

Checklist for the Publication of Open Access Journals at Research Institutions

Version 2 (Creation date: 1.3.2016)



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This checklist was created as part of the "Working Group on Publication Models" of the Open Access Network Austria and first published on 21.1.2015. You can find an online version of this document here: <http://www.oana.at/checklist-oa-journals>. While the German original has a strong focus on Austria, country-specific recommendations have been removed in this international version.

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Credits: Directory of Open Access Journals (doaj.org) – OASPA (oaspa.org) – Quality Open Access Market (qoam.eu) – FWF Initial Funding Program for Open Access Journals in the Humanities and Social Sciences · Herausgabe von wissenschaftlichen Zeitschriften an der Universität Wien (working paper; G. Blechl, J. Gorraiz, W. Mayer; 2012) and many others.

About this checklist

Research institutions increasingly act as supporting organisations and service providers for scholarly publications. Professional publishing of Open Access journals is possible without recourse to commercial suppliers by means of the internet and free software. This requires basic know how which is presented in form of this checklist. Over the past few years many research institutions have begun to establish advisory services that may be consulted in addition to this checklist. Occasionally they even offer technical infrastructures that enable editors to focus on content and quality of their journals. At the same time this checklist may act as supplementary material for consulting sessions that research services (libraries, university publishers ...) offer to editors.

Compliance

If a journal follows all the recommendations below, it also complies with the formal criteria for inclusion in the "Directory of Open Access Journals"¹ (DOAJ). In order to qualify for the DOAJ-Seal², journals have to meet certain criteria indicated in the checklist: 

The list also forms a basis for inclusion in the renowned "Web of Science" index compiled by Thomson Reuters³. Additionally, your journal will in all likelihood be rated highly in QOAM (Quality Open Access Market)⁴.

Universal recommendation of transparency

All characteristics of the journal should be available for reference in a well-structured manner on your website. Provide, as granular as possible, a single URL for every group of properties and HTML jump marks for each characteristic, respectively, so information can be referenced directly. The most important aspects are the scope of the journal, the description of its editorial process, all measures of quality assurance and digital preservation, all legal considerations, the names of all persons with decision-making power as well as all services provided alongside the costs that incur for authors. The checklist's second column serves as an indicator as to whether all aspects are mentioned on your website.

1 Directory of Open Access Journals, Journal Application Form, <http://doaj.org/application/new>, seen on 1.3.2016.

2 FAQ pertaining to the DOAJ Seal, <https://doaj.org/faq#seal>, seen on 1.3.2016.

3 Thomson Reuters, Thomson Reuters journal selection process, <http://wokinfo.com/essays/journal-selection-process/>, seen on 1.3.2016.

4 Quality Open Access Market, Journal Score Card, <http://www.qoam.eu/journalcorecard>, seen on 1.3.2016.



Checklist

- A. Journal scope**
- B. Formal Aspects**
- C. Legal and ethical issues**
- D. Quality assurance**
- E. Technical aspects**
- F. Indexing**
- G. Promotion of visibility**
- H. Metrics and statistical analysis**
- I. Costs and resources**

A. Journal scope

Nr.	compliant	transparent on website	Criterion	Recommendation
A1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Scope and profile	Analyse similar existing journals. Determine if there is demand for a new journal – ideally in cooperation with international experts in the field. Compose a mission statement. It should include thematic and other unique features and be no longer than an abstract.
A2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Authors and readers	Analyse and define your potential authors and readers. Determine if there are enough of both. Make sure you have enough high-quality articles during the starting phase. It is essential to build your journal's reputation with renowned authors – especially in the beginning.

