

# Scopus journal FAQs

Improving the *submission process* for  
editors and publishers



Being indexed in Scopus is a major attainment for journals worldwide. It's an accomplishment that not only brings a measure of satisfaction but also assures the quality of your journal to other members of the scientific community.

Through interaction and discussion with many journal editors, administration managers and publishers seeking to be indexed in Scopus, we realized that you often have questions during this process.

To help improve the success of your submission to Scopus, we have collated a set of frequently asked questions (FAQs) for all stages of the Scopus submission process. We also conduct workshops for journal editors with the Subject Chairs from our Scopus Content Selection and Advisory Board (CSAB) across many regions of the world. For more information about Scopus and the CSAB's scope and function, please visit [Scopus content policy and selection](#).

**Please use these FAQs a guide and reference only.** We have tried to make them as complete as possible, but they are by no means definitive as roles and responsibilities differ from journal to journal. The FAQs are intended mainly for journal editors, but they may also apply to publishers, given their overarching role in journal responsibility. We welcome feedback about the FAQs and their value. If answers to additional questions would be helpful, please send suggestions to [titlesuggestion@scopus.com](mailto:titlesuggestion@scopus.com) with the subject header "FAQs."



**These FAQs are divided into three categories related to Scopus journal submission:**

- Stage 1: Pre-submission and self-evaluation
- Stage 2: Scopus title evaluation
  - Submission process
  - Review decisions by the CSAB
- Review decisions and objections



## Stage 1

# Pre-submission and self-evaluation

### 1. What journals are eligible for Scopus review?

All journals need to meet all of the technical criteria (minimum or eligibility criteria). A journal that fails on any of these criteria will not be eligible for review:

- Consist of peer-reviewed content
- Be published on a regular basis and have an ISSN registered with the International ISSN Centre
- Have content that is relevant and readable by an international audience (at minimum, have English abstracts and article titles)
- Have a publicly available publication ethics and publication malpractice statement

Please note the CSAB uses sample documents of published content to evaluate the quality of a title. We advise publishers to carefully consider the amount of content published so far when choosing the right time to submit the title to Scopus. An embargo period will be applied in case of a negative evaluation outcome (see Stage 2 questions).

### 2. What is a peer-reviewed article in a peer-reviewed journal?

In academic publishing, the goal of **peer review** is to have experts in a specific field of research **assess the quality** of articles submitted for publication in a scholarly journal. Before an article is deemed appropriate for publication in a peer-reviewed journal, it must undergo an evaluation process.

- The author of the article submits it to the journal editor, who puts it through their journal's submission system and then forwards the article to experts in the field. Because the reviewers specialize in the same scholarly area as the author, they are considered the author's peers (hence "peer review").
- These impartial reviewers are charged with carefully evaluating the quality of the submitted manuscript, often using their own evaluation criteria to assist the review process.
- The peer reviewers check several issues in the manuscript, including assessing the validity of the research methodology and procedures. They are also vigilant for plagiarism or any unethical practices in the research.
- If appropriate, the peer reviewers may recommend revisions and resubmission of an article. In other cases, they may recommend rejection. The journal editor relies on the reviewers to offer guidance on whether to accept or reject an article.

### 3. What are the different kinds of peer-reviewed journals?

There are different types of peer review:

- **Main editor peer review:** Only one or two main editors review and select all the submitted articles for each issue.
- **Open peer review:** Reviewers are aware of the identity of the authors, and authors are also aware of the identity of reviewers. There are three or more reviewers for the total number of articles in each issue.
- **Single-blind peer-review:** Reviewers are aware of the identity of the authors, but authors are unaware of the identity of the reviewers. There are three or more reviewers for the total number of articles in each issue.
- **Double-blind peer-review:** Reviewers are unaware of the identity of the authors, and authors are also unaware of the identity of reviewers. There are at least two reviewers for the total number of articles in each issue, with many journals inviting more to ensure responsive feedback.

New formats of peer review include post-publication peer review, where the peer-review process takes place after a preliminary version of the article is published. Post-publication peer review takes place online.

