# Table of Contents

1. **The Publication Process**  
   a. Introduction  
   b. Statement of Prospect  

2. **Expectations**  
   a. Publication Requirements  
      i. Faculty Involvement and Approval  
      ii. Research Compliance  
      iii. Research Ethics  
      iv. Rights of Use  
   b. Team Projects, Authorship, and Acknowledgement  

3. **Reviewing the Full Manuscript**  
   a. Content Tips  

4. **Editing the Final Article**  
   a. The Editing Team  
      i. Communication Expectations  
      ii. Editing with the Editing Team  
      iii. Submitting the Final Article  
   b. Summer Editing & Journal Release  
      i. Summer Editing  
      ii. Journal Release Information  

5. **Figures & Design: Working with the Journal Design Team**  

6. **Resources**  

7. **Explorations Contact Info**  

8. **The Editor Team: Contact Info and Meeting Plan**  

The Publication Process: Introduction

Once again, congratulations on the acceptance of your manuscript. Our team is excited to work with you on this journey as you finish crafting your work into scholarly article. The following pages provide an overview of journal publication from an editorial perspective and are meant to serve as a guideline for prospective authors throughout the Explorations Publishing Process.

In this guidebook, you will find a timeline of events, tips for working with student, faculty, and staff editors, formatting guidelines, and submission instructions for your article. The first two steps of process, submitting a synopsis and writing a full manuscript, are already complete! What follows is a description of the editing processes, so you know what to expect in these final months.

Now that your manuscript is accepted, you will be assigned an editing team who will help you refine their work into a final article. Throughout this stage, you will meet in person with your editing team to discuss possible article revisions. Editing will also be conducted online through Google Docs, which will allow you to stay in close contact with your editing team throughout the process. Additionally, you will work with a faculty or staff editor in the LAUNCH office, as well as a remote professional editor, all of whom will provide their own expertise and edits through Microsoft Word via email. It is important that you check your email often and remain updated during this stage.

As you article reaches completion, you will be required to fill out paperwork, and submit a brief personal biography and headshot. You will also submit accompanying visual content follow our formatting guidelines. Should you have any trouble with your visual content, you can reach out to our design team for assistance. There will be a design consultation for authors who have certain design ideas for their work.

Lastly, it is important to remember that until an article is officially approved for publication, it is still considered prospective and may be denied publication.

Once everything is complete, the final journal is printed and released at a formal event.
The Publication Process: Statement of Prospect

As a prospective author for Volume 11 of *Explorations*, please keep the following in mind:

You are currently in the final stages of our publication process and will face additional reviews and decision meetings in the weeks to come. Your full manuscript is officially accepted as a final article, therefore you are required to obtain faculty mentor approval, complete a copyright agreement, and continue to work with editors to finalize your article for publication. The guidelines for completing this process are detailed in other parts of the Author Guidebook, but it is important to be aware of the expectations the *Explorations* Board has prior to publication.

Please also bear in mind that the LAUNCH office has the final say as to what gets published. Similarly, the *Explorations* board reserves the right to revoke publication in the journal at any point in time. Just like any producer or publisher, this is a normal part of any publication process. We feel it is important we stress this to prospective authors upfront to make our policies clear.

The purpose of the Statement of Prospect is not to scare you, but to act as a disclaimer. Even as a student-led journal, we at *Explorations* represent the LAUNCH office and Texas A&M University, and must abide by their standards.
Expectations: Publication Requirements

The work published in *Explorations* is a representation of Texas A&M University and must be original research or scholarship conducted by undergraduate students while they are enrolled in the university. The work must also be conducted under the mentorship of a university faculty member, must be in compliance with the Research Compliance and Biosafety office at Texas A&M University (if applicable), must abide by research ethics as set by the university, and must grant *Explorations* rights of use. These requirements are elaborated below.

