdom in waiting until you have had some pieces in a journal accepted and plan your first monograph as a piece of work which builds on later research
2. **What to publish:** there is a common misunderstanding that having a thesis passed as not needing revisions means a book version won't need any further revisions. Top academic publishers and certainly all Cambridge book series editors won't accept a proposal without, ideally, evidence of the differences in the book v the thesis version. It may be you can have a wider focus than your thesis word count allowed or you may have room to add some more jurisdictions, update your case law, add your own voice more clearly to your conclusions etc. in a book version of your thesis
3. **Where to submit:** look at the publishers most cited in your field? Take care to ensure you are submitting to a publisher who already publishes in this area. If your work is single jurisdiction in focus then you may be asked to expand it to offer some comparative content and analysis if you seek an international publication
4. **How to submit:** check the guidelines with your publisher of choice, and remember that while there is not always a rule against multiple submissions (publishers vary) it is best to have a plan and approach your ideal publisher first
5. **How to respond to peer reviewers:** do this with great care. The outcome of peer review may depend as much on your response to the referee reports as on the content of the reports. Be seen to engage with all advice.

#### **General tips**

- Think of your publishing portfolio as always a moving feast and strive to have a range of your writing always out for review/about to publish across both journals and books; that way your academic profile is constantly growing
- In general – seek advice – top authors are always those who have the maturity to regard criticism as helpful. If a referee has misunderstood your argument, then better that you clarify it and not have a reviewer in print post publication say the same thing
- Things change over time, so while what you asked to teach and what you prefer to research may conflict, there is always something to learn. 'Keep your eye on the prize' of your next publication opportunity always

#### **How to prepare a book proposal**

- Research the best publisher for your particular book
- Make contact with a named Editor at that publisher
- A proposal should contain:
  - Your reasons for writing this book and what it aims to do. Why is a book needed in this area at this time? State the draft book title.

- Its market and target audience (be as detailed as possible here covering both the type of work/research the potential purchaser might be undertaking as well as jurisdictional appeal)
  - Its "must have" value – why would somebody buy this book?
  - A full table of contents with chapter titles. Please include detailed abstracts for each chapter.
  - What is the expected overall length of the script in words, including footnotes and bibliography?
  - What is the expected completion date of the manuscript for delivery to Cambridge?
  - A note on competing books. Situate your book with regard to the literature in your discipline. Cover its potential position with regards to the existing Cambridge law list here too. What is the extra value of yours?
  - If your proposal concerns a revised dissertation please enclose a revision plan for conversion to a book.
  - Sample writing from the book itself, ideally at least 2 chapters. If your proposal concerns an edited collection, please also include the introduction.
  - The length in words/printed pages.
  - A note on the author's biography, listing relevant existing publications. If your proposal concerns an edited collection, please include a list of contributors, including their present affiliations.
- You should expect any academic publisher to have your proposal peer reviewed
  - Be open to suggestions made by the readers

### **Further tips for authors**

Cambridge has created a series of guides for authors on various areas which can be found here:

<http://www.cambridge.org/gb/academic/authors/author-hub>

### **Contacts at Cambridge University Press**

We are always happy to discuss publishing with aspiring authors.

#### ***Law journals:***

Rebecca O'Rourke: [rebecca.orourke@cambridge.org](mailto:rebecca.orourke@cambridge.org)

#### ***Law books:***

(In the UK)

Toby Ginsberg (for socio-legal studies, environmental law, human rights, armed conflict):  
[toby.ginsberg@cambridge.org](mailto:toby.ginsberg@cambridge.org)

Sharon McCann (for EU corporate governance, business law, finance, EU law):  
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