

Predatory Publishing

“Predatory journals” solicit and publish content with little or no peer review. They exist to make money out of defrauding authors and can sometimes have sophisticated marketing and appear reputable at a first glance.

How to spot a predatory journal

Use the following checklist to assess a journal. It is good practice to consider the following questions. If you answer no to any or a combination of these questions you should think carefully before submitting your paper:

- Consider the reach and readership: are articles in the journal cited by key academics researching the topic? Is it a journal you and your colleagues recognise and read?
- Is the peer review process clearly laid out on the journal webpages?
- Are the Editorial Board members from credible institutions?
- Is the publisher name clearly displayed, and a member of the [Committee on Publication Ethics \(COPE\)](#)?
- If it is a fully open access journal, is it indexed in the [Directory of Open Access Journals \(DOAJ\)](#)?
- Is the journal included in indexing databases such as [Scopus](#) or [Web of Science](#)? How will readers discover your work if you publish in this journal?
- Is there a clear policy regarding conflicts of interest for authors, editors and reviewers?
- If there are publication fees, are they clearly explained along with their waiver policy (for example, waivers for corresponding authors based in low- and lower middle-income countries)
- Does the journal promise a very quick turnaround period between submission and acceptance? This could indicate a poor-quality or absent peer review process. However, it may also indicate there is a paid peer-review service, or an editorial advisory board who are ready and willing reviewers.

If you have any concerns, use [Think Check Submit](#) for a more comprehensive checklist

Red flags

Emails soliciting articles for fields outside your area of expertise, or guaranteeing to publish your article on payment of a fee

Emails from the journal with spelling mistakes and grammatical errors

A journal title that you do not recognise, or that looks suspiciously similar to an established, reputable journal

Contact us

If you are in any doubt, you are always welcome to contact the Open Research & Publication Practice team at eprints@soton.ac.uk for specific advice