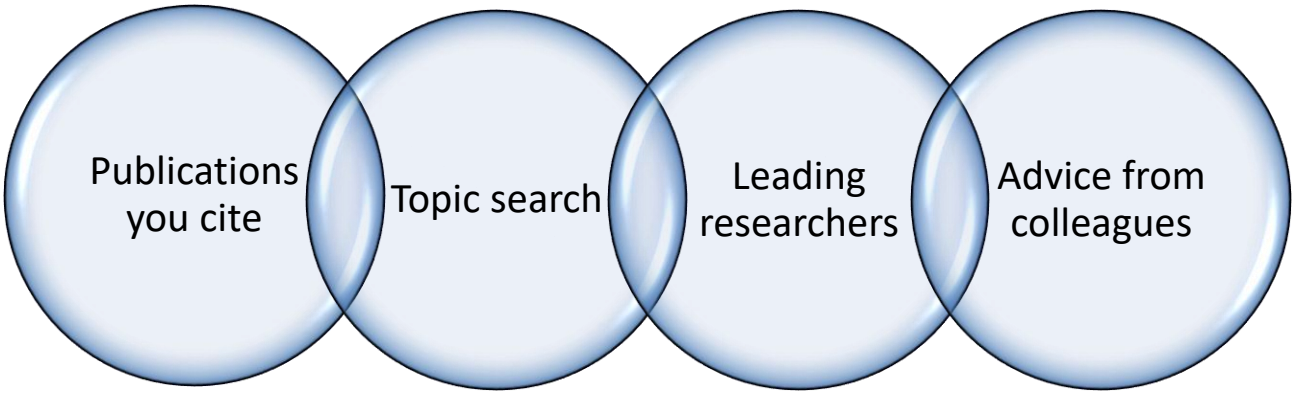
The Library

Which journal?

Develop your publishing strategy by drawing up a shortlist of aspirational journals. This guide will help you find and evaluate relevant journals.

Finding relevant journals

Ways to identify relevant journals for your research area include:



1. Publications you cite: which journals are the papers you cite published in?
2. Topic search: search *Scopus*, *Web of Science* or a specialist subject database for keywords or phrases relevant to your research. You can access these databases via the Library website: http://www.bath.ac.uk/library/. Which journals are publications matching your search terms published in? *Scopus* and *Web of Science* have *analyze search results* tools that gives you a breakdown of search results by journal (see p4).
3. Leading researchers: browse the publication lists of leading researchers in your field, which journals have they published in?
4. Ask colleagues for advice.

Once you've identified some journals, be sure to check their aims and scope (usually available from the journal's website) to make sure that they cover your research area. Also consider what type of material the journal publishes, e.g. methods, new advances.

Evaluating journals

When deciding whether to publish in a journal, you need to consider whether the journal is good quality and whether it will reach the people who you want to read your research. Here are some factors to take into account:

- Audience & reputation: is the journal widely read and well regarded by academics in your field and/or relevant practitioners?
- How easy is it to find and access research published in the journal? Is the journal indexed in databases of academic literature such as *Web of Science* and *Scopus*? What happens if you search *Google* or *Google Scholar* for a recent paper in the journal? If you publish in this journal, will you be able to make your article open access (i.e. freely available online)?
- Peer review: what form of peer review does the journal use? What criteria are peer reviewers asked to use? Some journals set the standard for passing peer review at technically sound methodology, others also require originality and importance to the field.
- Who are the editorial board? A prestigious editorial board can be a sign of a high quality journal.
- Indicators and rankings: How does the journal compare to other journals in the research area on citation based indicators such as *impact factor* or *SNIP*? Or in subject journal rankings such as the *ABS Guide to Academic Journal Quality* for business and management journals? Pages 3 & 4 of this guide give step by step instructions for finding journal indicators. But bear in mind that as average citation scores, these indicators can be heavily skewed by outlying extremely highly cited papers.

