How to Assess a Journal

Key Things to Consider When Assessing a Journal*

*It's up to you to weigh these factors in order to make your decision.

Don't trust unsolicited emails
- If a call for submission does not come from a trusted source, treat it as spam.

Be similarly wary of unsolicited offers to join editorial boards or conference invitations.

Review several issues of the journal
- Check for writing and research quality, relevance to discipline and adequate copy editing.

While you're at it...
- If your research grant or institution requires that your article be openly available, make sure the journal's policy allows this.

Review the journal website.
- It should contain:
  - a clear and appropriate scope;
  - an editorial board with recognized experts and current contact information for them;
  - a description of the peer review process;
  - transparent information about whether article processing charges (APCs) or other fees are charged.

Two journals can have similar names but different reputations; don't mistake one journal for another.

Check that any impact metrics listed by the journal are recognized and reputable
- e.g. Journal Impact Factor, H-index, Eigenfactor

Beware: there are a number of made-up metrics on the Internet.

Still Unsure?

Check with your colleagues and peers in your field.

Get help from a librarian at your institution.

Visit thinkchecksubmit.org for more useful tips.

Neutral Factors

The following factors are not indicative of journal quality:

Lack of impact metrics
- Not all reputable journals display impact metrics.

Geographical location of publisher
- Journal publishing is a global pursuit.

Article Processing Charges (APCs)
- Reputable open access journals operate under a variety of business models, including many who use APCs.

Reputation of other journals by the same publisher
- A publisher can be responsible for both highly respected and less reputable journals.