



From Dissertation to Publication

Your Complete Guide to the Journey — and Why You Should Not Walk It Alone

www.thetwodissertationmoms.com

A Message to Our Clients

You have done something remarkable. You conceived a research question, immersed yourself in the literature, designed a study, collected and analyzed data, and defended your findings before a committee of scholars. Your dissertation represents years of intellectual labor, and that work deserves to reach the world beyond your university library.

Publishing your research in a peer-reviewed journal is one of the most meaningful ways to extend that reach — and one of the most misunderstood processes in academic life. The path from dissertation to publication is long, technical, and often humbling. It requires a very different set of skills from those that earned you your degree.

That is exactly why The Two Dissertation Moms exists. This guide walks you through every stage of the process — not to overwhelm you, but to show you what is involved and why having experienced guides by your side makes all the difference. Our role is not to take credit for your ideas. It is to make sure your ideas get the hearing they deserve.

The Truth About Journal Acceptance

□ Journal acceptance is one of the most competitive processes in academia. Even excellent, well-researched dissertations face rejection — often multiple times.

Before we begin, we want to be fully transparent with you about something that no one tells graduate students clearly enough: **journal rejection is not a reflection of your intelligence, your effort, or the quality of your research.** It is a structural reality of academic publishing that even the most experienced scholars navigate repeatedly throughout their careers.

5–25%

Acceptance rate at top-tier journals

2–3+

Average submissions before acceptance

6–18

Months from submission to final decision

80%+

Of rejections occur without peer review

What these numbers mean for you is this: the manuscript you submit will almost certainly need to be revised, redirected, or resubmitted before it finds its home. The scholars whose names fill your reference list have all been rejected. Rejection is not the end of the road – it is part of the road.

What separates published scholars from those who give up is not talent. It is persistence, strategy, and knowing how to respond to reviewer feedback constructively. That is where we come in.

Why Your Dissertation Cannot Be Submitted As-Is

This is the single most important thing to understand before beginning the conversion process. A dissertation and a journal article are two fundamentally different documents written for two fundamentally different purposes.

Dimension	Your Dissertation	A Journal Article
Purpose	Prove you can conduct original research	Advance a scholarly conversation
Length	80,000–150,000+ words	5,000–8,000 words
Audience	Your committee	Global scholars in your field
Tone	Comprehensive and defensive	Assertive and concise
Literature Review	Exhaustive – every relevant source	Selective – only what the argument needs
Methodology	Full detail for replication	Summarized for transparency
Structure	Five chapters with institutional format	Journal-specific sections
Citations	Your required institutional style	Journal's required style – may differ

Submitting your dissertation directly to a journal – even after basic editing – is one of the most common and costly mistakes graduate students make. Editors recognize dissertation-style writing immediately, and it signals that the author has not yet understood the demands of the publication process. The conversion requires strategic reconstruction, not just trimming.

Our 9-Stage Process: How We Guide You From Start to Published

Every client who works with The Two Dissertation Moms on journal publication goes through the following nine stages. Some stages are completed by our team; others require your active participation. We will always be clear with you about what is needed and when.

1

Strategic Assessment

We study your work before we touch a single word.

What we do: We conduct a thorough read of your dissertation to identify your strongest, most publishable argument. Not everything in your dissertation belongs in one article – in fact, a strong dissertation often contains material for two or three separate publications.

What we assess: Originality of findings, strength of theoretical contribution, suitability for different publication types, and your target audience within your discipline.

What you provide: Your full dissertation, your field of study, and any initial thoughts on which findings felt most significant to you.

2

Journal Identification and Targeting

Choosing the right journal is as strategic as writing the article.

Why this matters: Submitting to the wrong journal – even a highly ranked one – guarantees rejection regardless of the quality of your manuscript. Journal fit encompasses scope, methodology, theoretical orientation, and readership.

What we consider: Journal impact factor, acceptance rates, time to decision, open access requirements, disciplinary fit, and whether your methodology aligns with the journal's published body of work.

Our recommendation: We identify a primary target journal and two backup journals ranked by fit, so that if the first submission results in rejection, we have a clear next step ready rather than starting over.

□ High impact factor does not mean right journal. A highly ranked journal in an adjacent field is a far worse fit than a mid-tier journal that speaks directly to your research community.

3

Structural Reconstruction

This is where the real transformation begins.

What this involves: We rebuild your manuscript from the ground up around a single, focused argument. We identify the core thesis, the essential literature, the most relevant methodological details, and the findings that directly support the central claim.

What gets cut: Approximately 90 to 95 percent of your dissertation's word count. This is not a loss – it is precision. Every word that remains serves the argument.

What gets restructured: The introduction is rewritten for a journal audience. The literature review is compressed to what the argument requires. The methodology becomes a tight, transparent summary. The discussion is sharpened to connect directly to the scholarly conversation.

4

Voice and Tone Transformation

From committee-facing to field-facing writing.

The challenge: Dissertation writing is trained to be exhaustive, hedged, and defensive. Journal writing is expected to be confident, economical, and direct. Making this shift is one of the hardest parts of the conversion process because it requires unlearning habits that earned you your degree.

What we do: We rewrite defensively-framed language into assertive scholarly prose. We reduce unnecessary hedging while maintaining appropriate academic caution. We ensure your argument leads each section rather than being buried in qualifications.

