



Where to publish your research article - 7 considerations

1. Why publish?

Publication is a significant form of communicating the results of scientific inquiry. If you do not publish your research outcomes no one will ever know of its existence. Producing publications is not easy and it is not in fact research, but it is essential to your research effort, as future grants, promotion, and other job opportunities will depend upon the substantial high-quality research outputs documented in your CV.



Unless you have documentation of the acceptance of your research outputs by your peers, you will be unable to prove to potential grant funders, promotion panels, NRF rating committees just how good your research output is, or indeed, even if you have been productive at all.

2. Qualities of a good journal

- **Reputation** – of the journal and the publisher. The reputation of the publisher, journal, editor and editorial board can give an indication of the quality of the journal.
- **Scope and focus of the journal.** It is important that your article reaches the readers who can most benefit from it and who can most benefit you. The scope and aim of the journal will give an indication of who the journal's readers are, e.g. national or international, limited to a select area of research or with a multidisciplinary focus. Your article should also suit the style of the journal.
- **Turnaround time / publication lag.** What is the length of the review process? Average length of time from submission to acceptance or rejection; from acceptance to publication? Frequency of publication?
- **Included in prominent indexes.** Are articles from the journal indexed in journal databases relevant to your field, or in citation databases such as Scopus or Web of Science?
- **Longevity.** The number of years the journal has been around can be an indication of its stability and its interest to academia.
- **Editorial standards / Journal information.** The competence of a journal's editorial office can hugely influence the success or failure of an article. Make sure that the "Instructions to Authors" are easily accessible and that they set out clearly what is expected from authors. Does the journal come

out on time or is it often two or three years behind?

- **Acceptance rate.** The acceptance rate gives an indication of how competitive a journal is. Journals with a low acceptance rate are considered to be
- **Cost.** Be aware that some journals charge either a submission fee, an acceptance fee, page fees or fees for use of colour images or other special media formats.
- **Rights for authors.** Check the journal website or their copyright form for information on author rights. Are you allowed to re-use the article after publication or to submit the post-print to the University's research repository?
- **Type of publication.** Some journals only accept certain types of articles for publication.

3. Journal and article types

It is important to match the type of article to the type of journal. Journals usually indicate the type of articles they accept in their "Author Guidelines" or "Instructions to Authors".

Types of Journals:

- Traditional academic research journal
- Letters journal
- Review journal
- Professional journal / magazine

Types of articles:

- Original article / research article
- Rapid communications
- Review articles
- Case studies
- Theoretical articles



4. Predatory journals

Prof Johann Mouton and Astrid Valentine (Centre for Research on Evaluation, Science and Technology (CREST)) highlight the following characteristics of a predatory journal or publisher according to certain categories in their article, *The extent of South African authored articles in predatory journals*. They advise to be aware of the following:

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| Business model | Predatory journals are open access journals and they exist for the only purpose to make profit. |
| Origin of papers | They spam researchers to solicit manuscripts from them, usually by using their Yahoo or Gmail accounts. |
| Journal titles | Predatory journals usually have very broad titles or titles with a strange combination of scopes, for example, Global Journal of Advanced Research or Journal of Economics and Engineering. |
| Time to publication | Journals will promise extremely rapid response and publication times. They will also publish a very high number of papers per year. This may be one of the best indications that a journal is a predatory journal, as it is not possible for any editor to handle so many papers and at the same time use proper peer review. |
| Journal metrics | They will often give fake journal impact factors as well as false information on where the journals are indexed. |
| Peer review | Predatory journals usually have fake editorial boards or editorial boards that consist of a small number of individuals from the same organisation or country. They may also include scholars on an editorial board without their knowledge. |
| Contact information | They will list false or unreliable contact information, which does not clearly state their location or misrepresents the headquarters location. |

5. Open Access

Open Access (OA) is the practice of providing unrestricted access normally associated with publisher copyright agreements via the Internet to peer-reviewed scholarly journal articles, theses and dissertations, and scholarly monographs and chapters in books. Access is immediate, online and freely available to the end user. One of the benefits of publishing in an Open Access journal is accelerated discovery. Researchers can read and build on the findings of others without restriction.

The Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) is the primary source for identifying open access journals: www.doaj.org. A comprehensive overview of Open Access is provided on the Library website.



6. Journal metrics

Journal metrics provide a quantitative method for evaluating the quality of journals and is based on bibliometric citation analysis, where the popularity of a journal is reflected by the number of citations related to the "average article" in the journal.

Various citation indicators have been developed to reflect perceived quality. Each of these metrics has its own particular features, but in general, they all aim to provide rankings and insight into journal performance based on citation analysis.

Sources for journal metrics:

- Web of Science: Journal Citation Reports, including Journal Impact Factor
- Scopus: Journal metrics include Citescore, Scimago Journal Ranking (SJR) and the Source Normalized Impact per Paper (SNIP).
- Google Scholar metrics: Lists the top 100 journals within Google Scholar .

7. Accredited journals

In South Africa, only articles published in accredited journals are considered for subsidy. To this effect only journals included in specific lists/indices are considered as accredited and will be taken into account for government subsidy and in terms of NRF evaluation.

The following indices are regarded as accredited journals by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET):

- International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBSS) (Click on 'View Serials Title List')
- Science Citation Index (Web of Science (WoS) Core Collection)
- Social Sciences Citation Index (Web of Science (WoS) Core Collection)
- Arts and Humanities Citation Index (Web of Science (WoS) Core Collection)
- List of approved South African journals as maintained by the DHET
- The Norwegian List
- SciELO SA
- Scopus

Please use this webpage at the Division for Research Development (SU) for more information and links to the specific lists: <http://www.sun.ac.za/english/research-innovation/Research-Development/outputs-accredited-journals/accredited-journals>

Enquiries and help:

- Library Guide: <http://libguides.sun.ac.za/publish>
- Your Faculty Librarian
- Research Commons Librarians