Academic-Led Journal Launch Checklist

Today, starting an academic-led journal is easier than ever with many institutions and funders willing to lend support and ample tools to simplify peer review and publishing. This checklist covers steps you'll need to take in the first month of launching a journal.

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❏ Consult the Fair Open Access Principles to familiarize yourself with academic-led publishing best practices.

❏ Establish clear aims and scope for your journal— it's best to cover topics not currently represented by a Fair OA journal in order to fill a gap in your discipline.

❏ Determine how to best meet the OA publishing needs in your discipline: Is it flipping an existing journal you're a part of to a Fair OA model or launching a new journal to compete against corporate titles? Consult and collaborate with scholars in your field.

❏ If you plan on flipping an existing journal, consult the Fair Open Access Alliance or other organizations with resources for journal flipping such as MathOA, LingOA, or PsyOA. Determine if your editorial team can legally reclaim the corporate-owned title or if you'll need to launch your flipped journal under a new name.

❏ Form an editorial board of active scholars for your journal.

❏ Work with your editorial board to identify sources of organizational support for your academic journal, such as university libraries, scholarly associations, or other nonprofits. Established organizations can lend legitimacy and resources to your journal.

❏ Work with your editorial team and supporting organizations to determine the best means of funding your journal such as grants, subsidies, APCs, submission fees, or a combination of models. This will probably involve estimating costs each year, so remember to include any costs for website hosting, peer review software, copyediting, typesetting, and administrative support time.

❏ Once you've determined who will publish your journal (your editors and any organizational backers) and how you will fund the journal, establish a transparent journal structure keeping control within the academic-community and building in opportunities for community input.

❏ Choose a journal name and get an International Standard Serial Number (ISSN)—this will legitimize your publication.

❏ Establish core journal practices and policies including your peer review process, publication frequency, and copyright policy in line with the Fair Open Access Principles (remember even OA journals with no restrictions need an official copyright policy!). All of this information should be detailed on your website.

❏ Determine the tools and methods you will use to peer review and publish your journal. Think: manuscript tracking, website hosting, article typesetting, publishing analytics (carefully consider the learning curves and time requirements of all options).

❏ Create your journal website and get active in online and university networks to start promoting the journal and soliciting submissions. Remember to think digitally and publish and promote in ways that will engage scholars (e.g. mobile friendly website, social media presence).

❏ Register to add Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs) to all of your articles. Here's a quick overview of how to get started with Crossref.

❏ Apply to have your journal added to the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). Learn more here.

❏ Keep on the forefront of new online publishing tools and practices you can use to modernize your journal and improve your publishing processes.

❏ Reach out to academic-led publishing organizations for community guidance and support like the Free Journal Network.