

Guidelines for Establishing Merit of Publications and Creative Works at Haramaya University

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Haramaya University

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Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| 1. Preface..... | 1 |
| 2. Introduction..... | 2 |
| 3. Objective of the Guidelines..... | 5 |
| 4. Definitions of Terms..... | 6 |
| 4.1. Academic staff..... | 6 |
| 4.2. Book..... | 6 |
| 4.3. Book chapter..... | 6 |
| 4.4. Conference papers (Proceedings papers)..... | 6 |
| 4.5. Creative work..... | 7 |
| 4.6. Dubiously peer-reviewed, poor quality or unethical journals or publishers..... | 7 |
| 4.7. Gold open access..... | 7 |
| 4.8. Green open access..... | 8 |
| 4.9. Journal..... | 8 |
| 4.10. Journal article..... | 8 |
| 4.11. Open-access..... | 8 |
| 4.12. Patent..... | 9 |
| 4.13. Peer-review..... | 9 |
| 4.14. Plagiarism..... | 9 |
| 4.15. Proceedings..... | 9 |
| 4.16. Publication..... | 10 |
| 4.17. Publisher..... | 10 |
| 4.18. Publishing..... | 10 |
| 4.19. Research..... | 10 |
| 4.20. Research activity..... | 11 |
| 4.21. Research publication..... | 11 |
| 4.22. Review article..... | 12 |
| 4.23. Scholarly publications..... | 12 |
| 4.24. Short communications..... | 12 |
| 4.25. Teaching material..... | 12 |
| 4.26. Technology..... | 13 |
| 4.27. Text book..... | 13 |

| | |
|--|----|
| 5. Attributes of Scholarly Publications | 13 |
| 5.1. Compliance with definition | 13 |
| 5.2. Peer-review | 14 |
| 5.2.1. Book | 14 |
| 5.2.2. Textbook | 15 |
| 5.2.3. Book chapter..... | 16 |
| 5.2.4. Journal article | 16 |
| 5.2.5. Conference or proceedings paper | 16 |
| 5.2.6. Teaching material..... | 17 |
| 5.2.7. New technology..... | 18 |
| 5.2.8. Audio-visual recording | 18 |
| 5.2.9. Computer software | 18 |
| 5.2.10. Refereed designs | 18 |
| 5.2.11. Patents | 19 |
| 5.2.12. Major original creative works..... | 20 |
| 6. Current Challenges Faced in Publishing..... | 21 |
| 6.1. Proliferation of unethical (poor quality) journals and publishers | 21 |
| 6.2. Publication misconduct | 24 |
| 6.1.1. Conflict in authorship | 24 |
| 6.1.2. Plagiarism..... | 25 |
| 6.1.3. Infringement of intellectual property rights | 26 |
| 6.1.4. Simultaneous submission | 27 |
| 6.1.5. Research fraud | 28 |
| 6.1.6. Slicing | 28 |
| 7. Common Methods of Addressing Problems Posed by Unethical Journals and Publishers | 29 |
| 7.1. Blacklisting..... | 29 |
| 7.2. Whitelisting | 30 |
| 7.3. Bibliometric data | 31 |
| 8. Indicators of Journal and Publisher Quality | 33 |
| 8.1. Indicators of poor quality journals and publishers | 33 |
| 8.2. Indicators of good quality journals and publishers | 37 |
| 9. Core Conditions for Deciding on Publication Quality..... | 39 |

| | |
|---|----|
| 10. General Procedure of Using the Guidelines | 41 |
| 11. Scope of Use of the Guidelines..... | 43 |

1. Preface

Haramaya University has been conferring academic promotions up on its staff members based on criteria set in its Senate Legislation. However, with the dramatic increases in the number of scholarly and creative works produced at the University as well as with the rising challenges being posed by poor quality and/or unethical publication outlets, establishing merit of scholarly publications and creative works has now become more onerous than ever before. Therefore, it is imperative to prepare and use guidelines to thoroughly vet publications and creative works submitted by staff members for academic promotions, employment, and related purposes.

The document sets out by introducing readers to the need for sustaining the missions of Haramaya University through dedicated involvement of its staff in scholarly and creative works. The document then highlights problems posed by the growing numbers of unethical and poor quality journals and publishers, the difficulties faced at the University in the process of ascertaining the scientific merit of publications and creative works, and pinpoints means of addressing the issue. The document then defines terms that are often encountered in the process of appraising publications or creative works presented by staff members for academic promotions or employment, whose meanings and connotations should be clarified for easy reference; it then describes the major types of scholarly publications and creative works, and how their scientific merit could be ascertained before accepting them for academic promotions, employment, scholarships, and related purposes. This is followed by descriptions of attributes of publications and creative works that determine scientific merit. The document then underlines the major problems currently facing academics in the choice of outlets to publish their scholarly works and the difficulties experienced by academic promotion committees in distinguishing between publications or creative works that are genuinely peer-reviewed (good quality,

ethical publications or creative works) from those that have undergone no or dubious peer-review processes (low quality, unethical publications or creative works). The document then highlights problems related to publication misconducts and the need to guard against them by promotion or employment committees. This is followed by a description of common methods that help in addressing problems posed by unethical journals and publishers. The document then lists indicators of poor quality journals and publishers as well as indicators of good quality journals and publishers. The document then provides a list of mandatory conditions to be met by publications or creative works to be accepted for academic promotions or employment. Then, procedures to be followed by promotion or employment committees of the University to appraise publications or creative works are described. The document is concluded by the scope of its use at the University.

2. Introduction

Teaching, research, and community engagement are central to the mission of Haramaya University. Therefore, it is expected that staff members of the University commit themselves to effective teaching and scholarship, constantly striving to expand and communicate their knowledge, ideas, and understanding for the benefit of society.

The quality of Haramaya University in terms of fulfilling the missions of teaching, research, and community engagement could be strengthened and sustained only through the dedicated and creative work of its staff members. Similarly, academic staff members can further the development of their career through engaging in research and other scholarly activities that eventually lead to publications. Thus, publishing research and conceptual papers in academic journals is a key performance indicator at universities and

research institutions¹. This is particularly related to the improvement of academic profiles through career promotion, and enhancement of visibility of academic institutions.

Promotions in academic rank are based on merit. They are never automatic or routine. In general, academic promotions are awarded to recognise the level of staff members' contributions to the missions of a university in teaching, research, and community engagement, which must be evidenced by vetted catalogues of publications and creative research works.

Research is an important component of staff responsibility at the University. Staff members are expected to actively do research in pursuit of new ideas and knowledge so as to add to their understanding of science in their areas of expertise, focusing on improved application of existing knowledge or methods. Staff of the University are, therefore, expected to disseminate their new findings and knowledge through peer-reviewed publications and/or creative works.

The Senate legislation of the University (Senate Legislation 2013) provides procedures for assessing research and publication performances of staff members seeking academic promotions. Accordingly, Article 49 sub-article 2.3 of the Legislation describes publication requirements.

Responsibilities for vetting applications of staff for academic promotions rest principally with Schools/Departments, Colleges, Appointment, Promotion and Scholarship Committee (APSC), Research Extension and Publication Committee (REPC), and the Senate of the University. Promotion committees should base their recommendations on carefully prepared dossiers that document and evaluate the accomplishments of each candidate measured relative to the duties assigned to her/him.

¹Truth F. 2012. Pay Big to Publish Fast: Academic Journal Rackets. *Journal of Critical Education Policy Studies*, 10 (2): 54 - 105.

The Senate Legislation states that the reputation of journals and proceedings in which academic staff publish articles or conference papers, which are to be presented for academic promotions, have to be established through criteria set by the Research, Extension and Publication Committee (REPC) (Art. 49.2.3.4 and 49.2.3.5). Guidelines for determining the reputability of a journal (publications) shall be developed by the Office of the Vice President for Research Affairs and approved by the Senate (Art. 147 of Senate Legislation 2013).

