



Getting Published & Mastering Peer Review

Learning to write and respond to reviewers' comments are vital skills for early-career researchers to master if they wish to become established scientists. However, these skills are often neglected, forcing researchers to learn them by trial and error.

By learning to address reviewers' comments, young researchers not only increase their chances of getting their work published but also learn to think critically about their own research. Equally, by becoming better reviewers, researchers can raise their profiles with journal editors. Becoming an invited reviewer for a prestigious journal is an opportunity for researchers to enhance their academic reputation and improve their career prospects.

Description

This two-day workshop guides young researchers through the peer review process using a practical approach that explores the roles of the author, the reviewer and the editor. As future authors, participants first learn how to engage the interest of the journal editor with a cover letter. They next learn to respond comprehensively and courteously to reviewers' comments. As future reviewers, participants learn how to critically evaluate a research article and to phrase their criticism in a constructive review that facilitates the scientific process.

By considering the differing perspectives of reviewers and authors, participants will learn about the responsibilities and opportunities associated with each of these roles.

Preparation

Before the workshop, participants will receive a manuscript of a short research article (approx. 1000 words). The manuscript describes a fictional research project of general scientific interest and exemplifies many of the common and more subtle errors found in first manuscript submissions.

Before the workshop, participants are asked to write a short review of the manuscript (approx. preparation time 90 minutes). Participants adopt the role of reviewer to:

- assess the work's distinctive contribution to advancing the field and its relevance for the wider scientific community.
- evaluate whether the conclusions and claims of the authors are justified by the evidence presented
- determine if the work is technically rigorous and suggest improvements

Workshop exercises allow participants to understand the subtleties of language use that distinguish courteous, informative and valuable feedback from superficial, unhelpful and small-minded criticism.