Faculty Involvement and Approval

*Explorations* requires faculty involvement in order to maintain the high standards of research expected from students at Texas A&M University. Now that you have been accepted, you will be required to obtain approval from your faculty mentor in order to publish your final article. During this time, check in with your faculty mentor and have them review your writing. Faculty mentors are content experts and can mentor you through the article writing process. While the article must be written entirely by you or your group, we encourage you to continuously seek advice from your faculty mentor as you write. You are also expected to communicate copyright agreement information to your faculty mentor. *We at Explorations* will provide the Faculty Mentor Approval form and its link to send to you, which you will then forward to your faculty mentor. The faculty mentor must submit approval through this online form by May 10th. **It is vital that faculty be aware of your intent to publish your research in *Explorations* before submitting approval.** Further details where to submit your faculty mentor’s email will be sent later.

Research Compliance

If your project involves human subjects, invertebrate animals, or biohazards, you must have approval from the Research Compliance & Biosafety office at Texas A&M University. When you submit your final article, you must include your approval or protocol number in writing. If you have questions or concerns about this, first contact your faculty mentor and then contact LAUNCH: UGR staff at ugr@tamu.edu.

Research Ethics

Conducting your research responsibly and ethically is an absolute requirement for project publication. Any misconduct is completely unacceptable, and goes against university standards. We will not tolerate non-compliance and any evidence of such behavior will be handled appropriately. Please review the 20.1.2.3.9 University Rules on Research, which state that students involved in conducting research and/or scholarly activities at Texas A&M University must also adhere to standards set forth in University Rule 15.99.03.M1 - Responsible Conduct in Research and Scholarship. University Rule 15.99.03.M1 can be found on the next page.

Rights of Use

When submitting our copyright agreement please keep the following in mind:
You still own the rights to your work. The copyright agreement simply states that Explorations, LAUNCH, and Texas A&M University have the right to publish your work, name, photo, and information about you. We also have the right to use the work published in Explorations for marketing purposes.

Publication in Explorations does not prohibit you from publishing in a professional or disciplinary journal. Because the work you submit to Explorations must be written for a general audience, you typically do not use the same content you might submit to a professional journal. Additionally, Explorations is not looking for detailed tables, data, or graphs. All results and conclusions should highlight the importance of the work, not the detailed methods in which you obtained the results. If you become a published author, we will expect a portrait to accompany the author biography displayed next to your article.
Expectations: Team Projects, Authorship, and Acknowledgement

Group collaboration and teamwork are the cornerstones of research. Aspects of your project may have included work by other undergraduate students, graduate students, and faculty, but work published in Explorations should focus on the work conducted by undergraduates. As you move forward, please keep the following in mind:

First, if you are writing your Explorations article with other undergraduates, please make sure that they and the Explorations board are aware of who they are so they are included moving forward in the process. We pride ourselves on the student growth generated through our publication process, and want every author to get the most out of this experience. Send their contact information to explorations@tamu.edu.

Second, please be aware that only undergraduates will be recognized as authors. Graduate students and faculty may be involved in the research process, but the purpose of Explorations is to highlight the academic products of Texas A&M undergraduates. Feel free to recognize faculty, graduate students, funding sources, and others involved in the acknowledgements section of your article. Remember that only undergraduates will appear as co-authors in our publication.

Finally, please be aware of the 20.1.2.4 Special Note on Group Projects under the Texas A&M University Honor Code. This rule states that if someone in a group commits academic misconduct, the entire group is liable to be held responsible as well. As such, it is important to clearly document each member’s contribution to the joint project. Please be sure all group members are aware of how the other members are conducting research and obtaining the materials they are providing. For more information on this rule, please visit the following link: https://aggiehonor.tamu.edu/Rules-and-Procedures/Rules/Honor-System-Rules#Special%20Note

By keeping these standards in mind, you and your team members should be able to enhance your student experience both with the Explorations Board and in undergraduate research as a whole. Personally, I cannot wait to read what you all will come up with over the course of our editorial process.
Reviewing the Manuscript: Content Tips

At Explorations, we value interdisciplinary connections. Why? It's imperative that you can relate your work to someone who may not have the same interests as you. the ability to do so makes your work relevant to the general public. Think of it this way. If Louis Pasteur could not effectively express the importance of his work to the poor milk farmers of that day, think of how different our society would be today without milk or very little dependence on it. History books are written in a way that emphasize the importance of the events and details. We want you to take a similar approach in introducing your research topic, generically explaining your theoretical/conceptual framework of research methods, making logical connections to your results, making interesting discussion of your results, and giving reasons why your project is important, relevant, and timely.

