



FORHEAL: Forestry Higher Education Advancement in Laos (Erasmus+)  
Scientific Writing in English – National University of Laos, 2020

# **Six things to do before writing your manuscript**

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# Six things to do before writing your manuscript

1. Think about why you want to publish your work – and whether it's publishable
2. Decide what type of the manuscript to write
3. Choose the target journal
4. Pay attention to journal requirements in the Guide for Authors
5. Pay attention to the structure of the paper
6. Understand publication ethics to avoid violations



# Think about why you want to publish your work

- Writing a paper starts well in advance of the actual writing
- You must to think about why you want to publish your work at the beginning of your research, when you question your hypothesis
- You need to check then if the hypothesis and the survey/experiment design are publishable
- Ask yourself:
  - Have I done something new and interesting?
  - Is there anything challenging in my work?
  - Is my work related directly to a current hot topic?
  - Have I provided solutions to some difficult problems?



# Review's (journal) point of view: questions 1

- Does the paper contain sufficient new material?
- Is the topic within the scope of the journal?
- Is it presented concisely and well organized?
- Are the methods and experiments presented in the way that they can be replicated again?
- Are the results presented adequately?



## Review's (journal) point of view: questions 2

- Is the discussion relevant, concise and well documented?
- Are the conclusions supported by the data presented?
- Is the language acceptable?
- Are figures and tables adequate and well designed?, are there information duplicated? Are they too many?
- Are all references cited in the text included in the references list?



# Decide what type of the manuscript to write

You have at least three options on the type of manuscript:

- A. Full article or original articles: the most important papers. Often they are substantial completed pieces of research that are of significance as original research
- B. Letters/short communications: usually published for the quick and early communication of significant and original advances. They are much shorter than full articles (usually strictly limited in size, depending on each journal)
- C. Review papers: summarize recent developments on a specific hot topic, highlighting important points that have previously been reported and introduce no new information

HERE- We focus on (A), but include (C) as well



# Choosing the target journal

How to select the right journal for your work?

- No easy answers
- Discuss with the co-authors
- Discuss with your supervisor
- **NEWER**: submit your manuscript to many journals at the same time (!!!)



# Choosing the target journal 2

The most common way:

- Look at the articles you have used to prepare your manuscript
  - Where were they published?
- Probably most of them are concentrated in one or two journals
- Read very recent publications in each candidate journal (even in press), and find out the hot topics and the types of articles accepted





# Journal requirements in the Guide for Authors

- After selecting the journal for submission, go to the journal web page
- Download the Guide for Authors
- Print out it and read the guidelines again and again!



# Guide for Authors

- They generally include detailed editorial guidelines, submission procedures, fees for publishing open access, and copyright and ethical guidelines
- You **must** apply the Guide for Authors to your manuscript, even the first draft, using the proper text layout, references citation, nomenclature, figures and tables, etc.
- Following this simple tip will save your time – and the editor's time
- You must know that all editors hate wasting time on poorly prepared manuscripts. They may well think that the author shows no respect



## Pay attention to the structure of the paper

- More and more journals have new types of structure for their articles
- It is crucial to consult the Guide for Authors

### **CORE TOPIC IN THIS COURSE**

- This is one of the key elements in this course
- We will discuss this in detail during the week
- Part of the individual writing and coaching



# General structure of the scientific paper

However, in general, most of them follow the same structure:

- A section that enables indexing and searching the topics, making the paper informative, attractive and effective. It consists of the Title, the Authors (and affiliations), the Abstract and the Keywords.
- A section that includes the main text, which is usually divided into: Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion and Conclusions.
- A section that includes the Acknowledgements, References, and Supplementary Materials or annexes.



# Publication ethics to avoid violations

- One of the worst things in science is plagiarism
- Plagiarism and stealing work from colleagues can lead to serious consequences, both professionally and legally
- Violations include data fabrication and falsification, improper use of human subjects and animals in research, and using another author's ideas or wording without proper attribution
- Include many other issues: discussed later this week



# Difficult? – Sometimes, but remember

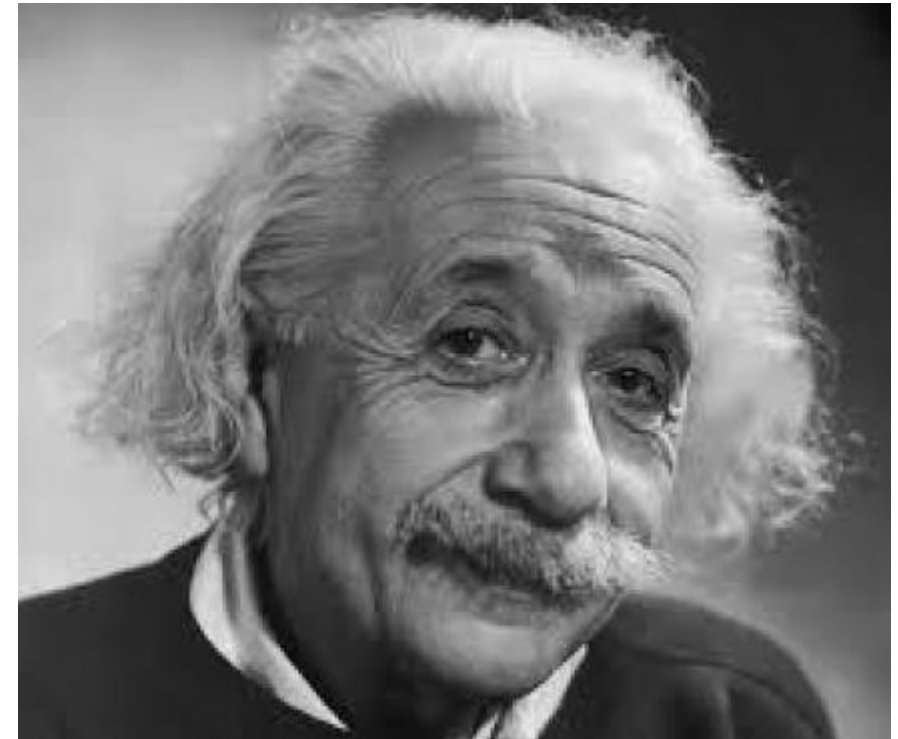
- Appreciate your own work – your research is important and needs to be communicated
  - If you do not take care it, no one takes
- Editors and reviewers are all busy scientists, just like you
  - Make things easy to save them time
- There is no secret recipe for success – just some simple rules, dedication and hard work



“Genius is 1% talent and 99% percent hard work”

“It is not that I'm so smart, but I stay with the questions much longer”

“Genius is 1% talent and 99% percent hard work...”



*Albert Einstein*



# Thank you



Tangkuban Perahu, Java, Indonesia. Photo: M. Kanninen

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