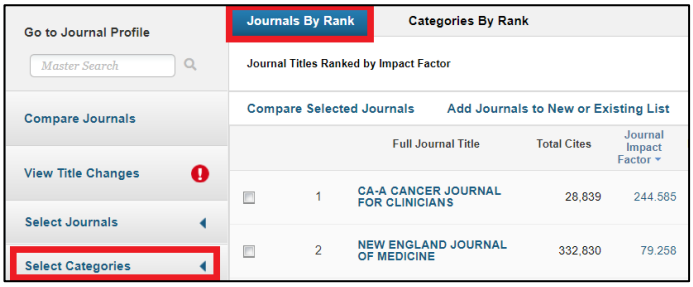
Avoid ‘predatory publishers’

Publishers that charge a fee for publishing but do not provide genuine editorial and publishing services, such as rigorous peer review and reliable dissemination, are known as ‘predatory publishers’. Warning signs include: emails soliciting contributions, publisher or journal you’ve never heard of, website doesn’t give full information about where the publisher is based or who is involved, e.g. editors. If you are unsure about a journal, contact the Library for advice. Note: many respected journals charge publication fees - it’s the quality of the publishing operation rather than the fee that makes a publisher predatory.

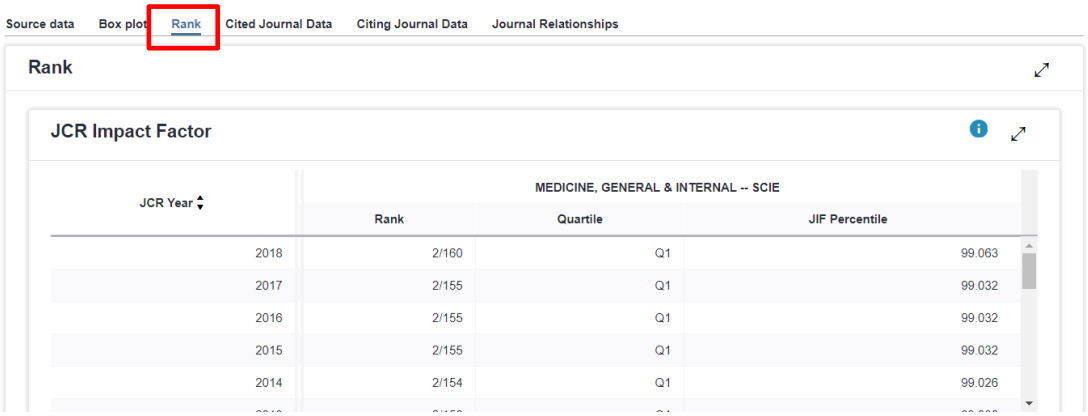
Using journal impact factors

A journal's *impact factor* for a given year is the average number of citations received in that year by articles published in the journal in the preceding two years. Citation rates vary by discipline, so what counts as a 'good' impact factor also varies by discipline. Looking at a journal's position relative to other journals in the area is more informative that looking at its impact factor in isolation. As an average for the whole journal impact factor is a very crude indicator of journal quality, remember to take other factors into account as well – see p2.

1. Start from the Library website: http://www.bath.ac.uk/library/
2. Search the Library catalogue for *Journal Citation Reports* and follow the links.
3. Choose *Browse by Journal* and then click on *Select Categories* in the left hand menu.
4. Choose one or more subject categories relevant to your research. Scroll to the bottom of the page and click *Submit*.



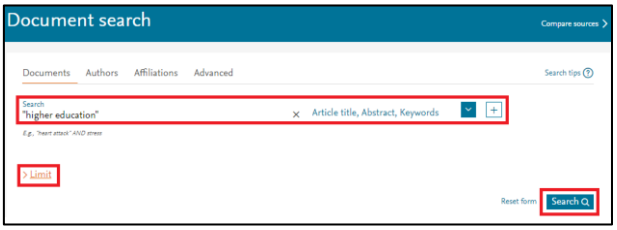
5. Go to the *Journals By Rank* tab. This list the journals in your categories, sorted by impact factor (highest to lowest).
6. For more details about an individual journal, click on the journal name. Here you can see a range of data about the journal's current impact factor.
7. Select the *Rank* option in the *Journal source data* box. This shows you the journal's position compared to other journals in the same subject category when ranked by impact factor.