B. Formal Aspects

Nr.	compliant	transparent on website	Criterion	Recommendation
On journal level:				
B1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Journal title	Find a succinct and distinctive title as well as an acronym for your journal. Check if these are in use already, e.g. in Ulrichsweb.com (subscription based: ask your library) or using a search engine (phrase search). Avoid special characters, e.g. diacritics or "ß", if possible. An (additional) English title facilitates international reception. Do not use proprietary expressions.
B2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ISSN	Apply for an ISSN (International Standard Serial Number) via ISSN.org . This requires an URL for the journal.
B3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Party responsible and imprint	Determine the party responsible for your journal. If the journal is deeply rooted at an organisation, this responsibility may – if agreed upon first – be assumed by the institution.
B4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Editor	Determine who acts as the editor of your journal, e.g. an institution, a person or a group of persons.
B5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Additional roles	Determine decision-making powers for the editorial board, editing, copy editing, layouting, correspondence etc. alongside the persons responsible.
B6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Journal language	Consider the languages in which you want to offer articles and information on your journal. English increases visibility and range. If you decide to provide an article in more than one language, English should be among them. If you decide to publish in other languages, make sure your journal can reach your audience this way.

B7	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Types of contributions	Determine which kinds of contributions (research articles, reviews...) are acceptable in your journal and whether or not special issues are a possibility.
B8	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Content types	Determine which content types apart from text you want to offer when it comes to contributions and additional material, e.g. tables, diagrams, images, audio and video files.
B9	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of contributors	Determine how many contributions per year you want to publish. In order to be perceived as a fully-fledged journal, your publication has to include at least five contributions per year, ideally more.
B10	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Frequency of publication	Decide whether you want to retain the classical journal structure (publication in issues). Determining and keeping to a frequency of publication is crucial. The alternative is to publish contributions as they are ready to avoid any delays. In this case your contributions should be assigned consecutive numbers and at least one contribution should appear at least every three months.
B11	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Layout, copy editing, foreign language copy editing	High language and layout standards not only indicate professionalism, they also increase readability. There are various models for contracting external service providers, even directly through authors, to make this process as efficient and economical as possible. For technical aspects see section E.
B12	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Additional print version	Gauge whether there is demand for an additional print version of your journal. If so, enquire about cost-effective possibilities for printing and distribution. Print-on-demand might be one solution.
On article level:				
B13	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Metadata (title, abstract ...)	All bibliographic and legal metadata should be easily discernible in all the formats offered (HTML, PDF ...) as well as in the respective document properties. These include especially: title, abstract, author(s), keywords, submission date, acceptance date, publication date, type of contribution, funders, licence (see C3) and DOI (see B17). Information on authors and institutions should be given in a consistent way. Scholarly communication requires email addresses. For contributions with several authors, indicate the "corresponding author". Authors should be unequivocally identifiable. This may be facilitated by e.g. an ORCID identifier: http://orcid.org/ .
B14	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Metadata language	It is imperative that title, abstract and keywords are available in English (as well). This is a prerequisite for almost all indexing services.
B15	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Length of contributions	Define the length of the individual contribution you expect from your authors (as applicable for the various types of contributions you accept).

B16	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Classifications for contributions	In addition to supplying keywords using thesauri (see e.g. http://www.bartoc.org) you can make your contributions more easily accessible using classifications. The Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) is both interdisciplinary and internationally widespread: http://www.oclc.org/dewey.en.html
B17	<input type="checkbox"/>		DOI – Digital Object Identifier	Apply to a DOI supplier such as Crossref or Datacite so you can provide DOIs for the contributions in your journal (charged service). A DOI is a unique and permanent identifier for digital objects Info: http://www.doi.org or http://www.crossref.org or http://www.datacite.org

