



What to remember and consider when you submit your PhD thesis and papers to scientific journals

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What to remember and consider when you submit your PhD thesis and papers to scientific journals

When you submit a paper or a PhD thesis you will typically be confronted with several *responsible conduct of research*-issues, RCR-issues. These are issues on open access requirements, data management, authorship issues, documentation of ethical and legal permissions, declaring your conflicts of interest, and etc. It is not always easy to navigate these issues. Below you find a checklist of things to remember/consider when you submit papers to scientific journals, and when you submit your PhD thesis. The list covers the most general RCR aspects of submission, but there might be RCR-issues not covered in the list. We hope you will find it helpful.

Martin Marchman Andersen & Peter Sandøe, May 2020



1. The right journal

When looking for the right journal consider the following:

What is the scientific scope of the journal? And how does your work fit into the scientific scope of the journal?

If it does not fit, find another journal.

If in doubt, you may try to write and ask the editor.

Is the journal trustworthy? Watch out for predatory journals!

If you are in doubt, ask yourself some of the following questions: Does the journal publish research that you would read yourself? Which organization publishes the journal? Are prices transparent? Do you know/have you heard of any of the editorial board members? If still in doubt, see more at: thinkchecksubmit.org

2. Issues of plagiarism and self-plagiarism

Plagiarism, if grossly negligent or done deliberately, is *research misconduct* and self-plagiarism is *questionable research practice*. It is advisable to stay clear of both.

Consider the following:

General considerations

If you copy text from others, be sure to quote the originals! Copied text should always appear in quotation marks.

If you paraphrase, be sure to make clear references to the originals!

Plagiarism does not only concern text, but also e.g. images, figures and tables. If you use an image/figure/table that is not of your own creation, be sure to write explicitly that you have copied from (...) with a clear reference to the original!

If you re-cycle text from your other papers, or your PhD/master thesis, be sure to quote and make references to your own work.

If you paraphrase yourself, be sure to make clear references to yourself.

If you re-use an image/figure/table that you have published elsewhere be sure to write explicitly that you have copied from (...) with a clear reference to the original!

See more in [the Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity](#).

Note. These are tips as for how to stay clear of plagiarism and self-plagiarism. But staying clear of plagiarism and self-plagiarism is not sufficient for scientific quality. In PhD theses based on articles, it is necessary that the PhD student writes the synopsis of the thesis in the PhD student's own words. This is particularly important in parts of the synopsis that are rich on text such as the abstract, introduction/background, discussion and conclusion/perspective. It is not possible for the assessment committee to specifically evaluate the PhD student's independent contribution to co-authored articles, so if long text paragraphs in the synopsis have been copied/paraphrased from co-authored articles, the assessment committee is less able to evaluate the PhD student's skills and competences.

In concise parts of the thesis where precision is pertinent, such as methods & materials descriptions and data intensive results sections it is generally acceptable to duplicate text, as long as there are clear and explicit references to the originals.

Considerations specific to journal submission

Papers are often desk-rejected by the editors because of formalities. Be sure to follow the 'instructions to authors' of the journal in regards to:

Manuscript formatting

Citation and referencing style

Format and details about figures, tables and statistics

Considerations specific to submission of your PhD thesis

Make sure that quotes are easily seen as quotes, and that you quote in a consistent manner throughout your thesis.

Pick a referencing style that is common for your scientific field and apply it consistently throughout your thesis.

3. Open Access Issues

Does your funding source require the use of Open Access? Fully or partially publicly funded research (and research funded by some private funds, e.g. the Carlsberg Foundation), must be made freely available to everybody via Open Access insofar the journal allows it. Open Access is often in your own interest too. It makes it easier for others to access your work.

See [Denmark's National Strategy for Open Access](#)

However, open access may sometimes violate copyrights. Therefore, consider the following:

General considerations

If you reuse an image (a figure for instance) from a published paper it will very often violate copyrights even if it stems from your own published papers. Often, however, journals allow such reuse if you ask for permission.

Considerations specific to journal submission

What is the journal's policy on pre-print and post-print? And does it impose an embargo?

Pre-print usually means a version of your paper prior to peer review. But there may be differences from journal to journal, so check your journal for the right definition.

Post-print usually means a version of your paper after peer reviewed, but not the publisher's version. But there may be differences from journal to journal, so check your journal for the right definition.

Embargo is usually the time from publication until the journal allows you to share publicly a post-print version of your paper.

You can check most journals policies on pre-print, post-print, and embargo on sherpa.ac.uk.

What are the journal's policies for reusing single diagrams or pictures, for future scholarly purposes?

Considerations specific to submission of your PhD thesis

If parts of your thesis have been published, or is under peer review, are there potential conflicts between the policy of the journal and the requirement of your PhD thesis being publicly available? If in doubt, ask your supervisor.