However, in certain ways, some of the criteria and procedures for academic promotion that are described in the legislation are not detailed. This would toughen the task of promotion committees to objectively judge the quality of publications for deciding on applications submitted by staff members for academic promotions. In addition, the types of scholarly publications and creative works that have to be considered for academic promotions at the University are not detailed in the legislation.

There are also other challenges particularly related to scholarly publishing paradigm that is evolving to embrace innovative open access publication models such as green open access and gold open access. While this environment fosters the creation of high-quality, peer-reviewed open access publications, it also provides opportunities for journals or publishers to engage in unprofessional or unethical practices². Although unethical practices have always been an issue in scholarly publishing, even in traditional, print-based publications, they are exacerbated by technological advances and the increasing ease and speed of disseminating information. One of the primary concerns with unethical publishers is that they accept articles with little or no

²Beaubien, S, Eckard, M. 2014. Addressing Faculty Publishing Concerns with Open Access Journal Quality Indicators. *Journal of Librarianship and Scholarly Communication* 2 (2): eP1133. <http://dx.doi.org/10.7710/2162-3309.1133>

peer review or quality control³. Consequently, the publishing community needs stronger mechanisms to help identify reliable and rigorous journals and publishers, regardless of access or business model⁴. Therefore, Haramaya University requires guidelines that would help its promotion committees in distinguishing good quality open access or print journals and publishers from low quality and unethical ones in the process of appraising staff performances for academic promotions.

3. Objective of the Guidelines

The general objective of these guidelines is to provide objective criteria and conditions for establishing the scientific merit of publications or creative works submitted for academic promotion, employment, scholarship, and any other purposes at the University.

Specifically, the criteria and conditions set in these guidelines are meant to guide promotion committees to make sound and objective assessments of publications and/or creative works presented by staff members for academic promotions. Thus, the guidelines are designed to help academic promotion committees to sift out publications or creative works that are published in genuinely peer-reviewed good quality and/or ethical journals from those that are published in dubiously peer-reviewed and poor quality (unethical) ones.

The guidelines are meant also to create awareness among staff members and students of the University on the challenges posed by the currently mushrooming unethical publication industry and to alert them to avoid publishing their scholarly works in dubiously peer-reviewed unethical (poor quality) journals.

³ Bohannon, J. 2013. "Who's Afraid of Peer Review?" In: *Science* 342.6154 (2013), pp. 60–65. DOI: 10.1126/science.342.6154.60. URL: <http://www.sciencemag.org/content/342/6154/60.short>.

⁴ Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association, (n.d.). Membership Criteria. Retrieved from <http://oaspa.org/membership/membership-criteria/>

The guidelines are also meant to help appointment committees of the University to appraise publication credentials of applicants seeking employment as academic staff members of the University. The guidelines could also help scholarship committees of the University to vet publication credentials of staff members competing for scholarships.

4. Definitions of Terms

4.1. Academic staff

“Academic staff” is a term generally referring to staff employed by the University to conduct both teaching and research. This definition includes two categories of staff: Teaching staff, which refers to staff employed to conduct teaching for 75% of his/her time and research for 25% of his/her time, and research staff, which refers to staff employed to conduct research for 75% of his/her time and teaching for 25% of his/her time.

4.2. Book

“A book” is a scholarly monographic collection of printed or digital information presented as a source of knowledge, which is published by private individuals, university departments and privately funded companies, etc. It is a major undertaking that represent the efforts of a staff member in putting together his/her teaching and research experience, normally over several years.

4.3. Book chapter

“A book chapter” is a contribution, consisting substantially of new material, to an edited compilation in which the material is subject to editorial scrutiny.

4.4. Conference papers (Proceedings papers)

“A conference or proceedings paper” refers to articles that are written with the goal of being accepted for a conference: typically an annual (or biannual) venue with a specific scope where one can present his/her results to the community, usually as an oral presentation, a poster presentation, or a tabled

discussion. Conference papers are typically published in collections called "proceedings": sometimes these are printed by university presses, by professional organisations, by big-name publishers, or simply online.

4.5. Creative work

“A creative work” is the result of creative efforts including but not limited to artwork, literature, music, paintings etc. Creative works have in common a degree of arbitrariness, such that it is improbable that two people would independently create the same work. A creative work basically involves two main steps: having an idea, and then turning that idea into a reality. The term is frequently used in the context of copyright.

4.6. Dubiously peer-reviewed, poor quality or unethical journals or publishers

“Poor quality or unethical or dubiously peer reviewed journals or publishers” are journals or publishers with a major priority of making money through publishing manuscripts without requiring a rigorous peer-review process. These journals and publishers focus on authors, not readers, and on collecting author fees at the expense of compromising scientific quality. In other words, publishers of such journals exist merely to trick and make a living from money that they collect from gullible authors as publication fees. These are becoming a concern not only to universities in Ethiopia but also almost all academic institutions throughout the world.

4.7. Gold open access

“Gold Open Access” refers to the practice in which an author publishes his/her paper in an open access (OA) journal or a book, supported by an open access publisher, which provides immediate open access to all of his/her articles, usually on the publisher's website.

4.8. Green open access

“Green Open Access” refers to self-archiving, which is the practice of depositing articles in an open access institutional repository or a subject repository after publishing in any journal.

4.9. Journal

“A journal” is an academic magazine published on a regular schedule. It contains articles written by experts in a particular field of study, based on research or analysis that the author, or authors, did. That research might include case studies in fields of any science, primary source research in the field of history, or literature analysis. Journal articles are written for experts or students of that particular field who have an advanced field-specific vocabulary and knowledge. Article types in a journal could be full-length research articles, review articles, and short communications.

4.10. Journal article

“A journal article” refers to a scholarly article written by academics or professionals in a particular field of study based on original research or analysis that the author(s) did. The research might include experimental work, observational studies, case studies, critical reviews, meta-analysis, and theoretical work.

4.11. Open-access

“Open-access” is defined as free availability of a publication on the public internet, permitting any users to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of these articles, crawl them for indexing, pass them as data to software, or use them for any other lawful purpose, without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself. The only constraint on reproduction and distribution, and the only role for copyright in this domain, should be to give

authors control over the integrity of their work and the right to be properly acknowledged and cited⁵.

4.12. Patent

“A patent” is a set of exclusive rights granted by a state to an inventor for a limited period of time in exchange for detailed public disclosure of the invention. An invention is a solution to a specific technological problem and is a product or a process. A patent is a form of intellectual property. A patent claim must meet relevant patentability requirements, such as novelty, usefulness, and non-obviousness.

4.13. Peer-review

“Peer-review” refers to an independent process that involves an assessment or review of a publication in its entirety by independent, qualified experts before it is published. Independent in this context means independent of the author or authors. Peer review is relevant for journal articles, book chapters, text books, books, and conference papers. It is a system of assuring the scientific quality of publications in which case manuscripts are submitted to an editor who then passes the work to other professional or ‘peers’ for a critique upon which the work is then passed back to the original writer for any required changes to be made before being published, or to be rejected.

4.14. Plagiarism

“Plagiarism” is the copying of idea, text, data and other creative work and presenting it as original result of own research work, without proper citation.

4.15. Proceedings

“Proceedings” are the collection of academic papers published in the context of an academic conference. They are usually distributed as printed volumes or in electronic form either before the conference opens or after it has

⁵Ten years on from the Budapest Open Access Initiative. Setting the default to open. Budapest Open Access Initiative. Sept. 12, 2012. URL: <http://www.budapestopenaccessinitiative.org/boai-10-recommendations>.

closed. Proceedings contain the contributions made by researchers at the conference. They are the written record of the work that is presented to fellow researchers.