DOAJ SEAL

C. Legal and ethical issues

Nr.	compliant	transparent on website	Criterion	Recommendation
C1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Open Access statement	Check whether your journal is compliant with the "Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities" (https://openaccess.mpg.de/Berlin-Declaration). In line with the declaration Open Access publications have to meet the following requirement (among others): "The author(s) and right holder(s) of such contributions grant(s) to all users a free, irrevocable, worldwide, right of access to, and a licence to copy, use, distribute, transmit and display the work publicly and to make and distribute derivative works, in any digital medium for any responsible purpose, subject to proper attribution of authorship".
C2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Copyright	Authors should not transfer their copyright to publishers. The journal is merely granted the non-exclusive right to publish and distribute the contributions. In addition, the contributions should be reusable by all interested parties worldwide through licences, e.g. Creative Commons (see C3.).
C3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Licencing information, licencing model	All readers should be able to determine unequivocally and quickly what they are allowed to do with journal content. Licencing information should also be machine-readable, e.g. by search engines, to allow identification of journal content as Open Access. The flexible licencing model Creative Commons was developed for these very purposes: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/ . In line with the "Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities" the licence "CC BY" (attribution) is recommended: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/ . This allows, among other things, that a contribution may be copied, distributed, and adapted, even commercially. All formats of any particular contribution must therefore include this licence, the authors, and a link to the terms of the licence.

DOAJ SEAL

DOAJ SEAL

C4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Deposit policy	Inform the directory SHERPA/RoMEO of your terms when it comes to publishing contributions, especially regarding pre-prints (advance publications): http://www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeoupdate.php .
	<input type="checkbox"/> DOAJ SEAL			
C5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ethical practices in all capacities	Establish guidelines e.g. for peer reviews, conflicts of interest, scholarly misconduct, retractions etc. Align these with the recommendations put forward by the Committee on Publishing Ethics (COPE): http://publicationethics.org/resources/guidelines .
	<input type="checkbox"/> DOAJ SEAL			

D. Quality assurance

Nr.	compliant	transparent on website	Criterion	Recommendation
D1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Editorial board	The editorial board is the epitome of your journal. Seek at least five renowned international scholars that actively contribute to the board. All members should be listed with full name, institutional affiliation, email address, research areas and, where applicable, links to personal websites.
D2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Submission of contributions	Inform your authors about the submission process and instruct them about your requirements (e.g. file formats accepted, structuring of contributions, citation styles ...) in form of a submission policy.
D3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Status of contributions	Inform your authors about the status of their contributions. Journal management software (see E3) facilitates keeping authors up to date about the current status of their contributions, e.g. via notification emails.
D4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Peer review	"Peer review" is the established quality standard for the publication of scholarly journals. The assessment is usually done in "double blind" fashion, i.e. author and reviewer conceal their names from each other. "Open peer review" and "open post publication peer review" have only been introduced in the last few years. These allow for greater transparency by opening up the peer review process to the public. "Editorial review", once common in smaller journal projects, is also increasingly being replaced by peer review.
D5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Assessment criteria	It is imperative to establish a strict peer review process and to disclose the criteria used for the assessment. Also determine how long the review process may take at most (it should not exceed a few months). Authors should have the option to name unwanted reviewers.
D6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Plagiarism check	There are many commercial services offering plagiarism checks; open source software is much less common. Ithenticate.com has a reputation for being a reliable commercial provider.

D7	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Research data	Consider whether you want to offer the research data forming the basis for your journal's contributions as "supplemental material", e.g. interview transcripts, sources or measuring results. This facilitates examination and confirmability of results by reviewers and readers. Recommend suitable data repositories to your authors – these can be subject repositories (see http://www.re3data.org), universal repositories such as the EU-funded http://zenodo.org or the commercial service http://figshare.com . An important selection criterion for data archiving services is support of the DataCite metadata scheme. You might even focus on publishing well described datasets and run a so-called "data journal".
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E. Technical aspects