### 4. What does inclusion in Scopus mean for a journal?

A journal that is suggested to Scopus and accepted for inclusion will:

- Gain international visibility
- Have increased opportunities for collaboration with researchers from around the world
- Have increased possibilities of article content being cited, due to the enhanced accessibility
- Contribute to the wider scholarly community in the specialist subject field

### 5. How important is it to know whether a journal is already being cited in Scopus?

Knowing whether a journal is already being cited in Scopus gives an idea of the impact it will have, should it be selected for Scopus coverage. The expected impact of a journal relative to other journals in its field is considered in the Scopus journal evaluation process. It is also a good indicator for authors of the value of their research to others in their field.

### 6. Why does the abstract and the title of an article have to be published in English?

English is considered the common language of the international scientific community — and therefore also for Scopus users. That is why all content of the records that are available in Scopus (title, abstract, keywords) need to be in English. Indexing, profiling and processing of content in Scopus is also based on the English language.

*Please note that the full text of titles covered in Scopus can be in any language, as long as the title, abstracts and keywords are in English.* Scopus currently covers journals that have full-text content in 40 different languages.

### 7. Should all articles be published in English as well as other languages?

As noted in the previous question, all abstracts and article titles must be in English. However, the full text of journals can be in any language. Currently, Scopus has titles that have full-text content in 40 different languages. Many journals now enable readers to read an English translation of their journal website or read a selection of published papers in English. Many journals also include English translations of some of their authors' work or publish a few articles in English, which both enables international researchers to access the research directly and encourages dialogue and collaboration.

## **8. What is a publication ethics and publication malpractice statement?**

A publication ethics and publication malpractice statement makes it clear that the publisher adheres to a recognized code of conduct and ethical practice for its own work and that of its journals.

This statement should cover topics such as equality for all articles and/or authors by the editor, editorial team and journal reviewers; confidentiality; publication fraud; originality and plagiarism, as well as action taken if this is suspected; authorship rules and disclosures and conflict of interests.

Several industry organizations, including the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), publish comprehensive guidelines that can be adopted by publishers. For an example, see [COPE's Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing](#).

## **9. How can an editor check whether their journal is being cited by other journals already indexed in Scopus?**

Knowing whether a journal is already being cited in Scopus gives an idea of the impact it will have if it is selected for Scopus coverage. It is also a good indicator for authors of the value of their research to others in their field. Use Scopus to search for your journal's name (and variations of the name) in the "Source Title" field. The search will likely result in zero results or documents published in Scopus journals with similar names. Then click "View secondary documents" to find cited references from sources covered in Scopus. Although it is possible to gain an approximate idea of the level of citations by using this method, the citation count may not be accurate. This methodology relies on text matching, which is dependent on ambiguity, differences in use of abbreviations, typing errors and incomplete data. Carefully choose the words of the journal title and check the results of what is found. You may need to adjust your search terms a few times before getting the best results.

## **10. Who should be nominated as the main handling editor of the journal?**

The main handling editor(s) should not just be those who are in the role in name only (that is, not contributing to the journal editor role), nor should they be an ad hoc Editorial Board member. They need to be involved with the journal and its management. We highly recommend that the main handling editor (or Editor-in-Chief in some journals) take an active interest in raising the journal's overall quality. Their involvement is often seen in their editorials in some journal issues. This information will be part of the evaluation by Scopus CSAB reviewers.

## **11. Are conference proceedings considered appropriate for submission to Scopus?**

Conference proceedings are eligible for Scopus review if they are serial and meet all the Scopus minimum journal selection criteria. Eligible conference proceedings are reviewed in the same way as journals.

## **12. Can an open access journal be submitted for inclusion in Scopus?**

Yes. All titles that meet the minimum journal selection criteria can be suggested for Scopus coverage, regardless of the journal's business model.