4.16. Publication

“Publication” refers to any material (book, journal, article, etc) published for the purpose of disseminating knowledge and information.

4.17. Publisher

“A publisher” is an entity which produces journals, books, etc. Publishers could be commercial or non-profit making. A commercial publisher is an entity for which the core business of producing journals, books, etc, and distributing them is for sale. If publishing is not the core business of an organisation and its publications are paid for or subsidised by the parent organisation or a third party, the publisher is acceptable as a non-profit making publisher. For the purposes of these specifications, universities and other self-supporting institutions are regarded as non-profit making publishers.

4.18. Publishing

“Publishing” is the process of communicating a message, statement, and text through any means: print, audio, video, electronically as an e-book or on the web for dissemination of knowledge and information. Publishing also includes quality control such as peer review or equivalent in-house quality control through processes such as expert assessment or review, as well as editing, copy-editing, design, and conversion of the work to an appropriate format.

4.19. Research

“Research” is defined as the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way so as to generate new concepts, methodologies, and understandings. This could include synthesis and analysis of previous research to the extent that it leads to new and creative outcomes.

This definition of research is consistent with a broad notion of research and experimental development as comprising of creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of humanity, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications. Research includes pure basic research, strategic basic research, applied research, and experimental development.

4.20. Research activity

“Research activity” is defined as creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of human knowledge, and the use of this knowledge to devise new applications. Any activity classified as research is characterised by originality; it should have investigation as a primary objective and should have the potential to produce results that are sufficiently general for humanity’s stock of knowledge (theoretical and/or practical) to be recognizably increased.

4.21. Research publication

“A research publication” is defined as any publication (book, book chapter, journal article, and conference paper), technology registration articles such as release of new crop varieties or other any useable technologies, which are the result of research activities, and are characterised by substantial scholarly activity (as evidenced by discussion of the relevant literature, an awareness of the history and antecedents of work described, and provided in a format which allows a reader to trace sources of the work, including thorough citations and footnotes); originality (i.e. not a compilation of existing works); increasing the stock of knowledge; being in a form that enables dissemination of knowledge; and veracity/validity through a peer review process or the quality control processes of a recognized publisher.

Research publications may be produced in any appropriate format, such as print, publication online, or publication in digital form on separate media such as a CD, video, audio, etc.

4.22. Review article

“Review articles” are articles written to sum up the current state of the research on a particular topic, in which the reviewer engages with a scholarly source - usually journal articles or academic books - by reporting their main ideas, claims, positions, or findings, and the reasoning which supports these ideas and by critiquing its contribution to knowledge in the discipline in which it is published. Ideally, the writer searches for everything relevant to the topic, and then sorts it all out into a coherent view of the “state of the art” as it now stands. Review articles teach about the main people working in a field; recent major advances and discoveries; significant gaps in the research; current debates; and ideas of where research might go next.

4.23. Scholarly publications

“Scholarly publications” refer to publications (journal articles, proceedings, articles, book chapters, etc.) written by scholars or professionals in the fields of their expertise often based on research results, which are subject to peer-review processes.

4.24. Short communications

“Short communications” are concise articles that are usually not longer than 3000 words (7-8 double spaced pages). The aim is to report new ideas in any science, recent advances in modelling, and software, primary new research findings, etc. Short communications do not cover in detail background information about the problems treated or the applications, rather they provide key pointers to the reader. The work reported needs to be technically sound, innovative, and significantly unique, advancing the state of the art. Novelty is the main driving principle for preparing a short communication article.

4.25. Teaching material

“A teaching material” is a compilation of exhaustive notes and information from various sources such as books, journals, etc, and emanating from the teaching experiences of the writer, which is designed to be used by students

as a valuable source of organized knowledge on a particular subject being taught at the University.

4.26. Technology

“A technology” is the collection of techniques, methods, and processes used in the production of goods or services or in the accomplishment of objectives. It can be knowledge of techniques, processes, etc or it can be embedded in machines, computers, devices and factories, which can be operated by individuals without detailed knowledge of the workings of such things. Technology can also be new methods of producing something or new products for enhancing productivity (e.g. new crop varieties, computer software or computer programmes, etc). These include, but are not limited to, new findings such as improved production practices, varieties, animal breeds, farm implements, machines, tools, and other products (tangible e.g. drugs, vaccines; or intangible e.g. crop protection measures, methodologies, software etc.), which are proved to increase the productivity of crops, livestock, and improve the livelihood of human beings.

4.27. Text book

“A textbook” is a book used as a standard work for the study of a particular subject. It mainly consists of new contributions of existing knowledge or updating of a body of established knowledge to make it more readily accessible, aimed primarily at a university audience.

5. Attributes of Scholarly Publications

To be considered for academic promotions, all scholarly publications should have the following basic attributes:

5.1. Compliance with definition

Any publication must first comply with the definition of “research publication” (section 4.19), which is clearly stipulated also in Art. 49 sub-

articles 2.3.2 of the Senate Legislation 2013 that any publication to be considered for promotion shall be the outcome of continuous research activities focusing on one's area of specialization.

5.2. Peer-review

Any publications submitted for academic promotion must have undergone a peer-review process that involves assessment of the publications:

- in its entirety – not merely an abstract or extract;
- prior to publication; and
- by appropriately qualified experts that are independent of the author

The following are peer review requirements for the different scholarly publications:

5.2.1. Book

When a book is submitted for an academic promotion, it shall be critically assessed by both internal and external evaluators.

For books and book chapters, the peer-review condition is met if:

- The book is published by a recognized publisher or institution
- The book is available for commercial sale or distribution
- The book must be offered for commercial sale (i.e. not just on a cost-recovery basis)
- The book must be a major work of scholarship (the book must meet the definition of a “research publication”)
- It consists mainly of previously unpublished material, and makes some substantial contribution to a defined area of knowledge
- The book must have an International Standard Book Number (ISBN), and

- The book must be written entirely by a single author, or by joint authors who share responsibility for the book as a whole.

Examples of books that are unlikely to meet the criteria include:

- Anthologies of previously published works
- Edited books
- Creative works such as novels
- Translations without original critical scholarly contributions
- Revisions/new editions
- Working Papers, Technical Reports, Discussion Papers, unpublished reports and the like
- Publications of academic units such as departments, colleges, offices, etc

5.2.2. Textbook

When a text book is submitted for an academic promotion, it shall be critically assessed by both internal and external evaluators.

- The text book is designed for use as a text for disciplines or subjects taught at the University
- The text book is published by a recognized publisher or institution
- The text book is available for commercial sale or distribution
- The text book is offered for commercial sale (i.e. not just on a cost-recovery basis)
- The text book is a major work of scholarship with authoritative information on a particular discipline for use as a standard text at Universities in Ethiopia or anywhere else in the world.
- The text book has an International Standard Book Number (ISBN)

5.2.3. Book chapter

It includes:

- A scholarly introduction of chapter length to an edited volume, where the content of the introduction reports research undertaken by the editor and makes a substantial contribution to a defined area of knowledge
- A critical scholarly text of chapter length, e.g. in music, medieval or classical texts, or critical reviews of current research.

It excludes:

- entries in reference works
- revisions of chapters in edited books (but entirely new chapters in revised books may still be counted)
- forewords
- brief introductions
- brief editorials
- works already published independently, e.g. as journal articles or in conference proceedings, and previously counted in one of those categories
- appendices

5.2.4. Journal article

Journal article includes commentaries and communications of original research, provided that these have been subject to a formal process of peer review and published in a scholarly journal, such as full-length research journals, short communications, and review articles.

