

2019 ABDC Journal Ranking Panels Terms of Reference and Milestones

The operation of panels will be underpinned by four guiding principles:

- **The process will be transparent.** A key determinant of the credibility of a journal ranking list is the transparency of the process by which rankings are determined. Aspects of transparency relate to *who* makes the decisions and the *method* (broadly defined) by which decisions are made. As with previous reviews, panels will be required to submit final reports of their deliberations and the rationale underlying recommendations to include new journals, re-rank existing journals, and delete journals from the list.
- **Recommendations and decisions will be consistent methodologically.** As per the ABDC's guidance approved in Nov 2018, the panels will be informed by globally recognised and externally validated journal ranking lists, appropriate and select citations metrics and, if required, expert peer review.
- **The final panel recommendations must be externally validated** by the ABDC Steering Group³ in consultation with an International Advisor appointed by the ABDC. The latter will comprise an academic not located in Australian and New Zealand universities.
- For the purpose of the 2019 review, **the 2016 interim list is accepted as a strong foundation on which to build.** Ratings assigned to journals in the 2016 list are widely regarded as having a high degree of credibility. Panel recommendations should therefore be **incremental in focus**. The review process should be used to enhance the credibility of the ABDC's Journal Ranking List and not undermine it.

The operation of panels will be informed by these four principles, and panel chairs will be expected to guide deliberations accordingly.

With respect to more operational considerations:

- Following the appointment of panels, a public call for submissions will be made via the ABDC website. Submissions will be accepted through a special-purpose portal. Anonymous submissions will not be accepted, and all submissions will be considered on the strict condition they will be publicly available.
- Panels will be required to meet at least three times, with one of these meetings held face-to-face at a location to be determined by the Chair. The ABDC will fund the travel costs of panel members attending from interstate and NZ.
- During their deliberations, each panel will have access to a Research Assistant who can be tasked with requests pertaining to citation metrics. Tasking requests will be made by the Chair only.
- Chairs will provide their panel's final journal ranking recommendations to the ABDC Steering Group, which will subsequently consult with the International Advisor. After a one-month period of public feedback on a draft revised Journal Quality List, the ABDC Steering Group will take responsibility for the Journal Quality List recommendations submitted to the ABDC for final approval.

In addition to quality indicators, the key criteria for adding journals not included on the 2016

interim review list are that they contain a substantive business element. In the submission process, this will need to be evidenced by >50% of articles over three years written by business faculty, or >50% of articles over three years being of a business nature.

Ranking recommendations by panels will be guided by the following percentage thresholds, which provide a numerical ceiling to impose discipline on judgements while at the same time ensuring a degree of consistency across the panels in terms of outcomes:

- **A***: the highest quality category, representing the top 5-7% of the journals assigned to an individual Field of Research.
- **A**: the second highest quality category, representing the next 15-25% of the journals assigned to an individual Field of Research.
- **B**: the third highest quality category, representing approximately the next 35-40% of the journals assigned to an individual Field of Research.
- **C**: the fourth highest quality category, representing the remaining recognised quality journals assigned to an individual Field of Research.
- **Unrated and unlisted journals**: There will be a range of relevant journals deemed not to reach the quality threshold level and therefore not included in the final list. These will include predatory/illegitimate outlets.

The timeline for the 2019 journal ranking process will incorporate the following milestones:

Milestone 1: Appointment of Panel Chairs by end of February

Milestone 2: Finalise all panel members by 29 March.

Milestone 3: Digital architecture confirmed as fit for purpose no later than 27 April.

Milestone 4: Call for public submissions opens 1 May and closes May 31.

Milestone 5: From 3 June, submissions are reviewed, and panels deliberate, with recommendations on the draft list submitted to ABDC Steering Group no later than 31 August.

Milestone 6: On 13 September ABDC releases draft Journal Ranking List with feedback to be submitted by 11 October.

Milestone 7: Feedback considered by panel chairs (consulting with panel members only if required) with recommendations provided to ABDC Steering Group no later than 11 November. Steering Group consults with International Advisor before submitting final draft list to ABDC for approval.

Milestone 8: The recommendations are endorsed by the ABDC Executive.

Milestone 9: Final Journal Ranking List to be released by the ABDC by 1 December 2019.

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