

ACADEMIC JOURNAL GUIDE 2021

METHODOLOGY

June 2021

CONTENTS

	page
Acknowledgements	2
Introduction	6
The Aims of the 2021 AJG	8
The Process	9
The Four Impact Factors Relating to Citation Information	10
Rating Definitions	12
Outcomes	14
Conclusion	15
References	17
Appendix 1	18
Appendix 2	19

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Sources of Journal Metrics

We are very grateful to Clarivate for the permission to use their Journal Citation Reports™ (JCR) and to Elsevier for the use of their SNIP, SJR, and CiteScore metrics powered by Scopus.

INTRODUCTION

The Purpose of the Academic Journal Guide

Welcome to the 2021 edition of the Chartered Association of Business Schools' Academic Journal Guide (AJG).

The purpose of the AJG is to assist researchers to make informed judgements about the outlets they may wish to publish in. It provides details on a wide range of journals, stretching across fields that are either central or salient to business and management studies; in other words, it aims to encompass a broad set of journals in which business and management academics may seek to publish their research.

Our guiding principles on how to use the AJG:

- As the name suggests, the AJG is a 'guide'. It should not be used as a 'one stop shop' to decide where to publish nor to evaluate individuals' research outputs.
- We advise that users of the guide should also seek advice and recommendations from peers and the academic community more generally.
- Although the best work is clustered in a limited number of leading journals, good work may be encountered in a wide range of different places; this highlights the merit of reading work.
- Consider the relevance and quality of journals not listed in the Guide, including new journals, but be aware of predatory outlets.
- The AJG seeks to encourage good practices in journal publishing. As well as considering a journal's rating and relevance, consider other factors such as the composition and diversity of its editorial board, its fee charging practices, or its acceptance rates.
- It is important that users of the AJG understand the methodology. By reading the methodology you will understand how a journal rating came about, and how the AJG's metrics are derived.

Introduction to the methodology and the role of the Scientific Committee

The AJG's ratings are based upon peer review, editorial and expert judgements following the evaluation of many hundreds of publications and is informed by statistical information relating to citation.

The AJG is distinctive in that, unlike other journal ratings, it is not based purely on a weighted average of journal metrics. Rather, the AJG is informed by metrics. The ratings of journals reflect the outcomes of consultations carried out by the subject experts of the Scientific Committee with expert peers and scholarly associations as to the relative standing of journals in each subject area. As well as being experts in their respective fields, members of the Scientific Committee are eminent scholars who typically work across multiple fields and thus are well qualified to evaluate journals outside their scholarly field.

Business and Management is made up of an umbrella of disciplines whose boundaries are fluid and have changed as the AJG has evolved. It has also altered the boundaries and number of fields it evaluates, bringing in new specialised expertise within fields in order to better ensure topics of societal importance are being captured. An example of this is the inclusion of Subject Experts within the 'General Management, Ethics, Gender and Social Responsibility' field with specific expertise in gender studies and gender related issues in management.

While a broad range of metric-based information is made available to the Scientific Committee, the AJG seeks to supplement this through peer opinion and review. The AJG builds upon the external consultations of Scientific Committee members and appreciates there are nuances in different fields based upon how the contours of their disciplines have developed, as well as the relative ability of journals to enable scholars in those fields to disseminate their work.

It is also the case that some specialised areas have a relatively small number of outlets because a large proportion of their output is published in general management journals.

Journal Impact Factors do not capture the nuances imparted by the often substantial differences in the volume of articles within journals, acceptance rates, nor within any specific rating. They also do not capture the nuances of the differences between short opinion pieces (which count towards the numerator, but not the denominator of citation calculations), or citation behaviours within different fields. On occasion, the ratings of some journals, if based purely on such metrics, may not correspond with how scholars perceive them. Our purpose therefore was to produce a guide that took into consideration this subjective input.

The AJG is not intended to be a fully comprehensive guide, given, *inter alia*, the problems of demarcating what is Business and Management research and/or relevant to it, and what is not. Inclusion in the AJG is wholly at the discretion of the Editors and the Scientific Committee, and no undertakings have been made that all journals that may desire inclusion will have been included. Non-inclusion in the AJG should not necessarily be taken as a judgment of journal quality, but may reflect a wide range of factors which may include: a journal's aims and scope; that most content of the journal lies outside the scope of, or are not relevant to business and management studies; or that the Scientific Committee and those they consulted with did not encounter sufficient evidence on which to formulate an opinion.

The AJG is intended to give both emerging and established scholars greater clarity as to which journals to aim for, and where the best work in their field tends to be clustered. Emerging scholars will have greater clarity as to the full range of possible outlets, and where the best work in their field may be clustered. Business and Management is an amalgam of fields. The volume of research in Business and Management has grown rapidly over time, as have the number and breadth of available outlets in which scholars publish. By the same measure, publication in identified top journals gives scholars a recognised currency to assist in situating their research that is not based upon idiosyncratic local preferences that can be distorted by local networks. Should local networks deny the currency of scholars' research in one institution, there will consequently be others who will recognise and welcome it.

