

Journal rankings and journal metrics

1. What are journal rankings and journal metrics?

Journal rankings and journal metrics provide information on the comparative performance of academic journals.

- Journal rankings are usually based on subjective expert opinion. For example, the ABS 'International Guide to Academic Journal Quality' which covers business and management journals, available from: <http://www.bizschooljournals.com/>.
- Journal metrics are statistics, usually based on citation counts. Journal metrics can also be used to rank journals. The table on the next page gives details of three commonly used journal metrics: impact factor, SJR and SNIP.

2. Choosing where to publish

You might find journal rankings and journal metrics helpful when choosing where to publish. Other important journal characteristics to take into account when choosing where to publish include:

- Type of journal: e.g. scholarly, professional, trade.
- Journal aims and scope: usually available on the journal's website.
- Reputation: is the journal well regarded and influential in your field?
- High-status editorial board.
- Indexing: it's easier for other people to find your work if you publish in a journal that's well indexed, e.g. by Google, Web of Science, Scopus, and/or the specialist databases for your field.
- Market-share: who is the intended audience? How many articles are published? How widely read are they?
- Open access options: is the journal freely available online? Does it allow authors to make a version of their articles open access?

3. Journal metrics: definitions and access

Metric	Definition	Data Source	Access
Impact Factor	Average number of citations received in that year by articles published in the journal in the preceding two years.	Calculated by Thomson Reuters based on publications and citations indexed in the Web of Science database.	Access via Library catalogue > Web of Science > Journal Citations Reports tab
SJR (ScImago Journal Rank)	Average number of weighted citations received in that year by articles published in the journal in the preceding three years. The average is weighted so that citations from more prestigious journals count for more.	Calculated by SCImago based on publications and citations indexed in the Scopus database.	Available from http://www.scimagojr.com/ and from Scopus 'compare journals' tool. Access Scopus via Library catalogue.
SNIP (Source Normalized Impact per Paper)	Average number of normalised citations received in that year by articles published in the journal in the preceding three years. Citations are normalised to account for different citation rates in different disciplines.	Calculated by CWTS, University of Leiden, bases on publications and citations indexed in the Scopus database.	Available from Scopus 'compare journals' tool and from http://www.journalindicators.com/ Access Scopus via Library catalogue.

4. Issues and limitations

The extent to which citations are useful as an indicator of research quality varies by subject: it is generally more accepted in life sciences than in arts and humanities. Citation rates vary between disciplines: don't compare the impact factors or SJRs of journals from different disciplines. Beware of these limitations when assessing multi-disciplinary journals.

5. Any questions? Contact:

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<http://www.bath.ac.uk/library/services/research-analytics.html>