

Conferences and Publications

Establishing your reputation as a scholar can be difficult. You know that you need to present and publish, but finding appropriate venues for your work is often time consuming and intimidating. The following process can help you to build your *curriculum vitae* (CV), increase your presence in academia, and improve your chances for employment upon graduation.

The first step in the process is to become aware of the trends in your discipline. While every area of study has diversity, there are often a couple (or a few) dominant paradigms. If you are fortunate enough to have an advisor that publishes in your exact area of interest, a good first step can be to ask them for suggestions for outlets for you to apply to. If you happen to be interested in an academic emphasis or sub-genre outside of your advisor's core area of research, consider recent publications from credible academic publishers or journals to compile a list of dominant/emerging scholars within your focus.

Once you have determined who is publishing in your paradigm, try to locate these individuals' CVs. Most people in academia who are publishing will have a professional electronic presence—either a page affiliated with their academic department, a personal page for their scholarship, or an online CV. By consulting their recent presentations and publications, you can determine some first-tier venues to apply to. (Be aware that you typically need to be an active member of professional organizations to have your work accepted—and prior attendance/subscription can also help.)

That said, if you are less established in the discipline, you can find yourself trying without success to be accepted in these forums. In such a scenario, consider less prestigious venues for your work so that you can build a reputation for your work. One way to do this is to focus on the outlets that other emerging scholars are using. For example, consider finding the CVs for recent graduates of programs which are dominant in the publishing of first-tier academic work in your area. Since scholarship is a form of lineage—with established scholars passing on knowledge and promoting emerging scholars within their paradigm—recent graduates of prestigious programs are likely to be publishing in quality (though perhaps slightly less competitive) venues.

Finally, don't underestimate the value of networking. Presenting and publishing are the vehicles by which scholarship perpetuates itself, but you may need to establish actual connections with people. Because most of the gatekeepers of academia (editors, readers, committees, etc.) attend academic conferences and symposia, such events provide you unparalleled access to the people who can make or break your professional career. Therefore, showing interest in your discipline and taking the time to support it can go a long way toward removing barriers to presenting and publishing.