

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS REGARDING SCOPUS JOURNAL SELECTION CRITERIA AND PROCESS

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Under what conditions a journal already indexed in Scopus is subject to re-evaluation?

To determine journal quality, Scopus runs the annual Re-evaluation program which identifies outlier and underperforming journals in three different ways: (1) by comparing with six metrics and benchmarks, (2) by using the data analytics tool 'Radar' and (3) by collecting information on publication concerns from stakeholders and users.

Details of re-evaluation, including the overview of six benchmarks and metrics, can be [found here](#).

Is it possible to find out the reason for which a journal already indexed in Scopus is subject to re-evaluation?

The journals are informed only if the re-evaluation resulted in a negative decision. Information about the reasons for this are shared with the publisher/journal, as well as are published on the list of discontinued titles, publicly available on our website. Please note that in that list there are only major categories of reasons for discontinuation, and details are confidential.

Currently, the citescore includes all documents of the journal (for corresponding years) in the denominator. This means, that also genres like conference reports, book reviews or editorials (i.e. documents that have DOI, but are not peer-reviewed and do not get citations) are included. Under the current model, it is thus advantageous not to publish any of these kind of documents. Would you recommend our journal to drop completely these genres (reviews, editorials) to get a better citescore? Or what is your stance towards publishing reviews, editorials and other such documents?

The new CiteScore methodology includes only peer-reviewed content, which means that editorials, book reviews etc. are not included in the calculation. When it comes to the type of content which a journal publishes, the rule is that the journal should always publish content which serves its audience best. If the readership and the community expect book reviews, letters, commentaries or any other types of documents, there is no reason why these should not be publish. A balance of these documents and research papers needs to be kept, however, to maintain the scientific profile of the journal.

What email should my Scopus-indexed Journal editor write to inform Scopus about change of the Journal web-site address?

Please reach out directly to the person who has been handling your journal until now (i.e. the person with whom you have exchanged emails regarding indexation agreement). If you do not have contact details of that person, please send your message to ScopusSupport@elsevier.com. In case of lack of response within a week, please forward the automated response with ticket number to me (k.gaczajac@elsevier.com) and I will do my best to help.

Is there a deadline for response to the appeal, since we did not get after 2 months?

If the appeal was on procedural grounds, then it can be considered by the board. If it was not, then it will be dismissed without consideration. If you haven't heard back in a long time, you may send a reminder (re-send your appeal with a comment that this is a reminder).

To whom we can send the application for pre-evaluation process? And can you explain that procedure and time span?

The pre-evaluation service is run in Central-Eastern Europe for all journals which are not yet in Scopus, not in formal evaluation and which would like to check their match of eligibility criteria before submission to formal evaluation. The service is free of charge and can be used only once by a given journal, and there is no embargo period imposed. The outcome of the service is a tailored report, in which potential weaknesses of the journal are indicated, allowing the editorial board or publisher to correct these before submitting the journal for formal evaluation. The goal of this service is to minimize the likelihood of the journal being rejected in the first stage of the evaluation due to reasons which could be easily amended. To use this service, a representative of the journal needs to fill [this form](#). The report is typically prepared within a month from submission. Please note that pre-evaluation is a voluntary, non-binding service, which means that the editorial board or journal publisher do not have to use it, can dismiss the outcome of the service and submit their journal for formal evaluation at any time. Using pre-evaluation service has no impact on the formal evaluation process and does not affect the result of the formal evaluation done by an independent board of experts.

[Our] Journal sent a pre-evaluation in 2018. We improved some requirements and in 2019 tried to fill in form again. We received the next answer: we have recently received the submission of your journal for journal pre-evaluation service. However, our records show that this journal has already used this service in March 2018, therefore it is no longer eligible. The service is a one-time service and journals cannot benefit from it more than once. What to do?

As indicated above, this service can be used by a journal only once. If the editors and/or the publisher are convinced that all issues raised in the report have been appropriately addressed, they may consider submitting the journal for formal evaluation, using [this form](#).

Embargo period? How long does it last, usually?

