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Choosing a Journal to Publish In: Toolkit

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Choosing a Journal to Publish In

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Introduction

Choosing a journal to submit your article to is a highly subjective process with many factors to consider. This toolkit outlines a two-step process to help you choose a journal to submit your publication to. In step 1, you will create a list of potential journals. In step 2, you will assess each journal on your list for fit, reputation, impact, and visibility.

Step 1: Methods to Identify Potential Journals

The purpose of this section is to create a list of potential journals you could submit to. Use any of the methods below to identify potential journals.

Talk to your supervisor

- As they know the field, ask them where they would recommend publishing your work.

Use your bibliography of reference list

- Are you citing the same journal over and over again in your bibliography? If so, it's an indication that your research fits the scope of that journal.

Use academic databases

- Search for research on your topic in an academic database for your field. Then use the filters to look at the journals that are most frequently publishing on your topic.

Database journal lists

- Did you know that you can often find/download the complete list of journals that are indexed in an academic database for your field? The list will be long, but you could identify potential journals based on the titles by skimming the list.

High impact journals by field

- What are the core journals in your field? Use the Web of Science's Journal Citation Reports[i] or Scopus' Sources Preview[ii] to view high impact journals in predefined fields.

Journal selection tools

- Many large publishing companies have started creating tools for choosing journals. Examples include Elsevier's Journal Finder[iii] or Springer's Journal Selector[iv].

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Step 2: Assessing Potential Journals

Once you have a list of potential journals, consider the following questions to help you decide if the is a good fit with your research and values. You can find the answers to many of these questions by visiting the journal's website.

Assessing Fit

Choose a journal that publishes on the topic that you're researching.

- Does this journal publish on the **topic** I'm researching?
- Does this journal publish the **type of article** I'm writing (case studies, methodology)?
- Has this journal **published similar material** to mine in past issues?

Assessing Reputation

Choose a journal that's recognized within your field and avoid predatory publishers.

- Is this journal **peer reviewed**? What type of peer review (double blind, single blind, open)?
- What **publishing company** or organization publishes the journal?
- Do you recognize anyone on the **editorial board**?
- What's the **history** of this journal and how long has it been published for?

Assessing Impact

Choose a journal that reflects your values about the impact of the journal within the academy.

- What's the **impact factor** for the journal?
- What's the **acceptance rate** for the journal?

Assessing Visibility

Choose a journal that reflects your values relating to the visibility and accessibility of your work.

- What databases **index** this journal? Have I heard of these databases?
- Is this journal based on subscriptions, **open access**, or a hybrid model? If open access or hybrid, are there article processing fees (APC's)?
  - Use the Directory of Open Access Journals[v] to see a list of high quality, open access scholarly journals.

Choosing a Journal to Publish In

Glossary

Academic Databases is a collection of sources, often scholarly and related to a specific field of research, that are used to find resources for scholarly research.

Article Processing Charge (APC) is a fee paid by the author(s) of an article in some open access or hybrid publications which allows the article to be published open access. Not all open access publications require APC's.

Editorial Board is a group of people (normally experts in that field) who determine the direction for a scholarly journal. They may provide peer review services themselves or find peer reviewers for articles.

Journal Impact Factor is roughly the average number of citations any single article published in that journal has received over the last 2 years.

Journal Indexing/Abstracting is the list of academic databases in which the journal can be found.

Open Access publications are articles and sometimes full journals that are published so that anyone can freely access the full text on the internet without paywalls.

Peer Review is a process used in academic publishing in which other experts in a field evaluate the quality of research and provide feedback before a work is published.

Predatory Publishers are publishers who take advantage of the open access publishing model for financial gain by charging article processing fees and engaging in a faulty peer review process.

Research Impact is the impact that research has inside and outside of the academy on policy, the environment, government, law, and practice.

Web Links

[i] Web of Science's Journal Citation Reports: https://www.ulib.niu.edu:9443/login?url=https://jcr.clarivate.com/

[ii] Scopus Sources Preview: https://www.scopus.com/sources.uri

[iii] Elsevier's Journal Finder: https://journalfinder.elsevier.com/

[iv] Springer's Journal Selector: https://journalsuggester.springer.com/

[v] Directory of Open Access Journals: https://doaj.org/