

SOKOINE UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE



GUIDELINES ON PROGRESSIVE SCHOLARLY PUBLISHING

NOVEMBER, 2025

FOREWORD

The pursuit of knowledge and its dissemination are at the very heart of Sokoine University of Agriculture's (SUA) identity. For nearly four decades, SUA has been a beacon of research and academic excellence, generating innovative solutions to some of our nation's most pressing challenges in agriculture, food security, and natural resources management. Our scholarly publications stand as tangible proof of this commitment, serving as a vital link through which insights from our research lab can reach and influence the wider world.

In a rapidly evolving global landscape, the integrity of scholarly publishing is more critical than ever. The rise of predatory journals and unethical practices presents a significant challenge to the credibility of individual researchers and the reputation of our institution as a whole. Without a clear and consistent framework, we can dilute the impact of our hard-earned research and compromising our university reputation. The scholarly publishing guidelines provide a guide on ethical scholarly publishing which can act as our proactive response to such challenges

The guidelines for scholarly publishing document are not merely a set of rules but a foundational document designed to empower our vibrant academic community. It provides clear standards and operational mechanisms for evaluating scholarly outlets, ensuring that every publication from SUA adheres to the highest levels of quality, credibility, and ethical conduct.

By adopting and championing these guidelines, we will not only safeguard the integrity of our research but also enhance our global visibility. We will ensure that the valuable knowledge created through research at SUA reaches reputable outlets where it can truly inform policy, drive innovation, and contribute to sustainable development.

I urge every member of the SUA community from our esteemed academic staff to our postgraduate students to embrace these guidelines. Let us work together to reinforce our commitment to academic excellence and build a legacy of trusted and impactful research that benefits our nation and the world.

Prof Raphael Chibunda
Vice Chancellor
Sokoine University of Agriculture

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD	II
TABLE OF CONTENTS	III
DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS	V
1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Scholarly Publishing at SUA	1
1.1.1 Challenges	2
1.1.2 Opportunities.....	2
1.2 Justification for Scholarly Publishing Guidelines at SUA.....	3
1.3. Benchmarking	4
1.3.1 Physical benchmarking	4
1.3.2 Online benchmarking.....	5
1.4 Stakeholders' Engagement.....	5
1.5 Goal of Scholarly Publishing	6
1.6 Objectives of Guidelines on Progressive Scholarly Publishing.....	7
1.6.1 General Objective	7
1.6.2 Specific Objectives	7
1.6.3.Scope of the Scholarly Publishing Guidelines	7
2.0 PUBLISHING GUIDELINES	8
2.1. Criteria for Selecting Reputable Academic Book Publishers	8
2.2 Criteria for Selection of Journals	8
2.2.1 Criteria for Selection of International Journals.....	10
2.2.2 Criteria for Selection of National Journals	10
2.2.3 Criteria for Selection of Local Journals	11
2.3 Conference Proceedings.....	11
2.3.1 International Conference Proceedings	11
2.3.2 National Conference Proceedings.....	12
3. INDICATORS OF PREDATORY ACADEMIC PUBLISHING OUTLETS	13
4. VERIFICATION TOOLS	14
5. OPERATIONAL MECHANISM FOR EVALUATING SCHOLARLY PUBLICATIONS	15
6. REFERENCES.....	16

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AJOL	African Journals Online
APC	Article Processing Charges
AUP	Association of University Presses
COPE	Committee on Publication Ethics
DOAJ	Directory of Open Access Journals
DOAJ	Directory of Open Access Journals
DOI	Digital Object Identifier
DORA	Declaration on Research Assessment
DVC-ARC	Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic, Research, and Consultancy
e-ISSN	Electronic International Standard Serial Number
ICMJE	International Committee of Medical Journal Editors
ISBN	International Standard Book Number
ISSN	International Standard Serial Number
MEDLINE	Medical Literature Analysis and Retrieval System Online
MUHAS	Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences
MUST	Mbeya University of Science and Technology
OA	Open Access
OASPA	Open Access Scholarly Publishing Association
SUA	Sokoine University of Agriculture
SUASA	Sokoine University of Agriculture Academic Staff Association
SUASO	Sokoine University of Agriculture Students Organization
UDOM	University of Dodoma
UDSM	University of Dar es Salaam

UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UPAC University Publication Assessment Committee

