

Editorial 32(4): (i) An editor's lament; (ii) Peer review in academic publishing; (iii) Update on new .au namespace

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An editor's lament

There is a temptation to make this subheading, used in a previous IIER Editorial [1], into a regular item in Editorials. The reason, sadly, is that causes for 'laments' seem to be arising more frequently. To illustrate, here are four very recent excerpts from Editorial emails.

<p>Dear Editorial Teams,</p> <p>May I know the impact factor of the journal? Thank you.</p> <p>Kind regards, Xxxxxxx</p>	<p>Hello Xxxxxxx,</p> <p>Thank you for the interest in IIER. A detailed answer to your question is available at: Atkinson, R. (2021). Editorial 31(3): "Please help me to identify the status of the journal...". <i>Issues in Educational Research</i>, 31(3), ii-v. http://www.iier.org.au/iier31/editorial31-3.html</p>
<p>Hello! Dear editorial board of the journal "Issues in Educational Research"!</p> <p>We are a team of scientists from [country], we would like to publish our articles in your journal. Tell me please:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How long will the article review procedure take? 2. In which approximate issue of 2022-2023 they can be published as soon as possible 3. Do you practice special issues? Is it possible to publish a special issue this year? If so, in which month? How many articles should be included in the special issue? How much will it cost? What do we need to do for this? 4. How much does it cost to publish an article in your journal? <p>Thank you very much for your answers! P.S. Given the current situation in our country. We want the whole world not to forget about us. We want to remind about it with our scientific works.</p>	<p>Hello Xxxxx,</p> <p>Thank you for the interest in IIER. Unfortunately, at present we cannot be helpful. Our next available issue is 33(1), projected for early February 2023. We expect to fill it with submissions already in hand from the period August to about mid-November 2022. Some acceptances from November submissions and all acceptances from December submissions will be published in 33(2), prospectively May 2023.</p> <p>Owing to high demand for places in regular issues, IIER cannot consider special issues. For other questions, please refer to http://www.iier.org.au/iier-inf.html and http://www.iier.org.au/iier-submissions.html</p> <p>For information on acceptance rates, please see http://www.iier.org.au/iier32/editorial32-2.html</p> <p>I regret that we cannot be more helpful, though we can say quite confidently, from an Australian perspective, that [country] is not forgotten.</p>

I would like to ask you a question about submission to IIER. I am a doctoral student, and I am searching for a journal where I can send my research. Because we have a limited time to publish this paper, I want to ask before I send it.

Would my paper fit the aims and scopes of your journal? *[96 word description of Xxxxxx's research omitted]*

Do you know the acceptance rate of your journal?

Thank you so much for your time and reply; I appreciate that a lot.

Kind regards,

Xxxxxx

Hello Xxxxxx,

Thank you for your inquiry, which has been relayed to me for a response. However, we cannot offer any specific advice until after receiving a submission. Please read:

<http://www.iier.org.au/iier-inf.html>

<http://www.iier.org.au/iier-submissions.html>

For information on acceptance rates, please see <http://www.iier.org.au/iier32/editorial32-2.html>

We recommend self-assessing the quality of a proposed submission, the best method being to search IIER using keywords that are relevant for your article (see <http://www.iier.org.au/about/iier-search.html>). The main question will be, "Can I do as well as, or perhaps even better than, similar articles already published in IIER?" Another important question will be, "Is my topic, country context, research question, or some other aspect under-represented in IIER?"

[45 word preamble omitted]

I have a few questions to be make sure.

1. Is my article relevant to the scope of this journal?
2. Does this publisher serve reviews to improve article writing methods? How many stages and time?
3. Is it allowed to use secondary data? (my article uses secondary data from [sources deleted].)
4. How many times are published in one year?
5. Is there a fee to be prepared.?

... we refer you to the web pages: *[see above]*

... Perhaps we could offer some further comment upon your "make sure" questions 1, 2 and 3? In brief, "It depends". It depends on the quality of your research work, and the extent to which IIER editorial staff and our external reviewers can recognise it as a significant addition to the international educational research literature in *[topic omitted]*, which accords with some of IIER's especially central perspectives, such as inclusivity towards issues, country contexts and categories of authors that we sense as being under-represented in IIER and the literature generally.

Turning to specific practical advice, your questions 1, 2 and 3 are best answered by undertaking your own reading of articles published in IIER. *[advice given above not repeated]* ... avoid asking journal editors to respond to questions, such as your questions 1 to 5, which reveal that you have not studied the advice that journals have provided online to prospective authors. Try to present your-self as an aspiring author who has 'done all the homework as best I can', before asking editors to give "reviews to improve article writing methods". Typically, current circumstances of high and rising rates of submissions are leading to editors and reviewers reducing the hours they can allocate to each submission, even to the point where "hours per submission" is changing to "minutes per submission".

The 'lament theme' illustrated above concerns "IFAs", that is "Instructions for Authors". I hasten to add that it is not my acronym, and normally as a copy editor I would convert IFA to full spelling. "IFAs" is quoted from a very recent posting from the Taylor & Francis Group (excerpt below) [2].



Familiar with your journal's Instructions for Authors (IFAs)?

Reading and following the IFAs before submitting will save you time in the long run.

[Find out everything you need to know](#)

The Editorial responses (right hand column) illustrate some important principles that I hope all editors are striving to sustain, whether their activities are with a single small scale publisher, as is IIER's case, or with a multinational giant such as T&F ("2,700+ journals" [3]). Firstly, take good care to respect and preserve the authors' anonymity.

Secondly, be respectful by avoiding any implication of a 'lament' or 'complaint' concerning an inquiry. Instead, wherever possible, try to convert an information request that was readily answered by reading a journal's "IFAs", into an autonomous learning opportunity. In other words, 'tempt' or 'push' authors into further learning that takes them into a deeper, more advanced understanding of both the question they asked and the answer [3].