5.2.5. Conference or proceedings paper

This category refers to full written versions of conference papers which are published. The papers may appear in a number of different formats. Papers

must be peer-reviewed and presented at conferences, workshops or seminars of national and international significance.

For conference papers, the peer-review requirement should meet at least one of the following:

- There is a statement in the proceedings that all papers are peer-reviewed in full
- The author has a statement or acknowledgement from the proceedings editor showing that all papers are peer-reviewed in full
- The 'Call for Papers' document states that all papers are to be peer-reviewed in full
- The author has a copy of the reviewer's assessment relating to the paper

Refereeing of conference papers usually involves external assessment, that is, assessment by at least one reviewer. Assessment by members of an expert advisory board/panel/committee with broad national or international representation will also be accepted. Refereeing on the basis of an abstract, or extended abstract, is not sufficient.

5.2.6. Teaching material

For a teaching material, the peer-review requirement is met if:

- It is clearly proved the teaching material prepared is a relevant source of knowledge for a specific subject or subjects being taught at the university
- It is evaluated by the relevant department and endorsed by the Academic Commission of the college as appropriate teaching material for a specific course or courses
- It has been in use as a teaching material for at least one year before submission for promotion

- If it has been blind reviewed by at least two relevant professionals external to the university and a written report of positive assessment of the results are obtained.

5.2.7. New technology

This includes improved crop varieties, improved production technologies, methods, etc, which must be accompanied by published catalogues identifying the individual technologies and for which authenticated evidence of release of the technologies could be presented. New technologies should be approved through a nationally accredited mechanism, and the office of Research Affairs should certify it.

5.2.8. Audio-visual recording

This refers to substantial and scholarly works presented in audio-visual form and offered for sale under the imprint of a recognised commercial publisher or distributor. The works should cover the presentation of research findings and factual information. Examples include an ethnographic film, or an audio-visual presentation of dynamic research output; eg. fluid mechanics, robotics, visual motion, new surgery techniques, etc.

5.2.9. Computer software

This refers to innovative software products of commercial quality either offered for sale or distributed as shareware, freeware, open-source, etc through a recognised publisher or distributor.

5.2.10. Refereed designs

This refers to major works in design disciplines such as architecture, creative arts and engineering. To be counted in this category a design work must have been recognised via a publicly understood refereeing process, which is

conducted by an independent review panel formed from qualified peers in the design discipline who are recognised as such by their national or international professional association.

To have been included in this category, the design must have met one of the following requirements:

(a) The major design award offered by national or international organisations in the field

OR

(b) Curated exhibitions of original design by an individual designer exhibited for the first time in a recognised gallery or museum. These must be accompanied by a published catalogue identifying the individual designs and the timing and location of the exhibition.

5.2.11. Patents

This category refers to Major Written or Recorded Original Creative Works that are publicly and commercially distributed or to Curated Individual Exhibitions of Original Art.

To have been included in this category, the creative work must have met one of the following requirements:

(a) Substantial creative or scholarly works which are separately bound/packaged and offered for sale or distribution under the imprint of a recognised commercial press or publisher; or to be recorded for commercial distribution the recording can be in any media such as CD, video, world wide web etc, but must be commercially distributed by an entity whose core business is producing creative recordings and distributing them for sale. For this purpose university and other self-supporting higher education institution presses are regarded as commercial publishers, provided that they have responsibility for the distribution of the publication and not only its printing.

OR

(b) Curated exhibitions of substantial collections of original works by an individual artist exhibited for the first time in a recognised gallery or museum. These must be accompanied by a published catalogue identifying the individual works and the timing and location of the exhibition.

Includes:

- a product or process for which a full patent has been granted.

Excludes:

- provisional patents.

5.2.12. Major original creative works

This category refers to Major Written or Recorded Original Creative Works that are publicly and commercially distributed or to Curated Individual Exhibitions of Original Art. To have been included in this category, the creative work must have met one of the following requirements:

(a) Substantial creative or scholarly works which are

- separately bound/packaged and offered for sale or distribution under the imprint of a recognised press or publisher;

OR

(b) Curated exhibitions of substantial collections of original works by an individual artist exhibited for the first time in a recognised gallery or museum. These must be accompanied by a published catalogue identifying the individual works and the timing and location of the exhibition.

Includes:

- published novels
- published anthology of short stories
- Published anthology of poetry

- books of poetry
- published play or film scripts for productions of at least 20 minutes duration
- published scores of musical works with a duration of at least 20 minutes in playing time
- recordings of live music, theatre or dance performances of at least 20 minutes duration which have been commercially distributed
- films, multimedia productions or sound productions of at least 20 minutes duration which have been commercially distributed.

6. Current Challenges Faced in Publishing

Establishing the reputability of scientific journals or other related publications or whether or not the journals are genuinely peer-reviewed and articles published in them meet scientific standards has become a difficult task now than ever before. There are many reasons for this difficulty.

6.1. Proliferation of unethical (poor quality) journals and publishers

The increased demand for publishing has led to tremendous increments in the number of publishers and standalone journals. As a result, there are a lot of journals to choose from and, unfortunately, not all of them are reputable. In line with the booming publication industry, journals which are not genuine are also emerging at an alarming rate. For such journals and publishers, generating money the easy way is an overriding motive as compared to professional interest and hence they are considered as pay-to-publish fake journals. A lot of academic authors, these days, are being duped by submitting their research outputs to publish in these fake journals that do not have proper quality control or peer-review processes^{6,7}.

⁶ Beall J. 2015. Beall's List: Potential, possible, or probable predatory scholarly open-access publishers. Scholarly Open Access, <http://scholarlyoa.com/publishers/> (retrieved May 29, 2015).

Particularly, in the context of open-access (OA) academic publishing, the mounting pressure across global academe to publish or perish has spawned an exponentially growing number of dodgy academic e-journals charging high fees to authors, promising super-fast processing and publication open-access (OA) online.

The commercialised journal conglomerates springing up on the Internet in academic English are part of the capitalist political economy of knowledge distribution and its very uneven playing fields, which remains for many scholars across the planet a grim game of survival⁸. OA, legitimate or fee-gouging, also involves basic contestations about asymmetrical power and representation and the geopolitics of the western world's hegemonic knowledge production and its epistemologies, validation, and dissemination on a global scale⁹.

This exponential growth in start-up cyber-journals of questionable quality and dubious upstart origin is driven largely by the globalization of Euro Atlantic research cultures into the Global South and lower-income economies¹⁰ and is potentially a form of 'academic racketeering'.

Open-access publishing has obvious advantages - namely making scientific research freely available to all that seek it. Unfortunately, it has become abused by publishing racketeers, threatening the credibility of scholarly publishing. In fact, OA needs to be reconceived in the struggle for a 'communism of the common'¹¹. OA's re-appropriation and its self-

⁷<https://scholarlyoa.files.wordpress.com/2015/01/criteria-2015.pdf>: Accessed on 25 July 2015

⁸Truth F. 2012..

⁹Haider, J. 2007. Of the rich and the poor and other curious minds: on open access and 'development.' *Aslib Proceedings* 59 (4/5): 449 - 461. URL: <http://goo.gl/j47Jb>.

¹⁰Jha, A. 2011. China poised to overhaul US as biggest publisher of scientific papers. *The Guardian*, 28 March. URL: <http://tinyurl.com/4u8mkjl>.

¹¹Hardt, M. 2010. The common in communism. In Douzinas, C., & Žižek, S. *The idea of communism* (pp. 130-144). London: Verso. URL: <http://goo.gl/48rQO>.

organization should become a main goal in confronting and dismantling the regime of monopolistic knowledge control today by giant ‘knowledge enclosure’ corporations like Thomson Reuters, Springer, and Wiley¹².

