

PREPARING FOR PUBLICATION: Factors to Consider in Selecting a Journal for Publication

1. Impact and ranking

Impact and ranking factors of journals are indicators of journal quality. Examples of impact and ranking factors include the frequency in which an average article from a journal is cited in other publications over a specified time period; the number of articles published per year; the immediacy index; the cited half-life; the aggregate impact factor of a subject area; citation influence; journal influence index; paper influence index; to name a few. Consult the user's guide or help icon for each resource for more information.

- a. [eigenFACTOR](#)
- b. [ISI Journal Citation Reports](#)
- c. [Red Jasper's Center for Journal Ranking](#)
- d. [scienceWATCH](#)
- e. [SCImago](#)
- f. [SCOPUS Journal Analyzer*](#)

(*Scopus is available to WU School of Medicine and WU School of Engineering users only)

2. Indexing status by citation databases

A factor to consider when evaluating a journal for publication is its indexing status by citation databases. One indicator of journal quality is whether it is indexed by any major citation databases and if so, how far back does the indexing date from?

- a. [Ulrich's Periodical Directory](#)
- b. Check the journal website or the most recent issue of a print issue to locate indexing information
- c. Consult the user's guide or help icon of a particular database to locate indexing information

3. Journal information

Factors such as the circulation count, the number of years in publication, the language/s of the journal, frequency of publication, number of articles published per year, and availability of electronic or print formats can be helpful in determining a journal for publication.

- a. [Ulrich's Periodical Directory](#)
- b. Check the journal website or the print version for a description of the journal

4. Scope and aim

Knowing the scope and aim of the journal can help assess whether the article will reach the intended audience. If the target audience is international, select a journal with an international focus. If the target audience is limited to a select area of research, select a journal with a narrow focus as opposed to one with a multidisciplinary focus.

- a. [Ulrich's Periodical Directory](#)
- b. Check the journal website or the print version for a description of the journal
- c. Review back issues of journals to assess the scope of the journal and author affiliations

5. Acceptance/Rejection rate

Acceptance rates provide a measure of determining how competitive a particular journal is. There are some highly competitive journals with an acceptance rate of less than 10%. More specialized journals tend to have a lower rejection rate than more general journals.

- a. [American Psychological Association](#) (APA) journals
- b. [Cabell's Directory of Publishing Opportunities](#)
- c. Check the journal website—some journals note the acceptance/rejection rate for submissions
- d. Contact the Editor in Chief

6. Peer review status

In most academic settings publication in peer-reviewed journals is a requirement for tenure and promotion. Peer review is defined as an organized procedure carried out by a select committee of professionals in evaluating the performance of other professionals in meeting the standards of their specialty.

- a. [Ulrich's Periodical Directory](#)
- b. [Cabell's Directory of Publishing Opportunities](#)
- c. Check the journal website or the print version for a description of the journal

7. Length of review process

One factor to consider is the length of the review process. What is the average length of time from submission to publication? What is the average length of time from submission to rejection? How soon will an author receive notice that their manuscript has been accepted for publication? If accepted, what is the expected time period from acceptance to publication? Also, consider the frequency of publication by a journal. The review process for a journal that publishes on a quarterly basis is most likely longer as opposed to one that publishes monthly.

- a. [Cabell's Directory of Publishing Opportunities](#)
- b. Check the journal website or print version for information
- c. Contact the Editor in Chief

8. Reputation of the publisher, journal, editor in chief, editorial board

The reputation of the publisher, journal, editor in chief and editorial board members can be useful in determining the quality of a journal.

- a. Check the journal website or the print version for information about the Editor in Chief and editorial board members
- b. Ask your colleagues, particularly senior researchers in your area of research

9. Journals used by yourself or mentors/colleagues

One factor for consideration of a journal is to review the journals you use for your research. Which journals do you use frequently to keep track of new developments in your field? Which journals are used by the main researchers/authors in your area of research? Does the professional organization you belong to publish any journals? Also, check with your mentors and colleagues about journal options—there may be some journals that are highly recommended for your area of research. Specific journals may be more prestigious for tenure and promotion. These are all quality benchmarks for assessing a journal for publication.

10. Type of manuscript

Some journals only accept certain types of manuscripts for review.

- a. Check the journal website or the print version for information on types of manuscripts accepted for review
- b. Contact the Editor in Chief

11. Review or publication fees

Some journals impose fees for reviewing an article, article processing fees, page fees or fees for use of color images or other special media formats. It is not uncommon to have a considerable range in article processing fees among journals with similar scope and focus. Some journals also offer discounts on article processing fees to authors who use certain bibliographic software for management of references.

- a. [Cabell's Directory of Publishing Opportunities](#)
- b. Check the journal website or the print version for information on publication fees and/or discounts

12. Funding agency policies

Some authors whose articles were generated as a result of grant funded research are required to comply with funding agency policies such as the NIH Public Access Policy, the Wellcome Trust Open, or the CIHR/IRSC Policy on Access to Research Outputs. If an author is required to comply with funding agency policies they should verify that a journal will allow authors to comply before submitting a manuscript.

- a. Check the journal website or the print version for information on funding agency policies (usually in the Instructions for Authors section)
- b. Review the journal copyright form
- c. Contact the Editor in Chief

13. Rights for authors

There are journals that allow authors to retain rights to their work in order to be able to re-use or disseminate the work after publication. Some rights include being able to post the peer-reviewed version or the final published article on a laboratory website or to re-use a graph or figure in a future work or retaining the oral rights to the work. Some journals offer authors many rights upfront with other publishers providing limited rights.

- a. Check the journal website or print version for information on author rights
- b. Review the journal copyright form
- c. Contact the Editor in Chief

14. Supplemental data

Some journals accept supplemental data associated with an article and allow for access to the data on the journal website. Other journals go as far to make a commitment to archive the data and to provide long-term access to data sets on behalf of authors.

- a. Check the journal website or print version for information on supplemental data policies
- b. Contact the Editor in Chief

Other Factors:

- Does the journal have a limit on the size of the manuscript? Some journals have a word count limit.
- Does the journal provide unrestricted access to all articles within a set time-frame?
- Does the journal provide free reprints or offprints to authors?
- Does the journal offer a manuscript template or other authoring tools for authors?
- Does the journal offer an extensive “Instructions for Authors” section?
- Is the journal an open access journal?

Have questions? Need assistance?

[Becker Medical Library](#)

[Cathy Sarli](#), Becker Library Scholarly Communications Specialist