



How to assess a journal

Key Things to Consider When Assessing a Journal*

*It's up to you to weigh these factors in order to make your decision

Positive Factors



Review several issues of the journal, checking for writing and research quality, relevance to the discipline, and adequate copy editing



Check to see if Open Access journals are listed at doaj.org

- The DOAJ requires a high bar for acceptance and journals that meet their requirements are generally considered reputable
- Note: very new journals will not be listed



Review the journal website. It should contain:

- A clear and appropriate scope
- An editorial board with recognized experts and current contact information
- A description of the peer review process



Open Access journals should include:

- A clear Open Access statement
- Licensing information, such as Creative Commons licenses or terms comparable with existing Creative Commons licenses
- Transparent information about whether article processing charges (APCs) or other fees are charged

Neutral Factors

Impact metrics 

- Not all reputable journals display impact metrics
- Beware: there are a number of made-up metrics on the internet

Geographical location of publisher 

- Journal publishing is a global pursuit

Article Processing Charges (APCs) 

- Reputable open access journals operate under a variety of business models, including many who use APCs

Reputation of other journals by the same publisher 

- A publisher can be responsible for both highly respected and less reputable journals

Negative Factors

Unsolicited emails 

- If a call for submission does not come from a trusted source, treat it as spam
- Be similarly wary of unsolicited offers to join editorial boards or conference invitations

The journal is not listed in known academic indexes (such as [Ulrich's Periodicals Directory](#) or [doaj.org](#))

Still Unsure?



Check with your colleagues and peers in your field.



Contact digital-scholarship@sfu.ca for help from an SFU librarian.



Visit thinkchecksubmit.org more useful tips.

To find out more about open access, visit lib.sfu.ca/oa

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