From Thesis to Publication

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Introduction and General Principles
Deciding to do postgraduate work

• Personal trajectory
• Motivation
  – Curiosity
  – Better employment opportunities
  – Title
• Reality
  – Time and effort
  – Cost
  – Sacrifices
Being a researcher

• Requirement to publish your work
  – Moral obligation (public funding)
  – Academic
    • career
  – Funding
  – Other

• Importance of peer review
Key elements to success

• Hard work
• Foster the ability to adapt
  – To one's own changing circumstances
  – To change in general
• Don’t be afraid to try new things or to enter into previously unchartered waters
• Respect other people’s dignity
Coping with discomfort

• It’s up to you and the choices you make
• Set small goals for yourself and meet them
• If we’re growing, we’re going to be out of our comfort zone
• The pain of discipline is far less than the pain of regret
• Failure does not mean defeat
Perceived failure

- Acceptance into a program
- Experiments
- Fund raising
- Publishing
“The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.”

Nelson Mandela
Planning, executing and writing up your post-graduate work
Planning and executing your project

• Identification of a topic
• Identification of a supervisor
• Planning your project
• Funding (personal and project)
• Being realistic
• Critical mass
  – Not working in isolation
  – Trouble shooting
Writing your dissertation/thesis

• Timing
• Planning/outline
  – Content
  – Time required
  – Assistance with writing
  – Supervisor input and time to respond
Authorship

• Recognized problems with authorship:
  – Including people who took little or no part in the research
  – leaving out people who did take part

• Solutions:
  – Encourage a culture of ethical authorship
  – Start discussing authorship when you plan your research project
  – Decide on authorship before you start each article
Translating your post-graduate work into a research paper
Why publish?

• Academic requirement
  – Funding
  – Promotion
  – Ranking/rating

• Sharing your ideas
  – Advancement of your domain – common good
  – Recognition

• Intellectual property
Key points

• Tell a story
  – Capture the interest of your reader
  – Keep your reader’s interest

• Focus on the reader and not on yourself

• You need to sell your story
  – It is your work, you must sell it
  – Simply having done the work does not mean it will be recognized

• Be concise – use only as many words as you need and no more
Making it easier to publish

• Visualize while writing your dissertation/thesis
  – Article
  – Journal
    • Read similar articles in your target journal

• Quality versus quantity
  – Start slowly
  – Get it right from the start!
    • Then move on
Selecting a journal

• Topic

• Impact factor
  – Reflects the average number of citations of articles published in science and social science journals
  – Used as a proxy for the relative importance of a journal within its field
  – Journals with higher impact factors are deemed to be more important than those with lower ones
  – Generally more difficult to have your work published in higher impact factor journals

• Other
Article structure

• Title page
• Abstract
• Introduction
• Materials and Methods
• Results
• Discussion
• Acknowledgements
• References
• Figure legends
• Figures and tables
Editor’s advice on how to get your article published

**Study the journal.** The first step is to know who the journal is for and the kinds of articles it publishes

**Use good English.** Reviewers often reject papers because the grammar is bad, rather than on the basis of the content

**Be realistic.** Be aware of the value of your results but don’t over-interpret them

**Don’t try to sound important.** Write in simple clear language
Editor’s advice on how to get your article published

Tell a coherent story, and don’t make sweeping conclusions if you don’t have the results to support them; i.e. don’t be over-speculative

Make sure the title matches the content, e.g. don’t use the title “Impact of climate change on bird ecology” when there isn’t a single climate parameter in your paper

Read lots of papers, and learn from them
Common problems

• The paper is too long
• The paper is not well structured
• The writing and figures are not clear
• The author has not explained the general interest of the specific issues
• The author assumes too much specific knowledge from the reader
• The subject matter is not suitable for the journal
## Dissertation/thesis vs. Journal Article

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Difference</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Abstract</strong></td>
<td>Dissertation 120 to 350 words; journal article 150 to 250 words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td>The introduction in a dissertation is longer than in a journal article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Literature review</strong></td>
<td>Journal article literature review will be much shorter than a dissertation and will be far more focused</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Research methodology</strong></td>
<td>In a journal article this will describe the methods used and will not include an extensive discussion of the research approach and philosophy found in a dissertation</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Research findings and analysis</strong></td>
<td>In a journal article this will provide the main findings and analysis of the research and will not report all the results as commonly found in a dissertation; fewer figures and tables in a research article than a dissertation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discussion</strong></td>
<td>The discussion section in a dissertation will be longer than in a journal manuscript submission</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>References</strong></td>
<td>Fewer references will be cited in a journal article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appendices</strong></td>
<td>Space and content requirements will limit the use of appendices in journal articles</td>
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Summary
Take-home messages

• When you start writing up your thesis/dissertation, do so with a publication(s) in mind
• If you are to be recognized as a serious researcher, you must publish
• The importance of peer review
• Practice, practice, practice
• Enjoy what you are doing
Thank you