

PROGRESSIO



Publishing an article: What editors want

J. E. Mitchell

Directorate: Curriculum Learning and Development
University of South Africa
e-mail: mitchje@unisa.ac.za

A. I. le Roux

Directorate: Curriculum Learning and Development
University of South Africa
e-mail: lrouxai@unisa.ac.za

Abstract

As editors of an academic journal, in recent times we have received unsolicited academic articles that have proved to be unacceptable because they did not comply with the necessary requirements. An analysis of the articles, reviewers' comments and opinions of other editors provides the basis of our presentation. The investigation showed that while it is claimed that there is no formalised structure to an academic article, there is a generally acceptable 'pattern' that editors require. The title and abstract should reflect what the article is about; there should always be an introduction that grabs the reader's attention and presents the nature of the problem. We found that most academic writing contains a section devoted to a review of the literature, to show that new research is built on a sound foundation. In addition, most articles report on actual research done to substantiate a new finding or theory. The discussion of the results of the research, new findings and the interpretation of the main findings are usually the focus of an article. This article presents some of the elements editors said were generally overlooked by

contributors, and provides guidance to prospective writers on ways to achieve success in academic writing.

INTRODUCTION

As editors of an academic journal, we receive many submissions that we are unable to publish. Even though much has been written on how to write an academic article, some writers still do not adhere to the minimum requirements of a successful academic article. It could be argued that there are no hard-and-fast rules for publishing such articles, but research of the requirements of many journals and reviews of articles has shown that there are generally acceptable prerequisites that editors of academic journals demand from authors.

It has become difficult for editors to determine what is acceptable and to make appropriate selections of manuscripts for a particular journal. This is because they are often swamped with submissions they need to assess. There seems to be increasing pressure on academics to publish, and in the quest for publishing in quantity, quality seems to be suffering (Mitchell and Le Roux 2008). In the past, research findings and academic discussions were published solely as a means of serving the scientific community – it was science for the sake of science. However, today editors are put in a difficult position, because the publication of articles determines career advancement and financial reward for writers (Worsham 2008). Not only this, but it is the citation of an author's work by others that is also gaining importance for promotion and academic credibility (Eger 2009).

In addition, the transfer of scientific information has become so broad that it is difficult for editors to maintain the quality they strive for. The Internet, for all its benefits, is indiscriminate because any information can be posted without verification or 'gate keeping'. Editors cannot verify everything that is written in manuscripts, and therefore need to rely on reviewers who are experts in certain fields and even subfields. The selection and tracking of reviewers further complicates the work of the editor. In the end it is the task of the editor to assess the feasibility of a manuscript and to risk publishing it. As Bewlay (2007, 156) argues, there is no formula or guidebook for this, it comes with experience and often with 'editorial intuition'.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Editors of academic journals are faced with a very difficult task in that they are responsible for viewing, assessing and publishing the work of colleagues. This is because editors are often academics themselves who edit journals as an additional responsibility. This responsibility can have far-reaching implications for the editors, because they can have an influence on the academic future of contributors. Eger (2009) regards editors as a journal's 'most precious resource', because they are not journal staff and usually do the job because they want to contribute to science. According to Wellington and Nixon (2005), academic journals have a pivotal role to play in defining the broad parameters

of a particular discipline. In their endeavours they can play the roles of filters or gate-keepers, mediators or guardians, facilitators or defendants, as they try to interpret the understood rules of publishing.

While much has been written on how to write academic texts, from journal articles to doctoral theses, very little has been written on an academic level to explain what journal editors require from authors. Editors' forums and guidelines published on the Internet and in brochures exist, but there is a need for a more academic perspective on the problem.

While the concepts of what authors are advised to do and what editors want seem to overlap (which of course they do) there appears to be a gap between what writers presumably know to do, and the way in which they actually submit their manuscripts. Keiger (2008) states that much of what editors receive 'should never have been mailed, because the writer can't yet write, or wasn't careful, or didn't submit to an appropriate publication, or has nothing fresh to say'. In fact, weaknesses in manuscripts often have little to do with philosophical issues or approaches to research, but rather deal with the basics of analysis, evidence and presentation (Boellstorff 2008).

