How to assess a journal
A.K.A. How not to publish in an undesirable journal

Key Things to Consider When Assessing a Journal*
*It’s up to you to weigh these factors in order to make your decision

Don’t trust unsolicited emails
• If a call for submission does not come from a trusted source, treat it as spam.

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

Review the journal website. It should contain:
• a clear and appropriate scope;
• an editorial board with recognized experts and current contact information for them;
• a description of the peer review process;
• transparent information about whether article processing charges (APCs) or other fees are charged.

Check that any impact metrics listed by the journal are recognized and reputable
• e.g. Journal Impact Factor, H-index, Eigenfactor

Neutral Factors
The following factors are not indicative of journal quality:

Lack of impact metrics
• Not all reputable journals display impact metrics.

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.

Still Unsure?
Check with your colleagues and peers in your field.
Contact digital-scholarship@sfu.ca for help from an SFU librarian.
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