Nr.	compliant	transparent on website	Criterion	Recommendation
E1	<input type="checkbox"/>		Journal hosting	Check with your institution's computer centre whether hosting the journal on the institution's web server or offering journal management software (see E3) is possible. A professional hosting service can take over this task otherwise.
E2	<input type="checkbox"/>		Domain	Apply for a domain that is easy to remember. Coordinate this with your institution's computer centre beforehand.
E3	<input type="checkbox"/>		Journal management software	Using journal management software to support your workflow – from submission to publication – is especially sensible when the number of contributions prevents proper manual management. Many publishers employ the free software "Open Journal Systems" (OJS): https://pkp.sfu.ca/ojs . According to the developer PKP, there were over 32,000 OJS instances online in 2015.
E4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	OAI interface	To achieve the widest distribution possible you should ensure all article metadata is available for service providers in accordance with OAI PMH (http://www.openarchives.org/pmh). If you employ software such as OJS, this can be done automatically using existing plug-ins. Your metadata is then "harvested", e.g. by subject-specific databases. The Dublin Core model serves as metadata exchange format for these purposes.
E5	<input type="checkbox"/>		Web design	Customise your website using professional and distinctive design. Check whether this can be realised together with your institution or with an external partner. If you use OJS all that is required is basic knowledge of CSS.

E6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	File formats	Ideally you offer each of the following formats: HTML for good screen readability, PDF/A for printing and XML for automated processing. All of these formats are also suitable for archiving. Additionally you can offer EPUB for e-readers. When it comes to supplementary material and multimedia content, open formats facilitate archiving.
E7	<input type="checkbox"/>		Layout	Establish standard layouts for the HTML, PDF and possibly EPUB versions of your contributions. Using available layouting software facilitates this task. One possible professional typesetting solution able to create PDFs is the open source software LaTeX: http://www.latex-project.org .
E8	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Digital preservation	Make sure all contributions of your journal are archived outside the hosting institution to guarantee permanent access to your content. Professional services for digital preservation include e.g. LOCKSS/CLOCKSS: http://www.lockss.org and http://www.clockss.org .
E9	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Archiving in repositories	Metadata and articles should be distributed to important (subject) repositories automatically immediately after publication using the respective interfaces available, e.g. OAI or SWORD. This facilitates digital preservation and increases visibility.
E10	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Web accessibility	The journal website along with the individual contributions should be adequately accessible to persons with visual, auditive and/or physical impairments. Recommended standard: WCAG 2, level AA, see https://www.w3.org/TR/2008/REC-WCAG20-20081211/ . If more formats (HTML, PDF, EPUB) are available, at least one of them should be compliant. This includes logical structuring, alternative verbalisation for images and tables, lists etc. that are correctly labelled. Ideally, create handicapped accessible PDFs as well.

F. Indexing

Nr.	compliant	transparent on website	Criterion	Recommendation
F1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)	Apply for inclusion of your journal in the DOAJ. Supply the directory with metadata on your contributions regularly. Info: http://doaj.org/application/new .
F2	<input type="checkbox"/>		Ulrich's Web	Apply for inclusion of your journal in Ulrich's Web. Info: http://ulrichsweb.serialssolutions.com .

F3	<input type="checkbox"/>	ERIH PLUS	Apply for inclusion in the "European Reference Index for the Humanities and the Social Sciences" (ERIH PLUS) – if your journal covers humanities or social sciences. Info: https://dbh.nsd.uib.no/publiseringskanaler/erihplus/about/admission_procedures .
F4	<input type="checkbox"/>	Electronic Journals Library (EZB)	Suggest your journal to the EZB. Info: http://rzblx1.uni-regensburg.de/ezeit/db_prop.phtml?lang=en .
F5	<input type="checkbox"/>	Web of Science: SCI, SSCI and AHCI	Apply for indexing in the Science Citation Index (SCI), Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) or Arts and Humanities Citation Index (AHCI), so your journal is included in Web of Science (Thomson Reuters). This way, your journal can receive an impact factor in SCI/SSCI (in three years at the earliest). Info: http://wokinfo.com/essays/journal-selection-process/ .
F6	<input type="checkbox"/>	Scopus	Apply for indexing in Scopus (Elsevier), which is one of the most important scholarly citation databases aside from Web of Science. Info: https://www.elsevier.com/solutions/scopus/content/content-policy-and-selection .
F7	<input type="checkbox"/>	Subject-specific databases	Apply for indexing in suitable subject-specific databases such as MLA, PsycINFO, WISO, GEOBASE, Biosis or Compendex. Your library can assist you in finding the right databases.
F8	<input type="checkbox"/>	Full text databases	Apply for inclusion in full text databases such as JSTOR or aggregators such as EBSCO or ProQuest.
F9	<input type="checkbox"/>	Google scholar	Register your journal for inclusion and indexing in Google scholar. Info: http://scholar.google.com/intl/en-US/scholar/publishers.html .
F10	<input type="checkbox"/>	Library	Notify your library of your journal so it can be included in the library's catalogue or discovery system.