As mentioned above, much has been written about the elements of research. While it is not the purpose of this article to discuss research methodology as such, we feel it is necessary to consider the array of literature that exists for authors to consult.

Once an author has formulated the research problem of an article, editors expect that the next step will be for the author to select an appropriate research design. Simply put: what is the kind of study that the author has done? What type of study is best answered by the question that was formulated? For example, Bausell (1994) suggests a practical way of designing a scientific experiment project. He clearly describes the various steps in an experimental design, from the formulation of the research problem to the write-up of the results. At the same time, many websites contain valuable information regarding research design. Trochim (2006), for instance, sets out types of research design for the social sciences, while Vaishnavi and Kuechler (2004) consider the methods and philosophical underpinning of design research. The list is considerable.

A very useful overview of questionnaire design is presented by Sudman and Bradburn (1983). They provide an introduction to the basic principles of questionnaire construction for social sciences research. The work of Oppenheim (1992) deals with questionnaire design, interviewing and attitude measurement. He describes questionnaire planning and the question wording of several types of questions, as well as data processing and statistical analysis. As one would expect, many Internet sites of institutions all over the world also provide useful guidelines and instructions on developing and administering questionnaires. Amongst these, the Georgia Tech College of Computing (http://www.cc.gatech.edu/classes/cs6751_97_winter/Topics/quest-design/) and UNESCO (http://www.iiep.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Cap_Dev_Training/Training_Materials/Quality/Qu_Mod8.pdf) deserve mention.

Editors are always on the lookout for sound empirical field research reported in articles. Fieldwork is that part of the research process that involves going into the 'field'. The term 'fieldwork' is also sometimes used to refer to the 'doing' stage of research. Mitchell (1993) does a critical examination of methodological and ethical issues in field research, in particular, in covert research, while Fife (2005) considers the use of fieldwork in ethnographic studies of disadvantaged populations. Internet sites such as that of the Barcelona field studies centre (<http://geographyfieldwork.com/Fieldwork%20Methodology.htm>) and Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Field_work) provide interesting information that authors can access.

The ability to reconstruct the past through narrative techniques is the main focus of narrative studies. Josselson and Lieblich (1993) describe how the researcher can derive concepts from stories, and use these concepts to understand people. They also show how to transform story material from the journalistic or literary fields into academic and theoretical research results.

Studies known as surveys are usually quantitative in nature and aim to provide a broad overview of a representative sample of a large population. On the design of surveys, Fink (1995) pays attention to the purpose of the survey concerning description, comparison or prediction, while Fowler (2001) provides a comprehensive overview of the entire survey research process.

Qualitative evaluation approaches involve the use of predominantly qualitative research methods to describe and evaluate the performance of programmes in their natural settings. Kohler-Riessman (1994) discusses the use of field observations, interviews, case studies, organisational documents and literary narratives. Allan (1991) provides insight into the use of qualitative approaches to collecting and analysing primary data. He discusses two main methods: participant observations or ethnography, and qualitative depth or unstructured interviewing. Delamont (1992) concentrates on qualitative research in educational settings. The use of theory to generate a research problem is the focus of Silverman (1993), while Merriam (2009) provides a comprehensive overview.

Concerning quantitative techniques, Birnbaum (1981) provides a theoretical introduction to the assumption and methods of quantitative causal analysis. His discussion is restricted to recursive systems, while Wrench, Thomas-Maddox, Richmond and McCroskey (2008) concentrate on research in Communication Studies.

Comparative studies focus on the similarities and differences between groups of units of analysis (Mouton 2001). Such 'objects' can include individual organisations, cultures, countries, societies, institutions and even individuals. In this respect Ragin (1987) draws a comparison between two approaches to comparative research: the case-oriented comparative study versus the variable-oriented analysis, also called qualitative versus quantitative research.

As editors we have found many resources that can be consulted about effective scientific writing. In this regard Mauer (1996) and Winkler and McCuen (1999) have

been most useful, although many other sources abound on the Internet and in library collections.

