***Choosing a target journal and using its instructions to authors***

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| Module 5 | Mentorship and the publication process |
| Sub-module A | Choosing a target journal and using its instructions to authors |
| Length of sub-module | Approximately 2 to 3 hours |
| Sub-module summary | This final module, divided into two sub-modules, still relating to the research communication context, provides an overview of the publication process and is framed in terms of guiding mentees through this process. In the first sub-module we will focus on choosing a target journal and using its instructions to authors. You are encouraged to draw on your own (mentoring-related) experiences and the lessons gained from them, during discussions. |
| Equipment, visual aids and handouts (on the day) | PowerPoint projector, screen and laptop  Internet connection  Flipchart paper, pens, sticky notes  2 to 3 flipchart stands (depending on size of group)  4 or 6 pieces of flipchart paper taped together to form one large piece of paper (or an alternative is to use a large whiteboard)  Put the **exit cards** up on the wall from the previous day or module (if applicable)  **5A-publ\_target journal.pptx**  **Video clip:** [www.thinkchecksubmit.org](http://www.thinkchecksubmit.org) (1 min 57 sec)  **HO1 cases to distribute.doc** |
| Guidance to facilitating learning activities | **Morning review** (5-15 mins)  Start off with some banter about what you or the participants did the previous evening, for example. Don’t make it about yourself – get the participants talking!  Next stand beside the **exit cards** on the wall and make some overall comments on the frequent themes. Say that you won’t have time to respond to all the cards but you will be commenting on the key ones. Invite further comments from the participants.  Remind participants of the learning contract on **5A-publ\_target journal.pptx*-*slide 2** (on animation fade setting) if necessary.  Throughout the sub-module, trainer/s should refer participants to the **four reflection questions** on the wall and at the back of their handbooks. Trainer/s should encourage participants to make notes in response to these four questions, at regular intervals (not just at the end of the sub-module or day).  **Sub-module summary** (2-3 mins)  Display **slide 3** and verbally present the sub-module summary above to set the scene. It is important that these points are shared with participants from the outset.  **Case 5: A variety of venues, Case 6: Too good to be true and Case 7: Instruction on instructions** (30-40 mins)  These three cases address various aspects of choosing a journal and using its instructions to authors. The first case is relatively complex, and the latter two cases are simpler.  First, trainer/s should select their preferred case discussion method/s for Cases 5, 6 and 7 from the ‘Guidance for trainer/s section’.  One method could be to divide participants into groups of three (try to change members of groups around regularly so that participants get to work with different people) to discuss all three cases at once (in **HO1 cases to distribute.doc**). Make sure that there is an even number rather than odd number of groups.  Then invite the small groups to sit with another small group (to form a group of six) and share their ideas and suggestions with each other. The trainer/s might want to assign a spokesperson for each group to feed back to the full-group.  Then bring the participants back to the full-group and each spokesperson to feed back their main suggestions and ideas related to Case 5 only.  Case 5 should stimulate discussion around the advantages and disadvantages of submitting papers to different types of journals. It leads into the next section which looks at factors to consider in choosing a journal.  The trainer/s can simply ask one or two other spokespeople to share their main conclusions having read Cases 6 and 7.  For Case 6, participants should identify the journal as a predatory journal and for Case 7, a major point to emphasize is that the mentee should indeed read carefully and follow the journal’s instructions, even if they are long. Note that the next section will touch on identifying and avoiding predatory journals.  Invite participants to make any notes from the discussions, under Cases 5, 6 and 7 before moving on to the next activity.  **Mini-participatory presentation: Identifying a target journal** (5-10 mins)  Present **slide 4**and then ask the full-group *why is it advisable to identify a target journal (journal to which to submit a paper) before writing the paper?*  Points that should emerge include the following:   * + Different journals, even in the same field, have somewhat different audiences; knowing the journal and thus the audience can aid in gearing a paper appropriately.   + Different journals have different requirements, for example regarding manuscript format; knowing the target journal allows one to prepare one’s paper appropriately from the start and thus saves time.   The need to stay somewhat flexible should be noted. For example, sometimes as one writes a paper, it becomes clear that a different journal would be more suitable. And sometimes, of course, the first-choice journal does not accept the paper and so one identifies another journal for submission.  **Parallel brainstorming: Factors to consider** (10-20 mins)  Divide the full-group into two groups (or three groups if there are more than 20 participants)  Explain that the next activity will be slightly competitive in nature. The groups will need to read the scenario on **slide 5**and then will be given three minutes (no more, no less) to list as many answers on a piece of flipchart paper (flipchart stands are useful here but this can also be done around a table)  Once the time is up, ask groups to move to another group’s flipchart, which they then check and mark against the factors listed on **slides 6 and 7**(though not an exhaustive list) The groups can tick them (or not) off the flipcharts.  There may be one or two additional factors which have not been listed on the slides, so these can be read out loud for the full-group to consider and decide whether a valid factor or not.  **Presentation: Factors to consider** (20-25 mins)  Go through **slides 6-8** with the full-group. Some points the trainer/s might want to make (if not discussed already), to accompany the factors listed on **slide 6**:   * Journals’ websites and instructions often indicate aims and scope. Looking at some issues of the journal can aid in this regard. * Are articles in the journal openly accessible? i.e. are they freely available to all via the Internet, starting at the time of publication? If not, will they become openly available soon after publication, or are they in a journal that the intended readers regularly receive or can easily obtain? * Journals that publish papers very quickly may indicate that it is not a valid journal that provides proper review and editing. * Given the time needed, it is realistic to expect somewhere from several months to about a year to elapse between submission and final publication. * Some journals publish the dates of submission, acceptance, and publication on papers or indicate typical timeframes in their instructions or elsewhere. It should be noted that some journals post papers online once they are accepted; the papers later appear in issues of the journal. * Authors often worry about publication costs. Because open access journals do not receive payment for subscriptions, they typically must charge authors to cover costs. Some other journals also have publication fees. * Many journals reduce or waive fees for authors from developing countries; if it is not clear from a journal’s website whether the journal does so, an author can contact the journal office to ask. Also, it should be noted that some funding sources allow grant funds to be used for publication fees; researchers may want to keep this fact in mind when preparing the budgets for grant proposals. * Finally, authors should consider likelihood of acceptance. For example, it is unrealistic to submit to Nature or Science, a paper reporting findings of interest, only in one’s subspecialty. In general, good advice is to aim high but not impossibly high. If one’s paper is not accepted, one can then revise it and submit it to a less competitive journal.   