Can I appeal?

J Peter Donnelly

Editor-in-Chief

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Can I appeal?
Consider 2018. Please put up your hand if you:

- submitted a paper
Consider 2018. Please keep up your hand if you:

• submitted a paper
• had the paper rejected
Consider 2018. Please keep up your hand if you:

- submitted a paper
- had the paper rejected
- considered appealing
Consider 2018. Please keep up your hand if you:

- submitted a paper
- had the paper rejected
- considered appealing
- actually appealed
Consider 2018. Please keep up your hand if you:

- submitted a paper
- had the paper rejected
- considered appealing
- actually appealed
- won the appeal
Survival of the fittest
What happens to your paper?
What happens to your paper?
What happens to your paper?
What actually happens to your paper?
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What actually happens to your paper?

- aims and scope
- editorial review
- peer review
What actually happens to your paper?

- aims and scope
- editorial review
- peer review
- published
Editorial players

- Editor in Chief: N = 1
- Senior editors: N = 10
- Editors: N = 42
- Reviewers: N = 1,671
Fate of submissions

- Immediate rejection - outside scope: 12%
- Immediate rejection - appeal, merit, quality: 25%
- Rejection after review: 39%
- Acceptance: 24%
Fate of submissions

- Immediate rejection - outside scope; 12%
- Immediate rejection - appeal, merit, quality
- Rejection after review
- Acceptance
- 24%
Fate of submissions

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Fate of submissions

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Immediate rejection - appeal, merit, quality; 25%
Rejection after review; 39%
Acceptance; 24%

76% rejection rate

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Immediate rejection - aims and scope

Dear Professor NN,

I have reviewed it and I have decided to return it to you without sending it out for external review. This is not necessarily a reflection on the quality or merit of your work but is based on how well the subject fits the aims and scope of the Journal and your article’s appeal to our readership.

The large numbers of submissions and the limited space in our Journal are imposing such a constraint that we are currently rejecting almost 4 in every 5 manuscripts.

I am sorry to disappoint you on this occasion and hope that this decision does not deter you from considering the JAC for publishing your work in the future.

Yours sincerely

Dr J Peter Donnelly
Editor-in-Chief
Dear Professor NN,
I regret to inform you that your article has been rejected because, in my judgement, it does not appeal sufficiently to our readership and I am therefore unable to give it a high enough priority. This is not necessarily a reflection of the quality or merit of your work.

The large number of submissions and the limited space in our Journal are imposing such a constraint that we have to reject 4 of every 5 manuscripts at present. I am sorry to disappoint you on this occasion, and hope it will not dissuade you unduly from considering submission to JAC in the future.

Yours sincerely,
Professor NN
Senior Editor
Dear Dr NN,

Thank you for submitting this manuscript to JAC. It has been assigned to an Editor and reviewed, but, unfortunately, we are unable to accept the manuscript for the reasons given below.

The large numbers of submissions and the limited space in our Journal are imposing such a constraint that we are currently rejecting almost 4 in every 5 manuscripts.

I am sorry to disappoint you on this occasion but hope that you will find the comments useful and constructive.

Yours sincerely

Dr NN

Senior Editor

Editor comments:

Referees comments:
Fate of submissions - 2018

1,666 rejections

- Immediate rejection - outside scope
- Immediate rejection - appeal, merit, quality
- Rejection after review

Acceptance
Fate of submissions - 2018

- Immediate rejection - outside scope
- Immediate rejection - appeal, merit, quality
- Rejection after review
- Acceptance

1,666 rejections
45 appeals

No appeal; 97%
How do you handle rejection?

Not fair!
10 reasons for appealing...

1. Reviewers failed to understand
10 reasons for appealing...

1. Reviewers failed to understand
2. The referees suck!
10 reasons for appealing...

1. Reviewers failed to understand
2. The referees suck!
3. Gross misunderstanding of our data
10 reasons for appealing...

1. Reviewers failed to understand
2. The referees suck!
3. Gross misunderstanding of our data
4. Please cut me some slack!
10 reasons for appealing...

1. Reviewers failed to understand
2. The referees suck!
3. Gross misunderstanding of our data
4. Please cut me some slack!
5. Not very collegial of you to reject our work
1. Reviewers failed to understand
2. The referees suck!
3. Gross misunderstanding of our data
4. Please cut me some slack!
5. Not very collegial of you to reject our work
6. Come on, we’re pals!

10 reasons for appealing...
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1. Reviewers failed to understand
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5. Not very collegial of you to reject our work
6. Come on, we’re pals!
7. I need to get published in your esteemed journal
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8. I demand you send my paper our for a proper peer review
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9. I insist in getting a second opinion
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10. I got the manuscript accepted unconditionally elsewhere, so there!
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9. I insist in getting a second opinion
10. I got the manuscript accepted unconditionally elsewhere, so there!
All beside the point

what are other words for beside the point?

irrelevant, immaterial, extraneous, unimportant, inconsequential, off the subject, inapplicable
How you should handle rejection?

Self-reflection is not always easy
How to lodge an appeal
Beg?
Be aggressive?
Use a forensic approach?

Rebuttals
Adopt a political approach?

Can I have another chance to resubmit my paper?
Adopt a political approach?

Yes but you must submit it before Christmas.
Adopt a political approach?

Non! Non! Impossible!
Adopt a political approach?

Would the end of June be okay?
Adopt a political approach?

Non! Non!
Only until the end of May!
Adopt a political approach?

Would Halloween be okay?
Adopt a political approach?

Thanks. I am so grateful.
Adopt a political approach?

Sigh! Okay then. You win.
An appeal letter is something you write if you believe you, or your work, has been treated unfairly in some way, and you want the person responsible to reconsider his or her decision.

