

Editorial: Following author guidelines or how to avoid desk rejection

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When a new manuscript is submitted, the editorial team of Education and Self Development carries out a preliminary assessment and checks it for compliance with the journal guidelines. In case of successful initial check, the manuscript is sent out for peer review. Unfortunately, the percentage of papers that are rejected by editors prior to review is quite high. In this editorial I want to discuss why it happens and how to avoid a desk reject.

One of the key reasons for rejecting a paper is inconsistency with the Journal's scope. When such cases occur, we realise that an author has not done the groundwork and has not read the journal aims. Before submitting a manuscript, authors must visit a journal website, get familiar with its mission, identify the target audience, learn about the submission process, and even read through some published works. It is highly recommended to select a target journal reasonably in advance, and this choice should be solely based on the scope of a journal.

The second ground for rejection is when a manuscript does not follow journal guidelines. As with the scope, submission guidelines can be found on the journal website. I should point out that instructions for authors who are interested in submitting their works to Education and Self Development are available on our website in the tab 'Submit an article' (Author guidelines).

The next issue that editors consider during a preliminary assessment is compliance with ethical standards. Text similarity, duplicate publication, concealed conflict of interest, as well as other violations of publication ethics immediately result in the rejection of submissions.

Unfortunately, reasons for paper rejection at the initial screening are not limited to the above-mentioned factors. I have listed only common grounds and I am not going to dwell on private ones in this editorial. However, I would like to consider cases when editors send out manuscripts for revision. As a rule, this happens when an article exceeds the target length or there are mistakes or inaccuracies in references and in-text citations. Sometimes authors forget to upload supporting documentation, without which the editorial team is not able to assess the submission. Please note that alongside your manuscript file, you need to upload a cover letter, a file with full author details, and a signed copyright transfer agreement. Earlier, I focused on the submission process in our system Editorial Park and described this issue (Bisimbaeva, 2023). Authors can also be asked to revise the content and clarify some parts of a manuscript. These comments require close attention and endeavour from authors. Unfortunately, some of them do not take revisions at the initial screening seriously. It is essential to remember that haste and token efforts never lead to the desired outcomes.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the first acquaintance with an author starts when a journal receives his or her submission. If you want to make an impression of a thoughtful and conscientious researcher, you need to adhere to high standards not only in relation to journals, but also to yourself. Otherwise, you risk joining the cohort of authors who have entered the publication race known as ‘publish or perish’.

References

Bisimbaeva, D. (2023). The manuscript submission process in Editorial Park. *Education and Self Development*, 18(2), 6–7. <https://doi.org/10.26907/esd.18.2.01>