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

i. Academic Book

An academic book is a long-form scholarly publication dedicated to presenting original, specialized research or a detailed, systematic analysis of a narrow topic within a specific academic discipline.

ii. Author (s)

An author is an individual (or group of joint authors) or corporate entity who are responsible for producing a written work, whose names appear on the title page of a published book, book chapter, journal article or equivalent publication. For any publication, each contributing author assumes responsibility for the content published.

iii. Credible Journal

A credible journal is an academic publication whose reliability and scholarly merit are confirmed by its adherence to established ethical and quality standards.

iv. Database

A database stores and provides access to full-text scholarly content including books, book chapters, conference proceedings or journal articles. Databases facilitate retrieval, reading, and/ or downloading of complete works for further reference.

v. Indexer

An indexer refers to the service provider offering services of collecting and listing of books or journal titles with their published abstracts. An indexer may also include citations and references with the aim of increasing discoverability and visibility of the scholarly publications

vi. International Journal

An international journal is a scholarly publication accessed globally, indexed in reputable databases, and managed by an editorial board composed of experts from different countries.

vi. **Journal**

A journal is a periodical devoted to disseminating original research and commentary on current developments in a specific discipline, subdiscipline, or field of study

vii. **Local journal**

A local journal is the one that publishes only case studies of a limited area of study, its editorial board mostly is qualified by only track records in publication.

viii. **National Journal**

A National journal is a reputable, peer-reviewed scholarly publication where the editorial board is predominantly national, featuring less than 25% international representation, and its content focuses primarily on research relevant to the host country or region.

ix. **Peer-Reviewed Journal**

A peer-reviewed journal is a journal whose published contents are evaluated by one or more experts in the same field as that of the author (s) before publishing Such contents.

x. **Predatory Conferences**

A predatory conference is an academic event often organised for profit by companies that pretends to be legitimate but exists primarily for making money from researchers. It makes money through registration and submission fees, without providing meaningful academic value or rigorous review of the submissions.

xi. **Predatory Journals**

Predatory journals are deceptive or unethical academic journals that deceive researchers by charging fees without providing the standard editorial and publishing services , such as peer review, quality editing, and proper archiving.

xii. **Predatory Publishers**

Predatory publishers are entities that deceive the academic publishing system by prioritising profit over scholarly integrity. They typically charge authors fees to publish their work

without providing the essential services of legitimate academic publishers, such as rigorous peer review, proper editorial process, and transparent practices.

xiii. Reputable Database

Reputable database often contains books or journals with full text which has been curated, reviewed, and sourced from reliable and authoritative experts in the relevant field.

xiv. Reputable Indexer

Reputable indexer often contains books or journal abstracts which have been curated, reviewed, and sourced from reliable and authoritative experts in the relevant field.

xv. Reputable Scholarly Publisher

A reputable publisher is an individual or organisation that produces and disseminates information in forms of books, articles, or digital contents that is trustworthy, accurate, and respected within its field. Reputable publishers are characterised by high reputation, clear editorial standards, transparency, expertise, and accountability.

xvi. Rigorous Peer Review

A rigorous peer review is the mandatory, documented, and systematic process of subjecting an author's scholarly work, research, or ideas to the scrutiny of other experts in the same field (the "peers") before the work is published in an academic journal.

1 INTRODUCTION

The Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA) is a public higher learning institution in Tanzania. It is one of the leading public universities in East Africa and beyond and it is based on agricultural research and other allied sciences. The university is widely recognized for its unwavering commitment to excellence in agriculture and allied sciences, natural resources management, and the integrated advancement of education, research, and community outreach. Established in 1984 as a full-fledged university, SUA has grown to become a centre of innovation in agriculture, contributing significantly to national development goals and global food security efforts. The university has consistently upheld research as a central pillar of its institutional mandate. Alongside teaching and public services, research is strategically positioned to drive innovation and practical solutions. Its scholarly efforts are directed toward addressing pressing challenges at national, regional, and global levels. Key thematic areas include agriculture, food systems, environmental sustainability, education, public health, and rural livelihoods..

1.1 Scholarly Publishing at SUA

SUA has a dynamic and expanding academic community that produces research in diverse disciplines including agriculture, veterinary medicine, forestry, wildlife, environmental sciences, food science, agribusiness, rural development and other disciplines. The university disseminates its research outputs primarily through journal articles, books, conference proceedings, and technical reports.

