

GETTING YOUR WORK NOTICED, READ AND CITED

We all hope that the research we undertake and publish will be recognised and valued by others within our field, in wider academic communities and even by the public. Yet all too often research that we consider important apparently goes unnoticed. When our work is cited by others it brings it to wider attention and while the use of citations for assessment purposes is controversial (and of little value in some areas), they are nevertheless being used ever more widely.

There are a number of ways in which we can quite legitimately improve the chances of our publications being read and cited, which many others use:

- **Good publications are more likely to attract attention.** Obvious of course, but sometimes one very strong publication has much more impact than three weaker ones, and a small amount of additional work can turn an average paper into an excellent one. Well written publications with clear figures and concise presentation are valued.
- **Where you publish matters.** The best journals are usually more widely read and more highly cited. Try for the best possible journal and ideally a general journal with the widest audience. If referees want more work, do it if at all possible, and if the decision looks marginal fight back! Several editors of major journals tell us that the British give in on negative decisions much more readily than some of our colleagues overseas!
- **Target leading colleagues.** Send your papers to leaders in the field (they are much more likely to publish and therefore generate citations) and add publications to slides and posters at conferences.
- **Recognise the work of others.** Ensure that you cite relevant work by colleagues - to omit their papers means that they are likely to omit yours next time they publish!
- **Value international collaboration.** Evidence suggests that researchers are more likely to cite papers where an author is working in their own country. Multinational collaborations enjoy a citation dividend from there being multiple 'home crowds'.
- **Consider the breadth of your audience.** Balancing work which is narrow and technical with other activity that appeals to a broader audience is likely to increase overall impact.
- **Make sure that papers are found.** Place them on to public databases, at the very least on to our own eScholar - <http://www.escholar.manchester.ac.uk> - (unless there is a copyright issue, in which case at least deposit the bibliographic details), cite them on your web site and ALWAYS ensure that University of Manchester appears in the affiliation list. We could lose up to 20% of citations because some other affiliation is given.
- **Review and edit.** Those who are willing reviewers of the papers of others and editors or members of editorial boards learn a great deal about writing good papers and recognition.
- **Increase profile.** This is something that some feel uncomfortable with, but getting a picture on a front cover of a journal has huge impact. If the findings have likely wider interest, contact one of our press officers and consider a press release.
- **Acknowledge who did the work.** Of course anyone who has made a major contribution should be an author, but take note of conventions in your field – for example in Life Sciences significant roles can be recognised as *joint first author*, when there are two senior authors, one can be last and the other corresponding author.
- **What type of publication?** Primary research findings are usually best presented as journal papers or monographs, but scholarly reviews of the field have value and can attract wide readership and high citations.

Comments and further suggestions most welcome.

Luke Georgiou, Nancy Rothwell and Andrew Walsh, October 2010.