University of Management and Technology

Journal Excellence and Indexing Guidelines for Faculty

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1 Purpose

The University of Management and Technology (UMT) is committed to strengthening research quality, integrity, visibility, and societal relevance. These Guidelines establish a transparent framework for selecting, verifying, and documenting credible journals and for distinguishing journal recognition, indexing, discoverability, and impact.

The objectives of these Guidelines are to:

a. Promote publication in rigorous, relevant, ethical, and internationally visible journals
b. Support field-sensitive assessment of journal quality and impact
c. Align publication decisions with applicable HEC requirements, UMT policies, and institutional research priorities
d. Prevent submission to predatory, cloned, hijacked, or otherwise deceptive journals
e. Establish a consistent evidence-based process for journal verification and institutional reporting

2 Scope

These Guidelines apply to:

a. All full-time faculty members across Research, Teaching and Research, Teaching, and Practice tracks, as applicable
b. Adjunct and visiting faculty when a publication is reported under UMT affiliation
c. Researchers, research associates, postdoctoral researchers, and postgraduate scholars affiliated with UMT

They guide journal assessment for institutional reporting, research visibility, quality benchmarking, and advisory support. Eligibility for rewards, promotion, appointment, degree completion, or any other benefit remains governed by the specific HEC and UMT policy applicable to that purpose and date.

3 Guiding Principles

3.1 Quality and Relevance

Journal selection shall prioritize disciplinary fit, editorial rigor, research integrity, and likely contribution to the field rather than publication volume alone.

3.2 Ethical and Responsible Publishing

All authors shall follow applicable standards for originality, authorship, conflicts of interest, ethical approvals, data integrity, corrections, and transparent use of research tools.

3.3 Field-Sensitive Assessment

Journal metrics and publication practices differ substantially across disciplines. No single metric shall be used as the sole measure of quality, and direct metric comparisons across unrelated fields shall be avoided.

3.4 Verifiable Evidence

Indexing, recognition, quartile, coverage, publisher identity, and journal website details shall be verified through official sources rather than journal logos, email claims, or third-party lists alone.

3.5 Responsible Internationalization

International collaboration is encouraged when it is substantive, contribution-based, ethically attributed, and relevant to the research question. International co-authorship is not, by itself, evidence of quality.

4 Criteria for Journal Excellence

A credible and high-quality journal should demonstrate the following characteristics in combination:

4.1 Scope and Editorial Quality

a. Clear aims, scope, readership, and article types

b. A qualified editorial board whose identities and affiliations can be independently verified

c. Editorial decisions based on scholarly merit and appropriate disciplinary expertise

4.2 Peer Review and Publication Ethics

a. A clearly described peer-review model and realistic editorial process

b. Visible policies on authorship, conflicts of interest, plagiarism, data and image integrity, corrections, retractions, and complaints

c. Alignment with recognized publication-ethics principles, including COPE guidance where applicable

4.3 Transparency and Publisher Accountability

a. A verifiable publisher, journal owner, ISSN/eISSN, official website, and contact details

b. Transparent submission procedures, copyright and licensing terms, and all author charges

c. A regular publication history and reliable archiving or preservation arrangements

4.4 Indexing and Impact Evidence

a. Active coverage in a recognized citation database or selective discipline-specific index, where relevant

b. Current, source-identified metrics interpreted within the appropriate subject category and year

c. Citation patterns and journal standing that do not show verified manipulation or integrity concerns

5 Indexing and Recognition Framework

Recognition, indexing, and discoverability are related but distinct. Inclusion in a database supports verification only to the extent stated by that database; it does not automatically establish high impact, ethical conduct, or eligibility under every institutional policy.

5.1 National Recognition and HEC Requirements

For Pakistani journals and for any purpose governed by HEC, the journal's status and category shall be verified through the current HEC journal-recognition system and the HEC policy applicable to the relevant publication or claim date. A journal's earlier or later category shall not be assumed to apply retrospectively. These Guidelines do not create HEC recognition or override HEC requirements.

5.2 Core Citation Databases

UMT recognizes the following as principal sources for verifying broad international citation coverage:

a. Web of Science Core Collection, including SCIE, SSCI, AHCI, and ESCI, as shown in the Clarivate Master Journal List

b. Scopus, as shown in the official Scopus Sources record and source-title list

Verification shall include the exact journal title, ISSN/eISSN, indexed collection, active or discontinued status, coverage years, and whether the article falls within the database's covered period.

