

## Evaluating Journals for Publication Checklist

Journal Name: \_\_\_\_\_

YES   NO

### Does the journal guarantee publication?

- *If you answered yes, do not submit to this journal.* If a journal guarantees acceptance on submission that means they are not rigorously reviewing your work, and it is almost certainly not subject to any meaningful peer review. Generally, these kinds of journals are accepting as many papers as they can in order to make as much money on article processing charges as possible.

### Does your article fit with the subject/topics that the journal covers?

- Look at the description or aims and scope section of the journal. Does the content your article covers fit with the subjects/topics that the journal covers? If you're still unclear after reading the aims and scope, look through a few of the articles from the journal to get a feel for the kinds of articles they publish.

### Does the journal cover a specific range of related topics?

- Does it seem like the journal is attempting to cover too broad an area? Does the journal cover topics that don't seem to fit together? If it seems like the journal scope is overly broad, double check that the journal editors have the expertise to select across such a broad area.

### Is the journal indexed where you or your colleagues would search?

- Check to see where the journal is indexed. Remember that others will find your work more easily if the journal is indexed in places where people in your discipline commonly search. Is the journal indexed where you or your colleagues would search? If not, it might be a good idea to find a journal that is better indexed. The most efficient way to check where a journal is indexed is to search for it in [Ulrichs Global Serials Directory](#).

### Do the members of the editorial board have the credentials and expertise you would expect?

- The members of the editorial board should have the necessary expertise to be able to select content for the journal. Do the members of the editorial board have the credentials and expertise you would expect? e.g. if it is a pharmacy journal are members of the editorial board pharmacists or other members of the medical profession? If not, look for a journal where the editors have the required expertise to evaluate the journal content.

YES   NO

**Are the members of editorial board actually on the board?**

- Deceptive publishers may lie about who is on their editorial board, you may wish to double check if the members of the board mention their work on that journal on their personal or institutional websites or CV. If you find evidence that the journal is lying about the members on their editorial board, in addition to running into other issues of concern, consider submitting to a different journal.

**Does the journal specify the method of peer review (i.e. single blind, double blind, open)?**

- The peer review process should be clearly outlined. Does the journal specify the method of peer review (i.e. single blind, double blind, open)? If the journal doesn't specify their method of peer review but everything else looks okay, follow up with the journal to inquire about their peer review methods. If the journal doesn't specify their method of peer review and you have run into other issues of concern with the journal, consider submitting to a different journal.

**Does the journal guarantee short peer review times?**

- The publishing process involves a number of checks and balances to ensure quality work is published. Given that these checks and balances need to take place, and that the people doing peer review work are doing this work as part of their full-time positions, critically question how fast a journal can publish your work while still providing rigorous standards.

**If the journal uses a ranking system, is it one that is trusted?**

- There are two main journal rankings: Journal Impact Factor provided by Clarivate, and CiteScore provided by Elsevier. What ranking system does the journal use, if any? Is it one that is trusted? Think twice about the credibility of the journal if they use falsified rankings such as Global Impact Factor or Innovative Impact Factor.

**If the journal provides a ranking from a trusted system, is the score provided verifiable?**

- If the journal provides a ranking, is the score provided verifiable? If the journal claims a certain Impact Factor or CiteScore these can be verified using Journal Citation Reports and Scopus, respectively. If a journal claims an Impact Factor or CiteScore that isn't verifiable, consider another journal.

YES   NO

**Is the journal more than 3 years old?**

- Is the journal new or well established? This may have an impact on how much content is available to review, whether the journal has any kind of ranking, and whether they are members of publishing organizations. Remember that new does not equal poor quality; the history of a journal is just one factor to consider among many.

**Does the copyright policy allow you to retain the rights to your work in order to meet funder obligations?**

- Is the journal's copyright policy clear? If you have funder obligations, such as those through [Tri-Agency grants](#), does the copyright policy allow you to meet them?

**Is the journal associated with a scholarly society, trade organization, or University you trust?**

- For example, if you are a chemist, it is likely you could place more trust in journals published by the American Chemical Society or the Royal Society of Chemistry. If you were in Legal Studies, you might have more trust in the Law Review published through the University of Toronto's Faculty of Law. Note that organizations we trust can publish journals along the quality spectrum, but they are highly unlikely to be predatory publications.

**Does the journal and/or its publisher follow publishing best practice guidelines set by COPE or OASPA?**

- If a publisher has a membership with the Committee of Publication Ethics (COPE) or the Open Access Scholarly Publishing Association (OASPA) they may be more likely to follow the best practice guidelines set by those organizations. Note that these organizations charge fees for membership, so smaller or new publishers may not take part.

**Is the website well put together?**

- Does it appear as though care has been taken in organizing and displaying the information? Are there lots of broken links? Is clear contact information provided? Are there lots of spelling/grammar errors? Can you easily find and read the articles?

*If the majority of your answers are 'NO', do not publish with the named journal and consider other journals for publication. If the majority of your above answers are 'YES', the quality and legitimacy of the publication is more than satisfactory to consider submitting your work for publication.*