



TIPS FOR AUTHORS

The Journey of a Manuscript Submitted to the
Journal of Prosthodontics, Part 1
Alethea Gerding, BS, MA, Managing Editor
and Nellie W. Kremenak, PhD
Manuscript Editor
Journal of Prosthodontics

After weeks of hard work on your research and writing, you have sent your manuscript off to the *Journal of Prosthodontics*. Now you must wait as the fate of your submission is decided. What is happening to your manuscript while it is out of your hands? How is it evaluated? What happens if your manuscript is accepted? What happens to it before it appears in the printed *Journal*? We will outline the process for you in this issue and the next, and offer a few pointers on steps you can take to avoid unnecessary delays in the submission process.

In this issue, we will discuss the first six milestones on your manuscript's journey through the editing process. In the next issue of the *JP* we will describe the second half of the process including notification of the review outcome (and possible requests for revisions) as well as the actual publication process and how the author is involved in that process.

- 1. Submission.** You may **submit your manuscript** to the *Journal* in one of three ways. **The preferred method (and the speediest) is to submit online** at <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/jopr>. The first person to respond to your submission will be the Managing Editor. When you submit online, your manuscript goes immediately to the editorial office and the review process (which we will describe in some detail), begins immediately. If you choose to submit via e-mail or by regular mail (hard copy and a disk), the submission process takes a little longer. The Managing Editor will work with you to get the manuscript uploaded to the website. This may take several days, however, and **critical review will not begin until the manuscript is correctly uploaded to the JP website**—so submitting online moves the process along most quickly. (See Instructions for Contributors at the *JP* website for more details on submission.)
- 2. Managing Editor review.** When the manuscript has been uploaded to the *JP* website, you will receive an e-mail informing you that the manuscript has been received and giving you the manuscript's "ID number" (i.e., JOPR-06-111). Throughout the review process, you can use the ID number on the website to check on the status of the manuscript in the process. At initial submission, **the Managing Editor quickly reviews the manuscript looking for obvious discrepancies**. For example, if your figure legend lists 7 figures, but you only sent 5, the Managing Editor will contact you to correct this. If the manuscript is complete, the Managing Editor's review usually takes no longer than one business day. If you **remember to include all elements of the manuscript** (body, references, figures, tables) with your initial submission, this step should be an easy one.
- 3. Editor-in-Chief brief review.** Next, the manuscript is forwarded to the Editor-in-Chief (EIC) who will read it, deciding which section of the journal is the best fit for your report and **which Section Editor should handle review of your manuscript**. Sometimes this

is an obvious decision—if your manuscript is labeled as a clinical report, it will automatically be forwarded to the Clinical Reports Section Editor. But sometimes, a manuscript does not seem to fit in any category, or seems appropriate for more than one category. Normally, this step takes a few days, but may last longer if it is unclear which section your manuscript belongs in. If you believe your manuscript is most appropriate for a specific section, please let us know in a cover letter.

4. **Role of the Section Editor and reviewers.** Once your manuscript has been forwarded to a Section Editor, the most critical part of the review process begins. **The Section Editor will be the first to review your manuscript in detail.** If he or she notices obvious major problems (poor English, incorrect organization, outdated literature review, etc.), your manuscript will be returned to you to make these corrections before the peer review process begins. If the manuscript is in good shape, however, **the Section Editor will assign it to two experts in the field for review.** Finding the correct individuals to review your manuscript can be the longest phase in the review process. If your manuscript addresses a very narrow or obscure topic, it may be difficult to find individuals qualified to review it. When submitting, you may suggest people you think would be appropriate reviewers. Although the Section Editor may not select the individuals you propose, your suggestions may help point in a useful direction.
5. **The peer review process.** The review process is “double blinded.” **Reviewers are not given the authors’ names, and authors are not given the names of a manuscript’s reviewers.** We ask that our reviewers complete their work within 30 days and, normally, they comply. However, from time to time, reviewers can be delayed. If your manuscript has been in review for a long period of time (e.g., more than two months since submission), please do not hesitate to ask us about it. Remember, you can always check on the progress of your manuscript at the *JP* review site using the ID number you were assigned.
6. **Back to the Editor-in-Chief.** When both reviews have been completed, the **Section Editor will make a recommendation to the Editor-in-Chief.** Sometimes this is a simple process. If both reviewers have similar opinions of the manuscript and have provided detailed comments, the Section Editor will simply forward these reviews to the EIC. However, sometimes the reviewers will have divergent opinions. One may think the manuscript should be rejected, while the other thinks it needs only minor changes. In this situation, the Section Editor will often serve as a “referee,” deciding which recommendation makes the most sense for the manuscript. Sometimes, however, arriving at a recommendation may require sending the manuscript to a third peer reviewer. When the Section Editor is comfortable with the reviews received, he or she will return the manuscript, with comments and a recommendation to the Editor-in-Chief.

In the next issue of the *JP*, we will discuss what happens after your manuscript has been returned to the EIC along with the recommendations of the reviewers and the Section Editor.

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