### 13. Where can I find additional resources for editors?

Here are several online resources for editors:

- **Editor Hub (Elsevier for Editors)**: Information on the latest developments in journal publishing, policies and initiatives, and helpful tips from industry peers. Although aimed at editors of Elsevier journals, these sources are publicly available for any editor. Many other scientific publishers also provide interesting sources relevant for editors.
- **Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)**: COPE is a forum for editors and publishers of peer-reviewed journals to discuss all aspects of publication ethics. It also advises editors on how to manage cases of research and publication misconduct and offers a series of Best Practice Guidelines, such as those for journal editors and for journals and publishers who wish to become members of COPE.
- **Scopus Metrics**: Metrics to show journal, article and author influence

### 14. What is considered a local or regional journal?

A local or regional journal is one where the aims and scope are limited to interest from a certain region or country. The authorship, readership and editorial board of these journals are generally all from the same region or country. They are often published only in the country's own language. This means that the readership is often restricted to that country or region or international researchers who can read the same language.

If relevant content is published, a regional or national focus can sometimes give journals a competitive advantage over truly international journals. Well written, locally oriented material has the potential to make a significant academic contribution to the wider scientific community.

### 15. What is considered an institutional journal?

Many academic institutions worldwide publish their own scientific journals. The primary purpose of these journals is as a repository for material generated within the institution or by authors affiliated with the institution. These journals are considered institutional journals. The Scopus CSAB recognizes that such journals may serve important local historical and political purposes, including encouraging local researchers onto the publication ladder. However, because of their localized approach to the dissemination of scholarly outputs, this does not translate into the broader expectations and requirements for inclusion in an international database.

Some academic institutions, however, have broadened their publishing role and offer a wider geographical focus to their journals, including involvement of the international academic community. These can become established publishing organizations in their own right as they recognize the value of this business model.

### 16. What is considered an international journal?

An international journal is one whose aims and scope are of interest to a wider international scientific community within a subject field. Moreover, an international journal has a good diversity of authors, readers and editorial board members, with representation from different regions and countries. Some journals may have an international advisory board to represent this diversity.

The journal's published content should also be in line with the stated aims and scope and be of interest to the international scientific community. *Note: The word "International" in a journal's title does not make it an international journal.*

## 17. What does an editor need to do before the submission process?

Ask yourself, “Does the journal meet the minimum criteria?” If not, rethink the journal sections that do not meet the criteria. Before submitting a journal for Scopus review, we advise you to **check the following items**:

- Does the journal publish peer-reviewed content?
- Does the journal have an ISSN registered at the International ISSN Centre?
- Do the articles published in the journal have English abstracts and titles?
- Does the journal have an online publication ethics and publication malpractice statement? For more information about publication ethics, see [COPE’s Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing](#).
- Is the journal title unique, descriptive and not already in use by other journals? This is an important issue to resolve, as it may result in a change of journal title and the need for a different ISSN number. Identical or similar journal titles can cause problems with authors who believe they are submitting articles to one journal but in fact may be submitting to a different one. This has ethical implications as well.
- Does the journal have a publication history? We advise publishers to carefully consider the amount of content published when determining the right moment to submit the title to Scopus.
- Have the three most recent journal issues, or nine articles and a table of contents, ready to upload in PDF format as sample documents.
- Determine the journal’s main handling editor. This is the person with overall responsibility for the peer-review process and managing the journal. You can name up to three main handling editors.
- Have a URL for each main handling editor’s professional information, including curriculum vitae or resume, institutional or personal homepage, and preferably showing scientific credibility, current affiliation and affiliation history, awards and grants received.
- Use the Scopus CSAB guidelines to evaluate whether the journal meets the [Scopus journal selection criteria](#).





## Stage 2: Scopus title evaluation

# Submission process

### 1. What is the CSAB and who is on it?

The Scopus Content Selection and Advisory Board (CSAB) is an international group of scientists who are experts in their respective subject fields. The independent CSAB is responsible for reviewing the journals that are suggested to Scopus.

The CSAB comprises 17 Subject Chairs, each representing a specific subject field(s). The board also works with the Scopus team to understand how Scopus is used, what content is relevant for users and what enhancements should be made. The recommendations of the CSAB directly influence the overall direction of Scopus in relation to its main content and the prioritization of new content requests. This ensures that Scopus stays international and relevant and, most importantly, ensures the quality of its content.

The CSAB evaluates journals submitted to Scopus using criteria that can be found here: [Scopus content and policy selection](#).