OUR RESEARCH APPROACH

We have tried to gain insight into the practices and experiences of academic journal editors in South Africa and internationally. We chose to base our enquiry and discussion on a review of literature, a comparison of the reviewers' guides used by various journals (see Addendum C), and our own experience. The journals selected were drawn from a variety of disciplines, and represent South African and international publications. We consider ourselves to be participant observers in this endeavour, because we aim to provide an in-depth description of the expectations of professionals in the field of academic journal publishing (Mouton 2001).

DISCUSSION

The first thing editors look for, is that the article presented actually matches the subject terrain of the journal. Many editors bemoan the fact that manuscripts submitted to them are presented in an unacceptable way. The text layout, citation style, figures and tables are often not in keeping with the instructions laid down in the style guide of the journal. It saves a lot of the editor's as well as the author's time if manuscripts are presented in the house style of the journal. Addendum A presents an example of such a style sheet. Egar (2009) suggests that submitting manuscripts that do not comply with the requirements of a journal indicates a lack of respect on the part of the contributor. Walsh and Momsen (2007) express amazement at the number of 'inappropriate' papers that are submitted to journals and are rejected even before being sent for peer review.

It can, therefore, be accepted that before an editor can consider an article for review, and ultimately publication, the manuscript submitted should show evidence of care and dedication on the part of the author because, as Boellstroff (2008) states, 'professionalism counts.' The manuscript should comply with the subject and scope of the journal, and should be formatted according to the house style. Citations and references must be presented in the preferred style of the journal.

Generally speaking there seems to be a pattern that emerges as the accepted norm for academic articles. The usual structure of an article consists of an introduction, literature review, research methodology, findings (sometimes called discussion) and conclusion. Some articles end with recommendations, but not all. Even when this structure is not followed, successful articles show that the authors have something valid to say and present coherent arguments.

It is evident from our research that the title is an important aspect of every article. Other than in the academic tradition of the previous century, where long and tedious titles were acceptable, recent trends show a move towards more concise and pithy titles. The title should reflect what the article is about, but a catchy 'cute' title is not always what the editors are looking for.

First of all, a title should not be too long. In fact, a good rule of thumb is that it should not exceed ten words. The topic must be explicit, descriptive and relevant for publication in the chosen journal. It should also be a true reflection of the content, so that the prospective reader will be able to scan the title for a clue of what to expect.

If the title interests readers, they will probably consult the abstract. An abstract is a condensed version of a longer piece of writing that highlights the major points covered. It concisely describes the content and scope of the article, and reviews it in abbreviated form. As mentioned before, the requirements of the journal must be kept in mind at all times, even when compiling the abstract. In all cases writers are warned that if the word count limitation or the style of the abstract (set down by the journal) is not adhered to, the article might be rejected.

The abstract should be comprehensive and should include the research problem, the population studied (when applicable), the methodology and findings. It should summarise the contents and follow the order of the article. It should use the accepted introduction/body/conclusion structure, and be understandable to a wide audience. In addition, an abstract must be so well written that it can stand alone. This is because the abstract and key words are published on databases across the world, and it is through these databases that other academics become aware of the writer's work.

We have also found that the introduction of the article itself is generally regarded as the most important component of a submission. Unless readers are captivated within the first few sentences, they tend to 'tune out' and stop reading. Good introductions start in a confident and interesting way. They contextualise the studies reported on and discuss their relevance and importance. They also give the authors' theoretical, empirical or practical reasons for deciding on their various topics. Introductions should indicate the purpose, focus and importance of articles. They include thesis statements or hypotheses that contain the general topics and focus areas. They also discuss previous and related research or its absence, pointing out strengths and limitations. These aspects help authors justify their own research, as they try to convince the reader that they are adding to the existing knowledge base.

The literature review

Traditionally, it is usual for researchers to underpin what they have investigated with what has already been published in the field. For this reason, most academic writing contains a section devoted to a review of the literature on a certain topic. Therefore, a literature review can be seen as a description of what has already been published by acknowledged scholars and researchers, to show that new research is built on a sound foundation. It is the synthesis of many texts created in order to validate the argument being presented by the author. Even though literature studies usually present both sides of an argument they must be balanced, not biased in favour of a single point of view.