It is true that not all open-access (OA) journals have dubious peer-review processes. There are, in fact, some online journals that have rigorous peer-review processes with high degree of transparency and publication ethics, including clear online tracking options for articles being reviewed. However, many of such journals have dubious peer-review processes and operate on lowly publication ethics and scientific standards.

In addition, no publication or financing model is, in itself, morally superior to others or can guarantee high quality. Various models can produce high-quality content, and all are vulnerable to exploitation. It might make the most sense to concern ourselves less with the publication or financing model used and more with ensuring transparency about a publication's content and editorial processes¹³.

What is more, charging a fee is not itself a marker of a predatory publisher: many reputable OA journals use APCs to cover costs, especially in fields where research is often funded by grants. Many subscription-based journals also charge authors fees, sometimes per page or illustration. However, the so-called predatory journals (low quality journals) are primarily fee-collecting operations—they exist for that purpose and publish articles without rigorous peer review, despite claims to the contrary¹⁴.

¹²Truth F. 2012.

¹³Charlotte Haug. 2013. “The Downside of Open-Access Publishing”. In: *New England Journal of Medicine* 368.9 (2013). PMID: 23445091, pp. 791–793. DOI: 10.1056/NEJMp1214750. URL: [//www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp1214750](http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp1214750) (visited on 06/27/2014).

¹⁴Berger M. and Cirasella J. 2015. Beyond Beall’s List: We need a better understanding of predatory publishing without overstating its size and danger. London School of Economics and Political Science, The Impact Blog, <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2015/03/18/beyond-bealls-list-predatory-publishers/> (retrieved May 29, 2015).

However, making the distinctions between ethical and unethical publications is important for maintaining publication quality and promoting scientific career of staff members as well as visibility of universities.

6.2. Publication misconduct

There are a number of publication misconducts that would render publications unworthy of considering for academic promotions. The following are just a few of a number of publication misconducts that can threaten not only the integrity of the science, but also an academic staff member's as well as a University's standing in the scientific community.

6.1.1. Conflict in authorship

Naming authors on a scientific paper ensures that the appropriate individuals get credit, and are accountable, for the research. Deliberately misrepresenting a scientist's relationship to their work is considered to be a form of misconduct that undermines confidence in the reporting of the work itself.

An "author" is generally considered to be an individual who has made a significant intellectual contribution to the study.

All persons designated as authors should qualify for authorship, and all those who qualify should be listed. Three basic criteria must collectively be met to be credited as an author:

- Substantial contribution to the study conception and design, data acquisition, analysis, and interpretation.
- Drafting or revising the article for intellectual content.
- Approval of the final version.

The order of authorship should be "a joint decision of the co-authors". Individuals who are involved in a study but do not satisfy the journal's criteria for authorship, should be listed as "Contributors" or "Acknowledged

Individuals". Examples include: assisting the research by providing advice, providing research space, departmental oversight, and obtaining financial support.

Three types of authorship constitute publication misconduct¹⁵:

"Ghost" authors, who contribute substantially but are not acknowledged (often paid by commercial sponsors);

"Guest" authors, who make no discernible contributions, but are listed to help increase the chances of publication;

"Gift" authors, whose contribution is based solely on a tenuous affiliation with a study.

6.1.2. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is one of the most important publication misconducts, which occurs when someone uses others' ideas, statements, and linguistic style and does not acknowledge intellectual originators. It is basically the copying of ideas, text, data and other creative work (e.g. tables, figures and graphs, technologies, artwork, etc) and presenting it as original research without proper citation¹⁶. Recently, plagiarism and manipulation have become major issues also in academic journals. Some prestigious journals have even been forced to publicly retract papers of well-known researchers¹⁷.

Plagiarism of words can be divided into: a) the direct form - completely or partially copying of text, computer files, audio or video recordings without

¹⁵ Elsevier, 2012. Authors Rights and Responsibilities. Publishing Ethics, Duties of Authors, Originality and Plagiarism. <http://www.elsevier.com/vps/find/authorsview.authors/rights>. Accessed 15 June, 2015.

¹⁶Roig M. 2012. Avoiding unethical writing practices. *Food and Chemical Toxicology*; 50: 3385-3387

¹⁷Solmaz FilizKarabag and Christian Berggren. 2012. Retraction, Dishonesty and Plagiarism: Analysis of a Crucial Issue for Academic Publishing, and the Inadequate Responses from Leading Journals in Economics and Management Disciplines. *Journal of Applied Economics and Business Research* JAEBR, 2 (3): 172-183.

acknowledging primary source; b) mosaic form – borrowing ideas and opinions from the original source, few words and phrases without citing this source; c) self-plagiarism – reuse of one’s own work without quotation and permission to reproduce text^{18,19}.

Unfortunately, digitalization made copy-paste plagiarism and inappropriate re-use of sources from the websites, online journals, and other electronic media widespread. “Within academia, plagiarism by students, professors, or researchers is considered academic dishonesty or academic fraud, and offenders are subject to academic censure, up to and including expulsion” and researchers and professors usually were punished for plagiarisms by sanctions ranging from suspension to termination with losing their credibility and perceived integrity²⁰.

6.1.3. Infringement of intellectual property rights

This is relating to any pieces of work created by someone else that are protected by copyright, or substantial scientific findings, hypotheses, teachings or approaches to research established or made by someone else, involving the following²¹:

- a) This includes also unauthorized use while claiming authorship (plagiarism) as described above;
- b) The use of approaches to research and ideas of others (theft of ideas), especially in one’s capacity as reviewer;
- c) The presumption or unfounded acceptance of scientific authorship or co-authorship;

¹⁸ Elsevier, 2012.

¹⁹ World Association of Medical Editors (WAME) Recommendations on Publication Ethics Policies for Medical Journals, Arch Med Res. 2004; 35: 361-367.

²⁰ <http://www.en.wikipedia.org/Plagiarism>. Accessed 15 June, 2015.

²¹ Schneider, C. 2000. Safeguarding good scientific practice: new institutional approaches in Germany. *Science and engineering ethics*,6 (1), 49-56.

- d) Falsification of content;
- e) The unauthorized publication and unauthorized disclosure to a third party, prior to the publication of the work, finding, hypothesis, teaching or approach to research.
- f) Claiming the (co-) authorship of others without the latter's consent or refusal to acknowledge other researchers' claims to co-authorship despite appropriate contributions;
- g) Sabotaging research work (including damaging, destroying or manipulating experimental facilities, equipment, documentation, hardware, software, chemicals or other items required by others to carry out an experiment;
- h) Eliminating primary data wherever this violates statutory regulations or recognized principles of scientific work specific to the particular discipline.

6.1.4. Simultaneous submission

Authors have an obligation to make sure their paper is based on original—never before published—research. Intentionally submitting or re-submitting work for duplicate publication is considered a breach of publishing ethics. Simultaneous submission occurs when a person submits a paper to different publications at the same time, which can result in more than one journal publishing that particular paper. Duplicate/multiple publication occurs when two or more papers, without full cross-reference, share essentially the same hypotheses, data, discussion points, and/or conclusions. This can occur in varying degrees: literal duplication, partial but substantial duplication, or even duplication by paraphrasing. One of the main reasons duplicate publication of original research is considered unethical, is that it can result in

"inadvertent double counting or inappropriate weighting of the results of a single study, which distorts the available evidence²².

6.1.5. Research fraud

Research fraud is publishing data or conclusions that were not generated by experiments or observations, but by invention or data manipulation. There are two kinds in research and scientific publishing¹³:

A) Fabrication

This is making up research data and results, and recording or reporting them.

B) Falsification.