On average, SUA produces about 600 journal articles per year, reflecting a strong and active culture of research dissemination. However, a significant proportion of these outputs, appear in less credible or lower-impact journals. This trend limits the visibility, recognition, and citation potential for SUA's scholarly publications in the global academia.

Scholarly publishing remains central to SUA's academic mission. It serves as the principal channel for disseminating research findings, contributing to scientific debates, and supporting evidence-based policy and practice in areas such as agriculture, food security, veterinary sciences, natural resources, and environmental management. To promote the visibility and credibility of its research, SUA has developed guidelines for SUA-affiliated journals, and created a University-wide Institutional Repository. Despite these achievements,

SUA's publishing system requires to be strengthened to ensure that it aligns with global standards of research integrity, visibility, and impact.

1.1.1 Challenges

While SUA has made strides in promoting research, including establishing the Directorate of Postgraduate Studies, Research, Technology Transfer and Consultancy (DPRTC), a university-wide repository, and guidelines for journals affiliated with SUA, several challenges still persist in the area of scholarly publishing, including:

- i. **Absence of standardised evaluation framework:** the university lacks a unified mechanism for evaluating the quality and ethical compliance of scholarly outputs.
- ii. **Exposure to predatory outlets:** some researchers especially early-career staff risk by publishing in predatory journals.
- iii. **Weak awareness of publishing ethics:** issues related to unclear authorship, plagiarism, and limited peer review remain.
- iv. **Inconsistent journal selection practices:** without standardised criteria for identifying credible journals, decisions are often made based on convenience rather than credibility or institutional guidelines.
- v. **Lack of incentives and accountability:** SUA has neither offered structured recognition for high-quality publications nor enforced sanctions for unethical practices/predatory publications.

1.1.2 Opportunities

Despite these challenges, SUA has significant strengths and opportunities to improve its scholarly publishing culture:

- i. **Qualified workforce:** presence of highly trained academic members of staff and a research community.
- ii. **Policy foundations:** SUA has research and publications framework that can be expanded into a full institutional publishing policy.
- iii. **Technological infrastructure:** SUA has institutional repository and access to global digital databases.

- iv. **Global alignment:** SUA is potential to adopt and align with international standards such as COPE, DOAJ, DOAB, DORA, ICMJE, etc.
- v. **Collaboration potential:** SUA is capable of increasing partnerships that can be leveraged for joint publications and editorial leadership roles.

SUA encourages and supports a strong culture of scholarly publishing among its academic staff, researchers, and postgraduate students, with an emphasis on quality, credibility, ethical standards, and global visibility.

1.2 Justification for Scholarly Publishing Guidelines at SUA

In the evolving landscape of higher education, issues related to quality of the research, credibility, and ethical standards of academic publishing are central for institutional reputation, academic integrity, and global visibility. As SUA advances its mission of generating and disseminating knowledge in agriculture and related disciplines, it is vital to establish comprehensive guidelines and mechanisms for evaluating scholarly outputs. The rapid growth of journals, publishers, and academic conferences some of which operate with questionable standards poses risks to the integrity of research. Without a clear institutional framework, SUA researchers may inadvertently publish in low-credible or predatory outlets, undermining the visibility and impact of their work.

These guidelines therefore seek to:

- i. **Protect institutional and researchers reputation:** ensure that SUA's scholarly outputs and individual contributions meet international standards, credibility, and integrity.
- ii. **Support researchers:** provide guidance to staff and students in selecting credible outlets.
- iii. **Align with global practices:** position SUA as a credible contributor to the global knowledge economy.

In line with this, and in addition to the Harmonised Scheme of Service for Academic Staff in Public Universities in Tanzania, SUA shall require that researchers should publish only in the credible outlets indexed in reputable databases.

1.3. Benchmarking

Benchmarking is an essential strategic process for developing university publishing guidelines, acting as a structured mechanism for ensuring quality assurance, strategic alignment, and risk mitigation within a globally competitive academic environment. By reviewing and learning from the best practices of other institutions, a university can effectively understand and adopt proven methods for fostering excellence in academic publishing. For these specific guidelines, benchmarking was executed through both physical site visits (UDSM, UDOM, and MUHAS) and online reviews of several local and international institutions. These combined insights from both physical and online benchmarking offer a comprehensive, internationally aligned model for developing robust university publishing guidelines.

