ALEC 604: Writing for Professional Publication

Week 11: Addressing Reviews/Revisions

Activities
- Discuss faculty and peer reviews
- Evaluate the merit of each review
- Plan manuscript revisions based on the collected reviews

Peer Review Process
- You wrote and submitted your manuscript
- It’s in the peer review process
- You wait for one of several decisions:
  - Accept/Publish – good news
  - Reject, without review – unexpected news
  - Reject/Resubmit – expected news
  - Reject/No Resubmit – bad, but not terrible news

Reject, without Review – Unexpected
- Articles can be rejected before review if:
  - Formatting differs from journal standards
  - Sections not defined per journal standards
  - Missing or incomplete sections
  - Research is not significant
  - Research is not suitable for that journal
  - Poorly written
- All are reasons within the editor’s rights

Most Common Decisions
- Accept/Publish as is
  - Good news, but don’t expect this outcome
- Reject/Resubmit, the most likely outcome
  - Minor revisions
    - Use reviews to make corrections, then resubmit early
    - May need a complete rewrite, or consider another journal
- Reject/No Resubmit, it happens to all authors
  - Best to consider another journal

Accept/Publish
- An unlikely, but possible outcome
- Minor revisions may be needed
  - Use reviewers’ comments
  - Read editor’s remarks
  - Incorporate all suggestions for improvement
- Submit the final draft
  - Follow instructions carefully; don’t jeopardize your chances for a successful publication
Reject/No Resubmit

- Use reviewers’ comments to revise the manuscript accordingly
  - Reread/rewrite the paper
    - Perspectives can change with time
  - Mistakes – correct, per suggestions
  - Misunderstandings – rewrite where needed
- Choose another journal
  - Consider journal’s purpose/fit with your paper

Reject/Resubmit

- Most likely outcome for novice authors
  - Very few papers are accepted with initial submission
- Plan revisions
  - Similar/dissimilar comments from multiple reviewers
- Track of your revisions
  - Some journals require open letters to reviewers about revisions made after first review
  - Write responses as you complete specific revisions
  - Allows reviewers to check responses with revisions

Peer Reviews

- Should be qualified peers in your discipline
  - May include people you know/cite
  - Reviewers may be specialized (e.g. statistics)
  - At least two, but can be up to four
- Almost always anonymous
- Reviewers may (may not) match well with your paper’s topic; comments indicate match

Merit of Reviews

- What to look for in reviewers’ comments:
  - Impact of your study; significance to readers
  - Theoretical/conceptual frameworks
  - Research methods used
  - May address writing style, grammar, etc.
  - Check “tone” of comments; positive vs. negative
- Reviewers are not proofreaders/editors
  - Don’t expect a fully edited manuscript

Revision Process

- Don’t have to revise everything reviewers suggest, but if you don’t:
  - Defend why you didn’t; use your resources
- Includes narrative changes and/or different analysis
- Always proofread your manuscript
  - Errors – check yours and reviewers
- Time limits (e.g. 90 days) for resubmission

Revision Review Process

- After resubmission, editors may:
  - Not send to reviewers, if revisions are lacking
  - Send to same reviewers; most likely process
  - Send only to same reviewers who did not “accept” on initial submission
  - Send out to new reviewers; unlikely, but can happen if original reviewers are not available
Resubmission Decisions
- **Reject/Resubmit**
  - More minor/major revisions needed
  - Revision process starts anew
  - Journals may limit the number of resubmissions
- **Reject/No Resubmit**
  - Time to submit to another journal

Resubmission Decisions
- **Accept/Publish**
  - May be edited by journal editor
  - Final formatting by journal staff
  - You will review “galley proofs” before press
- **Reject**
  - Submit to a different journal
  - Seek alternative publishing venue
    - Conference paper/poster, if no previous attempts exist

Reject/Resubmit Processes
- **Reject/Resubmit processes can be:**
  - Most common outcome for all scholars
  - Exhausting: requires time and patience
  - Frustrating: requires tenacity and diplomacy
  - Enlightening: your writing skills are improved
  - Rewarding: your research is published

Do NOT…
- **If you want your article to be accepted, do NOT:**
  - Ignore other research (i.e., inadequate literature review)
  - Discredit others’ research
  - Use too much jargon; write too simplistic
  - Discredit reviewers in the open letter
  - Harass the editor, at any time in the review process
  - Forget to convince readers they’ve learned something new
  - Give up on the publication process when rejected
  - Submit the manuscript to multiple journals simultaneously

Summary
- **Expect one of many outcomes from the peer review process**
- Revising and resubmitting manuscripts is the norm, not the exception
- Reviewers may/may not match well with your manuscript; honor their assessments
- Maintain a positive outlook throughout the process; scholarship is not easily achieved