



# Getting Started with the Scholarly Journal Publication Process by Laura Sefton

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*Hello, AEA365 community! Liz DiLuzio here, Lead Curator of the blog. This week is Individuals Week, which means we take a break from our themed weeks and spotlight the Hot Tips, Cool Tricks, Rad Resources and Lessons Learned from any evaluator interested in sharing. Would you like to contribute to future individuals weeks? Email me at [AEA365@eval.org](mailto:AEA365@eval.org) with an idea or a draft and we will make it happen.*

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Hi, I'm **Laura Sefton**, Research and Evaluation Associate in Commonwealth Medicine, the health care consulting and operations division of UMass Chan Medical School. Our team regularly seeks to publish our program evaluation findings in scholarly journals, and I'd like to share some resources that may help you along the publication process.

## What is a Scholarly Journal?

Scholarly or academic journals seek to publish articles on topics that are newly explored or build on the existing knowledge base. Some journals use a peer-review or referee process to determine which articles meet the criteria for publication, where the journal editor sends your manuscript (without identifying information such as your name or institution) to your peers for review. These reviewers determine whether your article should be published and often make suggestions for changes that can enhance your content and make it publication-ready.

## Rad Resource:

### Journal Finders

Larger journal publishers that cover many disciplines, including [Elsevier](#) and [Springer](#), offer resources to help you find journals that fit your topic. Enter your manuscript title and details of your manuscript into the webpage fields, and the finder searches for and provides a list of appropriate journals.

Another resource is [JANE](#) or Journal/Author Name Estimator. Enter your manuscript title, abstract, or keywords, and JANE will return search results on relevant journals, published papers, or authors who have published similar articles. JANE culls journals from the National Library of Medicine's [PubMed](#), a life sciences literature database.

## Hot Tip:

### Consult an Academic Library

Many academic institutions, including the medical school's Lamar Soutter Library, have a digital [repository](#) of the intellectual outputs of their institution's researchers that helps to broaden dissemination efforts. These databases can give easier access to journal articles that may otherwise be behind a journal's paywall. You can browse by collection type, discipline, academic department or program, author, or keyword and confine your search to the school's repository or expand it to all repositories in the network. These libraries also provide subscription-based access to a wealth of journals, allowing researchers access to journal information and articles.

## Rad Resource:

### Journal Websites

Check out the journal's website to learn about its topical focus, audience, publication criteria, and their review and publication processes. Journals provide guidance to authors on how to prepare and submit articles for review and publication. This information includes article types, maximum word or page counts, font and spacing requirements, reference formats, and figure/graphics instructions. Be sure to review whether the journal is open access, meaning non-subscribers can access articles, and whether there are costs for publication.

## Rad Resource:

### Journal Impact Measures

Another way to learn about a journal is to research its [Journal Impact Factor](#), a measure of overall journal quality or importance based on the average number of citations from that journal over a period of time. There are many sources for this and similar types of scores (see [Measuring a Journal's Impact](#) and [Journal Citation Reports](#)) and many opinions as to its value, so it should be used with caution.

## Hot Tip:

### Ask the Editor

If you're still not sure your article is a good fit for a journal, you can email the journal's editor directly (if their contact information is listed on the journal's website) or submit a pre-submission query form, depending on the journal. Include a brief description of your planned manuscript and how you think it fits with the journal's aims and interests. While the editor may provide a positive response that indicates a strong interest, remember that this does not guarantee publication.

These resources are not exhaustive. If you've used something different, please share in a comment so we can all broaden our knowledge!



*Do you have questions, concerns, kudos, or content to extend this aea365 contribution? Please add them in the comments section for this post on the [aea365 webpage](#) so that we may enrich our community of practice. Would you like to submit an aea365 Tip? Please send a note of interest to [aea365@eval.org](mailto:aea365@eval.org). aea365 is sponsored by the [American Evaluation Association](#) and provides a Tip-a-Day by and for evaluators. The views and opinions expressed on the AEA365 blog are solely those of the original authors and other contributors. These views and opinions do not necessarily represent those of the American Evaluation Association, and/or any/all contributors to this site.*

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