Successful literature reviews include a variety of resources, and indicate that seminal as well as the most recent works on developments in a field have been consulted. In

journal articles, literature studies are focused and concise, in contrast with literature studies in dissertations and theses, which tend to be much more comprehensive.

The argument

An article should provide an argument in which the author tries to convince the reader of his or her point of view. Merely restating the process of a research project is not acceptable, as an article which intends to contribute to the literature on a certain topic should indicate what new thoughts are being presented.

There must be a relationship between the argument and the data presented in an article. In addition, the argument needs to be valid. Needless to say, it must be factually correct and validated by accurate data. The deductions made must be logical, while conclusions should follow logically after the reasoned exposition of the data. The recommendations must be relevant to the data and conclusions.

Editors need authors to take care that the claims they make are well supported by data and that the thread of the argument is presented consistently throughout the article. All too often one line of argument is presented in the introduction, but is not continued throughout the article or verified by the data presented (Boellstorff 2008). Keeping to the 'pattern' of articles mentioned above helps authors structure their arguments, and helps readers follow the thread of what is being said.

The research method

Most articles report on research or use research to substantiate a new finding or theory. Other than in academic dissertations and theses, in articles only those aspects of the research that are important to the argument at hand, are included.

Journal editors expect the research method to be clearly described and appropriate to the investigation. The data cited must be reliable, valid and relevant. All this is taken on trust until the manuscript has been reviewed by specialists in the field, because editors do not have the capacity to test all research that is reported. Above all, authors must show that they are serious about their research. This is achieved through the care with which the research is presented. If authors do not demonstrate their own dedication to their research, it will be difficult for them to convince their readers to take their findings seriously (Eger 2009).

Discussion of results

The main focus of academic journal articles seems to be the discussion of the results. From our research it has become evident that, other than in dissertations and theses, the longest section of most articles is the discussion of the results. However, in successful articles this section is concise and to the point, the purpose of the article and the focus of the journal are evident in the summaries and interpretations of the main results. Both positive and negative aspects are discussed and alternative interpretations

are considered. What was significant from the research was that there are no speculations or recommendations in this section, as these are reserved for the sections dealing with conclusions and recommendations.

The conclusion

For some reviewers the concluding section seems to be a very significant part of an article, because it presents the end product of the researcher's endeavours and leads to further research. Conclusions that are strong and interesting and leave the reader thinking, are recommended. Other aspects of good conclusions are that they round off what has been stated in the article, and relate back to the literature study and research. They emphasise the connection between the research results and the literature reviewed, thus demonstrating the importance of the author's ideas. However, they do not include new data, discussions, recommendations or citations, because they are derived from discussions. They indicate the implications of the research and call for further research. In so doing they show that authors have committed themselves to a course of action.

The recommendations

Not all articles end with recommendations. Those that do are formulated tactfully, include cross-references to the literature study and conclusions, and help the article end on a strong note. The recommendations always flow from the conclusions and are often not presented as a separate section of the text.

The list of references

The list of references is a very important part of the article. One of the main complaints journal editors have is that authors do not take enough care with the reference list. It is essential that sources are cited accurately and in accordance with the journal's style. Accuracy is achieved by ensuring that names are spelled correctly and consistently, and source page numbers and publication dates are accurate and complete.

Finally, editors want to receive manuscripts that resemble published articles as closely as possible. In other words, they prefer manuscripts that are neatly typed, do not contain unnecessary typographical and language errors, and are meticulously edited. As Worsham (2008) points out, poorly proofread manuscripts could be an indication of sloppy scholarship and a lack of confidence.

Editing of the final manuscript

Most editors complain about the sloppy way in which many manuscripts are presented, by novice as well as experienced researchers and writers. A badly written text in which typographical and language errors abound is difficult to read. The argument becomes clouded and the purpose is lost. Even though most publishing houses provide language

editorial services, it is to the benefit of the author and the editor if the manuscript is professionally language-edited before submission.

We regard the issue of language accuracy as being so important that we include guidelines for prospective authors in this article (see Addendum B).

CONCLUSION

Academic journal editors make an important contribution to the dissemination of knowledge. They are usually academics themselves who edit journals because they believe journals are a way to advance research. They are often under stress to publish journals of high academic quality under conditions that are not conducive to achieving their goals. They consider each manuscript they receive, and when submissions do not comply with the requirements of their journal or are sloppily presented, their valuable time is wasted.

