4

The Rhetoric of Submission

Abstract: In “The Rhetoric of Submission,” we ask readers to consider how they might begin making their work public, and we point to heuristics and prompts for thinking about ways to merge research interests with publication venues. Here we offer suggestions for responding to Calls for Papers, contacting editors before submitting work, and establishing networks. We also define and outline steps for placing scholarship and offer guidelines for understanding the relationship among writer, reader, editor, and publication venue; reconsidering audience; negotiating submission guidelines; and determining realistic timelines. We also include a discussion about what happens after work is accepted for publication.

Keywords: calls for papers; editor; publication notebook; query letter; revise and resubmit; submission guidelines

In Chapter 3, we explained that many opportunities for scholarly publication begin with Calls for Proposals or Papers (CFP) and that these CFPs usually stipulate the topic under consideration, suggest the types and range of proposals that organizers are seeking, and give due dates and other submission requirements, including length and format guidelines for the proposal. In the following pages, we explain steps for locating and targeting CFPs, responding to a call, and navigating the submission and review process.

The publication notebook

As you consider submitting your work for publication, think of ways to systematically organize your ideas and target publication venues. We suggest creating a “place” to file information concerning publication in your area of specialization. Keep a physical notebook or designated electronic space (organized according to your specific needs) with the following information at hand. You will find that if you keep potential publication information organized, the task of initiating projects is less daunting. For many of us, getting started is the biggest stumbling block. By gathering necessary resources in one place, having a plan for submitting your work, and a backup plan for resubmitting scholarship if you are first rejected, you take away some of the initial concern and confusion about publishing and putting yourself and your work out for review. In your publication notebook, consider including the following information:

1. **A list (or copy) of all possible work (already drafted) for submission.** These papers may grow out of teaching experience, professional service, graduate work, conference presentation ideas, or independent writing. Rarely are these drafts ready to submit to a CFP, but they provide the first step in seeking a publication venue for existing ideas in that they help you avoid the need to “start from scratch.”

2. **Copies of calls for papers.** Begin searching listservs in your field, CFPs found within the pages of most journals, and comprehensive sources such as the UPenn website for CFPs (http://call-for-papers.sas.upenn.edu/). Highlight due dates on the CFPs (perhaps even including those dates as part of file names for electronic