

EVALUATING OPEN ACCESS JOURNALS CHECKLIST

Many of the criteria used to assess the quality of subscription-based journals apply to open access journals as well. When deciding where to publish, or whether to serve as an editor, consider whether or not the journal is:

- ✓ Scholarly/Academic with a well-defined scope and audience
- ✓ Affiliated with an academic or professional organization
- ✓ Peer-reviewed
- ✓ Edited by experts in the field
- ✓ Has an ISSN number
- ✓ Provides DOIs at the article level

- ✓ Transparent regarding any publishing fees
- ✓ Allows authors to retain some of their rights under the copyright transfer agreement
- ✓ Allows authors to post the final, peer-reviewed manuscript version to any repository or web site

- ✓ Included in Ulrich's Periodicals Directory and indexed/abstracted in major databases
- ✓ Has an impact factor (JCR) or SCImago Journal Rank Indicator (SJR)
<http://www.scimagojr.com/>

Additional quality indicators for open access journals include:

- ✓ Publisher is a member of the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA)
<http://oaspa.org/>
- ✓ Journal is included in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)
<https://doaj.org/> (Note: criteria for inclusion were recently tightened and journals added prior to March 2014 have to reapply to be included)
- ✓ Journal and/or publisher is registered with SHERPA/RoMEO
<http://www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo/>
- ✓ Journal provides free readership rights immediately upon publication (i.e., no embargo)
- ✓ Publisher provides information about its digital preservation practices

While publishers with questionable practices are nothing new, there are some things to be wary of when evaluating an open access journal:

- ✗ No "about" or contact information on the journal's web site
- ✗ No information about peer-review, copyright, or instructions for authors on the web site

- ✗ Excessive solicitation by the publisher, especially if poorly targeted
- ✗ Publisher issues a lot of "edited volumes" rather than actual journals
- ✗ Journal has a very low article count (fewer than 5/year)
- ✗ Other journals in your field by the publisher are of poor quality
- ✗ Publisher launched many journals on the same date
- ✗ Authors are from the same institution, or there are repeated authors or groups, or one dominant author across a few issues

- ✗ Publisher makes false claims about indexing or archiving
- ✗ Journal is not listed in DOAJ