

Academic Writing Q&A Series:

6/“How long might an average student take to put out a respectable manuscript?
Given that the student is a first-time author.”

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About me

- Over 20 years working at the intersection of academic libraries, scholars, and technology
- Over 10 years on a STEM campus
- International career (US native now working/living in Europe)
- Editorial assistance (with formal acknowledgment) for over 40 peer-reviewed STEM articles
- On the editorial board of two journals, one based in Canada and one in Austria
- Independent consultant working mostly with doctoral candidates, postdoctoral researchers, and professors
 - All answers in this video reflect my experience in scholarly publishing to date (in the future, some things might change)

6/“How long might an average student take to put out a respectable manuscript out?
Given that the student is a first-time author.”

Answer:

Writing one's first manuscript can take a long time if you are not used to the process and it's impossible to estimate an average time-to-publication. It also depends on what you want to publish, a full research article, a commentary, a review article, and so on

I would recommend planning for your first research article manuscript at least one year before you need it published

If you are unfamiliar with the scholarly communications environment, learn as much as you can about the process before you start, asking your mentor questions as needed

- Learn more: <https://www.techlib.cz/en/84160-academic-reading-and-writing> and the other videos in this series

What is your research goal? (or: pre-writing “homework”)

Remember, to write a proper research article, you need to create a scientifically well-founded, original research project that fills a research gap, and this can take time before you even start writing because you need an understanding of the literature in your field and how your research itself will fill a research gap in your field

- Understanding where you want to publish
- Well-formulated research question(s)
- Appropriate quantitative, qualitative, or mixed research methods
- Understanding of what your data/results means in the context of the research gap/literature

“It takes a village”: crucial post-draft collaborative tasks

With all this homework done in advance, writing the actual manuscript will be a lot easier and take less time than it would if you were not organized, but you will still need to make sure you have enough time to:

- Read/re-read your manuscript multiple times once you write it
- Send to at least one other reviewer (mentor, trusted colleague)
- English review by a native speaker, if you are a non-native English speaker

All these steps take time and concentrated effort, even if you use some technology tools to assist with certain things along the way (see videos one and four in this series)

What we learned today

- Pre-writing “homework” will help make the writing process easier (and maybe faster)
- Collaboration, though it adds some time to the manuscript preparation process, is important once you complete your first draft, even if you are the sole author of your manuscript. It might take some time, but it will improve your manuscript even before peer review