5.3 Discipline-Specific Databases

Selective discipline-specific databases may provide important evidence in fields where they are authoritative. For biomedical research, current MEDLINE indexing should be checked through the NLM Catalog. The presence of an individual article in PubMed, by itself, does not establish that the journal is currently indexed in MEDLINE or that the journal is endorsed by NLM.

5.4 Open-Access and Transparency Indexes

DOAJ inclusion provides evidence that an open-access journal has met DOAJ's transparency and open-access criteria. DOAJ is not an impact-ranking system, and DOAJ inclusion alone does not establish a journal's HEC category, quartile, or eligibility for a specific UMT benefit.

5.5 Discovery Platforms

Google Scholar, ResearchGate, Academia.edu, general web search engines, and similar discovery platforms may increase visibility but shall not be treated as evidence of journal recognition, selective indexing, peer-review quality, or impact.

6 UMT Publication Guidance Levels

The following levels support journal-selection advice and quality benchmarking. They are not substitutes for HEC categories or for the eligibility rules in UMT reward, promotion, appointment, or graduate policies.

Level A - Preferred

a. The journal has active coverage in Web of Science Core Collection or Scopus for the relevant period
b. The journal is Q1 or Q2 in the latest completed Journal Citation Reports or official CiteScore subject-category record applicable to the field
c. No verified publication-integrity, discontinuation, hijacking, or deceptive-practice concern is present

Level B - Standard

a. The journal has active Web of Science Core Collection or Scopus coverage but is Q3, Q4, newly indexed, or not yet assigned a quartile
b. Alternatively, it is covered by an authoritative selective discipline-specific index and satisfies the qualitative criteria in Section 4
c. Any HEC or UMT eligibility requirement is separately confirmed

Level C - Context-Specific or Developing

a. The journal is currently recognized by HEC, where applicable, or is a credible emerging or regionally important journal that satisfies the qualitative criteria in Section 4
b. DOAJ or another transparency index may support the assessment but does not independently establish impact
c. Authors shall obtain office of research guidance before relying on this level for a reward, promotion, degree, or formal institutional target

6.1 Rules for Using Metrics

a. Always state the metric source, metric year, subject category, and quartile or percentile
b. Do not mix JCR quartiles, CiteScore quartiles, and SJR quartiles without naming the source and explaining the basis
c. Where a journal has multiple subject categories, use the category relevant to the manuscript and the reporting rule in the applicable UMT policy; do not select a category solely to inflate standing
d. Use journal-level metrics as supporting evidence, not as a substitute for assessing the quality and integrity of the individual article

7 Journal Selection and Verification Requirements

7.1 Scope and Audience

a. Read the journal's aims and scope
b. Review recent articles and article types

c. Confirm that the intended scholarly or professional audience matches the manuscript

7.2 Identity, Recognition, and Coverage

a. Verify title and ISSN/eISSN across official records

b. Confirm the official website through the database or publisher record

c. Check active status, coverage dates, HEC status where applicable, and discontinuation information

7.3 Quality and Impact

a. Check current official metrics and subject-category standing

b. Review editorial-board expertise, peer-review information, publication history, correction and retraction practices, and citation patterns

c. Consider field norms and avoid judging journals from different disciplines by a single threshold

7.4 Costs, Access, and Author Rights

a. Confirm all submission, processing, page, colour, or open-access charges before submission

b. Check waiver or discount provisions and obtain required institutional approval before incurring an APC

c. Review copyright, licensing, repository, and funder-compliance terms

7.5 Practical Fit

a. Consider decision time, publication schedule, manuscript format, data requirements, and likelihood of reaching the intended audience

b. Treat publisher journal-finder results as suggestions only; independently verify every recommended journal

c. Do not equate a low acceptance rate, a famous publisher, open access, or an APC with quality

8 Avoidance of Predatory, Deceptive, and Hijacked Journals

A journal shall not be labelled predatory solely because it is new, open access, charges an APC, is published outside a major commercial group, or has limited resources. Assessment shall be evidence-based and consider multiple indicators.

