Getting Published: Liaising with Editors/Associate Editors & Responding to Journal Reviewers' Feedback and Journal Decision Letters

This session will:

- Provide a forum to discuss the challenges faced in getting published
- Suggest ways to engage with journal editors/associate editors
- Suggest ways to make sense of editors' decision letters and reviewer comments.
- Address and discuss strategies to ensure that appropriate revisions are made and communicated in an effective way to the journal editor and reviewers.

Background

Getting published is increasingly important not just for those in academic job roles but also for doctoral students (Debowski, 2012). Peer reviewers, in association with journal editorial teams, act as 'gatekeepers' within the academic publishing community but, with the exception of Shaw (2012) the peer review process is rarely discussed in the scholarly research literature (Paltridge, 2015) and tends to merit limited discussion in the genre of 'How to get published' books (see, for example Belcher, 2009; Murray, 2013; Thomson & Kamler, 2013). Paltridge (2015, p.111) suggests that reviewers' feedback typically contain up to four types of comment: 'directions'; 'suggestions'; clarification requests'; and 'recommendations'. However, learning to 'decode' journal decision letters and interpret and respond effectively to the comments of peer reviewers represents a challenging area of practice for experienced as well as novice academics. Key skills are being able to 'read between the lines' of editorial feedback letters and reviewer comments and identify how best to respond and communicate the revisions that have been made.

Sources of advice

Although advice on how to perform reviews are frequently found on journal publisher's websites only Elsevier include many 'hints and tips' for responding to reviewer comments. For example: https://www.elsevier.com/authors-update/story/publishing-tips/3-top-tips-for-responding-to-reviewer-comments-on-your-manuscript https://www.elsevier.com/authors-update/story/peer-review/how-reviewers-look-at-your-paper-your-questions-answered

Session plan

This session will offer the perspective of members ENU's professoriate staff in the Business School on understanding the language of the review and responding in an appropriate and effective way. We will ground the session in practical examples of good and poor practice to enable participants to learn from good practice and know how to avoid making an ineffective response.

- Part 1 – Liaising with Journal Editors and Associate Editors before formal submission of manuscript – need to establish if manuscript is a 'good fit' for the journal and is of interest to the editorial team.
- Part 2 - Making an initial interpretation of editors' and reviewers comments – Drawing on practical examples participants will discuss what reviewers and editors 'really mean' in their comments. Importance of seeking guidance from colleagues on how to respond to feedback (R&R 'round tables').
- Part 3 – Deciding on an appropriate response - Drawing on these examples specific challenges involved in responding to reviewer comments will be discussed from the perspectives of both authors and members of journal editorial teams
- Part 4 - Developing good practice actions for authors to use when resubmitting their work to a journal such as:
    - Responding in a polite and respectful way
    - Disagreeing (but explaining why)
    - Communicating in a clear way the exact revisions that have been made – critical that you are systematic, transparent and make it clear to Editors/AE & Reviewers that you have responded to all feedback.
    - Ensuring that the changes really have been made (beyond 'lip-service')

Facilitators

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