This refers to manipulating research materials, images, data, equipment, or processes. Falsification includes changing or omitting data or results in such a way that the research is not accurately represented. A person might falsify data to make it fit with the desired end result of a study. Both fabrication and falsification are serious forms of misconduct because they result in a scientific record that does not accurately reflect observed truth.

6.1.6. Slicing

The "slicing" of research that would form one meaningful paper into several different papers is called "salami publication" or "salami slicing". Unlike duplicate publication, which involves reporting the exact same data in two or more publications, salami slicing involves breaking up or segmenting a large study into two or more publications. These segments are referred to as "slices" of a study. As a general rule, as long as the "slices" of a broken up study share the same hypotheses, population, and methods, this is not an acceptable practice. The same "slice" should never be published more than once.

²²Elsevier, 2012.

Salami slicing can result in a distortion of the literature by leading unsuspecting readers to believe that data presented in each salami slice (i.e., journal article) is derived from a different subject sample. This not only skews the "scientific database" but it creates repetition that wastes readers' time as well as the time of editors and reviewers, who must handle each paper separately. Further, it unfairly inflates the author's citation record.

Promotion committees are expected primarily to validate the quality of publications by determining the authenticity of the peer-review process undertaken, which would vouch for the merit of the scientific work done. However, the committees are not expected to remain oblivious to authorship fraud (publication misconducts), and they should make appropriate corrective decisions against such cases of impropriety.

7. Common Methods of Addressing Problems Posed by Unethical Journals and Publishers

There are three possible mechanisms to tackle problems posed by unethical journals and publishers (so-called predatory journals and publishers): blacklisting, whitelisting, and bibliometrics.

7.1. Blacklisting

Beall's blog is the best known and most comprehensive blacklist²³. Altogether, Beall's work seems to be very thorough and much appreciated. However, his analysis results in an incomplete list of dubiously peer-reviewed journals and publishers and a backlog of doubtful publishers that need yet to be examined in depth. For example, it was discovered that 20% of journals and publishers in Beal's predatory list had in fact rigorous peer-review

²³Wehrmeijer, M. 2014. Exposing the predators. *Methods to stop predatory journals. Publishing*

systems²⁴. Thus, researchers cannot solely rely on Beall's list and should make their own evaluations on a case-by-case basis. In the meantime, the backlog could raise suspicions against publishers and journals that have just been established but inexperienced, making it harder for them to attract high-quality research²⁵.

7.2. Whitelisting

Whitelisting, or listing publishers and journals that have been vetted and verified as satisfying certain standards, may be a better solution than blacklisting. The central player in the whitelisting movement is the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)²⁶. DOAJ aims to support the transition of the system of scholarly communication and publishing into a model that serves science, higher education, industry, innovation, societies and the people in all kinds of ways²⁷. Other whitelisting services include Thomson-Reuters JCR (also called the Web of Science, Science Citation Index, or Social Science Citation Index), Scopus, Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA), Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), World Association of Medical Editors (WAME), African Journals Online (AJOL), International Association of Scientific, Technical and Medical Publishers (STM), Open Humanities Press (OHP), PubMed, Springer, SCI, Medline, Web of Science, RePEc, ProQuest, Taylor & Francis, BIOSIS, Agricola, ScienceDirect, etc.

Black and white-lists are useful in the fight against predatory publishers and non-genuinely peer-reviewed journals and publishers. Blacklists give a good attempt at naming and shaming. Whitelist organizations have drawn up useful rules for good journal practices. However, both black- and white-lists

²⁴ Bohannon. 2013.

²⁵ Butler, D. 2013.

²⁶ Berger, M., & Cirasella, J. 2015.

²⁷ OASPA Principles on Transparency and Best Practices in Scholarly Publishing.

have their drawbacks for new and inexperienced journals. Blacklists could add them too easily when they make careless mistakes. This makes it harder for these journals to prove themselves, which is a requirement for membership of a white-list²⁸.

7.3. Bibliometric data

The other method of addressing unethical journals and publishers is the use of Bibliometrics. The major bibliometric data of concern here is Impact Factors (If), which is calculated and then published annually in the *Journal of Citation Reports* (JCR) by the Institute of Scientific Information (ISI), a commercial organization²⁹. Nowadays the JIF is calculated by Thomson Reuters for thousands of journals and is published in its yearly Journal Citation Reports. It was originally meant as a tool for American universities to select the best journals for their libraries, but now also influences decision making in research grant allocation, hiring and promotion of academic staff³⁰.

However, the impact factor has a limited scope. It only looks at journals, conference proceedings and monographs in sciences and social sciences. These have to be included in Thomson Reuters' Web of Science database, which has strict rules for the inclusion of new journals. Impact factors, as one citation measure, are useful in establishing the influence journals have within the literature of a discipline. Nevertheless, they are not a direct measure of quality and must be used with considerable care³¹. What's more,

²⁸ Margot Wehrmeijer. 2014. "Exposing the Predators. Methods to Stop Predatory Journals," Leiden University, 2014. <https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/handle/1887/28943>.

²⁹Jennings, C. 1999. Citation data: the wrong impact? *Neuro endocrinology letters*, 20(1-2), 7

³⁰Bloch, S., & Walter, G. 2015?. The impact factor: time for change. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 35 (5), 563-568.

³¹Amin, M., & Mabe, M. A. 2003. Impact factors: use and abuse. *Medicina (Buenos Aires)*, 63 (4), 347-354

the great reliance on impact factors is seen as one of the main causes for fraudulent research practices and is liable to manipulation³².

The following problems blight the use of impact factors as an indicator of scientific quality of publications³³:

1. Papers may be cited frequently because they are regarded as poor (e.g. an obviously biased review attacking a certain fraudulent paper, and an author wishes to highlight their limitations)
2. Other papers may be commonly cited merely because they provided the first description of a certain research method (e.g. laboratory assay), which an author does not want to repeat in detail. Conversely, about 50% of articles may never be cited, according to one study³⁴.
3. The two-year duration arbitrarily set by ISI to calculate IF is nonsensical. Quality does not always declare itself in as brief a period. Many a Nobel Prize winner in medicine has received the honour several years after the discovery³⁵.
4. The number of journals in ISI's database, the so-called Science Citation Index (SCI), is only about 3500, a minute proportion of the world total of over 100 000³⁶.
5. Journal selection for the SCI is questionable. For instance, English-language journals – particularly those published in the USA – seem to be favoured. Different fields are covered unequally. Coverage for chemistry is estimated at 90%, in contrast to a mere 30% for biology³⁷.

³²Djuric, D. (2014). Penetrating the omerta of predatory publishing: The Romanian connection. *Science and engineering ethics*, 21 (1), 183-202

³³Bloch, S., & Walter, G. 2001.

³⁴Opthof T. 1997. Sense and nonsense about the Impact Factor. *Cardiovascular Research.*, 33:1–7

³⁵ Coleman R. 1999. Impact factors: use and abuse in biomedical research. *Anatomical Record*; 257:54–57

³⁶ Institute of Scientific Information. <http://www.isinet.com>. Accessed 18 August 2000.

³⁷Seglen PO. 1997. Citations and journal impact factors: questionable indicators of research quality. *Allergy*; 52:1050–1056.

Therefore, the IF and its offspring no longer serve a useful purpose. For example, impact factors had been widely used in Germany. However, in 2000, the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, Germany's main government research agency) issued new guidelines to universities, requiring that they abandon the practice of evaluating candidates based on impact factors, and instead examine the candidates' top five publications directly.

Therefore, there are no shortcuts for the proper appraisal of scientific endeavour and there is nothing as reliable as the painstaking process of peer-review³⁸.