8.1 High-Risk Indicators

a. A journal title, ISSN, publisher, or website domain that conflicts with official records

b. False, unverifiable, or outdated indexing and metric claims

c. Guaranteed acceptance or publication, or a timeline incompatible with the stated review process

d. Editorial-board members who cannot be verified, deny involvement, or lack relevant expertise

e. Copied content, fabricated archives, broken DOI links, or journal issues that differ from the publisher's official record

f. Hidden fees, payment to a personal account, lack of a formal invoice, or unexplained payment instructions

g. Submission through a personal email address without a credible editorial system or documented explanation

h. Aggressive or misleading solicitation, especially when unrelated to the recipient's field

i. An implausibly broad scope, weak publication-ethics policies, or no transparent correction and retraction mechanism

8.2 Verification and Institutional Handling

Authors shall verify concerns through official sources and may use the Think. Check. Submit. checklist as a structured aid. Logos, testimonials, unsolicited email claims, and opaque third-party watchlists shall not be treated as conclusive evidence on their own.

Where a material concern remains, the author shall seek office of research verification before submission or before claiming institutional recognition. Office of research may place a claim on hold while evidence is reviewed. Recognition or non-recognition for a particular purpose shall be decided under the applicable HEC and UMT policy, with the verification record retained.

9 Ethical and Research-Integrity Compliance

All publications shall comply with applicable HEC requirements, UMT policies, journal instructions, and recognized research-integrity standards. Authors are responsible for:

a. Obtaining required ethical, biosafety, clinical, institutional, or regulatory approvals before conducting or reporting the research

b. Ensuring originality and avoiding plagiarism, duplicate submission, redundant publication, fabricated or falsified data, and inappropriate image manipulation

c. Assigning authorship only for substantial contributions and disclosing author contributions, conflicts of interest, and funding accurately

d. Using data, citations, and third-party materials lawfully and providing required data-availability, registration, or reporting statements

e. Disclosing the use of generative-AI or AI-assisted tools when required by UMT or the journal, independently verifying outputs and citations, protecting confidential data, and not listing an AI tool as an author

f. Cooperating with corrections, expressions of concern, retractions, or investigations when a material error or integrity concern arises

g. Any violation shall be addressed under the relevant UMT and HEC policies and established due process.

10 Internationalization, Visibility, and Research Impact

Faculty and researchers are encouraged to develop substantive international and interdisciplinary collaborations, publish for the most relevant global or local audience, and improve the discoverability and responsible use of UMT research. Authors should:

a. Use the approved UMT affiliation consistently and provide ORCID and funder identifiers where applicable

b. Select descriptive titles, abstracts, and keywords appropriate to the discipline

c. Link publications to underlying data, protocols, software, or repositories when ethical, lawful, and permitted

d. Avoid coercive citation, citation cartels, excessive self-citation, honorary authorship, and token international co-authorship

e. Assess impact through a balanced combination of scholarly quality, citations, use, policy or practice influence, innovation, and societal benefit

11 Alignment with Institutional Priorities

Research outputs should align, where relevant, with the current UMT-approved research themes, school and departmental priorities, and societal or industrial needs. Interdisciplinary, foundational, creative, and investigator-initiated research remains important and shall be assessed on its scholarly merit, integrity, and contribution rather than forced alignment with a single theme.

12 Roles and Responsibilities

12.1 Faculty, Researchers, and Scholars

a. Conduct and retain journal-verification evidence before submission and again at publication or claim stage

b. Seek advice promptly when indexing, website identity, discontinuation, or ethical status is unclear

c. Submit accurate bibliographic, indexing, metric, authorship, affiliation, and funding information for institutional reporting

12.2 Departments, Schools, and Deans

a. Promote discipline-appropriate journal selection and responsible research practices

b. Support early mentoring rather than relying only on post-publication verification

c. Refer disputed or complex cases to office of research and avoid making recognition decisions from journal branding or informal lists

12.3 Office of Research (OOR)

a. Provide advisory support on journal selection, indexing, metrics, publication ethics, and open-access options

b. Verify disputed or high-risk journals using official evidence and maintain a documented decision record

c. Maintain current links to authoritative verification resources and communicate material policy or database changes

d. Coordinate institutional reporting and apply the specific UMT or HEC policy governing each claim

13 Verification Evidence and Recordkeeping

For each journal assessed for a formal claim or disputed case, the verification record should include:

a. Journal title, print ISSN, electronic ISSN, publisher, and official website

b. HEC status and category where applicable, together with the relevant date

c. Database, indexed collection, active or discontinued status, and coverage years

d. Metric source, year, subject category, and quartile or percentile where used

e. Date of verification and links, screenshots, or downloaded official evidence sufficient to reproduce the decision

f. Any OOR clarification, exception, conflict, or final determination under the applicable policy

14 Review, Interpretation, and Relationship with Other Policies

These Guidelines shall be reviewed periodically and whenever material changes occur in HEC requirements, UMT policies, indexing databases, research-integrity standards, or ranking methodologies. OOR is responsible for coordinating proposed updates.