The goal of an appeal letter is to have a decision reconsidered, and hopefully overturned.
Writing a letter to appeal: what to include

• describe the necessary details in brief
• explain why you think the decision was wrong
• state what you hope the new outcome will be
Making your appeal

1. Use business letter format
2. Employ a polite tone
3. Stick to the facts
4. Keep it brief
5. Sleep on it!
Making your appeal

1. Use business letter format
2. Employ a polite tone
3. Stick to the facts
4. Keep it brief
5. Sleep on it!
6. Carefully read your letter again
7. Edit it where necessary
Making your appeal

1. Use business letter format
2. Employ a polite tone
3. Stick to the facts
4. Keep it brief
5. Sleep on it
6. Carefully read your letter again
7. Edit it where necessary
8. Send it to the correct person
Instructions for authors

Appeals
Authors wishing to lodge an appeal against a decision so do so by contacting the Senior Editor responsible for the decision directly and by copying in the Editorial Office.

EDITORIAL OFFICE CONTACT INFORMATION
The contact details for the *JAC* Editorial Office are as follows:
Griffin House, 53 Regent Place, Birmingham  B1 3NJ, UK
Tel: +44 121 262 1830  E-mail:  jac@bsac.org.uk
Letter of appeal

Subject

Appeal against rejection of JAC-2019-XXXX [SUBJECT of an email]
# Letter of appeal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Appeal against rejection of JAC-2019-XXXX [SUBJECT of an email]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salutation</td>
<td>Dear [Title &amp; surname] [formal, so avoid using the Christian (given) name]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Letter of appeal

**Subject**  
Appeal against rejection of JAC-2019-XXXX [SUBJECT of an email]

**Salutation**  
Dear [Title & surname] [formal, so avoid using the Christian (given) name]

**Body**  
I would like to appeal against the decision to reject our manuscript because ....[Avoid emotional outbursts please! Provide the reasons for your appeal as briefly as possible. Do not provide a detailed rebuttal here! This can be done if your appeal is successful.]
Letter of appeal

Subject
Appeal against rejection of JAC-2019-XXXX [SUBJECT of an email]

Salutation
Dear [Title & surname] [formal, so avoid using the Christian (given) name]

Body
I would like to appeal against the decision to reject our manuscript because ....[Avoid emotional outbursts please! Provide the reasons for your appeal as briefly as possible. Do not provide a detailed rebuttal here! This can be done if your appeal is successful.]

Closing
I would therefore ask if you would reconsider your decision and look forward to hearing your verdict in due course.
Letter of appeal

**Subject**
Appeal against rejection of JAC-2019-XXXX [*SUBJECT of an email*]

**Salutation**
Dear [Title & surname] [*formal, so avoid using the Christian (given) name*]

**Body**
I would like to appeal against the decision to reject our manuscript because .... [*Avoid emotional outbursts please! Provide the reasons for your appeal as briefly as possible. Do not provide a detailed rebuttal here! This can be done if your appeal is successful.*]

**Closing**
I would therefore ask if you would reconsider your decision and look forward to hearing your verdict in due course.

**Signature**
Signed
Full name [*state that you are the corresponding author*]
Fate of submissions - 2018

- 1,666 rejections
- 45 appeals
Fate of submissions - 2018

- 1,666 rejections
  - Immediate rejection - outside scope
  - Immediate rejection - appeal, merit, quality
  - Rejection after review

- 45 appeals

Total:
- Acceptance
- Successful; 1%
- Unsuccessful; 2%
- No appeal; 97%

1,666 rejections

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Editor-in-Chief and appeals

Complaints about:-

• taking too long to provide a verdict
Editor-in-Chief and appeals

Complaints about:-

• taking too long to provide a verdict
• a referee’s or an editor’s competence or impartiality
Editor-in-Chief and appeals

Complaints about:-

- taking too long to provide a verdict
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- insults aimed at a referee or an editor
Editor-in-Chief and appeals

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• dissatisfaction with the senior editor’s response to an appeal
Editor-in-Chief and appeals

Complaints about:-

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• discourteous or impertinent correspondence
Editor-in-Chief and appeals

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• discourteous or impertinent correspondence
• threats to JAC’s reputation
Editor-in-Chief and appeals

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- threats to JAC’s reputation

Perhaps I can be of some assistance?
Peer review – author’s perspective
Peer review – reviewer’s perspective

"DEAR CONTRIBUTOR"

by author
Peer review – reviewer’s perspective

“DEAR CONTRIBUTOR”

“THANK YOU FOR SUBMITTING YOUR STORY TO OUR MAGAZINE”
Peer review – reviewer’s perspective

“DEAR CONTRIBUTOR”

“THANK YOU FOR SUBMITTING YOUR STORY TO OUR MAGAZINE”

“TO SAVE TIME, WE ARE ENCLOSED TWO REJECTION SLIPS…”
Peer review – reviewer’s perspective

DEAR CONTRIBUTOR

THANK YOU FOR SUBMITTING YOUR STORY TO OUR MAGAZINE

TO SAVE TIME, WE ARE ENCLOSING TWO REJECTION SLIPS...

...ONE FOR THIS STORY AND ONE FOR THE NEXT STORY YOU SEND US!
So what should you do to avoid having to appeal?
So what should you do to avoid having to appeal?

Obviously write a good paper!
So what should you do to avoid having to appeal?

and follow the journal’s instructions
So what should you do to avoid having to appeal?

Ask yourself if rejection of your paper is justified.
So what should you do to avoid having to appeal?

If not, then consider making an appeal.
Publish or perish
When restraint and courtesy are added to strength, the latter becomes irresistible.

Mahatma Gandhi
When restraint and courtesy are added to strength, the latter becomes irresistible.

Mahatma Gandhi
Thank you!