Academics are also under stress because now, more than ever, they are expected to publish the results of their research in journals that maintain a high standard. Academic journals exist for the dissemination of research. The academic community expects journals to publish new and original results in specific disciplines, in order to advance knowledge production and understanding. However, the electronic distribution of knowledge via the Internet places journals in a difficult position, because they need to compete with a vast array of often unedited and unverified information online.

In conclusion, in order to help editors do their work to the best of their ability, and to ensure the continuation of the dissemination of knowledge, authors should comply with the requirements laid down by specific journals. That is what editors want.

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Author date system

1. The *Chicago manual of style* author date system is used for **references in the text**. This technique involves inserting, in the text, the author's surname, the year of publication of the source and the page number(s) on which the information appears.
 Example: 'Ignorant of the law, without legal advice, competing for employment and services with others in a similar condition, the household is an easy victim of predation by the powerful' (Chambers 1983, 210).
 Example: Chambers (1983, 210) points out that poor households are powerless and vulnerable (p. 222) . . .
2. Use the following **punctuation** in individual references:
 Example: (Smith 1998, 20) (please note: no comma after surname).
3. An **alphabetical list of sources** consulted should be provided at the end of the articles, containing ALL the relevant information such as the author's surname and initials, date of publication, full title of the book or article, place of publication and publisher.

Example of entries:

In text:

- (Sturkin 1997, 20–30) **book**
- (Schellinger, Hudson and Rijsberman 1998) **three-author book**
- (Secher et al. 1996, 243) (Note: et al. is not italicised) **multiple-author book**
- (Michelangelo 1999, 122B134) **a translated book**
- (UNDP 2003, 14) **organisation as author**
- (Anon. 1547). **anonymous author**
- (Garcia 1987, vol. 2) **book volume**
- (Johnson 1979, sec. 24) **section**
- (Wiens 1983) **chapter in a multi-author book**
- (Weber, Bulet and Abel 1928) **edition**
- (Allison 1999, 26) **journal**
- (Wright 1968–1978, 2: 241) **multivolume work**
- (Barnes 1998, 2:244B255, 3: 29) **journal volume number with page reference**
- (Tulchin and Garland 2000) **series**
- (H. J. Brody, pers. comm.) **personal communication**
- (Kurland and Lerner 2000, chap. 9, doc. 3) **part of a document; URL**
- (Fischer and Siple 1990, 212n3) **note**.
- (Schwarz 2000) **unpublished thesis**

In reference list:

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Bias-free language

Biased language makes a work less credible. Use gender-neutral language and language free of slighting allusions, assumptions, or stereotypes based on race, ethnicity, religion, disability, birth or family status.

Capitalisation

1. The **titles of books** should be mostly in lower case, that is, capitalise the initial word, also capitalise the first letter of the subtitle.
Example: *Cape Flats details: Life and culture in the townships of Cape Town*.
2. **Journal titles** are always upper case for the initial letter of all words.
Example: *South African Journal of Higher Education*.
3. Do NOT capitalise in the following instance:
The *South African Journal of Psychology* appears three times a year. The journal only accepts. . .

Copyright/Permissions

A source should always be given, whether or not permission is necessary. Please ensure that you have obtained copyright where necessary. Please consult the Copyright Permissions Officer at Unisa Press for further details.

Dates

Use day, month and year (e.g. 4 April 2009).

Endnotes/Notes

1. Endnotes/**Notes** are used instead of footnotes, since extensive footnotes complicate the page make-up of the journal.
An **exception** is scholarly works in the Classics and History, where the footnotes sometimes outweigh the body copy anyway.
2. Place at the end of the article before the references.
3. Number consecutively in each article.

Place numbers (superscript) in text after any punctuation mark, including bracket but excluding a dash.

Numbers should come at the end of a sentence or at least a clause, rather than in the middle.

They should follow a quotation.

BUT: Where the meaning of words is explained, please add number immediately after the word.

Example:

NOTES

1. See Sayre (1965). These discussions cover nearly . . . The report of the . . . We examine aspects of the efficiency of the civil service in paragraph 3.1.