The embargo period is imposed if the outcome of the formal evaluation is negative. It defines a time, during which the journal cannot be re-submitted to Scopus for evaluation. The duration of the embargo period spans from several months to five years. The length is determined by the member of CSAB who evaluated the journal, and it is equal to the estimated time which will take the journal's management to introduce changes to address the reasons for journal rejection. Minor shortcomings will typically result in shorter embargo periods, while those requiring deep and long-term efforts, such as building international visibility or sustainable diversity of authors, result in long embargo periods.

How to check citation of articles for journal which is not indexed in Scopus, in advance search in Scopus?

In order to do so, you need to go to www.scopus.com, choose "Advanced" search and type REFSRCTITLE and add within parenthesis and inverted commas the title of the journal. The search query should look like this: REFSRCTITLE("journal name"). Once the list is visible, click on view "Secondary documents", above the search results, and then use the filters on the left side to limit the results to show only the exact matches of the journal title. This view will tell you which articles from the given journal have received citations. The first view (before choosing "Secondary documents") will show you the total number of citations. Please note this might be inaccurate if your journal shares a title with another one or if it overlaps with others.

How often does Scopus index the currently published articles?

Scopus is updated on a daily basis, meaning that content is added or corrected everyday. New content of journals is checked periodically, matching the frequency of journal's publishing schedule. Delays in indexation may happen for various technical reasons, and if they do happen please inform Scopus support at ScopusSupport@elsevier.com. Please include journal title and ISSN in the explanation of your enquiry. In case of lack of response within a week, please forward the automated response with ticket number to me (k.gaca-zajac@elsevier.com) and I will do my best to help.

The journal has a significant number of citations that are not included because the authors used different abbreviations. How to influence it?

When journal is submitted for Scopus evaluation, you can provide alternative titles of the journal, including abbreviations, and these will be used to check the overall number of citations. To avoid situations like this, the best practice is to provide citation guidelines in each paper. Some journals provide a short text at the bottom of first or last page saying "Please cite this document in the following way:"; sometimes this can be also found next to the link to download/access the paper on the journal's website. In this text you can provide alternative forms of citations: one abbreviated and one not. Additionally, you may officially inform authors, readers and reviewers what is the formal abbreviation of the journal title. You can do so on the journal's website in a place easy to find.

We have been rejected at first stage of journal evaluation and the reason was small citedness. Our question is how to improve citedness if we are not interesting to authors since we are not included in Scopus? Our inclusion in Scopus will increase impact and citedness of journal.

The citation count is not among eligibility criteria, therefore it cannot be the reason for journal rejection at the first stage. Also, low citation count is very rarely the only reason for journal rejection and most often it is mentioned among other reasons for journal rejection. Having clarified that, there are many ways in which journal citations can be boosted. Most of all, consider promoting your journal's content at conferences, at which the content presented in your journal would be interesting to the participants. Discuss with the Scientific or Advisory Board how to work towards increasing citations of the journal – it is also their role to ensure good visibility and recognition of the journal. You can also reach out to editors of journals from your region, which are indexed in Scopus, and ask them for advice. You can ask your publisher for help in this, too.

How to encourage reviewers to finish their review on time?

There are many incentives which can be introduced by the journal, and I believe it's best to discuss with editors of other journals on what are their strategies. From numerous discussions with editors, I can list a few which I remember: (1) give a discount or fee waiver on OA fee (APC) to reviewers who do reviews on time (this way they will also have a better reason to publish at your journal, if it offers OA), (2) provide annual awards, gifts or recognition certificates to timely reviewers, (3) invite best reviewers to be guest editors of special issues and (3) reward the best reviewers by inviting them to join the editorial board or scientific council of the journal.

How to attract high quality papers, when authors are looking for journals with high IF?

Journal's reputation is built over time and there is no shortcut to attracting high quality content. There are a few tips I've heard from editors who successfully built their journals. The best I've heard is to start with a very good editorial board and solid scientific council. These people should always ensure that the journal fulfils its mission and publishes only relevant, high quality content. Members of these boards should have very good scholarly record in the field of the journal (i.e. be recognized), which would also mean that they have expansive network of collaborators and many of those will be excellent researchers in the field. Members of the board should invite their colleagues to submit their work for peer-review and potential publication. These publications can be done in collaboration also with junior researchers, who are eager to publish and have excellent guidance from their mentors. This strategy is indeed challenging, but it gives the best return of investment, according to editors and publishers with whom I speak.