

# Journals and Publications Policy

## Overview

Since 2005, HEC has sought to introduce policies for raising the quality of national research journals. However, there are concerns academic quality hasn't improved, and may even have deteriorated. This demands transition to a more transparent, rigorous, and focused system for accreditation and monitoring. The objective of the proposed policy is to nurture and enhance academic and publication standards of national journals through financial support and capacity building.

## Objectives

The intended objective of the proposed policy for research journals is to bring their academic and publication quality to international standards.

## Activities

- Establishment of minimum and optimal standards, in line with international best practices, for academic review, publication quality, and ethical practices.
- Establishment and strengthening of monitoring systems.
- Capacity building of editorial teams.
- Provision of financial support and linking of such support to performance, i.e., success in meeting quality criteria.

## Eligibility Criteria for Registration/Application Submission

- *Objectives*: The journal must have clearly defined aims, objectives and scope of publication.
- *Transparency*: The Journal must have an ISSN no., title and URL (verified from International ISSN register). The journal's website should facilitate online availability, and include an archive of previous issues. The submission process, publication fee, and sponsorships / source of funding, must be available publicly, including on the website. The journal must be published regularly.
- *Publisher Characteristics*: The journal must be owned and published by a registered entity, which could be university or HEI or a department of faculty of such an entity, or a registered research institution, or registered nonprofit academic society with a mandate for research. In all such cases, the publisher should have a formal governing body, which must approve the publication decision. "Registered" means registered with the SECP, or the Registrar of Societies.

## Categories of Research Journals

National journals listed at Category Y, X, or W will receive financial support as per prescribed limits and procedure. Category W is the highest category, while Category Y is the minimum level for eligibility. In case of non-performance, a journal can be delisted/ derecognized, as and when necessary, in accordance with the prescribed procedure. Details of the categories are as follows:

| Category                 | Y  | X  | W  |
|--------------------------|--|--|--|
| <b>Definition</b>        | Fulfill minimum quality criteria. They can receive seed funding to reach Category X to seek international recognition  | Fulfill additional quality criteria, and can receive increased funding (compared to Category Y)  | Qualify for accreditation as per HEC requirements, and relatively increased funding. No ranking is assigned to recognized journals and all Category W journals have equal standing   |
| <b>Eligibility</b>       | Must be eligible journal   | Must be eligible journal, and meet all criteria for Category Y. Journal must be registered with one or more well reputed abstracting/indexing agencies.                              | Journals internationally recognized by reputed accreditation/ ranking systems listed below OR having international recognition, based on citation information (e.g., IF, SJR, SNIP, IPP, EGF) from diverse sources including but not limited to Web of Science or Elsevier |
| <b>Governance</b>        | An academic editorial board (or equivalent), comprising of members with PhD degrees in relevant fields (i.e., area of publication) or FCPS/FRCS/MCPS degree for medical journals and strong research and publications background | Open Journal Management System (OJS) or similar Journal Management systems to be adopted for submission, acceptance and rejection as well as peer review process of research article |  |
| <b>Editorial process</b> | Established procedures for <b>external</b> peer review (not by members of the editorial board or the publishing institute). Peer review by well-reputed international scholars encouraged.                                       | Published articles should be peer reviewed by well reputed international experts in relevant field   |  |

|                |   |   |  |
|----------------|---|---|--|
| <b>Authors</b> | Authors may be international or national. Publications by editor or members of editorial team not allowed. No more than 1/5 of published articles per issue by "local" authors (i.e., from the publishing institute). Authors' names, addresses and contact details provided along with the contribution. | At least one-fourth of the published articles must be by international authors. |  |
| <b>Content</b> | Published articles must be in line with the scope of the Journal  | References as per international standards.                                      |  |

*Note: IF=Impact Factor; (ii) SJR=ScImago Journal Rank; (iii) SNIP=Source Normalized Impact per Paper; (iv) IPP=Impact Per Publication; v) EGF=Eigen Factor.*

HEC will develop/ adopt IT based accreditation and ranking system tailored to HEC needs and requirements, e.g., Journal Prestige Management System (JPMS) Link: <http://jpms.alfoze.com/>.

Other ranking systems are as follows:

- JCR enlisted Journals with impact Factor Link: <https://jcr.clarivate.com/>
- Master Journal List including Emerging Source Citation Index (ESCI) Link: <https://mjl.clarivate.com/>
- Norwegian Scientific Index and ERIH PLUS (level-1 and level 2 journals)  
For NSI: [https://dbh.nsd.uib.no/publiseringskanaler/Forside?request\\_locale=en](https://dbh.nsd.uib.no/publiseringskanaler/Forside?request_locale=en)  
FOR ERIH: [https://dbh.nsd.uib.no/publiseringskanaler/Forside?request\\_locale=en](https://dbh.nsd.uib.no/publiseringskanaler/Forside?request_locale=en)
- Australian Business Dean Council (ABDC) Journal Quality List  
<https://abdc.edu.au/research/abdc-journal-list/>

## Funding Limits and Procedures

HEC provides **seed funding** up to a maximum amount (Rs. 250,000) for Category Y Journals; **performance-based funding** up to a maximum amount (Rs. 450,000) for Category X journals; and **eligibility funding** up to a maximum amount (Rs. 700,000) for Category W journals.

Funding is also allowed to national research journals in specific categories for a maximum two years for the following purposes:

- Registration with one or more well reputed abstracting/ indexing agencies
- Website maintenance, OJS or similar platform
- External peer review fee (national/ international)

Funding will be stopped if the journal fails to improve quality standards or to meet quality criteria for the next level. However, the competent authority may decide, for reasons to be recorded in writing, to extend funding by one year, with close monitoring of the journal performance.

The following procedure will be followed in making the funding decisions:

- Call for applications will be issued once a year (every February) on the HEC Website.
- New/ emerging journals as well as already listed journals may apply for funding.
- Applications can be submitted by email or on the online portal before the specified deadline.
- Applications should be on the prescribed form, and must include all documentary evidence required as per checklist
- All completed applications by eligible journals will be evaluated by a review committee comprised of subject experts.
- Editors will be informed of the decision and the final list will be made available on HEC website.
- Editors will have the right to appeal against the decision as per prescribed procedure.

## Capacity Building of Editors and Members of Editorial Team

- HEC will organize capacity building programs for editors and members of editorial teams of eligible journals
- An open call will be issued on HEC website for nominations from journal editors, who may nominate any members of their editorial team.
- All eligible journals (regardless of their funding status) may apply.
- The selected candidates will be invited to participate in the training workshop.
- HEC will provide remuneration to resource persons and/or trainers.
- Collaboration with COPE (Committee on Publishing Ethics) and similar national or international organizations will be developed in order to strengthen the accreditation mechanism and mobilize support for training programs.

## Validity of Research Journals and Verification of Publications

R&D Division is responsible for the ranking, financing, and capacity building of journals. It will play no role in establishing or monitoring criteria for utilization of journals, validity of research journals, or verification of publications for the purpose of faculty appointments, promotions, appointments as PhD supervisors, or award of PhD degrees.