En-dash

When typing an en-dash in a manuscript, please use a double hyphen, namely (--).

Figures and tables

1. Please indicate in what **electronic** format they were generated.
2. **Attach** the figures and tables **separately** at the end of the article. Indicate clearly in the text where the figures or tables should be placed.
3. Provide clear **captions, labelling and headings**.

Placement:

Figure captions are placed below the figure

Table captions are placed above the table.

4. When **referring to** figures or tables in the text, write out:

Example: Refer to Figure 1 for . . .
The statistics (Table 2) for . . .

Footnotes

See **Endnotes/Notes**.

Footnotes are used in scholarly works in the Classics and in historical texts.

Headings

Please indicate clearly what the levels are. Headings are usually numbered in journals.

Infinitives

Try not to split infinitives.

Interword spacing

Please do not put two spaces after a full stop or colon. If the (page-proof) text is fully justified and the tracking slightly loose, then there will be a big gap between the full stop marking the end of the previous sentence and the start of the next, which then has to be corrected manually at page proof stage for aesthetic reasons (i.e., to prevent rivers of gaps).

Italicisation

Italic is used for

1. **titles** of books, periodicals, newspapers, plays, some musical works, paintings and films.
2. **foreign phrases** not yet naturalised in an English sentence – these should have the correct accents

	Example:	<i>en route</i> and <i>vis-à-vis</i> .
	BUT:	roman for proper names such as institutions and streets, and roman in quotation marks for foreign quotations.
3.	identification	of letters or words referred to
	Example:	The word <i>communication</i> is used to . . .
4.	emphasis	(but do so sparingly and add in whose emphasis).
Numbers		
1.	Numbers from one to ten are spelt out	in words, except for dates, page numbers, exact measurements and series of quantities.
2.	Numbers applicable to the same category	(i.e., in a series) should be treated alike throughout
	Examples:	one out of every thirty women)
3.	Do not use a comma	in thousands: space the numerals
	Example:	2 123 not 2,123.
Paragraphs		
Please leave a line between paragraphs. The designer/typographer will decide on open line versus indent. Sometimes indents are lost in the electronic conversion from word-processing package (e.g. WordPerfect) to page-layout package (e.g. PageMaker).		
Parochialism		
When copy-editing information books, think of readers in other countries.		
1.	Use 'South Africa'	instead of 'this country'; 'South African' instead of 'our'; 'in the early 2000s' instead of 'in the last few years'.
2.	Avoid: 'we'.	Who are you? The author, South Africans, readers, target market (e.g. sociologists)?
3.	Check in which hemisphere the reader will be in	cases where words such as 'winter' and 'summer' are used.
Participles		
Please avoid 'dangling' participles.		
Example:	Not being stamp collectors, there was nothing in the exhibition to interest us.	
Correct:	Not being stamp collectors, we did not find anything in the exhibition to interest us.	
Caution:	Commenting on the state of the nation in his address at the opening of Parliament on 14 February, President Thabo Mbeki stressed . . .	
Recast:	President Thabo Mbeki, commenting on the . . . , stressed . . .	
Quotations		
1.	Prose quotations of 60 words and longer	are indented and blocked; anything shorter is run on in the text.
2.	Use square brackets to indicate changes	made to the original quote.
3.	Any emphases added	must be noted as [my italic/emphasis] or [emphasis added] or [original emphasis].
4.	Omissions	are indicated by an ellipses (three equally spaced points . . .) Standardise to three points throughout. To distinguish the omission of one or more paragraphs, use a row of points on a separate line.
Note:	Do not start a quotation with an ellipsis to indicate that the quote forms part of a full sentence.	

Example: Not ' . . . a single victory on the battlefield, a political triumph' but 'a single victory on the battlefield, a political triumph'

5. **Sources** (see entries under **Bibliography** and **Referencing system**).

Quotation marks

Use single, but double quotation marks within single.

's' and 'z'

Example: *civillise* and not *civilize*.

Use 's': 'z' requires a study of the Greek stems of the English words and regular checking in the *Oxford Dictionary*. Furthermore, the excessive use of verbs ending in '-ize' formed from nouns is inelegant.