Points the trainer/s might want to make (if not discussed already), to accompany the factors listed on **slide 7**:   * + A point to emphasize is that although impact factor is correlated somewhat with the prominence of a journal, it is not the only factor to consider.   + It may be noted that the impact factor was developed not to indicate quality of journals but rather to show which journals are used most and thus may be most worthwhile for libraries to buy.   + It should be emphasized that other types of impact (listed in the last bulleted item) can be important to consider.   Points the trainer/s can make to accompany the resources listed on **slide 8**:   * Links to both resources are provided. If time and Internet permits, the trainer/s might want to show the resources. * Note that article-level metrics can be helpful when, for example, researchers are being considered for promotion. * Note that the DORA provides recommendations for improving how research output is evaluated.   **Paired discussion task: Predatory journals** (5-10 mins)  Ask participants in pairs for a couple of minutes only to discuss the following two questions: *what do you understand by the term predatory journals and what are the clues that a journal might be “predatory”?* Invite three or four participants only to share their answers with the full-group.  Use **slide 9**to reveal the bullet points (on animation fade setting):   * Note that such journals often send researchers emails inviting them to submit papers. Advise participants to evaluate such requests carefully, to determine whether they are from valid journals. * More information on the topic can be obtained by searching the AuthorAID website, using the search term “predatory journals”. * Also of interest might be ‘Think. Check. Submit.’ there is a short video clip on the homepage (see the web address at the start of these facilitation notes) which you might want to play which lasts around two minutes. More information on the campaign can be found in **Resource 13** in the participant handbook.   **Mini presentation: Using the journal’s instructions** (5-10 mins)  Display **slide 10** and reveal bullet point one (on animation fade setting) then add any additional points verbally then reveal bullet points two to four (together) again adding any additional points after the reveal.  Some points the trainer/s could include to accompany bullet point one:   * Mention that instructions to authors sometimes go under other names, such as information for authors, author guidelines, or submission instructions. * A lack of instructions on a journal’s website (or inclusion of poorly written instructions on the website) is sometimes a clue that a journal is not of high quality. * Emphasize that obtaining the journal’s instructions early, and following them from the beginning, can save work later.   Some points the trainer/s could include to accompany bullet points two to four:   * Re-emphasize the value of repeatedly consulting the instructions. * Suggest underlining or highlighting key points in the instructions. * Include an anecdote about finding something to correct when checking the instructions, a final time before submitting a paper. * Note that serious deviations from a journal’s instructions (for example, submitting a longer paper than the journal allows) may result in the journal’s refusal to consider the paper unless it is modified. * Note that more minor deviations from a journal’s instructions also may make the publication process more difficult for the author and journal and thus delay publication. * Flag that many submitted papers have significant deviations from the instructions to authors (for example, references in the wrong format). * Editors sometimes wonder whether some authors even know that the instructions exist. Submitting a paper that follows the instructions can make a good impression from the start.   **Brainstorm and grouping: Questions the instructions to authors may answer** (15-20 mins)  Tape four or six pieces of flipchart paper together to form one large piece of paper and write the following six headings: article, abstract, figures & tables, references, format and other on the paper with enough space around each heading so that sticky notes can be stuck around each one. An alternative is to use a large whiteboard if available.  Attach the paper to a wall or place it on a table, either way it needs to be visible to the participants. It is a good idea to prepare the paper during the break before.  Invite participants to individually or in pairs write down (clearly) at least two questions (one per sticky note) which they think the instructions to authors may answer related to any of the headings on the flipchart paper. Perhaps provide one example, to start off. This should not take long, so after approximately five minutes, invite participants to stick their questions next to the relevant heading.  The trainer/s can quickly go through the questions with the full-group: removing any that are the same, seeking any clarification from the group, inviting participants to challenge or comment on any of the questions they have read and adding any questions the trainer/s think might have been missed (see below).  Some of the questions participants might come up with include:   * What categories of article does the journal publish? * What is the maximum length of articles? * What is the maximum length of abstracts? * Does the journal have a template for articles? If so, how can it be accessed? * What sections should the article include? What are the guidelines for each? * What guidelines should be followed regarding writing style? * How many figures and tables are allowed? What are the requirements for them? * In what format should references appear? Is there a maximum number of references? * In what electronic format should the paper be prepared?   **End of day or sub-module reflection** (20-30 mins)  Trainer/s can share a summary of the day’s or sub-module’s activities and the highlights for them as trainer/s. Then invite participants to share their reflections on the day’s or sub-module’s work and impressions of the workshop.  Finish by asking participants to individually fill out exit cards. Display **slide 11** (on animation fade setting) with the instructions. Make sure the colours of the sticky notes or cards correspond with those named on the slide. They can be of any colour, as long as they are of three different colours, and preferably not white. |