If these Guidelines conflict with a statutory requirement, an HEC rule, or a formally approved UMT policy governing a specific purpose, the higher or more specific requirement shall prevail. Journal status can change; therefore, every decision shall identify the relevant date and governing policy. Questions of interpretation shall be referred to OOR and the competent approving authority, where required.

Supporting Details

Annex A - Journal Selection Checklist

Complete the following checks before submission and retain the evidence for future verification:

1. Manuscript fit

The aims and scope, article type, recent content, and intended audience match the manuscript.

2. Journal identity

The title, ISSN/eISSN, publisher, and official website agree across authoritative sources.

3. Recognition and coverage

HEC status where applicable, database collection, active status, coverage years, and the relevant publication period are confirmed.

4. Quality and metrics

Peer-review information, editorial expertise, publication history, official metric source/year/category, and field norms have been assessed.

5. Ethics and transparency

Policies on authorship, conflicts, plagiarism, data and image integrity, corrections, retractions, complaints, and AI-assisted tools are visible and appropriate.

6. Costs and rights

All fees, waivers, licences, copyright, repository rights, funder requirements, and institutional approvals are understood.

7. Final decision

No unresolved red flag remains; where uncertainty exists, OOR advice has been obtained before submission.

Annex B - Practical Checks for Fake or Hijacked Websites

1. Start from an official record

Open the journal link from HEC, the Web of Science Master Journal List, Scopus Sources, DOAJ, the NLM Catalog, or the publisher's main site rather than from an email or advertisement.

2. Match identifiers

Compare the exact title, ISSN/eISSN, publisher, country, and domain. A familiar title with a different domain or publisher may be a clone.

3. Inspect the archive

Check whether volumes, issues, article titles, authors, and dates match records held by the real publisher or indexing database.

4. Resolve DOIs

Test several recent DOIs and compare their metadata with Crossref or the relevant DOI registration agency.

5. Verify people

Check editors through institutional profiles and confirm that their expertise is relevant. Treat unauthorized names or unverifiable affiliations as serious concerns.

6. Review submission and payment

Use the official submission system. Be cautious about personal email submission, personal bank accounts, missing invoices, unexplained payment destinations, or requests for payment before a genuine editorial decision.

7. Assess claims in combination

HTTPS, attractive design, rapid communication, a DOI, an ISSN, an APC, or a major-publisher name alone neither proves nor disproves credibility.

8. Escalate uncertainty

Contact the publisher through its verified main website or request OOR verification before sharing a manuscript, confidential data, or payment.

Annex C - Official Verification and Selection Resources

Recognition, Indexing, Identity, and Ethics

- **HEC Recognized Journals:** Official link - current HEC policies and recognized-journal information
- **Web of Science Master Journal List:** Official link - collection and coverage verification
- **Scopus Sources:** Official link - source status, coverage, CiteScore information, and discontinued-title checks
- **Directory of Open Access Journals:** Official link - open-access and transparency criteria
- **NLM Catalog:** Official link - current MEDLINE indexing verification
- **ISSN Portal:** Official link - journal identity and ISSN verification
- **Crossref Metadata Search:** Official link - DOI and publication-metadata checks
- **Committee on Publication Ethics:** Official link - publication-ethics guidance
- **Think. Check. Submit.:** Official link - structured journal trustworthiness checklist

Publisher Journal-Finder Tools

These tools help identify potentially suitable journals within a publisher's portfolio. They do not verify HEC eligibility or replace independent journal assessment.

- **Elsevier Journal Finder:** Official link - scope-matching suggestions
- **Springer Nature Journal Finder:** Official link - journal-matching guidance and access to the finder
- **Wiley Journal Finder:** Official link - journal discovery and comparison

Institutional support: For assistance with journal verification, contact the Office of Research (OOR), UMT https://www.umt.edu.pk/odr/home.aspx, or email: sehrish.shoukat@umt.edu.pk