### 2. How is a journal suggested for the Scopus title evaluation process?

First, check if the journal you would like to suggest for Scopus review is eligible. The FAQs for “**Stage 1: Pre-submission and self-evaluation**” will help you determine if the journal is eligible for Scopus.

All Scopus journal suggestions need to be submitted via the [online suggestion form](#). You will be asked to confirm that the journal you are suggesting meets all the minimum criteria.

The form also requires detailed information about the journal. All questions are mandatory, and you will also need to upload sample articles. After submitting the completed form, you will receive an automatic confirmation letter and the journal will enter the review process.

The confirmation letter merely confirms that the journal suggestion has been received and will be considered for review. It does not guarantee that the journal will be indexed in Scopus.

### 3. How long will it take after submission to receive a response?

After suggesting a journal, you will receive an automatic email acknowledging receipt of your suggestion. However, the journal must still go through the CSAB’s selection process. Depending on the number of suggestions received and the available information about the suggested title, it will take at least several months, and possibly up to six months, before the review process is completed and the CSAB makes its decision.

### 4. What happens after the journal suggestion is submitted?

The journal will be checked to determine if it is indeed eligible for Scopus review. If the journal is not accepted for review at this stage, we will communicate with the suggester and include the supporting reason(s).

If the journal is eligible for Scopus review, the Scopus Title Evaluation team will obtain all required information and add it to the file. If needed, the publisher will be asked to provide or correct information about the journal.

Once the journal suggestion is fully “enriched” — meaning all information is complete — the journal will be sent to the relevant Subject Chair of the CSAB for review according to the Scopus journal selection criteria.



## 5. What are the main areas considered during the Scopus CSAB review process?

The CSAB's subject experts review titles using both quantitative and qualitative measures. The selection criteria are grouped in five main categories: **journal policy, content, journal standing, regularity and online availability.**

### Journal policy

- Convincing editorial concept/policy
- Type of peer review
- Diversity and geographic distribution of editors
- Diversity and geographic distribution of authors

### Quality of content

- Academic contribution to the field
- Clarity of abstracts
- Quality and conformity with stated aims and scope
- Readability of articles

### Journal standing

- Citedness of journal articles in Scopus
- Editor standing

### Regularity

- No delay in publication schedule

### Online availability

- Content available online
- English-language journal home page
- Quality of home page

## 6. Where can I find more information about the Scopus review process and the status of the journal I suggested for review?

Find details about the evaluation process and selection criteria here: [Scopus content policy and selection](#).

If you have specific questions about Scopus title selection or want to know the status of the journal you suggested, you can email the Scopus team at [titlesuggestion@scopus.com](mailto:titlesuggestion@scopus.com).

## 7. How important is the title of the journal?

The title of the journal is very important not only for potential authors but also for researchers who use Scopus and other databases to search for essential research related to their work. The title can project international status and, with it, the higher expectation that the composition of its editorial board is diversified as well as international. The title also denotes clearly the aims and scope of the journal and the expected content.

*Example: For a title such as The French Journal of Informatics, it would be assumed that the aims and scope would be focused on informatics in France and that at least part of the articles are likely written in the French language, or that the scope is informatics internationally but the articles are written in French. This difference would be seen clearly in the aims and scope of the journal.*

If you are setting up a new journal with an appropriate name, it is very important to check for journals with similar names in order to reduce confusion in the major databases. Some editors and editorial boards may consider similar names a good idea to access authors already publishing in that field or because of potential prestige. However, this practice is not considered ethical and should be avoided. (See [COPE's Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing](#).)

## 8. What is expected of a journal with “International” in the title?

Some journals may misrepresent their journal by inappropriately using the word “International” in its title. It sets an expectation that the journal's content, Editorial Board and/or advisory board, scope and philosophy will reflect international quality and content. It does not mean one or two members of the Editorial Board are from another country that may or may not reflect the main language of the journal. It needs to be explicit why the journal is considered international in all aspects of its publication.

We expect that international journals also have international Editorial Board members who are active in the management of the journal and its policies. Any person who is named in a specific role on the journal must agree to their name being affiliated with that journal. There may be different models of international representation, such as an international advisory board, an international council, or international members on the main Editorial Board. It must be very clear who the editor or Editor-in-Chief is, along with any other journal section editors and their roles.