Referencing system

Please note the **difference** between academic **journals** and **books**.

Journals: use the author date system (see entry under **Author date system**).

Sentences

Please use short, compact sentences and avoid complicated multi-phrased constructions. Use the active voice.

Spelling

1. Please **check** that **names** are spelt correctly, since it is difficult for the copy-editor to decide which to use when there is a variation in the spelling (also, it is not always possible to get hold of the author/source in good time).

2. **Preferred spelling**

Use the British form of words. Here are a few examples of what is required:

Past participles: dreamt, learnt not dreamed and learned

Word form: orientate/orientated not orient/oriented.

Tables

See entry under 'Figures and tables'.

Table of contents

1. Ensure that there **is** a table of contents and that it reflects all the elements of the journal
2. Ensure that the article headings **marry up** in terms of order of entries, spelling and wording.

Technical presentation of manuscripts (Notes for authors)

Please adhere strictly to the following when presenting manuscripts (any article that does not comply will be returned):

1. Authors should submit three **copies** of their article on A4 paper, together with an **electronic file** (the electronic file may be e-mailed, but must be followed up by a print-out) of the articles to be published.
Please ensure that the electronic file is exactly the **same version** as the hard copy, and that they are the latest and final version. This is essential both for initial submission and if you are asked to revise and resubmit.
Keep the electronic file as simple as possible, that is, do not attempt to lay out the page.
2. The full **title** of the article should be supplied on the title page.

3. A **list of contents** indicating the order of the articles: ensure that the headings marry up with that of the articles included for publication.
4. Type the manuscript in one-and-a-half **line spacing** (including all notes and references) on one side of the paper only
5. The article should be between 5 000 and 8 000 words in **length**.
6. An **abstract** of 200 words in length, covering the main factual points and statement of objective or problem, method, results and conclusions, should accompany an article.
7. A list of at least six **keywords** for abstracting and indexing services should accompany each article.
8. All **notes** should be kept to a minimum and appear at the end of the article before the list of references.
9. **Figures and tables** should not be embedded in the text, but be saved as separate files at the end of each article with their position clearly marked in the text. Indicate clearly in which format they were generated. Please supply typed captions including sources and acknowledgements.
10. Where an article appears in a **language other than English**, an English summary of the article must accompany it, as well as an indication of whether or not an English translation of the article is available.
11. Please supply short biographical **details of each author** as well as the name, mailing address, telephone and facsimile numbers, e-mail address, and affiliation and country of each corresponding author at the time of the work. Please note: this information must only appear on the title page, this helps with the peer-review process.
12. Check that all **references** referred to in the text are included and correspond with those in the reference list at the end of the article.
13. Provide proof that **permissions** have been obtained for reproducing illustrations and copyright material quoted in the text, with appropriate acknowledgements (and/or credits in captions) included, and any reproduction fees paid.
14. Submit a **signed publishing agreement** for each article and review article (although not for individual book reviews). A copy of this agreement can be obtained from the Copyright Officer at Unisa Press.
15. Once the journal editor/contributor has received first page proofs, **ALL queries raised by the copy-editor** must be addressed. If not, the article will be resubmitted to the appropriate person until such time as the production process can continue.
16. All articles shall be critically **reviewed** by at least two referees.

Titles, books and journals

Please see **Capitalisation**.

URLs (uniform resource locators)

1. Punctuation: even if it follows a period, the first letter of the protocol (e.g. the *h* in *http*) is not capitalised. Punctuation marks used following a URL are perceived as belonging to the surrounding text. It is therefore unnecessary to omit appropriate punctuation after the URL or to bracket the URL.
2. Line breaks: if a URL has to be broken at the end of a line, the break should be made **after**: a double slash (`//`) or a single slash (`/`).
before: a tilde, a period, a comma, a hyphen, an underline, a question mark, a number sign, or a per cent symbol.

before or after: an equal sign or an ampersand.

Note to authors: please type the URL on a new line in you manuscript. The copy-editor will indicate the break.

Verbless phrases

Strong sentences are driven by strong verbs and not nouns.