1.3.1 Physical benchmarking

Benchmarking against key Tanzanian institutions provided valuable blueprints for governance and quality control:

i. University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM)

UDSM showcases a highly structured approach through its comprehensive Journal Policy and Guidelines and its oversight body, the University Publication Assessment Committee (UPAC). Its framework mandates rigorous editorial and peer review standards, indexing in reputable international databases (e.g., DOAJ, Scopus), and adherence to ethical bodies like COPE, often benchmarked against institutions like the University of Cambridge.

ii. University of Dodoma (UDOM)

UDOM employs a Media Vetting Committee (MVC) for structured evaluation of scholarly outputs. Crucially, UDOM utilizes a dual system of reward and control: providing financial incentives for articles published in high-ranking indexed journals while using a Staff Disciplinary Committee to address malpractice, promoting quality through motivation and accountability.

iii. Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS)

MUHAS's system is defined by its focus on quality assurance linked to staff promotion. A distinctive feature is the explicit exclusion of predatory journals from promotion consideration, with the Directorate of Library Services (DLS) centrally vetting scholarly works and managing a list of predatory publishers. This highlights the importance of integrating quality control directly into promotion policies, ensuring compliance with international standards from bodies like ICMJE and COPE.

1.3.2 Online benchmarking

Online benchmarking against local and international institutions (including MUST, Moshi Cooperative University, Washington University, University of Cape Town, COPE, University of South Africa, Marymount University, and Brunel University) reinforced the global criteria for reputable publishing:

i. Journal Credibility

The core standards advocate for transparency, scholarly integrity, and measurable impact. This requires clear peer review processes, strong editorial quality, and indexing in major databases (e.g., MEDLINE, Scopus). Publishers should also demonstrate affiliation with ethical bodies like COPE and OASPA.

ii. Ethical Authorship

Publishing standards advocate for ethical authorship. Guidelines strictly require that authorship reflect substantial intellectual contributions and explicitly denounce practices such as ghost, guest, or honorary authorship, forming a crucial framework to safeguard academic credibility.

1.4 Stakeholders' Engagement

The development of the progressive scholarly publishing guidelines at Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA) was founded upon a comprehensive, institution-wide consultation process designed to ensure wide ownership and strategic alignment. Active engagement included both the Sokoine University of Agriculture Academic Staff Association (SUASA) members and the Sokoine University of Agriculture Students Organization (SUASO),

members representing both the academic staff and postgraduate students. The core working group was a dedicated taskforce composed of four academic staff, three SUASA representatives, as well as one postgraduate student, all charged with soliciting inputs from various stakeholders. To maximize participation, the taskforce employed several systematic strategies: SUA academic staff were explicitly invited to submit their views on the guidelines via a dedicated email address, while Principals, deans, and directors were requested to mobilize inputs from their respective colleges, schools, and directorates. Furthermore, the SUASA leadership was extensively involved in providing detailed inputs across different stages of developing the guidelines. .

Beyond the academic staff associations, the consultation process actively integrated the contributions from the student organization. . Specifically, postgraduate students provided their inputs through their elected representatives, ensuring that the guidelines include different views from the students. All inputs were received and systematically incorporated by the taskforce which is responsible for refining and drafting the final document. The ultimate phase of validation and administrative endorsement was achieved by involving the Committee of Principals and Deans. The involvement of such senior executive body provided the necessary strategic validation and authoritative approval of the framework thereby implementing a robust and inclusive process for developing the progressive scholarly publishing guidelines.

1.5 Goal of Scholarly Publishing

Scholarly publications may take the form of journal articles, books, book chapters, or conference proceedings. Regardless of the format, all must be produced under the auspices of a recognised publishing outlets to ensure quality and credibility.

The overarching goal of the guidelines on progressive scholarly publishing at Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA) is to elevate the quality, credibility, and global visibility of its research outputs through rigorous production and strategic dissemination. By fostering a culture of academic integrity and editorial excellence, SUA aims to advance scholarly distinction, support evidence-based policymaking, and contribute meaningfully to sustainable development across national, regional, and international spheres.

1.6 Objectives of Guidelines on Progressive Scholarly Publishing

1.6.1 General Objective

The general objective of the guidelines on progressive scholarly publishing is to provide SUA staff and students with clear guidance for selecting and evaluating scholarly publication outlets, thereby ensuring that all published research outputs adhere to high academic standards, uphold integrity, and attain global recognition.

