

Tips for first-time *Legal Studies* authors

This advice has been put together by the journal *Legal Studies* and Cambridge University Press to support early career scholars and encourage them to submit appropriate work to the journal.

What should I publish on?

- Journals are looking for scholarship that says something new; is there an aspect of your research that is particularly innovative or adds a new perspective to the current literature. Make sure you clearly highlight the contribution of your research in the article
- The *Legal Studies* editorial team and reviewers want to be excited; only submit a paper that you feel excited about yourself
- Is there a topic you would like to test for a book; it is entirely appropriate to publish a few articles on a topic that will later become a book
- Consider testing your topic at a workshop or conference before writing a full article
- Discuss your idea with your colleagues, perhaps even asking them to do a pre-submission peer review of your paper

Is my topic appropriate for *Legal Studies*?

- Ask colleagues which journals they recommend for your particular topic
- Read the scope of *Legal Studies* carefully, if your article does not fit the scope of the journal it will likely be immediately rejected or time will be wasted when it could be being evaluated by a more appropriate journal; spend time looking at previous content published by the journal to evaluate your fit
- Consider what kind of audience you are hoping for – if a large audience is important than a generalist journal like *Legal Studies* might be most appropriate; if you want to reach those most interested in your field, then think about a specialist journal

How can I make my article more 'publishable'?

- Think about what the peer reviewers will be looking for; they want to be excited
- Be explicit about the something 'new' that your article is adding to the literature
- Write in clear English and if English is not your first-language consider using a professional editing service; ask colleagues to proof-read your work
- Pay attention to the title and abstract; the title should clearly describe your topic and make the piece easily discoverable online; the abstract should be a succinct summary
- Your article should present a detailed analysis rather than a simple narrative or commentary on a list of cases or legislation
- Make sure you make an arguable case and that your argument flows logically, using clear headings to break up the text

- Take time to check your citations thoroughly and ensure they are complete; ensure you reference the related literature accurately and completely and do not change its meaning to support your argument
- Be careful to make sure your article would be of interest to a global audience
- Ensure you are happy that your article is complete; do not expect to finesse your text or add additional material at a later stage
- Use *Legal Studies'* instructions for authors to put your paper into journal style
- Ensure you have adhered to the word limit (being over or under word count is likely to result in immediate rejection)
- Please anonymise your work for the double blind peer review process by eliminating any author details and anonymising any citations that refer to your own work
- Please submit via the journal's electronic submission system ScholarOne
- Do abide by the journal's exclusive submission policy. Finding out an article has been submitted to another journal at the same time is likely to frustrate the editorial team and discourage publication this time or in the future

What happens after submission?

- Many papers are simply desk rejected without ever going to reviewers, a common reason is being out of scope of the journal
- Other articles will proceed to double-blind peer review (neither author or reviewer will know the identity of the other)
- Common decisions are reject, revise and resubmit, accept with minor or major revisions, an immediate accept is very unlikely on any journal
- Take seriously any revisions suggested
- Include with any revised manuscript a note on how you have responded to reviewer comments; if you have not made the suggested amendments say why

What should I expect if my article is accepted for publication?

- Respond to any queries from the editorial team or any copyeditor promptly
- Be ready to check proofs quickly (*Legal Studies* gives authors five days for this process)
- Proof corrections should be limited to typos and errors of law, substantial changes to your article are not allowed by any journal at this stage
- Expect to be asked to transfer your copyright to the journal's owner (The Society of Legal Scholars (SLS)) and complete any documentation relating to this with care
- Check the re-use and self-archiving policy of the journal carefully before considering re-publishing or archiving in a repository
- Once published think about how you can help promote usage of your article, for example through social media, see a useful guide here

What is the best way to move on from a rejection?

- Try another journal but consider amending your article to respond to reviewer comments before you do; the same reviewers could easily appear on another journal and you do not want to insult them
- Do not be afraid to send a more suitable piece to *Legal Studies* in the future
- Consider other types of submission such as writing a book review (a good way to show you are eager to write as well as increasing your profile and network of contacts)
- Contact the Editors to be added to *Legal Studies'* database of peer reviewers for a chance to support the journal and learn more about the publishing process

For further guidance see Cambridge University Press' collection of author guides here.