

Terms of reference

2025 ABDC Journal Quality List (JQL) review

v3: updated December 2025 to reflect changes in milestone dates

1. Purpose of 2025 JQL review

The 2025 review will be the first major review of the ABDC Journal Quality List since 2019. Expert panels that cover the in-scope fields of research (FoR) will be convened by the ABDC to consider:

- rankings of currently listed journals;
- inclusion of new relevant, refereed journals, including business education, interdisciplinary, and practitioner journals;
- exclusion of non-relevant or low quality journals;
- exclusion of likely predatory or overly aggressive journals;
- changes to the FoR of listed journals;
- journal name changes.

2. Guiding principles

A key determinant of the credibility of the ABDC Journal Quality List is the principled approach taken to the inclusion and exclusion of journals and the determination of ratings by experts. The 2025 JQL review will be conducted according to the following principles:

- **Transparency** — Recommendations and decisions will be made in accordance with the agreed process and method outlined in these terms of reference. Expert panels report on their process of deliberations and the rationale for recommendations.
- **Consistency** — Recommendations and decisions will have methodological consistency informed by globally recognised and externally validated journal ranking lists, appropriate and select citations metrics and, expert peer review when required.
- **External validation** — The recommendations of the expert panels will be externally validated by the ABDC JQL Steering Group, which will include an international advisor. The international advisor will be a recognised academic not formally affiliated with any Australian or New Zealand universities.
- **Stability** — The 2022 JQL is accepted as a strong foundation for undertaking the 2025 review.

Panel chairs are expected to guide deliberations among panel members in accordance with these principles.

3. Operational considerations

With respect to operational considerations:

Expert panels

- Expert panels will be appointed to conduct the review in accordance with the FoR groupings below. In the 2025 review, all panels will be asked to consider the inclusion of business and management education, interdisciplinary, and practitioner journals that are relevant to the associated FoR(s).

Panel name	FoR codes
Accounting	3501
Business and taxation law	4801 — Commercial Law, Contract Law, Tax Law
Economics including statistics	3801 3802 3803 3899 4905
Finance including Actuarial	3502
Information systems	4609
Business systems in context; Commercial services; Human resources and industrial relations; Transportation, logistics and supply chains	3503 3504 3505 3509
Marketing	3506
Strategy, management and organisational behaviour	3507
Tourism and other commerce, management, tourism and services	3508 3599

- Expert panels are required to meet a minimum of three times to review stakeholder submissions and make recommendations on changes to the JQL.
- The ABDC will appoint a research assistant to assist the expert panels with information requests about, and analyses of, journal citation metrics and other data to guide deliberations.

Eligible submissions

Eligible Australia or New Zealand (ANZ) stakeholders will be invited to make submissions on the nine areas of the review. These are:

1. An ANZ business school or faculty deemed to have a legitimate interest in the disciplines covered by the ABDC JQL
2. A relevant peak body representing ANZ academics
3. An individual or group of like-minded academics with formal affiliation/s to universities based in ANZ.

Submissions made on behalf of groups of signatories are encouraged.

Submissions will be accepted through a special-purpose page hosted on the ABDC website.



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Anonymous submissions will not be accepted, and all submissions will be considered on the condition that the ABDC reserves the right to make submissions publicly available.

FoR codes

Journals will be assigned to particular panels in a custodian role, recognising that many journals service more than one FoR code. For example, while the journal *Accounting and Finance* is highly relevant to both 3501 Accounting and 3502 Finance; the accounting panel is deemed the custodian of this journal.

FoR codes are to be assigned to interdisciplinary, practitioner and business education journals by the associated panel.

Submissions made in relation to journals already ranked by the ABDC will be assigned to the expert panels according to the FoRs identified in the 2022 list.

For journals not already ranked, submitters will be asked to nominate a FoR for the relevant panel to consider.

ABDC Steering Group

An ABDC Steering Group will be convened comprising:

- two representatives of the ABDC Executive Committee
- two representatives of the BARsNet Executive Committee
- one Australian advisor
- one New Zealand advisor
- one international advisor.

Panel chairs will provide their final recommendations to the ABDC Steering Group.

After a two-week period of public feedback on a draft revised JQL (~October 2025), the ABDC Steering Group will take responsibility for the Journal Quality List recommendations submitted to the ABDC for final approval.

Substantive business element

In addition to quality indicators, the key criteria for adding journals to the JQL is that they contain a substantive business element.

In the submission process, the substantive business element 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 or management nature.

Where a journal has been in existence for < three years, the substantive business and management element test applies to the time of the journal's existence.

Ranking thresholds

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

- **A***: the highest quality category, representing the top 5–7% of the journals assigned to an individual FoR. These are journals that are internationally recognised as exemplars of excellence in their FoR.
- **A**: the second highest quality category, representing the next 15–25% of the journals assigned to an individual FoR. These are journals that have among the highest citation metrics within their FoR.
- **B**: the third highest quality category, representing approximately the next 35–40% of the journals assigned to an individual FoR. These are journals with good to excellent metrics and reputation.
- **C**: the fourth highest quality category, representing the remaining recognised quality journals assigned to an individual FoR. This may include excellent practitioner-oriented journals.
- **Unrated and/or 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.

4. Timeline and milestones

Milestone	Description	Timeframe
1	Terms of Reference approved by ABDC Executive Committee	January 2025
2	Confirmation of ABDC JQL Steering Group	February 2025
3	Publication of the 2025 review timelines on the ABDC website and by email to ABDC members	March 2025
4	Call for expressions of interest for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panel chairs • Panel members 	March 2025
5	Panel appointments confirmed	March to April 2025
6	Call for stakeholder submissions	17 April to 28 May 2025
7	Panel review and deliberations	June to August 2025

8	Draft list submitted to ABDC JQL Steering Group for approval	September 2025
9	Draft 2025 JQL released for stakeholder feedback	December 2025/January 2026
10	ABDC Steering Group deliberation and submission of Final Draft List to ABDC for approval	February 2026
11	ABDC Executive Committee endorsement	February 2026
12	Release of 2025 ABDC JQL	Q1 2026