8. Indicators of Journal and Publisher Quality

Unethical journals and publishers often claim that they have rigorous peer-review systems, often boastfully. Therefore, it is important that researchers scrutinise their genuineness using certain indicators that may evidence as to whether or not a given journal is truly peer-reviewed and maintains scientific quality.

8.1. Indicators of poor quality journals and publishers

Although Beall's contributions are arguably compromised by his biased attitudes towards OA³⁹, the criteria he uses for his list are an excellent starting point for thinking about the hallmarks of poor quality (so-called predatory) publishers and journals⁴⁰. Therefore, the following indicators could be

³⁸McDonald, S.; Kam, J. 2007. Ring a ring o' roses: Quality journals and gamesmanship in Management Studies, *Journal of Management Studies*, 44, 640-55.

³⁹Crawford, W. 2014. Ethics and Access 1: The Sad Case of Jeffrey Beall. *Cites & Insights*, 14(4), 1-25.

⁴⁰Berger M, Cirasella, J. 2015. Beyond Beall's List: We need a better understanding of predatory publishing without overstating its size and danger. London School of Economics and Political Science, The Impact Blog, <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2015/03/18/beyond-bealls-list-predatory-publishers/>.

considered as peculiar features of poor quality journals and unethical publishers (so-called predatory or bogus stand alone journals and publishers).

8.1.1. The journal has no (genuine) peer-review process to preserve the quality of research output, and hence provides acceptance notification with no or very minimal comments.

8.1.2. The publisher lists insufficient contact information, including dubious addresses or contact information that does not clearly state the location or misrepresents the location; or have a "contact us" page that only includes a web form.

8.1.3. No single individual is identified as the journal's editor, or no academic information/qualifications are provided about the editors.

8.1.4. The journal does not identify a formal editorial/review board, or no information is provided regarding the editorial/review board members (e.g., institutional affiliation).

8.1.5. The editor and/or review board members do not possess academic expertise to reasonably qualify them to be publication caretakers in the journal's field.

8.1.6. The journal has concocted editorial boards (made up names), or has board members with minimal number, or that are not recognized in their field, or that are affiliated with questionable institutions, or that are included as editorial board without their knowledge or permission, or has board members who are prominent researchers but exempt them from any contributions to the journal except the use of their names and/or photographs.

8.1.7. The journal lacks transparency about publishing processes; has no author guidelines; provides insufficient information or hides information

about author fees, offering to publish an author's paper and later sending a previously undisclosed invoice.

- 8.1.8. The journal demonstrates lack of transparency in publishing operations and has no policies or practices for digital preservation.
- 8.1.9. The name of the journal does not adequately reflect its origin (e.g., a journal with the word "American", "British" or "Canadian" in its name that has no meaningful relationship to America, Britain or Canada).
- 8.1.10. The publisher copies or mimics or hijacks names of other reputable journal titles from other publishers.
- 8.1.11. The publisher spams researchers with emails inviting them to publish in its journals; or requests them for peer review without knowledge of whether they are qualified to review submitted manuscripts; or sends authors emails that their work has already been preselected for publication.
- 8.1.12. The publisher asks the corresponding author for suggested reviewers and the publisher subsequently uses the suggested reviewers without sufficiently vetting their qualifications or authenticity and sends them the paper for review. (This protocol also may allow authors to create faux or false online identities in order to review their own papers).
- 8.1.13. The journal falsely claims to have an impact factor, or uses some made up measures (e.g. view factor) usually through fake companies that give fake impact factors⁴¹.
- 8.1.14. The publisher falsely claims to have its content indexed in legitimate abstracting and indexing services or claims that its content is indexed in resources that are not abstracting and indexing services.

⁴¹<http://scholarlyoa.com/other-pages/misleading-metrics/retrived> on 28 July 2015

- 8.1.15. The journal does minimal or no copyediting, ending up in a lot of formatting, style, accuracy, grammatical, and consistency problems.
- 8.1.16. The publisher has a poorly maintained website, including dead links, prominent spelling errors, grammatical errors, and pages ‘under construction’.
- 8.1.17. The publisher does not use ISSN⁴² numbers, doi⁴³ numbers or uses them improperly.
- 8.1.18. The publisher has excessive advertising on its website to the extent that it interferes with site navigation and content access.
- 8.1.19. The publisher displays prominent statements that promise rapid publication and/or unusually quick peer review.
- 8.1.20. The journal or publisher usually operates in a western country chiefly for the purpose of functioning as an easy press especially for scholars in developing countries.
- 8.1.21. The publisher or journal use language claiming to be a "leading publisher" even though it may only be a start-up or a novice organization.
- 8.1.22. For the name of the publisher, the publisher uses names such as "Network", "Centre", "Association", "Institute," and the like when it is only a publisher and does not meet the definition of the term used.
- 8.1.23. The publisher or its journals are not listed in standard periodical directories or are not widely catalogued in library databases.

⁴²International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) is a unique eight-digit number used to identify a periodical publication at a specific media type. ISSN codes are assigned by a network of ISSN National Centers and coordinated by the ISSN International Centre based in Paris.

⁴³Digital Object Identifier (doi) is a unique alphanumeric string assigned by a registration agency (the International DOI Foundation) to identify content and provide a persistent link to its location on the Internet.

- 8.1.24. The publisher's owner is identified as the editor of all or many of the journals published by the organization.
- 8.1.25. Two or more journals under a given publisher have duplicate editorial boards (i.e., same editorial board for more than one journal within the publisher's list of journals).
- 8.1.26. The journal or publisher publishes plagiarised articles.
- 8.1.27. The journal and/or its publisher are listed in the latest Jeffrey Beal's list of Predatory Journals and publishers.

If the journal is listed in Beal's predatory list, promotion or appointment committees are advised to enquire whether the publishers or the journal knows that it has been listed and what its response has been. The journal may respond to the query explaining in detail why its inclusion is not appropriate and describing what measures it has taken to appeal for the removal of its name from the list, or the remedial measures it has taken to fix whatever the problem perceived was. If the committee is convinced that these efforts and rationale are legitimate, they could accept the publication. On the other hand, if the journal or publisher refuses to respond or stops contacting the committee despite repeated requests, this could be taken as a tacit or obvious admission that it is functioning unethically, and the publication could be rejected.

8.2. Indicators of good quality journals and publishers

In general, an ethical or good quality publication will have characteristics of positive indicators⁴⁴. Researchers and promotion committees may consider the following indicators of journals or publishers to vouch for scientific quality of publications:

⁴⁴Beaubien, S, Eckard, M.2014.

- 8.2.1. The journal is indexed by at least one legitimate abstracting, indexing, and database services/agents (e.g. Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), Thomson-Reuters JCR (also called the Web of Science, Science Citation Index, or Social Science Citation Index), Scopus, Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA), Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), World Association of Medical Editors (WAME), African Journals Online (AJOL), International Association of Scientific, Technical and Medical Publishers (STM), Open Humanities Press (OHP), PubMed, Springer, SCI, Medline, Web of Science, RePEc, ProQuest, Taylor & Francis, BIOSIS, Agricola, ScienceDirect, etc.
- 8.2.2. The journal has an institutional affiliation (home-base) in a country such as a university or a research institution or recognized society.
- 8.2.3. The journal clearly indicates journal editor(s), editorial staff and review/editorial board members, with full correspondence addresses including their institutional affiliation, who will directly respond to author queries via email, fax, and other necessary communication media.
- 8.2.4. The journal or publisher has "contact us" page with clearly identified detailed contact addresses: name of persons and institution, telephone numbers, email, P. O. Box numbers, and other relevant information for direct contact.
- 8.2.5. The journal has a genuine doi or ISSN.
- 8.2.6. The journal has a genuine peer-review process, assigning at least two reviewers of relevant competence that complete a blind peer-review process per article.
- 8.2.7. The journal has a transparent publication process: clear author instructions, ethical guidelines, and clear policies on copyright, etc.

