**EVALUATION OF SCHOLARLY JOURNALS**

Scholarly journals are considered as the most important channel for communicating scientific research. Assessing the scholarly worth of a particular journal or article can help in determining its merits and relevance pertaining to the academic research of a scientist.

When reviewing a journal for quality and legitimacy, the following should be considered:

1. **Peer review process**

All of a journal’s content, excluding the editorial content, shall be subjected to peer review. Peer review is defined as obtaining advice on individual manuscripts from reviewers expert in the field who are not part of the journal’s editorial staff. This process, as well as any policies related to the journal’s peer review procedures, shall be clearly described on the journal’s Web site.

1. **Editorial Boards**

Journals shall have editorial boards or other governing bodies whose members are recognized experts in the subject areas included within the journal’s scope. The full names and affiliations of the journal’s editors shall be provided on the journal’s Web site.

1. **Contact Information**

Along with the names and affiliations of the journal’s editors the contact information/ address of the editorial office of the journal also should be provided on the website. .

1. **Author Fees**

Any fees or charges that are required for manuscript processing and/or publishing materials in the journal shall be clearly stated in a place that is easy for potential authors to find prior to submitting their manuscripts for review or explained to authors before they begin preparing their manuscript for submission.

1. **Copyright**

Copyright and licensing information shall be clearly described on the journal’s Web site.

1. **Identification of and dealing with allegations of research misconduct**

The Publisher and Editors of the Journal shall take steps to identify and prevent misconduct in publication such as plagiarism, citation manipulation, data falsification/fabrication etc. In no case shall a journal or its editors encourage such misconduct, or knowingly allow such misconduct to take place. In the event that a journal’s publisher or editors become aware of any allegation of research misconduct relating to a published article in their journal appropriate disciplinary action must be taken against the author(s).

1. **Ownership and Management**

Information about the ownership and/or management of a journal shall be clearly indicated on the journal’s web site. Publishers shall not use organizational names that would mislead potential authors and editors about the nature of the journal’s owner.

1. **Name of journal**

The Journal name shall be unique and not be one that is easily confused with another journal or that might mislead potential authors and readers about the Journal’s origin or association with other journals.

1. **Journal Policy**

A journal shall have clear policies on various aspects such as peer reviewing, editing, handling misconduct etc. and these should be clearly displayed on the Journal Website.

1. **Access**

The way(s) in which the journal and individual articles are available to readers and whether there are associated subscriptions or pay per view fees shall be stated.

1. **Revenue Sources**

The revenue sources (eg, author fees, subscriptions, advertising, reprints, institutional/ organizational support) shall be clearly stated or otherwise evident on the journal’s Web site.

13. **Advertising**: Journals shall state their advertising policy if relevant, including what types of ads will be considered, who makes decisions regarding accepting ads and whether they are linked to content or reader behavior (online only) or are displayed at random.

14. **Publishing schedule:**The periodicity at which a journal publishes shall be clearly indicated.

15. **Archiving:** A journal’s plan for electronic backup and preservation of access to the journal content (for example, access to main articles via CLOCKSS or PubMedCentral) in the event a journal is no longer published shall be clearly indicated.

16. **Direct marketing:**Any direct marketing activities, including solicitation of manuscripts that are conducted on behalf of the journal, shall be appropriate, well targeted, and unobtrusive.

# Open Access Journal Quality Indicators

Open access journals make articles freely available on the Internet, permitting any user to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search or link to the full text. Benefits of publishing in an open access venue may include:

* Increased visibility, usage, and impact of your research
* More efficient dissemination compared with traditional publishing models
* Retention of some or all of your copyrights
* Contribution to societal good by providing scholarly content to a global audience
* Rigor of traditional peer-review before publication
* Ongoing feedback through social media

The open access landscape is complex. There are thousands of peer-reviewed open access journals, with new titles emerging rapidly using a variety of models. While there are many high-quality, peer-reviewed open access publications, there are also journals/publishers that engage in unprofessional or unethical practices. The following guidelines are intended to help you evaluate open access publications as you consider appropriate publication venues, or invitations to serve as reviewers or editors.