We appreciate DORA's concerns as to any focus on outlet rather than content; however, by the same measure, a journal guide gives scholars some outside affirmation that their work resides in the best company, even if the worth of their research is denied by established patronage networks often dominated by privileged groups. Again, we share DORA's concern with citation metrics as an over-riding measure, and hence our emphasis on peer opinion, encompassing a careful reading of typical work and scientific merit that is encountered in particular journals. The Chartered ABS Guide simply seeks to give an opinion that encompasses a composite view as to the relative concentration of work that may be encountered in particular places, whilst recognising that this is a tendency, rather than a general rule. If readers wish to appraise the worth of a particular piece of scholarly work, any choices they make are theirs alone. It is also recognised that there is a great range in the standard of editorial experience and standing between journals, and, indeed, in the quality of reviewers that journals can hope to attract, although it does not automatically correspond to journal metrics, and, indeed, there are important methodological differences within the latter. Of course, there are many other forms of research output than journal articles, including books and a variety of creative endeavours informed by scholarly enquiry; the Guide only focuses on journals, but other forms of scholarly endeavour are worthy of due consideration. Again, relative readership of, and citation by, the peer scholarly community needs to be considered against the wider impact on the economy and society of scholarly research. At the same time, we would reject the view that only research that demonstrates immediate practical impact is worthwhile; we remain convinced that scholarly reflection and endeavour can be a good in its own right, and the presence of an intellectual class engaged in either pure or applied enquiry and debate on the state of the human and natural condition is the mark of a civilized society.

Good work may, of course, be found anywhere, but it is a generally held view that such work is more likely to be concentrated in certain journals rather than others. The Editors recognise that any guide that seeks to differentiate between journals will naturally be contentious. Some of this will reflect the natural tensions in academia between shared scholarly identity, exchange and debate, and the individual pursuit of very specialised knowledge that, whilst potentially worthwhile in its own right, when disseminated is likely to be only accessible to a very small audience. It will also reflect the tensions between efforts to commodify academic labour time, and the acclaim exceptional bodies of work receive across the scholarly community. While recognising that exceptional scholarly work may be found in many places, we similarly accept that such work tends to be clustered in particular locales and journals, in a process that may reflect both the availability of resources and accumulated collective human capital. Better journals can be more selective, find it easier to attract top reviewers, have the resources to manage papers efficiently, and, because they are more widely read and cited, will attract some of the most ambitious authors. Identifying such locales is a difficult and fraught process, but we remain convinced that it is better that this is operationalised through the involvement of scholarly experts than without. We have made every effort to learn from feedback we received on the 2018 edition of the AJG.

As outlined in the methodology section, the AJG builds on its previous iterations, and the Editors of this Guide owe a debt of gratitude to the Editors and Scholarly Experts involved in these former editions.

THE AIMS OF THE 2021 AJG

The 2021 edition is a full update of the entire guide.
The aims of the 2021 edition were:

- i. To undertake consultation involving a consistent, verifiable and robust process with learned societies and additional consultation with peer communities and stakeholders.
- ii. To reflect the emergence of a number of new journals that meet appropriate standards for scholarly rigour across the subject areas covered by the AJG and bring into the fold a number of established existing journals that have a strong relevance to business and management, about which we were now in a position to formulate an opinion.
- iii. To identify and consult upon selected journals that have witnessed substantial changes in practices and/or metrics that have potentially influenced their quality.
- iv. To transfer, where appropriate, journals across subject areas if their initial 'home' had been deemed to be unsuitable.

THE PROCESS

The holistic methodology underpinning the AJG, consisting of evaluations of journals not based solely on metrics but reflecting Subject Experts' views, is a distinctive feature of the Guide. The approach followed in 2015 and 2018 built on the previous iterations of the AJG, while we endeavoured to engage more widely with expert peers than when producing earlier guides. The 2021 AJG continued to build on the work of the 2018 AJG through an enlarged and more diverse Scientific Committee and enhanced consultation process.

In detail, the four methodological components are as follows:

First, an open call was issued for applications for new journals to be added to the Guide alongside those already included in the AJG. The Subject Experts formulated an opinion if journals should be included or not.

Second, the Methodologists analysed the data collected from: (i) the Journal Citation Reports™ (JCR) from Clarivate; (ii) the SCImago Journal Rank (SJR); (iii) the Source Normalised Impact per Paper (SNIP); and (iv) the CiteScore.

Third, commencing from September 2020, evaluations were conducted by Subject Experts, based on consultations with learned societies, professional associations and leading academics in their area (see Appendix 2 for details of the consultation process). Following these consultations, Subject Experts compiled these inputs, metric information and other information into cases for changes in journal ratings where these were supported by robust evidence. The experts accorded particular attention to journals where there had been a significant change in the metrics, where there had been a significant change based on criteria of AJG journal grade definitions, as well as journals new to the Guide. Based on this, reasoned recommendations were formulated.