In addition, an international journal must publish international content or at least demonstrate that it is striving to achieve this. It is not only about international readership but also what the journal represents.

## **9. How important is a journal's website in the submission process?**

Given that we live and work in a technological age and the web is the major source of communication, it is essential that any information related to the presentation and content of a journal should reflect the quality of its content.

The journal's website is also the primary place that CSAB reviewers will visit to evaluate the criteria for Scopus inclusion.

If the reviewer cannot find information for all aspects of the review process on the journal's website, it is very difficult to assess the quality of the journal. It is also important that the website and the journal are clearly visible and separate from the publisher's other marketing or promotional material. For example, a university-published journal should have a dedicated homepage rather than be placed in the middle of the main university website.

## **10. What should the website information include?**

The journal website must include:

- Information about the editor or Editor-in-Chief, the structure of the Editorial Board(s) and/or international advisory board, and names of board members
- Author guidelines explaining the manuscript submission process and criteria
- Information on how the peer-review process is organized
- Publishing ethics guidelines, including information on what action the editor or Editorial Board will take if malpractice is suspected
- Clear information about criteria and costs of open access options (if relevant)
- Information about how readers can access full-text articles
- Information about the role and organization of the journal publisher

It is imperative that potential authors can easily find and view a journal's website and that the site is reflective of a professional journal. The reviewers of the CSAB will need similar access during the review process, especially to revise any information that has been updated since the initial submission.

## **11. How important is it to keep the website updated?**

An up-to-date website demonstrates an ongoing commitment to the journal's development and sustainability. If a journal has a decreasing number of articles over time, or major time gaps between issues, it raises questions of whether the journal is receiving enough articles (copy flow) to sustain itself.

It's also important that all website links are functioning and have the most up-to-date information. Editors need to ensure that all information related to Editorial Board members, office contacts and publishers are accurate and the journal is not misrepresenting itself.

For more information, see [COPE's Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing](#).

## 12. What should a publisher do if the journal is part of a university or society?

We recommend that whenever possible, a journal has its own website or homepage, even if it is published on behalf of a society, institute or university. This ensures that the information and content is considered as a distinct publication by potential authors and readers and by the reviewers of the Scopus CSAB.

For journals published by a university or institute, it is essential that the various departments ensure that similarly named journals are not published from the same place and that if more than one journal is published by the university, that there is some consistency between information provided on the website.

Occasionally there is also confusion from universities in close proximity publishing journals on the same topics with similar titles and competing for the same kind of articles.

If the journal is published by a small society, it needs to be clear on where it seeks its authors from. If it is from its own membership only, this can impact the number of papers being submitted and the journal's long-term sustainability for inclusion in an international database such as Scopus.

## 13. How important is the ability to translate the website information into English?

This question is linked to the aims and scope of the journal, and whether it is only for authors who write and speak in one specific language. However, English has emerged as the common language for scientific publishing. Long-term accessibility of the journal articles and content for the international research community may be something to consider.

Website translation is the first step to sharing internationally and enabling cross-national collaboration and communication. This will enhance the citation of the articles as well as the journal.

Many journals from traditionally non-English speaking countries have an option (such as a website button) to automatically translate key website information into English. This does not mean translating all articles, although all submitted journals must have English titles and abstracts.

Given that research and scholarly contributions by authors need maximum accessibility in order to increase their own citations, as well as those of journals they publish in, increasing numbers of journals now provide at least some of their articles in English. This is encouraged, especially for authors whose research is of international relevance but may not otherwise achieve the recognition it requires to become internationally known.





## Stage 2: Scopus title evaluation

# Review decisions by the CSAB

### 1. What decisions are made by the Scopus CSAB?

In the Scopus title evaluation process, the CSAB reviewers decide if a journal will be accepted (selected for Scopus coverage), rejected or deferred. **Decisions made by the CSAB Subject Chairs are final and will be accompanied by reviewer comments.** In case of rejection, the reviewers will give a date when the title may be submitted again for Scopus review.

