

Evaluating Open Access Journals: A Checklist

Review and answer the following questions. You can use the journal’s website and the linked sources to help. At the end of each section, total your answers for the “Yes” and “No” columns.

Positive Indicators

	Yes	No
Is the scope of the journal well defined and clearly stated?		
Is the journal’s primary audience composed of researchers/practitioners?		
Are the editorial board members recognized experts in the field? If so, have you asked at least one of them if they are aware this site lists them as a board member?		
Is the journal affiliated with or sponsored by an established scholarly society or academic institution?		
Are articles within the scope of the journal and do they meet the standards of the discipline?		
Are fees for publishing in the journal easily found on the journal’s website and clearly explained?		
Do articles have DOIs (i.e., digital object identifiers)?		
Does the journal clearly indicate rights for use and reuse of content at the article level (e.g., Creative Commons CC BY 4.0 license)?		
Does the journal have an ISSN (International Standard Serial Number)?		
Is the publisher a member of the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association ?		
Is the journal registered in UlrichsWeb Global Serials Directory ?		
Is the journal listed in the Directory of Open Access Journals ?		
Is the journal included in reputable subject databases and/or indexes?		
TOTAL:		

Continued →

Negative Indicators

	Yes	No
Is the journal's website difficult to locate or identify?		
Is the publisher's "About" information absent on the journal's website?		
Does the publisher engage in obtrusive direct marketing (i.e., spamming) or other advertising?		
Are instructions to authors unavailable?		
Is information on peer review and copyright absent or unclear on the journal's website?		
Is the journal's scope statement absent or extremely vague?		
Does the journal's website provide no information about the publisher, or does the information provided not clearly indicate a relationship to a mission to disseminate research content?		
Does the same issue have repeat lead authors?		
Does the publisher have a negative reputation (e.g., documented examples in Chronicle of Higher Education, email distribution lists, online forums, etc.)?		
Has the publisher been fined for deceptive business practices by the U.S. Federal Trade Commission or other regulator?		
TOTAL:		

If your answers are mostly “**yes**” in the **Positive Indicators** section, then the journal is likely to be reputable.

If your answers are mostly “**yes**” in the **Negative Indicators** section, then the journal may not be reputable or high-quality.

If you have questions or need further help, then please contact a member of Emory's Scholarly Communications Office by emailing scholcomm@listserv.cc.emory.edu.

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