8.2.8. The journal has well maintained website, with no dead links.

8.2.9. The journal has an online tracking system for submitted manuscripts.

The points enumerated above give a good sense of whether or not a journal or any other scholarly publication is genuinely peer-reviewed as well as whether or not the publisher in question is trustful. However, some of the listed criteria may not be easy to prove and could lead to controversial decisions. It is, therefore, necessary to select core objective criteria and conditions for use in assessing publications whether or not they meet the peer-review criteria to be considered for academic promotions.

9. Core Conditions for Deciding on Publication Quality

Determining the reputations of journals or publishers, or more sensibly whether or not journals or publishers are genuinely peer-reviewed is a serious task of promotion committees. However, this task is not simple, and requires a closer scrutiny. Therefore, pursuant to Article 49 sub-article 2.3 of the University's Senate Legislation 2013, each publication submitted for promotion should be appraised for scientific merit and the genuineness of claimed peer-review status (reputability) meticulously. The appraisal should be done through all available means such as scrutinizing the published article for scientific quality, style, etc; assessing the journal through website browsing, and direct communication with editorial board members, supported by good professional judgement and objective peer-review conditions described for each type of publication in the foregoing sections.

Consequently, each journal should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by promotion committees. The negative and positive indicators described above should be used as a starting point for the evaluation. The indicators and the criteria should offer enough information to be effective. However, there could be no single criterion that indicates high or low quality. Rather, users of

the indicators should look for a cumulative effect of more positive or more negative criteria.

Thus, to be accepted for academic promotions, any research publications must fulfil all of the following 11 conditions.

- 9.1. The journal is indexed by at least one *legitimate* abstracting, indexing, and database services/agents (e.g. Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), Thomson-Reuters JCR (also called the Web of Science, Science Citation Index, or Social Science Citation Index), Scopus, Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA), Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), World Association of Medical Editors (WAME), African Journals Online (AJOL), International Association of Scientific, Technical and Medical Publishers (STM), Open Humanities Press (OHP), PubMed, Springer, SCI, Medline, Web of Science, RePEc, ProQuest, Taylor & Francis, BIOSIS, Agricola, ScienceDirect, etc.
- 9.2. The journal or publisher should have clearly indicated journal editor(s), editorial staff and review/editorial board members with full academic information/qualifications, and clear correspondence addresses including their institutional affiliation, P.O. Box, email, telephone, town/city and/or country. Note that the editorial board members', including that of the Editor-in-Chief, genuine identity, affiliation, and relevance of professional background to the journal in question should be confirmed through web search, after which e-mail, telephone, or mail contacts could be made personally for further confirmation, if required
- 9.3. The publisher should not have copied or mimicked or hijacked names of other reputable journal titles from other publishers.
- 9.4. The journal should do maximal copyediting of published articles, resulting in meticulous formatting, style, accuracy, and consistency.

- 9.5. The publisher should maintain a website with no dead links, with no prominent spelling errors, grammatical errors, and pages ‘under construction’.
- 9.6. The publisher's owner should not be identified as the editor-in-chief or the associate editor-in-chief of all or many of the journals published by the organization.
- 9.7. No two or more journals under a given publisher should have duplicate editorial boards (i.e., same editorial board for more than one journal within the publisher's list of journals).
- 9.8. Except for Haramaya University journals, any journal must have continuously published for a minimum of two years (i.e. a minimum of four issues per two years). However, if a publication appeared in an issue during the first two years of the starting period of the journal, but the journal has continued publishing for more than two years up until the time when the application is submitted, the publication shall be accepted.
- 9.9. A journal should have a minimum average of five articles per issue in the last two consecutive years.
- 9.10. A journal should have a genuine ISSN or doi system.
- 9.11. The article in question must fulfil all the required attributes of scholarly publications as described in Section 5 of this document.

10. General Procedure of Using the Guidelines

Ad hoc promotion or employment committees established at all levels (Departments/Schools/Colleges) at the University shall assess the scientific merit of publications and creative works presented by staff members based on the criteria and indicators given in these guidelines.

At the final stage of the assessment, the committee shall produce a checklist of the 11 mandatory conditions (Section 9), all of which must be met by any publication or creative work for acceptance. The committee shall mark “No” in case of failure of the publication or creative work to meet the condition or “Yes” otherwise, across each of the 11 points, and submit its report to the next body scrutinising the credentials.

The committee shall present the results of the assessment to an *ad hoc* committee established at a higher level or to permanent committees of the Senate such as Academic Commission (AC) or Appointment, Promotion, and Scholarship Committee (APSC). The AC and APSC shall verify the truthfulness of the results of the assessment by conducting their own independent and thorough evaluation of the submitted publications and creative works according to the criteria and indicators set in these guidelines.

In case of uncertainty or indecision on the genuineness of the peer-review process or quality of journals and/or publishers in which the publications or creative works in question have appeared, *ad hoc* promotion and appointment committees as well as the AC and APSC shall consult the Research Extension and Publication Committee (REPC) for decision, pursuant to article 147 of the Senate Legislation 2013.

Final approval of academic promotions shall be done by the Senate of the University based on reports submitted by the APSC.

In general, Haramaya University shall take a rigorous peer-review process as the best indicator of publication quality. Accordingly, the University shall vet journals and publishers based on the rigour of the peer review system they follow. Journals and publishers that have rigorous peer review systems shall be catalogued or listed for use in academic promotions. Departments/school/colleges shall assign committees made up of experienced researchers to do the vetting and listing of journals and publishers using the indicators and conditions listed above.

The journal and publisher catalogue or list shall be subjected to appraisal and approval by the Research Extension and Publication Committee (REPC).

The vetting and cataloguing, however, cannot be a one-time process. Departments/Schools/Colleges may be required to vet and list new journals and publishers as staff come with new avenues of publications and apply for academic promotions. Consequently, the committees shall continue vetting new journals and publishers and update the list or catalogue of chosen journals and publishers in consultation with REPC. In addition, journals and publishers already catalogued as genuinely peer-reviewed shall be subject to review and further scrutiny in case evidence emerges that they have failed to maintain the peer-review processes. Such journals shall be removed from the list of catalogues.

Articles published by the University's staff that are to be submitted for promotion must bear the name of the University as the institutional affiliation of the author(s). What is more, staff members of the University must register their published articles or creative works with the Office of Research Affairs within a maximum period of three months after publication. The Office shall issue the authors with certificates of publication and registration. Only articles registered with the Office may be presented by staff members for academic promotions. However, the registration of articles would not be a guarantee for quality and award of the academic promotions sought.

11. Scope of Use of the Guidelines

These guidelines are prepared to help promotion and appointment committees of the University to objectively evaluate publications and creative works presented for academic promotions, employment, scholarships, and related purposes. The guidelines can also orient researchers to identify genuinely peer-reviewed journals or other outlets of publications to publish

their work. Therefore, it should be strictly followed and used by promotion and appointment committees across the University to assess publications, and by staff members to make conscious decisions on publication outlets for their work.

Besides, articles published by PhD students as a requirement for completion of a study must be subjected to vetting by the respective School/Department Graduate council as well as by the Council of Graduate Studies based on the above-mentioned criteria to make sure that the work is published in genuinely peer-reviewed journals to ascertain its scientific merit. This should be done before the students are given the go-ahead for defence examinations.

Furthermore, request of staff for covering article processing charges (APC) shall be considered only if it is proved in writing that the article in question is to be published in a rigorously and genuinely peer-reviewed(ethical) journal.

These guidelines shall come into force as of 21 August 2015.

Done at Haramaya this 21st day of August 2015

Senate of Haramaya University

