

The Peer-Review Process



Introduction

Professors expect the majority of the information that university students read and use in their papers/assignments will consist of articles from "**peer-reviewed**" journals (also sometimes called "scholarly" or "academic" or "refereed" journals).

Peer-reviewed (scholarly) journals focus on reporting **new knowledge and original research undertaken in a specialized field of study** e.g., Business, Psychology, Chemistry or Engineering. Articles that appear in these journals are written by experts (your professors) and, once published, articles will be shared with other specialists and educators.

In order for a professor to publish an article in a scholarly journal, the article must undergo a process known as peer-review.

Why does peer-review matter?

For an article to be accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal, the article undergoes a process of "**pre-approval**" or **evaluation** by the journal's editors and one (or more) established subject specialist in the given discipline.

Please take a few minutes to watch the following YouTube video which explains the peer-review process courtesy of **North Carolina State University (NCSU) Libraries**:



As the video notes, the specialists who evaluate a journal article are peers (referees) from an academic/research institution; referees read the article and independently assess the quality of the writing and research presented. Citations and references to the works consulted by the author are also examined.

For an article to be accepted for publication in the journal, referees can suggest that the author makes revisions to the original article prior to its publication. If the referees don't think an article meets the standard to be included in the journal, it can be rejected.

The peer-review process for some journals can be **very selective**. In some cases, the rejection rate for articles submitted to a highly-ranked journal can be more than 90%!



QUICK TIP

Peer-review is an essential part of assessing if the information presented in a journal article is accurate, well-researched, and contributes to the knowledge in a given field of study.

Why use peer-reviewed articles in my paper?

Professors expect students to read and use peer-reviewed journal articles in their papers/assignments for the following reasons:

- **articles are considered more reliable** than most sources of information
- **articles are evaluated for their quality by established specialists in the field** before an article is published

Another important point to note about peer-reviewed journal articles is that the content can contain very detailed information that is sometimes quite technical. The research is usually reported in these articles long before it makes its way into textbooks.

As such, it is important for students to undertake some background reading about your topic first **before** progressing to peer-reviewed articles. A little background reading will give you a better understanding of the discipline-related jargon that may appear in the journal article.

What are the top peer-reviewed journals?

What are the top academic (peer-reviewed) journals in Business and Management? Excellent question! Here are a few examples available at UNB Libraries:

- *Academy of Management Journal*
- *Accounting Perspectives*
- *Business Ethics Quarterly*
- *Human Resource Management Journal*
- *Journal of Finance*
- *Organization Science*
- *Journal of Marketing*
- *Journal of Marketing Research*

Like to learn more about the top quality journals in Business & Management? The following organizations offer their own lists:

[Financial Times \(FT\) Top 50 Journals](#)

This 2016 listing of top 50 journals is used by the *Financial Times* (UK) when compiling their own FT Research Ranking for MBA programs.

[SJR - SCImago Journal & Country Rank](#)

SCImago Journal & Country Rank (created by Elsevier Ltd) is a publicly available portal which includes a list of journals and country indicators developed from the information contained in Elsevier's [Scopus](#) database.

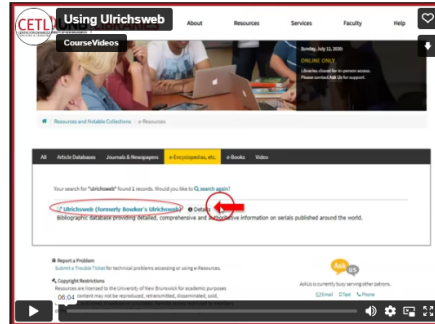
[Australian Business Deans Council \(ABDC\) Journal Quality List](#)

In 2018 the ABDC appointed Australian and international experts to review the methodology for their journal quality list.

How can I tell if a journal is peer-reviewed?

UNB Libraries subscribes to a database called **Ulrichsweb**. Ulrichsweb provides detailed and authoritative information on periodicals (scholarly journals, peer-reviewed titles, popular magazines and newspapers) published around the world.

Please watch the following video which explains how to find out if a journal is peer-reviewed:



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Activity Details

- Task: View this topic