

A. Scope

<i>Criterion</i>	<i>Key question</i>	<i>Best answer</i>
Age	When was the journal established and how long has it been going?	Long-established journals always sell more copies and so are more available in and via more university libraries than more recent ones who have yet to build up readership. Subscription journals established in the last five years may have very small distribution bases.
Publication history	How consistently and regularly has the journal been published?	Avoid journals that do not stick strictly to their announced publication schedules, or include 'light content' issues. They may be having difficulty attracting appropriate content.
Publisher affiliation	Who publishes the journal?	Journals published by a professional body are normally the most prestigious. They are followed by well-known commercially run journals from top firms and with well-known editors. Commercial journals from obscure or new publishers are normally last.
Scope	Is the journal a general ('omnibus') one for a discipline? Or is its coverage specific to only one sub-field, and how large is it?	In STEM subjects there are a few trans-disciplinary journals with top prestige – <i>Nature</i> , and <i>Science</i> – but with new open access entrant <i>Plos ONE</i> adding to that list. Normally, however, generalist journals for a single discipline have the largest readership and most prestige. They are followed by top sub-discipline journals. Specialized field and hyper-specialized journals come lower down – because their potential readership is less.
Size	How many copies does the journal sell? How many university libraries around the world is it available in?	There are about 2,500 top university libraries worldwide, so anything over this number is very good. Publishers create 'package deals' which bundle up large numbers of journals for university libraries so establishing firm subscriber numbers is often tricky now. But basically the wider the global library access is to a journal, the better the chance that a relevant researcher will find your work and cite it.
Composition of the Editorial Board	Who is on the Editorial Board? How well known, well respected and research-forefront are	All editorial boards are a bit fossilized. Famous names with great reputations are best. But not those resting on their laurels: most should be active publishers still, and at least a quarter

	they?	should be current pathbreakers or exemplars.
Internationality	How international is the journal – e.g. as reflected in the Editorial Board and authors?	Multi-country journals are best or those that reach into a particular region e.g. Europe.