1.6.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the scholarly publishing guidelines are to:

- i. Improve standards and guidelines for selecting credible journals.
- ii. Strengthen the criteria for identifying and verifying reputable academic publishers.
- iii. Develop criteria and guidelines for assessing, recognising, and evaluating scholarly publications.
- iv. Develop an operational checklist for evaluating scholarly publications in accordance with the best National and International practices in scholarly publications.

1.6.3. Scope of the Scholarly Publishing Guidelines

- i. This framework applies to all scholarly publications undertaken by SUA employees, SUA-affiliated staff, and students.
- ii. The framework complement other approved University and National regulatory instruments for ensuring quality and excellence in scholarly publications. In case of contradictions, the existing University and National regulations/guidelines should prevail.

2.0 PUBLISHING GUIDELINES

2.1. Criteria for Selecting Reputable Academic Book Publishers

A reputable academic publisher must meet and fulfill the following criteria:

- i. **Affiliation and establishment:** a reputable academic publisher should be an academic/research institution, organization, industry, professional associations or societies. The publisher should have full address, website and contact details.
- ii. **Peer review:** A reputable publisher must implement a rigorous and transparent peer-review process. Reviews should be rigorous and conducted by qualified experts in the respective specific field or discipline of study.
- iii. **Editor:** for the book chapters, the editors should have expertise relevant for the respective topics. Monograph books are exempted from this requirement.
- iv. **Publication policies:** the publisher should have clear policies such as plagiarism policy, submission guidelines, publication timelines, , and fees (if any).
- v. **Standard identifiers:** a reputable publisher should assign standard identifiers like ISBN or ISSN.
- vi. **Copyright and licensing:** the publisher must have clear copyright and licensing policies.
- vii. **Distribution:** the publisher must provide reliable distribution channels (print and/or digital).

2.2 Criteria for Selection of Journals

A reputable journal intended for academic purposes shall meet the following general criteria:

- i. **Peer-review:** the journal should publish articles peer reviewed in a rigorous process by experts in the respective field.
- ii. **Regularity:** the credible journal should be regularly published as stipulated into its publication policy.
- iii. **Identification of publication:** the reputable journal should have an International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) for print or Electronic International Standard Serial Number (e-ISSN) for electronic online publications that can be verified at www.issn.org.
- iv. **Scope:** the journal should have a well-defined scope and publish consistently within its scope.
- v. **Guidance and information for authors:** the journal should have an up-to-date website with required information that guides authors, and a publication platform demonstrating the article publication process.
- vi. **The language of publication:** the journal should be published in English or any other language accepted by SUA.
- vii. **Article processing:** the journal should have an online editorial manager that allows an online submission and peer-review tracking system for authors, reviewers and editors.

Open Access Journals should be registered in the Open Access (OA) policy databases such as the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) and equivalent databases. Moreover, articles published in OA journals that require APC should generate evidence that APC is charged after the review process.

2.2.1 Criteria for Selection of International Journals

Together with the above general criteria, a reputable international journal shall meet the following:

- i. **Indexing:** the reputable journal should be indexed in Scopus, Web of Science, Embase, JSTOR, PubMed, IEEE Xplore, Proquest, SSCI, REXISNEXIS, SciELO, ERIC, CAB Abstracts, EBSCO, or equivalent indexers as approved by the university. The indexing should be verified from the databases and not on the journal website.
- ii. **Editorial board:** at least 25% of members of the editorial board should come from countries other than the host country.
- iii. **Retrievability:** the journal articles published should be internationally retrievable. It should have unique, persistent, and resolvable identifications such as Digital Object Identifier (DOI).
- iv. **Publisher:** the journal should be published by reputable university, organization, or association.

2.2.2 Criteria for Selection of National Journals

Together with the above general criteria for selecting a journal and criteria for selecting a reputable international journal a reputable national journal shall meet the following:

- i. **Editorial board:** a journal should have editorial board of less than 25% members from countries other than the host country.
- ii. **Retrievability:** journal articles published should be nationally retrievable. It should have unique, persistent, and resolvable identifications such as Digital Object Identifier (DOI). It should be accessed through regional databases including AJOL, SABINET, African Index Meducus, Indian Citation Index (ICI) or equivalent indexers as approved by the university. The indexing should be verified from the databases and not on the journal website.
- iii. **Publisher:** a national journal should be published by accredited university, organization, or association.