Addendum B

Some hints and tips for language use

- Remember the KISS principle: Keep it simple, sweetheart.
- Ask yourself: Why am I writing this? Who am I writing for? What will the reader do with this information?
- Use simple words, short sentences, divide your work into readable bits by using headings and subheadings.
- In general, use words that suggest a definitive action (*read* rather than *refer to*, *try* rather than *make an attempt*).
- An implicit dialogue with readers is essential.
- Help the reader to refer backwards and predict what is to come by using explicit cohesive links (As we can see; Nevertheless; However).
- Provide a definition for new and foreign terms and words when they are used for the first time or illustrate key terms with clear, concrete examples.
- Consider where you could place a simple graphic: remember a picture tells a thousand words.

Checklist for language use	
Language is simple, direct	
The short (20 words max.)	
Sentences are readable, clear, and concise	
The paragraphs are short (5 sentences max.)	
Paragraphs are effective. They have unity and coherence. Each one focuses on one specific idea.	
The spelling correct	
There are no grammar errors	
Tenses are used consistently	
All the necessary articles (a, an, the) are included	
Each sentence has a verb	
No slang expressions are used	
Limited jargon is used	
Punctuation is correct	
All the correct words are capitalised	
Each paragraph is clearly indicated - indented or a line skipped	
Words like: <i>recommend, advise, request, suggest</i> , are used instead of stating individual ideas as fact	
Words and phrases like <i>first, second, next, after, last, for example, for instance, to illustrate, in addition, also, besides that, moreover, furthermore, in conclusion, finally, however, nevertheless, this means that, therefore, thus</i> are used to bridge one part of the argument with another	
There are concrete examples or analogies	
Reference is made to aspects mentioned before and after throughout the text	
Editorial accuracy	
The manuscript complies with the editorial and technical requirements of the journal	
The manuscript has been language edited	

Publishing an article: What editors want

The manuscript has been carefully proofread – there are no typographical errors	
The article has been critically read by at least one peer	
General checklist	
A process of pre-writing, writing, and rewriting has been followed	
The article has high academic content	
The research and findings contribute to knowledge	
The research advances theory	
The topic is relevant for publication in a particular journal	
The tone is appropriate for the chosen journal	
The article reflects original and independent research	
The research is topical and of high quality	
The key concepts are defined at the beginning of the article and/or explained in the course of the article	
The key concepts are used consistently in the article	
The research problems and/or hypothesis are addressed in the article	
There is a systematic development of the argument	
There is a 'golden thread' of coherence throughout the article	
The introduction mirrors the conclusion	
The literature review and the research = conclusions and recommendations	
The article deals with what has really been accomplished, not what one wished to accomplish	
Research follows on the theory presented	

Addendum C: Reviewer's guide

Progressio: South African Journal of Open and Distance Learning Practice Peer reviewer's guide

1. Is this paper suitable for publication in Progressio ? Does it make a substantial contribution to Open and Distance Learning?	
2. Please suggest adjustments to be made to ensure that the focus of the article is on ODL.	
3. Has the topic been soundly motivated?	
4. In the case of a research articles has the problem been posed very clearly?	
5. Is the argument presented in the article logically expounded?	
6. Does the article culminate in a logical conclusion?	
7. In the case of a research article, is the research methodology scientifically acceptable and justifiable?	
8. Are the results based on a clearly demarcated field of research and/or comprehensive database?	
9. In the case of descriptive article or case study, has sufficient information been presented to provide an objective picture of the situation?	
10. Are the facts presented accurate?	
11. Is there evidence of unnecessary bias? Please be specific in your comments, and offer advice to rectify the bias.	
12. Is the aim of the article mentioned in the beginning? Is there evidence that the aim has been achieved?	
13. Are accepted technical terms used? Is the article written in acceptable academic style? Is the formulation clear throughout?	
14. Is the Reference List adequate? Are references used evidence of a thorough investigation of some of the latest thoughts on a particular issue? If not, can you suggest further reading?	
Recommendations	
1. I recommend that the article be published without any alterations.	
2. I recommend that the article be referred back for revision to meet the following requirements before it can be published:	
3. I recommend the article be rejected and resubmitted after serious revision. I recommend the following changes:	