When reviewing and editing the manuscript, use the following tips to make your content effective:

- Use minimal technical jargon
- Submissions should not be data-heavy
- Use active voice (e.g., “I did”… instead of “this was done”)
- Complex phrases and clauses, new information, and technical terms are easier to process when placed at the end of a sentence
- Avoid informal language if you are trying to maintain a professional/academic tone (e.g., thing, really, deal with, just, even)
- Avoid ambiguous language to enhance clarity (e.g. numerous, a lot, a little, this, very, considerable, good/bad)
- Watch for any repeated words. Replace repeated words with synonyms.
- Watch verb tenses in different sections. For example, in the Methods section, use past tense. In the Discussions section, use present tense for arguments.
- Remove excess words, like doubles and redundancies (i.e. full and complete, tried and true, each and every, true facts, free gift, in a wise manner, red in color, seven in number, come to an agreement, long in duration).
- Remove sentence sprawl. A sentence sprawls when there are many clauses after the verb. Reduce sprawl by cutting or revising who/that/which clauses.

Another way to make your manuscript competitive is to think about the mechanics of your writing. Here are some mechanics tips for your manuscript:

- On first mention of a term, introduce its acronym in parentheses:
  Health maintenance organizations (HMOs) are preparing…
- Try to avoid using acronyms if the term is only used two or three times throughout the paper.
- Find another way to describe the term. An audience can get lost and forget what an acronym means if you constantly use it. Try to find a descriptive noun as a substitute. (e.g. β-nicotinamide
adenine dinucleotide 2′-phosphate (NADPH) could also be referred to as a “reducing agent” rather than using the acronym all of the time.)
Communication Expectations

The majority of your editing will be completed with your editing team, up until the May 1st deadline. The final article submission and author information deadline is May 10th, submitted through the portal given to you in your acceptance email. So, you should begin planning to meet with your Editing Team now. You will need to remain in contact with your team throughout this time to ensure smoothness, effectiveness, and professionalism. As you communicate, keep these points in mind:

- Check your emails regularly.
- Create a group message for secondary communication.
- Check the spam or junk folders if you are not seeing expected emails.
- Allow for one business day to hear back from your Editing Team or Explorations.

Editing with the Editing Team

An Editing Team is made up of a Lead Editor and one or two more Editors. Working with an Editing Team will start out with your Lead Editor creating a Team Drive in Google using your TAMU Google account, where you should upload your accepted article to the team drive in a Google Doc. The editors will read, review, and revise your article. The first meeting with your editing team will then take place to discuss the article and their revisions. After this meeting, you and your Team will continue to review your work, make suggestions on the Google Doc, and perhaps have one to two more meetings.

While making the proposed revisions, use the Suggesting feature on Google Docs, that way your Team knows what you changed. In fact, as you and the Editing Team continue to review and make suggestions, everyone should use the Suggesting feature to see what each person suggests and where they suggest to make the change. You should use another meeting time to discuss which changes to accept and which ones you choose to reject so that your Team knows what you decide to do.

There is a minimum of one personal face-to-face meeting with your Editing Team. You may not be able to meet with all of your Editing Team, but at least meet with the Lead Editor during that meeting. Remember, your work is your work. The Editing Team’s revisions are just suggestions to making your work more relatable to a general public. If you choose to not accept them, you face the risk of publishing an unrelatable work.
Editing the Final Article: Summer Editing & Journal Release

Summer Editing

After submitting the final files, there will be a short break where Explorations will check faculty approval, article content, references, Chicago Manual style, and other requirements.

A LAUNCH faculty or staff editor that is in your field will review and revise the work using Microsoft Word. They will make suggestions like the Editing Team did in Google Docs as well as comments about certain things. You will address their suggestions and comments directly in Microsoft Word and send your revised version back to Explorations. Be sure to use the track changes feature in Microsoft Word so we can keep track of what changes you made. After you submit your faculty edits version, a non-TAMU affiliated professional editor will do the same thing as the faculty editor. You will, again, address their comments and suggestions directly in Microsoft Word using the track changes feature and then send your revised version back to Explorations.