2.2.3 Criteria for Selection of Local Journals

A reputable local journal intended for academic purposes shall meet the following criteria:

- i. **Publisher:** journal should be affiliated with or was established by registered academic institution, organization, associations or society with authoritative source of specialized knowledge of a particular academic field.
- ii. **Editorial board:** journal should have a chief editor/editor in-chief/academic editor and an editorial board. The journal's editorial board members should be scholars with a track record in publishing.
- iii. **Retrievability:** journal articles published should be retrievable.

2.3 Conference Proceedings

Conference proceedings shall meet the following general criteria:

- i. **Conference reputation:** the event should be organised by reputable academic institutions, professional societies, or recognised research organisations. The organising committee should consist of experts with verifiable credentials in the relevant field.
- ii. **Peer review process:** all submitted papers must undergo a peer-review process.
- iii. **Conference information:** conference proceedings should have important information such as the title and theme of the conference, contacts of the host organization, physical location and dates
- iv. **Publication identification:** the conference proceedings should be published and possess an ISSN.

2.3.1 International Conference Proceedings

Together with the above general criteria, international scholarly conference proceedings shall meet the following:

- i. **Composition of editorial board:** at least 20% of members of the editorial board who are experts in the field should come from countries other than the host country.
- ii. **Publisher:** the proceedings should be published by reputable university, organization, or association.
- iii. **Retrievability:** the proceedings must be internationally retrievable. It should have unique, persistent, and resolvable identifications such as Digital Object Identifier (DOI).

2.3.2 National Conference Proceedings

Together with the above general criteria, national scholarly conference proceedings shall meet the following:

- i. **Editorial board:** members of the editorial board should be experts in the field.
- ii. **Publisher:** the proceedings should be published by accredited university, organization, or association.
- iii. **Retrievability:** The proceedings must be retrievable.

3. INDICATORS OF PREDATORY ACADEMIC PUBLISHING OUTLETS

Predatory academic publishing outlets prioritize profit over academic rigor. They often use deceptive practices to exploit authors. Indicators of the predatory publishing outlet are as follows:

- i. **Lack of rigor:** promising quick publication, manuscripts are accepted without any proper peer review or a clear description of the process.
- ii. **Aggressive solicitation:** they send frequent and unsolicited emails to researchers, often unrelated to their field.
- iii. **Financial red flags:** fees are not clearly mentioned or can be requested before or immediately after manuscript submission.
- iv. **Deceptive practices:** the publisher uses fake or misleading editorial boards, makes false indexing claims, or has a name designed to mimic a reputable publisher.
- v. **Affiliation and ownership:** information about location and ownership is often hidden or unverifiable.
- vi. **Vague scope:** the journal covers an unrealistically wide range of unrelated subjects, suggesting a lack of focus or expertise.
- vii. **Unclear publishing policies:** there is no clear information on publishing policies, ethical standards, or on how to handle retractions or corrections.

4. VERIFICATION TOOLS

The verification tools help researchers/authors to evaluate whether a publisher or journal meets scholarly and ethical publishing standards before submitting their works. These tools include:

- i. **Indexers and databases:** search for a journal/publisher to verify if it's indexed in relevant indexers or databases and check whether the journal/publisher meets ethical publishing criteria.
- ii. **Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE):** check whether the publisher or journal is a COPE member or indicates to adhere to ethical publishing practices.
- iii. **Think, Check and Submit:** follow this guideline to verify the reputation of journals/publishers before submission.
- iv. **Consultation with the Sokoine National Agricultural Library (SNAL):** the library provides advice on where to submit scholarly work for publication. Consulting the library before submission may help authors to select reputable publishers.

5. OPERATIONAL MECHANISM FOR EVALUATING SCHOLARLY PUBLICATIONS

The academic review process for scholarly publications at SUA shall be initiated from the departments. Every Department/Academic Unit shall form a Staff Evaluation/Review Committee, as mandated by the *Up the Ladder (6th edition) Section 14* and the *SUA Regulations for Higher Degree Section 5 (5.1.18)*. This committee, comprising senior academic staff, who is responsible for the preliminary assessment of publications submitted by both teaching staff and postgraduate students. Following this internal review, the Head of the Department compiles and submits the Departmental Academic Review recommendations to the office of the Principal/Director/Dean. The recommendations are then reviewed by the College/Directorate/Centre/School Academic Review Committee, which is constituted by the College Management Committee and chaired by the Principal/Director/Dean alongside the respective Heads of Department. The resulting scholarly publication verification reports generated will then be utilized by all relevant university organs for various administrative and quality assurance purposes.