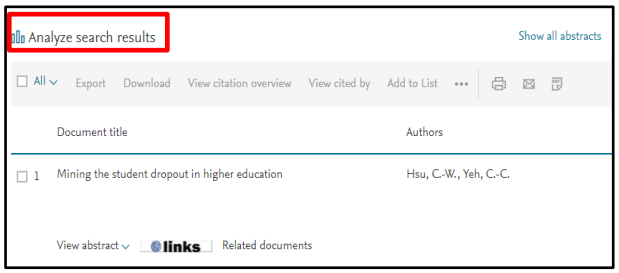


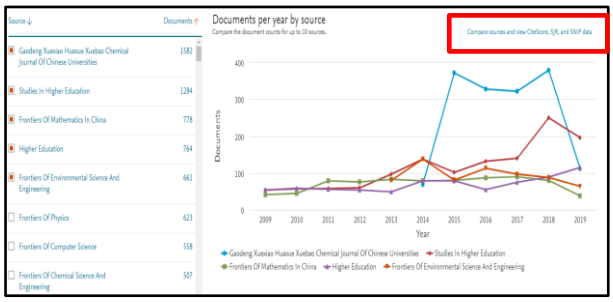
8. View how the journal's performance has changed over time in the *Metric trend* box. Select *Journal Impact Factor* or *Average JIF percentile* from the drop down menu and choose to view last 5 years or all years. To view further data and metrics for this journal for this year and all previous years, select the *All years* tab from the menu at the top of the page.

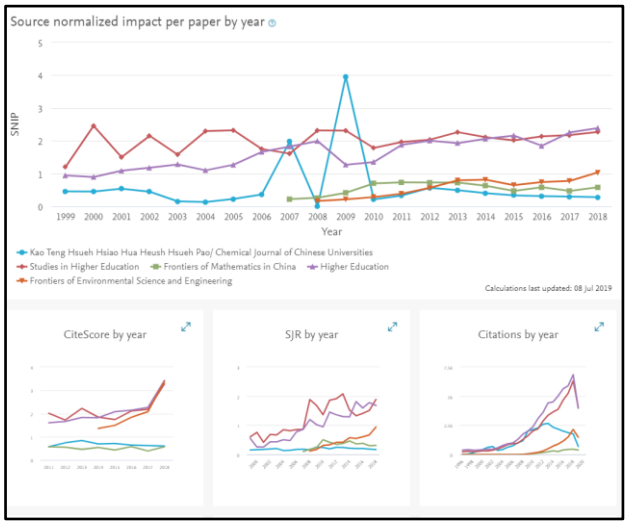
Finding and evaluating journals using *Scopus*

1. Start from the Library website: http://www.bath.ac.uk/library/
2. Search the Library catalogue for *Scopus* and follow the *Online access* link.
3. Use the *Document search* option to search for keywords or phrases that characterise your research area. You might want to limit your search to recent years.
4. On the *Document search results* page, click the *Analyze search results* option.
5. Scroll down and select the *Documents per year by source* card. This shows you which journals publish papers matching your search terms.
6. Select up to 10 journals of interest by checking the boxes next to their names, then click the *Compare sources and view CiteScore, SJR, and SNIP data* link above the graph.
7. Click through the cards displayed to compare indicators for your selected journals. *CiteScore, SJR,* and *SNIP* are all average citation scores for journals. *SNIP* is subject normalised, but *CiteScore* and *SJR* aren't, so be careful when comparing across different disciplines.
8. Remember to take other factors into account in your assessment – see p2.









For help finding journal, evaluating journal, and using citation metrics contact:

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