G. Promotion of visibility

Nr.	compliant	transparent on website	Criterion	Recommendation
G1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	News	Regularly publish news pertaining to your journal on your website.
G2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	RSS feed	OJS and most other content management systems support this feature, which enables harvesting current news via RSS software, out of the box. Only configuration is required.
G3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Newsletter	Many readers prefer receiving news via email.

G4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social media	Provide social media (Twitter, Facebook, Google+ ...) with news pertaining to your journal and to recent contributions. Having your authors use academic platforms (ResearchGate, Mendeley, Academia.edu ...) also increases visibility.
G5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Post-publication tools	Offer post-publication tools (e.g. the ability to comment) to foster academic discussion, where applicable.
G6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Blog	Blog articles allow reporting on research in progress or publishing statements on current topics in addition to regular contributions and can then be commented on as well. Invite your authors to use this forum and tie blog articles to contributions where applicable.
G7	<input type="checkbox"/>		Web portal	Consider whether extending your journal website to a web portal offering various services (blog, discussion forums, resource collections) connected to the scope of your journal might increase readership.

H. Metrics and statistical analysis

Nr.	compliant	transparent on website	Criterion	Recommendation
H1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Journal citation metrics	State factors enabling citation analysis (e.g. Impact Factor, SNIP, SJR) on your website as soon as they become available. Info: http://bibliometrie.univie.ac.at/grundlagen/indikatoren/ (available only in German).
H2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Article level metrics (ALM)	Offer guidance to your readers by displaying article access and download statistics (usage metrics). In addition, mentions of contributions on social media and academic platforms can be analysed (altmetrics). OJS offers a plug-in for that purpose (based on the open source software Lagotto), provided you use DOIs (see B17).
H3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Acceptance rate	Collect data on all contributions submitted, accepted and rejected and display it on your website.
H4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Publication delay	State the average timespan from submission to publication so potential authors can plan accordingly.

I. Costs and resources

Nr.	compliant	transparent on website	Criterion	Recommendation
11	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Financing	Determine how your journal can be financed. Open Access journals are often financed by institutions or by charging publication fees. External funding, sponsors or a combination of the above are also possible. State your funding bodies publicly. Should you supplement your finances using advertisements, establish an advertising policy where applicable.
12	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Article processing charges (APCs)	One possible business model apart from institutional financing is establishing article processing charges (APCs). Consider, if and to what extent potential authors or their institutions would be willing to pay such charges. It is important to declare how the charges accrue, their amount per contribution, and the date of invoicing. Consider waiving fees to ensure equal possibility of publication, e.g. for authors from low-wage countries. It is equally important to communicate that there are no article processing charges on your website should this be the case.
13	<input type="checkbox"/>		Budgeting and cost centres	Budget the first three years in advance so you have a professional basis in place for negotiations with potential funders. A business case covering the most important aspects of your project (personnel expenditures, infrastructure, expenditures for external services ...) provides clarification and commitment. Estimate at least 20 hours per week for journal administration. SPARC Europe offers a "business plan toolkit" for the publication of Open Access journals: http://sparceurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/BusinessPLAN_OAJournals_0116.pdf .
14	<input type="checkbox"/>		Long term financing	You should be able to determine which financing options offer long term stability after about two years.
15	<input type="checkbox"/>		Royalties	Authors of contributions in online journals may be eligible for royalties by collecting societies.