INTRODUCTION

This brief guideline presents key considerations when planning and preparing your research publications and other scholarly publications. It is not intended as an exhaustive or in-depth presentation of these principles, instead referring to resources for further reading.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

- Develop a publications strategy with your team and/or collaborators, considering the requirements for authorship contributions as described in the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.
- Carefully consider where to publish to reach the target audience for your work. It might not always be an academic journal.
- Aim for open-access publication, whether by publishing in an open-access journal or through including the author-version publications in Macquarie’s research portal.
- Quality and impact of research questions, the research done and the ensuing research publications is paramount – quantity matters less.

GUIDELINES

PRE-PLANNING

Unless you are doing your research solo, it makes sense to have early and ongoing conversations within your team about your publication strategy and the planned authorship – i.e. who will be authors on the work and in what order. Many fallouts within teams, and even occasional accusations of academic misconduct, have arisen from differing expectations among team members as to authorship.

Setting early expectations is especially crucial for new research collaborations, new HDR students and new members of research teams.

Of course, the path of research rarely runs smoothly, so sometimes authorship might need to be revisited and adjusted once research has been completed; but that should be easier if ongoing discussions have been occurring.

AUTHORSHIP: FOLLOW THE CODE

Any research publications should follow the principles outlined in the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research and particularly the Authorship Guide. One of the key points is the definition of authorship:

“An author is an individual who:
• has made a significant intellectual or scholarly contribution to research and its output, and
• agrees to be listed as an author.”

Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research Authorship Guide

Read the guide for details and examples of what constitutes a significance intellectual or scholarly contribution.

Another point in the guide – citing and acknowledging other relevant work appropriately and accurately – can be greatly assisted by using good referencing software, such as Endnote, when writing your publications. (For that matter, it can help with grant writing or teaching too.) Macquarie has an institutional site licence for Endnote in PC or Mac versions.

Make sure that your byline details and addresses are correct in each manuscript. This allows easy harvesting of your publications (from major literature databases) by the Macquarie Research Hub’s core system, Pure. The harvested publications can then populate your research profile once you claim the identified publications. Refer to our Byline Guideline for more information on correct byline usage.
WHERE TO PUBLISH?
How does one choose from the many possible “outlets” for research publications? The Macquarie strategic publishing webpage provides some excellent principles to consider, so read up there on “relevance, reputation, visibility and validity”.

If you are new to research or a specific discipline area, seek advice from experienced colleagues about outlets that they would consider appropriate to the work. Think too about where your target audience would be most likely to find the publication – getting your publications to the target audience is the main reason to publish in the first place.

For other types of scholarly works, think about the most relevant outlet to reach your desired audience. Perhaps case studies, opinion pieces, and education or training pieces might find wider readership in a non-research outlet such as a trade newsletter, a peak-body publication or website, or an education magazine.

And watch out for the so-called predatory or unethical journals. These are journals that publish manuscripts without peer-review and charge exorbitant publication fees. For early-career researchers and HDR students, don’t be tempted by unsolicited invitations to publish your work in unknown journals; it usually will be a predatory journal. Some websites, such as Stop Predatory Journals, maintain lists of known or suspected predatory outlets.

OPEN ACCESS
Open access means making your publications openly available online, rather than hidden behind a publisher’s pay-per-view website. There is an increasing focus on making research data openly accessible too.

This is consistent with the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research and is also an expectation of major research funders nationally and internationally; see, for example, the ARC Open Access Policy and NHMRC Open Access Policy. If your research has been funded by an ARC or NHMRC grant, they expect the resulting outputs will be made openly accessible, provided there are no sensitive data or intellectual property issues. They expect too that each publication will acknowledge the funder, funding scheme and grant that supported the research.

Macquarie University supports open access (it has a policy) and the Macquarie Library has more information about open access. Macquarie’s preferred approach to open access is that of depositing your outputs into our institutional repository, Pure. This is so-called Green Open Access, in contrast to publishing in journals that charge an article processing fee to make an article open access (so-called Gold Open Access; see, e.g., https://oaasg.org.au/what-is-open-access/ for more explanation):

*We encourage support for Green Open Access publishing which enables us to meet the mandates of research funding bodies ... Macquarie University Library does not deem Article Processing Charges (APCs) to be a satisfactory approach to address the issues facing subscription budgets and therefore does not support APCs. We do not wish to change the point of payment, but seek to change the business model.*

https://libguides.mq.edu.au/open_access

To align to these institutional perspectives and the fact that the ARC and NHMRC Open Access Policies expect publications to be placed into institutional repositories – i.e. Green Open Access – MQ Health’s recommended approach is for your author-version publications to be added to Pure:

*Researchers are able to add or import their own publications into [Pure], and as part of that process, attach the author manuscript (version of paper after peer review, as accepted for publishing by the journal) to the publication record in the system [see this guide for details]. Adding the author manuscript enables the Library to make research publications Open Access as allowed by publishers’ policies, so this step is very important.*

https://libguides.mq.edu.au/open_access

Should you wish to publish your research outcomes in a journal that charges an article processing fee, that is up to you, but MQ Health is not able to cover these charges. Consequently, you will need to include a request for these fees in your grant application budgets, assuming they are an allowable expense for that funder (e.g. NHMRC doesn’t allow such fees to be written into your budget, but you can use the awarded funding to cover actual publishing costs).

DOES IT MATTER WHAT AND WHERE I PUBLISH? ISN’T QUANTITY OF OUTPUTS MOST IMPORTANT?
Historically there has been a tendency for grant review panels or recruitment or promotion panels to consider only the volume of an applicant’s publications as a measure of excellence. Now, however, this perspective is gradually changing to a focus on quality and impact of an applicant’s research, although some consideration of quantity is still typical. Consequently, publishing high-quality research or scholarly outputs is far more important than simply churning out numerous short papers or low-quality work.

The NHMRC’s new funding schemes illustrate this changing perspective. For example, Investigator and Synergy Grants consider the “quality and contribution to science” of applicants’ publications and an entirely new emphasis on the end-
user impact of applicants’ research. And publication lists have been removed from Ideas Grants applications, with the focus instead on scientific quality, significance, creativity and innovation, and feasibility.

Similarly, the Australian government’s implementation of periodic national assessments of research quality (Excellence in Research for Australia, ERA) and Engagement and Impact, illustrate the increasing focus on quality and impact, not just quantity. Similar trends in judging the value of research to the discipline and society are noteworthy internationally too.

Likewise, what a university publishes and how the outputs are cited play a key role in international university rankings, which in turn influence student enrolments, attracting future HDR students and so on.

Consequently, research itself and the publication of it should always focus on quality, engagement with end-users (including other researchers who will build on the work) and impact arising from the work.