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### **Statement on the Scopus journal selection process**

Scopus is an abstract and citation database which is designed to simplify the access of researchers, students, teachers and general users in the academic environment to a wide range of published research and related materials across the spectrum of Science, Technical and Medical disciplines as well as Arts and Humanities; and to derivative information about this material.

It is variously estimated that there are in excess of 80,000 professional and peer reviewed journals published worldwide on a huge range of subject areas, in a variety of languages and on a local, institutional, national, regional and international basis. Journals start up and Journals close on a regular basis, so the true population of current journals at any point in time is difficult to assess.

Scopus presently makes available the abstracts and metrics of some 18,000 journals. It bases its journal accrual strategy upon a search for the highest quality journals in each and every field, in order to simplify and hallmark each user's search strategy.

Quality is of course difficult to define both qualitatively and quantitatively in a way which satisfies everyone. In particular, comparisons of quality are very difficult between specialist and generalist journals, between those in different subject areas and between different institutions and language groups.

In order to help define and refine its journal accrual and retention strategy, Scopus has appointed a panel of experienced and independent advisors from the world of publishing, librarianship and commerce to form a Content Selection and Advisory Board (CSAB) of some 40 members. Within this panel, an Executive Group of Subject Chairs comprising experienced Journal Editors meets on a regular basis to debate and advise on a wide range of subject areas of relevance to the strategic direction of Scopus.

The immediate challenge for the CSAB has been to ensure that fair, measurable and testable standards are set for the accrual of all new journals to the Scopus database, and for the retention of all journals which were adopted by the system prior to the current work of the board.

It is also an intention of the CSAB that weaker journals and those which fail to meet these standards are given fair opportunities to adopt and adapt to Scopus requirements and in the process, so that their content can in future become accessible to a worldwide audience.

In recognition of the wide range of subject areas, origins of journals and publication models, the Scopus CSAB has set out to develop and refine the Scopus Title Evaluation Platform (*STEP*) as a generic scoring tool which assesses each and every Journal against a core set of advisory and mandatory standards to optimise its credibility, accessibility and usability in the Scopus database

## Mandatory Factors

### 1. English Language Usage

English has become de facto the world language of scientific communication. Scopus carries and is happy to accrue journals and articles in a wide variety of languages, so long as:

- a. articles carry a structured abstract in the English language, thus making the content of that paper visible and understandable to the widest possible community of international users.
- b. all references are in Roman script and preferably in English, as Scopus is not able to handle non-Roman scripts.

The Scopus CSAB believes that such a policy will open up the content of regional and specialist journals to new and sometimes unexpected communities of users and thus optimise the citation rates and visibility of all accrued content.

### 2. Publication Ethics and Publication Malpractice.

Publication malpractice is unfortunately widespread in the world literature, in all subject areas and in all jurisdictions, and no journal is immune. Malpractice ranges from innocent transgression to deliberate and willful fraud, and most journal editors have experience and can cite examples of fraudulent practice.

Malpractice reduces confidence in the reliability of the published literature, and substantially increases the costs to Society as a whole, to the Publishing industry and to the Scientific and Arts community. In some disciplines, malpractice and fraud can have serious and even mortal consequences, where undetected but misleading and fraudulently published material leads others into actions which are founded in misplaced trust in that material.

The prevention of publication malpractice is the responsibility of every author, editor, publisher and institution, and there are advisory codes in all major jurisdictions as to how to deal with it.

In order to start to address this endemic problem, the Scopus CSAB has taken the unanimous view that Scopus will in future require that each and every journal which accrues to the system must publish a clear and consistent statement of Publication Ethics and Policies in respect of Malpractice, and that each and every publisher will be held to account for the performance and compliance with this policy of every journal in its portfolio.

The Scopus CSAB mandates no specific wording of such statements, but notes that:

- i. major publishers already publish comprehensive statements of compliance on their websites

ii. A number of reputable institutions, notably the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), and the World Association of Medical Editors (WAME), publish comprehensive guidelines and advice which can be readily adopted and adapted by all journals and publishers.

The Scopus CSAB recognises that this action in itself will not be sufficient to eliminate publication fraud. However, it will ensure that at least within the boundaries of influence of Scopus, no author, editor or publisher will be able to claim ignorance of best practice as an excuse for condoning or executing publication malpractice.

The Scopus CSAB looks forward to auditing the results of this policy and to assisting in the development of robust, industry wide strategies for the marginalisation, profiling and elimination of publication malpractice.

#### Advisory Factors

The Scopus STEP system requires a range of information to be provided by publishers and journals to maximise transparency and to help the CSAB Advisors and reviewers come to a fair and supportable judgment as to which journals can be directly accrued to the system, and as to those which need further work before they can be accepted. Publishers and Journal Editors are asked to provide all of the information requested, and to take all necessary steps in advance of application to cooperate with the Scopus policies.

For those journals already accredited to Scopus, evidence of compliance with these information disclosure processes is also required as a condition of retention in the system through a review cycle which is in development.

#### Development assistance

The Scopus CSAB takes a long term view of its role in helping raise standards in the world literature; in helping to maximise the communicability of trustworthy knowledge and experience from the smallest regional journal to the largest possible audience; and of the role of Scopus among the world's major citation systems in securing these goals.

To this end the Scopus team is pleased to work with all editors and publishers to help ensure the development, accrual, retention and visibility of high quality journals of whatever origin to the Scopus database.

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