4. Authorship Issues

According to [the Vancouver Recommendations](#) everyone contributing substantially to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work should be given the opportunity to fulfill further three conditions listed and thereby be honored with authorship.

General considerations

Have you added ALL authors, and ONLY persons who qualify as authors, to the byline of your paper? Can you describe the contribution of each author and why it qualifies to authorship?

You might find help at [Credit](#)

Do you acknowledge scholars who have contributed to your paper/thesis, but who do not qualify as authors? If so, did you ask for their permission to be acknowledged in the paper?

Considerations specific to submission of your PhD thesis

If you plan papers to be part of your PhD thesis, consider the following:

If you have co-authors, have you collected your co-authors' signatures on a co-authors statement?

Find the declaration [here](#).

Are there PhD students other than yourself among your co-authors who will include the paper in their PhD thesis? If so, you should synchronize your estimations of the size of each authors' contribution!

5. Conflicts of interest

Often journals require you to declare your conflicts of interest, and according to the [Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity](#) you should disclose any conflict of interest. If you have financial conflicts of interest it is mandatory and in accordance with the Code to disclose it.

General considerations

Is any of your work funded by companies, institutions, or organizations that could be thought to have a financial interest in the results of your study being in one way rather than another? If so, declare it!

Do you, your close family or friends, hold assets, the value of which may be affected by the result of your study? If so, declare it!

Are you affiliated with, or do you hold a partnership with, companies, institutions, or organizations that could be thought to have a financial interest in the results of your study being in one way rather than another? If so, declare it!

If still in doubt, see the specific guidance of the journal, or write and ask the editor of the journal.

6. (Ethical) Permissions

Journals may require you to document the relevant legal and ethical permissions of your study. You might also be expected to, or it may be required of you to, document relevant legal and ethical permissions in your PhD thesis. You should therefore be aware of the legal and ethical requirements to your study, and you should know how to document the granted permissions.

General considerations

Does your study involve clinical research?

Journals often require a file number referring to the registration of the [Regional/National Committee on Health Research Ethics](#)' permission of your research.

It is increasingly required that clinical trials are registered in international databases like clinicaltrials.gov

Does your clinical research project include test of drug(s) and/or medical equipment?

Approval from [Danish Medicines Agency](#) (Lægemiddelstyrelsen) is required and journals often requires a filenumber referring to the registration of the permission.

Is your research based on information from hospital records?

Approval from the [Danish Patient Safety Authority](#) may be required and journals may have requirements of documentation.

Does your research involve gene-technology or therapy?

If so, it should be approved by the [The Danish Working Environment Authority](#). Journals may have requirements of documentation.

Does your research involve radiopharmaceuticals?

If so, it should be approved by [the Danish Medicines Agency](#) (Lægemiddelstyrelsen). Journals may have requirements of documentation.

Does your study involve animal testing?

Journals may require documentation of [The Animal Experiments Inspectorate](#)'s permission of your study.

Does your study involve personal data?

If so, it should be approved by [the Faculty Secretariat](#). Journals may have requirements of documentation.

Sometimes journals require (or encourage to) permissions from the institutional review board. This is often, but not only, in regards to research including surveys and interviews. Journals may require permissions from [the Research Ethics Committee of Science and Health, Copenhagen University](#).

7. Data Management

Submitting a paper, and even more your PhD thesis, gives you the opportunity to check your data management. Journals may ask questions pertaining to data management.

General considerations

What is your primary material? Where is it stored now? Where and how do you aim to store it in the future?

What are your data? Where are your data stored now? Where and how do you aim to store them in the future?

Do you work with personal data? Have they been anonymized?

If yes, where did you store the informed consents?

If no, where and how are they stored? See more at [KUnet](#).

Do you intend to, and are you required to, share your data at the end of your project? If so, where will you share them? See more at [KUnet](#).

If you have questions about data management you may ask them at: datamanagement@ku.dk

8. Other issues

Considerations specific to journal submission

If your research involve animal research, your paper should be aligned with the [ARRIVE guidelines](#)!

Considerations specific to submission of your PhD thesis

Have you discussed with your supervisor who to nominate as members of your assessment committee for your PhD thesis? See more at your [PhD School](#).

Did you consider and have you talked to your supervisor and other partners about your work responsibilities in regards to publication of articles after your PhD project? For example, if you receive an 'accepted with minor revision' feedback from a journal you submitted a paper to while you were still a PhD student. Who shall revise and re-submit the paper?

General considerations

Make sure your English is correct (linguistically fluent etc.) in your papers and your thesis.

If you intend to apply for a patent on an invention you have made, do not publish or present your work publicly before you have filed an application! See more at [dkpto.dk](#)

Do you consider your work to be a piece of responsibly conducted research? If not, do not submit it!