

**Writing for Publication: Top Tips.**

Before you start to write your paper, you need to know which journal or publication you will be submitting it to. This is really important as each journal will have their own guidance and instructions for authors regarding the format and specifics they require. If these are not adhered to then your piece may be rejected even before it’s read!

Journals will be similar in many respects, so this guidance is a general guide detailing different areas to consider but as stated above check with the journal.

Remember!

If you have written a dissertation or thesis, you will have a huge amount of content, the important thing to remember is that you need to scale it down dramatically; journal articles have significantly lower word counts.

The structure and content of a paper will be different depending on if you undertook a qualitative or quantitative study.

Structure

**Title** – The title is very important! Make sure it is relevant and interesting, so people want to read on

**Authors** – Anyone who has made a significant contribution to the paper and research/project should be named as an author. The first author is the person who has had the most input into the research and prepares most of the paper.

**Abstract** – The abstract usually consists of the research/project background, aim and objectives, methodology, design, results, and conclusions. This section is often strictly limited (roughly 250 words) so you need to be concise. Think of the back of a book – it provides a snapshot.

**Keywords** – Include around 3-10 keywords which encompass the research. These help for cross referencing and searches.

**Introduction** – Think of this as the ‘Why’ section. You will need to describe the background to the research/project, what you researched and why – often referred to as the rationale (highlighting the importance of it and/or the gap/problem you identified). Research question, aim and objectives are described here as well.

**Literature** – Depending on the journal this may be a standalone section, or it could be included in the introduction. You will need to include a short review of key articles and documents in literature to provide an overview of the theoretical conversation. If there is a vast amount of literature, then cite those which are landmark articles and had a significant impact in the field.

**Methodology** – Think of this as the ‘What did you do’ section. This will include research design, theoretical perspective, setting, sample, inclusion and exclusion criteria, dates, data collection process, ethical approval and the analytical framework/statistical tests used.

**Findings –** Think of this as the ‘What did you find out’ section. This is where you will detail what you found from the data/results from any tests. Try to present it so that it addresses your research question. This section will be presented differently depending on if you conducted qualitative or quantitative research. You can use subheadings, quotes and themes, tables and graphs if relevant, ensure that your findings are organised.

**Discussion** – Think of this as the ‘What does it mean?’ section. This section often starts with a summary of the main findings and then a description of why they are important – what does it mean for the sector, for professionals, policy makers, commissioners etc. Comparison is usually made to literature. You will also need to outline the strengths and any limitations of the research and provide recommendations for practice or future research.

**Conclusion** – Link clearly to your research question and objectives, keep It clear and succinct.

**Acknowledgements** – This section should acknowledge anyone who has had an input or supported the research/project who are not the authors. This could be anyone who has given time ‘in kind’, funding bodies, ethics committees etc.

**References** – You will need to include a full reference list and also in-text references. The format of this can differ between journals so check the guidance for their preferred style.

You will end up drafting a few versions before you have a piece ready to be submitted, ask other people to have a read though it for you – both those in the field and those who are not to check it makes sense and reads well.