Thirdly, for time-conservation reasons, there is usually little original text in Editorial responses; it is nearly all 'copy, paste, and edit a bit to suit'. Perhaps, sometimes, responses may seem to be terse and impersonal, though sometimes it is okay to relax time-conservation and go a little bit further, as in "... from an Australian perspective, that [country] is not forgotten." Sometimes the advice may be more specific and forceful, as in "... we suggest that you avoid asking journal editors...".

Also sometimes, as time permits, we update IIER's main "IFAs" located at:

<http://www.iier.org.au/iier-inf.html> and <http://www.iier.org.au/iier-submissions.html>
with further information at <http://www.iier.org.au/about/iier-search.html>,
<http://www.iier.org.au/about/iier-bibliometrics.html> and
<http://www.iier.org.au/about/iier-contents-editorials.html>

Whilst updating of "IFAs" is a continuing and important task, our main reliance is likely to be promoting this kind of enduring advice about 'forever learning':

We recommend self-assessing the quality of a proposed submission, the best method being to search IIER using keywords that are relevant for your article (see <http://www.iier.org.au/about/iier-search.html>). The main question will be, "Can I do as well as, or perhaps even better than, similar articles already published in IIER?" Another important question will be, "Is my topic, country context, research question, or some other aspect under-represented in IIER?"

Peer review in academic publishing: Challenges ...

It is well worthwhile setting aside time to read editorials from other journals. There is the very obvious benefit of learning from the experiences of other academic editors, and the less obvious but nevertheless valuable service of providing evidence that others are expressing similar 'laments' [1]. Two especially notable editorials have appeared in 2022, both in *Journal of University Teaching & Learning Practice*. Joseph Crawford provided "On editor decisions: A framework of best practice" [4]. Prue Gonzalez, Gail Wilson and Alison Purvis provided "Peer review in academic publishing: Challenges in achieving the gold standard". Highly recommended reads for authors, editors and reviewers. However, perhaps the authors could have given a little more attention to one of my "pet gripes" (Google that), last vented in Editorial 32(2) [6]:

... IIER is at present "maxed out", but the international academic publishing industry is not, to date, delivering what we would really like to see. This is a good number of emulators of IIER, featuring open access; no article publishing charge ("APC"); high quality mentoring and copy editing support; a commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion; able to sustain high standards in academic merit; and having strong local or regional societal connections that can help to counter existing "global power imbalances"... [6]

To improve upon that statement, "we" could be broadened to encompass a rather large number of journals, or potential new journals, for which there are needs as discerned from the perspective of academic publishing industry 'laments' about the pressure of numbers of submissions. We need more "emulators", not simply emulators of IIER, but 'best practice' emulators as outlined by Crawford [4] and Gonzalez et al. [5]. Rethinking "emulators" in the light of the reading recommended above suggests that "emulator journals" could and should emerge outside Australia. In particular, Australia's recently revitalised engagement with Pacific countries could include support and facilitation services that assist these countries and their relatively small universities to improve existing journals, and establish new academic research journals as small scale, low cost, sustainable, high quality endeavours.

Update on new .au namespace

Editorial 32(3) explained IIER's position on this matter, invoking the keywords "irritating administrivia" and "editorial timewaster" [1]. One aspect not mentioned was the temptation to check occasionally on the appropriateness of our decision to not purchase the additional domain name "iier.au". Checking is not a serious "timewaster", it's just a matter of copying and pasting into web reader address box the search string:

<https://www.auda.org.au/domain-search?domain=iier.au>

which on 8 December 2022 revealed that all of these domains are available:

iier.au, iier.com.au, iier.net.au, iier.asn.au, iier.id.au

whilst iier.org.au is "Already Taken". I'm glad they have that correct, and not surprised that to date no one is interested in doing a "copycat" act on IIER! [1]

References

1. Atkinson, R. (2022). Editorial 32(3): (i) New .au namespace; (ii) Google Scholar searches for IIER articles; (iii) An editor's lament. *Issues in Educational Research*, 32(3), ii-viii. <http://www.iier.org.au/iier32/editorial32-3.html>
2. Bergan, R. (2022). Familiar with your journal's Instructions for Authors (IFAs)? *Research Insights*, Taylor & Francis. <https://view.s6.exacttarget.com/?qs=f45c3fdef203dc97d71759ba6e2a1ed19821e52720adf9b3857f700dc84e2ba1e8688d18851dde5b3cd9895dedb9003d1f873d13f982e796deedb5341f85fdb5b22ca12718ec1c7e94c75f0ad6df080ddcbc848168007e14>
3. For an example of this approach that has been used for some years in response to inquiries about DOIs and IIER, please see "A note about digital object identifiers ('DOIs')" in Power, A. & Atkinson, R. (2017). Editorial 27(2). *Issues in Educational Research*, 27(2), ii-v. <http://www.iier.org.au/iier27/editorial27-2.html>
4. Crawford, J. (2022). On editor decisions: A framework of best practice. *Journal of University Teaching & Learning Practice*, 19(3), 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.53761/1.19.3.01>
5. Gonzalez, P., Wilson, G. S. & Purvis, A. J. (2022). Peer review in academic publishing: Challenges in achieving the gold standard. *Journal of University Teaching & Learning Practice*, 19(5), article 01. <https://ro.uow.edu.au/jutlp/vol19/iss5/01>
6. Atkinson, R. (2022). Editorial 32(2): (i) IIER's 2021 review outcomes; (ii) Diversions from core tasks. *Issues in Educational Research*, 32(2), ii-x. <http://www.iier.org.au/iier32/editorial32-2.html>

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