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## THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

# Evaluating the impact of journals in your subject area

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## UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

**Part 1: Introduction**

**Journal metrics**

This guide aims to show you how to use bibliometric tools to evaluate the impact of journals in your subject area. You can use journal metrics to identify highly cited journals in your subject area. Identifying highly cited journals may help you to decide where you will publish your own research.

**Use with caution!**

Journal metrics should be used with caution and not in isolation. There are a number of issues to consider when using journal metrics:

- Results can vary depending on the tools used because the content covered by each tool varies.
- A high impact factor does not tell you anything about the quality of the individual articles within the journal
- Time needs to elapse before a meaningful citation analysis can be made, so new journals tend to fare badly
- Not all research work is published and cited in the citation indices. For example conference proceedings are often poorly covered
- There is a bias towards English language material
- Different fields of research publish at different rates. Some disciplines such as the arts, humanities and social sciences rely less on publishing in journals.

**Other issues to consider when deciding where to publish**

Don't just rely on using a journal metric to decide where you might want to publish your research. There are several other factors to consider:

- Does the journal have suitable open access options and appropriate embargo periods?
- Does the journal comply with your funder requirements around open access? (See more information about Open Access: https://library.leeds.ac.uk/open-access)
- Do you and your colleagues know about the journal?
- Is it easy to discover the latest paper in the journal?
- Are articles indexed in the services you use?
- Do you recognise the editorial board?
- What is the likelihood of you being accepted?
- Is it appropriate for your research area?

The Think. Check. Submit, campaign helps researchers to identify trusted journals for their research. They have created a simple checklist researchers can use to assess the credentials of a journal or publisher: http://thinkchecksubmit.org/.

**Part 2: Key journal metrics**

**Journal Impact Factor**

Journal impact factors are available from Journal Citation Reports, calculated from data held in Web of Science. Journal Citation Reports is a Thomson Reuters product. Over a two-year period, the number of citations to a particular journal is divided by the number of articles published in that journal. For example, for 2012 impact factors the following formula was used:

$$2012 \text{ Journal Impact Factor} = \frac{\text{Number of times articles published in the journal during 2010 and 2011 were cited during 2012}}{\text{Total number of articles published in the particular journal during 2010 and 2011}}$$

See the following guidance on using Journal Citation Reports wisely: http://ipscience-help.thomsonreuters.com/incitesLiveJCR/JCRGroup/usingJCRWisely.html.

**Finding Journal Impact Factors**

Journal Impact Factors are available from Journal Citation Reports (via Web of Science)
- Go to the Library homepage: http://library.leeds.ac.uk/.
- Type Journal Citation Reports into the Library Catalogue search box and click on search
- From the results page, click on 'Journal citation reports: social science edition'
- Click on 'Journal Citation Reports: social science edition – Thomson Reuters' in the 'Available online' box
- Depending on where you are (e.g. off campus), you may be required to log in with your ISS username and password
- You will then be logged into Web of Science

You can search for a specific journal, view a group of journals e.g. by subject category or view all journals.

**Search for a specific journal**

- Enter the name of the journal into the Journal Profile box and select it from the drop down list:



- You will be presented with journal metrics (including the Journal Impact Factor) for that particular journal.

**View a group of journals by subject**

- Click Select Categories on the left hand menu and select the category you want to view:



**CiteScore**

CiteScore is calculated from data held in Scopus. CiteScore is an Elsevier product. CiteScore calculates the average number of citations received in a calendar year by all items published in that journal in the preceding three years. For example, for 2016 impact factors the following formula was used:

$$2016\ CiteScore = \frac{\text{Number of times articles published in the journal during 2013, 2014 and 2015 were cited during 2016}}{\text{Total number of documents indexed in Scopus, in the journal, during in 2013, 2014 and 2015}}$$

CiteScore is a new metric, released in December 2016.

**Finding CiteScore**

CiteScore is freely available to view at https://journalmetrics.scopus.com/. You can search for a specific journal, view a group of journals e.g. by subject category or view all journals.

**Search for a specific journal**

- Enter the name of the journal into the Search titles box and select it from the drop down list:
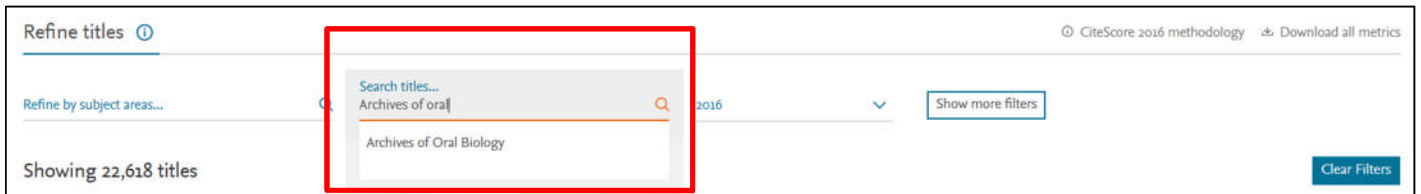
- You will be presented with journal metrics (including the CiteScore) for that particular journal.

**View a group of journals by subject**

- Click Refine by subject areas select the category you want to view:



**Alternatives**

There are a number of alternative journal metrics available which attempt to correct for the citation practices between disciplines. The following are just a few of the ones available:

**SCImago Journal Rank (SJR)**

SJR is calculated from data held in Scopus. It is a measure of scientific influence of journals that accounts for both the number of citations received by a journal and the importance or prestige of the journals where such citations come from. With SJR, the subject field, quality and reputation of the journal have a direct effect on the value of a citation. Scopus provides journal metrics values to all peer-reviewed journals indexed in the database.

SJR expresses the average number of weighted citations received in the selected year by the documents published in the selected journal in the three previous years.

More information on accessing and using SJR can be found here:
https://blog.scopus.com/posts/journal-metrics-in-scopus-scimago-journal-rank-sjr

**Scopus Source Normalised Impact per Paper (Scopus SNIP)**

Scopus SNIP is calculated from data held in Scopus. It measures contextual citation impact by weighting citations based on the total number of citations in a subject field. Citation practices can vary significantly from one field to another, SNIP corrects for those differences, i.e. it normalises for

subject differences. The Scopus SNIP is defined as the ratio of a journal's citation count per paper and the citation potential in its subject field.

More information on accessing and using Scopus SNICP can be found here: https://blog.scopus.com/posts/journal-metrics-in-scopus-source-normalized-impact-per-paper-snip

**Eigenfactor**

The Eigenfactor score measures the journals importance to the scientific community. It is measured by counting the total number of citations a journal receives over a 5 year period. It is calculated using data from Journal Citation Reports. It accounts for citation practice differences between disciplines and citations from highly ranked journals are weighted. Self-citations are removed from the calculation.

More information on Eigenfactor can be found here: http://www.eigenfactor.org/about.php.

**Further help**

- If you would like to know more about what bibliometrics is, why you may want to use bibliometrics, what the main metrics are, what tools are available to gather bibliometric data and what the limitations of bibliometrics are, please refer to the Bibliometrics webpages: https://library.leeds.ac.uk/researcher-bibliometrics-about

- If you cannot find the answer through the resources above, you can contact the Library Research Support Team on research@library.leeds.ac.uk

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