What remains unchanged: Your ideas, your analysis, your findings, and your voice. We amplify your scholarly presence – we do not replace it.

5

Abstract and Keywords

Your first and often only chance to make an impression.

Why abstracts matter: Most journals conduct initial screening based on the abstract alone. An abstract that does not clearly communicate your research problem, method, findings, and contribution will not advance to peer review – regardless of how strong the manuscript is.

What we deliver: A tightly constructed abstract within the journal's word limit – typically 150 to 250 words – that covers background, purpose, methodology, key findings, and implications. We also develop a strategic keyword list that maximizes discoverability in academic databases.

6

Citation and Formatting Compliance

The details that determine whether your manuscript reaches a reviewer.

What most scholars underestimate: Journals conduct technical checks before any human reads your manuscript. Non-compliance with citation style, heading structure, word count, figure formatting, or reference format results in immediate return or desk rejection.

What we do: We reformat every citation and reference to match the target journal's required style – whether APA, Chicago, Vancouver, Harvard, or a journal-specific variation. We check headings,

spacing, margins, figure captions, and table formatting against the journal's author guidelines line by line.

□ Formatting non-compliance is the most avoidable cause of rejection. It signals to editors that the author has not read the submission guidelines – which raises doubts about the care applied to the research itself.

7

Cover Letter and Submission

A professional, targeted submission that gives your work the best possible entry.

The cover letter: We draft a journal-specific cover letter that names the editor, articulates why the manuscript fits the journal's scope and readership, summarizes the contribution clearly, and includes all required declarations – originality, no concurrent submission, conflicts of interest, and author contributions.

Submission management: We guide you through the submission portal, ensure all required documents are correctly uploaded, and confirm that all technical requirements are met before you hit submit.

8

Peer Review Response and Revision

Where most scholars lose momentum – and where we are most essential.

What to expect: If your manuscript is sent for peer review, you will receive between one and four reviewer reports containing detailed – and sometimes harsh – critique. Even manuscripts that are eventually accepted often require substantial revision before final approval.

The critical mistake: Many scholars respond to reviewer critique emotionally, either conceding everything or defending everything. Neither approach is effective. Responding to peer review is a skilled and strategic process.

What we do: We analyze each reviewer's comments systematically, categorize them by type – major revision, minor revision, clarification, or reframing – and develop a response strategy. We then draft both the revised manuscript and the point-by-point response letter that accompanies it. Every reviewer comment receives a clear, professional, and substantive response.

□ A 'revise and resubmit' decision is good news. It means the journal sees real potential in your work. With the right response, it frequently leads to acceptance.

Upon acceptance: The journal's production team will send page proofs — a formatted version of your article for final review. This is your last opportunity to catch errors before the article is permanently published. We assist with proof review to ensure nothing is missed.

After publication: We advise you on how to share your published work appropriately, including uploading to ResearchGate or Academia.edu, updating your institutional profile, and identifying whether your remaining dissertation material supports a second publication.

Your ongoing journey: One publication opens doors. It establishes your scholarly identity, strengthens future grant applications, and creates a foundation for a growing academic portfolio.

Realistic Timeline Expectations

One of the most important things we can do for our clients is set honest expectations about how long this process takes. Academic publishing operates on timelines that can feel frustratingly slow compared to the pace of doctoral study.

Stage	Typical Duration
Manuscript conversion and preparation	4–8 weeks
Journal review — initial screening	2–6 weeks
Peer review process	2–6 months
Revision and resubmission	4–12 weeks
Final editorial decision	2–4 weeks
Production and publication	1–6 months after acceptance
Total from start to publication	8–18 months on average

Patience is not passive. During the waiting periods, our team monitors your submission, prepares contingency plans for redirection if needed, and works with you on identifying your next publication opportunity. Your research career does not pause while the journal decides.

Why Work with The Two Dissertation Moms

We have walked this road ourselves.	We are not consultants who have read about dissertation publishing. We are scholars who have lived it – the rewrites, the rejections, the revisions, and the acceptances. We bring that lived experience to every client engagement.
We protect your voice.	Your ideas are yours. Our job is to make them more visible, more accessible, and more compelling to journal reviewers – not to replace your scholarly identity with a generic template.
We give you honest counsel.	We will not tell you your manuscript is ready when it is not. We will not promise acceptance because no one can. What we will promise is that when we submit your work, it will be as strong as it can possibly be.
We stay with you through rejection.	Rejection is not the end of the engagement. We analyze reviewer feedback, re-strategize, and help you resubmit – whether to the same journal after revision or to a better-fit journal.
We see the bigger picture.	Your dissertation may contain material for multiple articles. We help you think strategically about building a publication portfolio, not just producing a single article.

Ready to Begin?

Your research has already changed you. Now let it change your field.

The Two Dissertation Moms is here to walk every step of this journey with you – from the first read of your dissertation to the moment your name appears in print. We understand the process, we respect the difficulty, and we are committed to seeing your work reach the audience it deserves.

To get started, send your dissertation or a summary of your research to: submissions@thetwodissertationmoms.com For general inquiries, reach us at support@thetwodissertationmoms.com For payment questions, contact payments@thetwodissertationmoms.com Visit us at www.thetwodissertationmoms.com to learn more about all of our services.