The Sokoine National Agricultural Library (SNAL) holds the official mandate to take the institutional lead in verifying the credibility of all scholarly publications. Consequently, all university departments, colleges, schools, and directorates are required to actively involve the library in their scholarly publication verification processes. This involvement ensures rigorous quality control and consistency across all academic units of the university.

6. REFERENCES

- i. Blas, N., Rele, S. and Kennedy, M.R., 2019. The development of the journal evaluation tool to evaluate the credibility of publication venues. *Journal of Librarianship and Scholarly Communication*, 7(1).
- ii. CAB Abstracts - Home | CABI Digital Library. <https://www.cabidigitallibrary.org/product/ca>. Accessed: 12/2/2025
- iii. Committee on Publication Ethics., 2000. Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE). Guidelines on good publication practice. *Dentomaxillofacial Radiology*, 29(4), pp.195-200.
- iv. Council of Science Editors, 2024. Authorship and Authorship Responsibilities. Accessed at <https://www.councilscienceeditors.org/2-2-authorship-and-authorship-responsibilities>.
- v. Dagienè, E., 2023. Prestige of scholarly book publishers—An investigation into criteria, processes, and practices across countries. *Research Evaluation*, 32(2), pp.356-370.
- vi. DOAB: Directory of Open Access Books. Accessed at <https://www.doabooks.org/>
- vii. DOAJ: Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). Accessed at <https://doaj.org/>
- viii. EBSCO Information Services. <https://about.ebsco.com/>. Accessed: 12/2/2025
- ix. Embase | The comprehensive medical research database | Elsevier. <https://www.elsevier.com/products/embase>. Accessed: 12/2/2025
- x. ERIC - Education Resources Information Center. <https://eric.ed.gov/>. Accessed: 12/2/2025
- xi. Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research. 2019. Key-criteria to check the quality of scientific conferences. Accessed at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334225804_Key-criteria_to_check_the_quality_of_scientific_conferences/citations
- xii. IEEE Access | https://ieeaccess.ieee.org/?gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=19948275259&gclid=Cjw

- xxv. Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI) | Clarivate. <https://clarivate.com/academia-government/scientific-and-academic-research/research-discovery-and-referencing/web-of-science/web-of-science-core-collection/social-sciences-citation-index/>. Accessed: 12/2/2025
- xxvi. SUA (2023) Guidelines for Journals Affiliated with Sokoine University of Agriculture
- xxvii. SUA (2025). Regulations for Higher Degrees
- xxviii. SUA, 2010. Research Policy, Focus Areas, Guidelines and Regulations.
- xxix. SUA, 2017. SUA Quality Assurance Policy (2nd).
- xxx. SUA, 2018. Anti-Plagiarism Policy and Guidelines.
- xxxi. SUA, 2023. Code of Conduct for Research Ethics.
- xxxii. SUA, 2023. Guidelines for Journals Affiliated with Sokoine University of Agriculture.
- xxxiii. SUA. 2023. Up the Ladder: Guidelines for Employment and Promotion of Academic Members of Staff (6th ed.).
- xxxiv. Suiter, A.M. and Sarli, C.C., 2019. Selecting a journal for publication: Criteria to consider. *Missouri medicine*, 116(6), p.461.
- xxxv. Think. Check. Submit, 2025. Identify trusted publishers for your research. Accessed at <https://thinkchecksubmit.org/>
- xxxvi. UDSM 2024. Journal Policy and Guidelines. https://www.udsm.ac.tz/sites/default/files/2025-02/20240806_093117_UNIT_16_CUSTOM_PAGE_%20Journal%20Policy%20and%20Guidelines-January2024.pdf
- xxxvii. University of Cape Town, 2024. *UCT Authorship Practices Policy*. Accessed at https://uct.ac.za/sites/default/files/content_migration/uct_ac_za/39/files/Policy_Authorship_Practices.pdf

xxxviii. URT 2022. Revised Harmonized Scheme of Service for Academic Staff in Public Universities and Constituent Colleges.

xxxix. Web of Science Platform Clarivate. <https://clarivate.com/academia-government/scientific-and-academic-research/research-discovery-and-referencing/web-of-science/>. Accessed: 12/1/2025