As you receive these edits, be timely in accepting suggestions, addressing comments, and making other changes. To make the most out of this experience, make your changes early and send these changes back early. Any extra time you have may make your article an outstanding publication. But on the other hand, be professional and send your changes back on time, if not early. At this point, you will not have to do anymore editing over the summer, but please remain available to your article Designer.

Journal Release

Save the date for the Explorations Volume 11 Journal Release event in November 2019. Further details will be announced and a formal invitation will be sent directly to you.
The Journal Design Team will design your article for print and web-based publication. To ensure quality of your work, please submit original versions of your figures with your final files. This means if you created your figures in Microsoft, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, Jump Pro, or any other figure-generating software, send the original file, not the exported version. So, if you created a figure in Photoshop, submit the .psd version. If you created your figure in Adobe Illustrator, submit the packaged file and the .ai version. If you get confused about any of this, please stay in contact with your Editing Team as there should be an article Designer with each Team.
University Writing Center Guides

Main Page: http://writingcenter.tamu.edu/Students/Writing-Speaking-Guides

“Active and Passive Voice” -
http://writingcenter.tamu.edu/Students/Writing-Speaking-Guides/Alphabetical-List-of-Guides/Drafting/Active-Passive-Voice

“Audience Awareness” -
http://writingcenter.tamu.edu/Students/Writing-Speaking-Guides/Alphabetical-List-of-Guides/Brainstorming-Planning/Audience-Awareness

“Citing Sources” -
http://writingcenter.tamu.edu/Students/Writing-Speaking-Guides/Alphabetical-List-of-Guides/Citing-Documenting/Citing-Sources

“Clear and Concise Writing” -
http://writingcenter.tamu.edu/Students/Writing-Speaking-Guides/Alphabetical-List-of-Guides/Drafting/Clear-Concise-Writing

“Evaluating Scholarly Sources” -
http://writingcenter.tamu.edu/Students/Writing-Speaking-Guides/Alphabetical-List-of-Guides/Citing-Documenting/Evaluating-Scholarly-Sources

“Revising and Proofreading” -
http://writingcenter.tamu.edu/Students/Writing-Speaking-Guides/Alphabetical-List-of-Guides/Revising-Editing/Revising-Proofreading

“Scientific Writing” -
http://writingcenter.tamu.edu/Students/Writing-Speaking-Guides/Alphabetical-List-of-Guides/Academic-Writing/Scientific-Writing

“Transitions” -
http://writingcenter.tamu.edu/Students/Writing-Speaking-Guides/Alphabetical-List-of-Guides/Drafting/Transitions

Videos

“Writing Accessibly About Science” -
http://writingcenter.tamu.edu/Students/Writing-Speaking-Guides/Alphabetical-List-of-Guides/Academic-Writing/Scientific-Writing/Writing-Accessibly-About-Science

“Writing for Publication” by Bruce Thomas -
http://writingcenter.tamu.edu/Students/Writing-Speaking-Guides/Alphabetical-List-of-Guides/Academic-Writing/Writing-for-Publication

*Explorations uses Chicago citation style. For questions about this format, please see the following link: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/717/01/
Faculty and Staff Advisors

Dr. Sumana Datta  
Assistant Provost of Undergraduate Studies,  
Executive Director, LAUNCH,  
Professor of Biochemistry

Dr. Sarah M. Misemer  
Associate Director,  
LAUNCH: Undergraduate Research  
Associate Professor of Hispanic Studies

Staff Advisor

Ms. Annabelle G. Aymond  
Program Coordinator, LAUNCH: Undergraduate Research  
annabelle.aymond@tamu.edu

General Contact Info

Email: explorations@tamu.edu  
Website: explorations.tamu.edu
Contact Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Email:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lead Editor:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editor:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editor:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designer:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Don’t forget to make a GroupMe or some other secondary communication method!

Meeting Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time:</th>
<th>Location:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>