### 2. What is a resubmission date?

In case of rejection, a conditional embargo date will be given, after which the journal title may be suggested for Scopus review again. The embargo period can range from six months to several years.

### 3. How does the Scopus CSAB decide on the length of the embargo period?

The length of the embargo period can range from six months to several years and depends on how long the reviewers think it will take to address the evaluation feedback. Feedback is normally given as an overall message that includes both positive comments and constructive comments on areas for improvement, all focused on the key assessment areas for inclusion in Scopus.

### 4. How long does the journal stay in the Scopus database?

Once a journal is selected for Scopus, the starting coverage year will be four years before the year of selection. Journals that are selected for Scopus within their third publication year will be covered from the first publication year. If complete journal archives are available in digital format, the publisher may request to add backfiles to Scopus. Journals selected for Scopus will be covered in the database on a continuous basis; however, the performance of journals included in Scopus is continually evaluated and poorly performing journals may be discontinued.

Scopus reserves the right to re-evaluate and remove journals as it sees fit. Journals with proven publication malpractice will be canceled for Scopus coverage and removed from the database.

## **5. How can editors and publishers ensure that journal quality is maintained once included in Scopus?**

Editors should communicate regularly with their board members, updating author and reviewer information as well as promoting good practice. Publishers should give their editors and journals the support needed to maintain communication networks and website quality and to market the journal to the wider scholarly community. Once citations increase, there will be an increased interest in the journal itself and its aims, scope and future direction.

All the Scopus selection criteria need to be maintained, but most importantly the journal needs to develop and expand its readership and authorship. Editors play a major role in ensuring that the journals maintain their quality while growing and increasing the accessibility of the journal content to the research community.

Regularly monitoring how authors and journals are citing the journal is an excellent way to show that being in Scopus makes an impact. Editors can monitor citations through Scopus itself and by using the journal metrics provided for Scopus-covered journals.

## **6. After being indexed in Scopus, is there a possibility that a journal might be removed?**

The CSAB is committed to maintaining the quality of all journals and publications included in the Scopus database. Once selected, a journal does not necessarily remain indefinitely. To continue being covered in Scopus, the publisher, editor and Editorial Board(s) must commit to ensuring that it maintains the quality on which it was judged for inclusion in an international database.

Publishers can protect a journal's reputation and maintain its quality by practicing publication ethics at all times and ensuring that its editorial team and authors do the same for journal articles. This is an essential prerequisite for remaining in the Scopus database.





# Review decisions and objections

## 1. How are review decisions for Scopus made?

Scopus reviews journals for inclusion according to its own selection criteria, developed in collaboration with the independent CSAB and the wider research community.

Subject matter experts from the [editorially independent CSAB](#) review individual titles according to the [Scopus quality criteria](#) and decide whether a suggested journal should be included in Scopus.

## 2. What if a title is rejected for Scopus inclusion?

Review decisions are final and will not be reconsidered until the communicated embargo period has passed and the journal can be submitted for review again. The CSAB is independent, and the Scopus team cannot overrule or change the CSAB's decision.

## 3. Can the publisher of a title question the review decision?

Complaints or objections to review decisions are usually resolved between the publisher and the Scopus team, who will consult with the reviewers of the CSAB if needed.

If the decision continues to be questioned, there is an appeal procedure. Appeals apply only to the question of whether significant factual errors occurred in the review process — for example, if the correct criteria were not been considered or the reasons for not including the journal were not properly communicated.

To invoke the appeals procedure, the publisher of the journal needs to provide clear evidence of these significant factual errors.

The publisher can submit an appeal to the Scopus team by emailing [titlesuggestion@scopus.com](mailto:titlesuggestion@scopus.com) within six weeks of receiving the rejection letter.

By asking for an appeal, the publisher agrees to accept the findings of any appeal as final.

Appeals are submitted to the independent Appeals Officer, who will determine if the appeal is warranted.

In case of a valid appeal, the reviewers of the CSAB will be asked to reconsider the review process and decision. However, a valid appeal case does not guarantee that the CSAB will change its decision.

For questions about the review process, email [titlesuggestion@scopus.com](mailto:titlesuggestion@scopus.com).



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