Note that there is no single criterion that indicates whether or not a publication is reputable. Rather, look for a cumulative effect of more positives or more negatives. If you still have questions, please contact [your liaison librarian](http://gvsu.edu/library/librarians).

### Positive Indicators

* Scope of the journal is well-defined and clearly stated
* Journal’s primary audience is researchers/practitioners
* Editor, editorial board are recognized experts in the field
* Journal is affiliated with or sponsored by an established scholarly society or academic institution
* Articles are within the scope of the journal and meet the standards of the discipline
* Any fees or charges for publishing in the journal are easily found on the journal web site and clearly explained
* Articles have DOIs (Digital Object Identifier, e.g., doi:10.1111/j.1742-9544.2011.00054.x)
* Journal clearly indicates rights for use and re-use of content at article level (e.g., Creative Commons CC BY license)
* Journal has an ISSN (International Standard Serial Number, e.g., 1234-5678)
* Publisher is a member of [Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association](http://oaspa.org/)
* Journal is registered in [UlrichsWeb, Global Serials Directory](http://ulrichsweb.serialssolutions.com/)
* Journal is listed in the [Directory of Open Access Journals](http://www.doaj.org/)
* Journal is included in subject databases and/or indexes

### Negative Indicators

* Journal web site is difficult to locate or identify
* Publisher “About” information is absent on the journal’s web site
* Publisher direct marketing (i.e., spamming) or other advertising is obtrusive
* Instructions to authors information is not available
* Information on peer review and copyright is absent or unclear on the journal web site
* Journal scope statement is absent or extremely vague
* No information is provided about the publisher, or the information provided does not clearly indicate a relationship to a mission to disseminate research content
* Repeat lead authors in same issue
* Publisher has a negative reputation (e.g., documented examples in Chronicle of Higher Education, list-servs, etc.)
* Do you or your colleagues know the journal?  
  – Have you read any articles in the journal before?  
  – Is it easy to discover the latest papers in the journal?
* Can you easily identify and contact the publisher?  
  – Is the publisher name clearly displayed on the journal website?  
  – Can you contact the publisher by telephone, email, and post?
* Is the journal clear about the type of peer review it uses?
* Are articles indexed in services that you use?
* Is it clear what fees will be charged?  
  – Does the journal site explain what these fees are for and when they will be  
  charged?
* Do you recognise the editorial board?  
  – Have you heard of the editorial board members?  
  – Do the editorial board mention the journal on their own websites?
* Is the publisher a member of a recognized industry initiative?  
  – Do they belong to the [Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)](http://publicationethics.org/) ?  
  – If the journal is open access, is it listed in the [Directory of Open Access](https://doaj.org/)  
  [Journals (DOAJ)](https://doaj.org/) ?  
  – If the journal is open access, does the publisher belong to the [Open Access](http://oaspa.org/)  
  [Scholarly Publishers’ Association (OASPA)](http://oaspa.org/) ?  
  – Is the journal hosted on one of INASP’s [Journals Online](http://www.inasp.info/en/work/journals-online/) platforms (for journals published in Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Central America and Mongolia) or on [African Journals Online](http://www.ajol.info/) (AJOL, for African journals)?  
  – Is the publisher a member of another trade association?

The scholarly publishing paradigm is evolving to embrace innovative open access publication models. While this environment fosters the creation of high-quality, peer-reviewed open access publications, it also provides opportunities for journals or publishers to engage in unprofessional or unethical practices.

Changing publishing models, including the rise of open access journals, have reshaped the ways in which scholars share and use journal articles. The author-pays model of some open access publications did not give rise to predatory or vanity publishing as is often claimed nor are such problems exclusive to open access publishing. Even traditional subscription journals should be carefully analyzed for quality. Librarians should be aware of the various quality indicators and tools that are available for use by their constituents in evaluating potential places of publication.