Academic Publishing in Military Studies: Insights from an Experienced Editor

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Editor-in-Chief
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Editorial Board Outreach
Overview of Presentation

1. Military Studies Journals
2. Manuscript Review Process
3. Editors Perspective
4. Editors Desk
5. General Tips (content quality)
6. To Do -- Before submit
7. To Do – R&R
8. Keys to Success (personal)
9. Discoverability
Where do Military Studies Journals Fit in Academic Rankings?

Journal Citation Report

Google Scholar

Altmetric
2018 Journal Citation Reports

Journals in the 2018 release of JCR

35% of all journals are part of
The JCR
Where are Military Journals Ranked
Impact Factor measures the average number of citations to recent published articles.

\[
\text{Impact Factor} = \frac{\text{Number of times AF&S articles in 2016 & 2015 were cited in JCR Journals}}{\text{Total number of articles in AF&S for 2016 & 2015}}
\]

Problems with indicator
# Military Studies Rankings 2018

**h5-index**

is the largest number \( h \) such that \( h \) articles published in 2013-2017 have at least \( h \) citations

As score of 10 would mean

10 articles published 2013-17 with 10 citations +

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<th>Rank</th>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>5h-Index</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>International Security</td>
<td>33</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Security Dialogue</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Studies in Conflict and Terrorism</td>
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<td>Journal of Strategic Studies</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td><strong>Armed Forces &amp; Society</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td>European Security</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>International Peacekeeping</td>
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<td>The RUSI Journal</td>
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<td>Intelligence and National Security</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Civil Wars</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Small Wars and Insurgencies</td>
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</tr>
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</table>
Rate wider exposure of articles

Authors’ can take actions to influence
Double Blind Peer Review

Promotes Fairness in Process
Editorial Process
(submission - publication)
Stage 1

• Manuscript arrives

• Editor’s Review
  Reject 40-60%

• Find Reviewers
Stage 2

• Send out for review
  2-4 reviewers

• Reviews in

• Reviewers assessment
Stage 3
First Round Decision

• Accept     Very rare (1 in 500)
• Reject
• Revise and Resubmit

Persistence
Stage 4 +++

• R&R decision, comments sent to author
• Revised Manuscript and letter with explanation arrives
• Re-review Re-review (could be 2 - 4 rounds)
• Decision - Accept/Reject
• If Accept publisher takes over
Editors
Perspective
Steward or Caretaker Role
Editor as Coach and Cop

Improve the manuscript

Make sure poor material gets caught
Most Precious Asset

Reviewer time
What is the citation potential?

Impact Factor
Tips Article Acceptance

Getting past the Editors Desk
POOR FIT

Outside scope or mission of the journal
Audience --
Scholars/Policy Makers
International & Interdisciplinary

AVOID

• Purely Military topics (strategy, tactics)
• Purely International Relations Topics
• If audience is military leadership of a particular country
  • Lots of country specific acronyms
Strong Abstract

Reviewer comment

Poor abstract
Poor paper
Include

• Purpose
• Method
• Key findings
• Take-away

Avoid

• Acronyms
• Convoluted sentences
• Obvious conclusion

(more research needed)
Introduction

• Big Picture
• State purpose or aim early
• Compelling Case for research question
• Strongest Writing
Bibliography

- Overall Quality
- Cites to AF&S
- Find Reviewers
Easy to Navigate

- Clear logical subheadings
- Tables – Stand alone quality
Inadequate sample size
(7 interviews, 2 focus groups @ university Y)
Quality Threshold

Poor Writing
Tired ideas
Lacks Coherence
Limited generalizability
To ensure meets quality threshold
Strong External Validity Broadly Defined

Survey Research
Case Studies multiple countries
Theoretical analytical generalizability
Enough Information

Imagine **how to Replicate**
• State Hypotheses in testable form
• Operationalization easy to find/judge
• Does Hypothesis connect to research purpose/question?
• Does the evidence collected test the hypothesis?
Do Data and Claims match?

- Inappropriate generalization
- Recognize Alternative Hypotheses
Before you send it out
Strategize the best fit journals

Find journal description, does it fit?
What is journal’s quality threshold?
Have they published articles on similar topics?
Preferred Methodology?

End with a plan and a ranking of journals
Send to journals you cite!
Revise & Resubmit Decision
Get control of emotions
Open minded Creative Thinking
Revise & Resubmit Explanation Letter

- Organized
- Thoughtful \(\text{(not superficial)}\)
- Disagree OK
  – good reason
Additional
• Don’t take it personally (key test how you deal with first rejection)
• Try again (use comments from reviewers)
• Share your work widely – present at conferences
• Conference Papers/Syllabi on Academia.edu, Institutional Repository, Research Gate
Cultivate Collaborators

No down side to “Good” co-author(s)
Two Personal Rules for Successful Scholarship

1. The only good dissertation is a completed dissertation.

2. Better in a library than a file cabinet.
Become an Active Reviewer

• Familiar with behind the scenes
• Hone critical review skills – apply to own work
• Respect of the editor
• Get a sense of what is a strong/weak paper
• Active member of scholarly community
Shed the insider perspective

- Consciously write for a larger audience
- Limit unnecessary acronyms
- Stand alone tables – easy skim
Discoverability
Optimizing Article For Search Engines
EXTRA ATTENTION

• Key Words
• Abstract
• Title
Incentives
Questions??