Following this process, the Methodologists, the Chair of the Scientific Committee and the Editors met with the Scientific Committee on 9th March 2021. All cases with completed Journal Review Forms and supporting metric information were provided to the committee. This allowed the Committee as a whole to review the proposed ratings of the journals under consideration in their entirety.

Fourth, the review and approval by Chartered Association of Business School's Academic Journal Guide Management Committee.

Please see Appendix 1 for more detail on the review process.

THE FOUR IMPACT FACTORS RELATING TO CITATION INFORMATION

With regard to the citation information within the second methodological component, it is not the intention of this document to provide a detailed review of the methodologies underlying these four impact factors. Nevertheless, in what follows we provide a brief description of these four impact factors, including their advantages and drawbacks. The 2008 version of the 5-Year Impact Factor from Clarivate was the impact factor underlying the 2010 version of the AJG. In addition to the Five-Year JIF the 2015 version used the SJR and the SNIP. The 2018 revision of the AJG also used a fourth impact factor, i.e. the Impact per Publication (IPP). As Elsevier replaced the IPP with the CiteScore in December 2016, the 2021 AJG therefore uses the latter, in addition to the Clarivate 5-Year Impact Factor, and the SJR and SNIP from Scopus.

An immediate advantage of using all four impact factors other than just the Clarivate 5-Year Impact Factor is that the SJR, the SNIP and the CiteScore are available for a much larger number of journals whereas the JCR represents only journals that are in the Social Sciences Citation Index™ from Clarivate. Refer to González-Pereira et al. (2010) for more information on the SJR, and Moed (2010) for more information about the SNIP and how it compares to the SJR.

The main advantages and disadvantages of the four impact factors are as follows (see Colledge et al. 2010 for a much more detailed comparison). The Journal Citation Reports (JCR) contain the most widely used journal metrics, including the Journal Impact Factor™ (JIF) and the 5-Year Impact Factor. Its main disadvantage is that it does not adjust for differences in the number of citations across subject areas. In particular, it tends to generate much lower values compared to journals in the Science Citation Index Expanded™ from Clarivate that includes biomedical science, physical sciences, and chemistry.

The SJR's main advantages are that it adjusts for differences in the number of citations across subject areas and also adjusts for the prestige of a journal. However, the fact that it adjusts for prestige also creates a drawback as sources that are cited in more prestigious journals in turn are given more prestige. This may result in self-perpetuating lists of so called prestige journals.

The SNIP's main advantage is that it normalises citations across subject areas and that it does so without relying on classifications of subject areas that in turn would create limitations.¹ However, as the SNIP does not adjust for the percentage of reviews published in a journal, it tends to have higher values for journals publishing reviews. It is also more prone to editorial 'game playing' via journal self-citations.

The CiteScore measures the average citations received per article published in a journal. It is the ratio of the number of citations obtained in a given year (e.g., 2018) for the papers published in the prior three years (e.g., 2015 to 2017) to the total number of articles published in that journal during the same three-year window.²

Bearing in mind that all four impact factors have advantages as well as drawbacks – i.e., no impact factor is perfect – a strong case can be made for the need to consult all four impact factors (wherever available) when assessing the quality of a journal. This is the approach adopted for the AJG. The four impact factors were standardised across each subject area in a similar way to the 2015 and 2018 versions of the AJG.

1 Effectively, the SNIP's subject areas are 'tailor-made' (Moed 2010: 274) which is an advantage when dealing with cross- and multi-disciplinary journals.

2 Analogously, the 5-Year Impact Factor for 2018 divides the 2018 citations for a journal by the number of papers it published during the five previous years, i.e. 2013-2017. Note that in June 2020, the CiteScore calculation was changed, in particular, counting the number of citations for a journal over a four-year window. Work on the 2021 AJG began in 2019 and hence employs the previous CiteScore calculation.

Following the 2018 AJG, this iteration of the guide uses the mean 5-Year Impact Factor from Clarivate based on the average of the five-year impact factors for the years 2014 to 2018. This average is then standardised by subtracting the average for the subject area and dividing this difference by the standard deviation:

**Standardised
Impact Factor**

=

Journal Impact Factor - Mean Impact Factor for Subject Area
Standard Deviation of Impact Factor for Subject Area

We used standardised impact factors that are calculated for the SJR, the SNIP and the CiteScore. It should be noted, however, that the standardised mean SJR, SNIP and CiteScore are based on the three-year impact factors rather than the five-year impact factors as the latter are not available.

The reason why the AJG focuses on the 5-Year Impact Factor (and the three-year SJR and SNIP) rather than a 2-year impact factor is that 2-year citation metrics can be highly volatile across years and because the AJG takes a longer-run view of journal evaluation.

It should be noted that there can be considerable variability between and across journal metrics from different sources and with different calculations. Hence, these should not be used mechanically and uniquely as a means of distribution. Crucially, this variability underlines the importance of adopting a four-step methodology. The Subject Experts were also provided with the other metrics and data items, such as the percentage of articles not cited and the percentage of reviews per journal, to help them rate the journals in their subject area. The Subject Experts were asked to rate the journals from 4 to 1. A further distinction (Journal of Distinction) was made for in respect of a small number of journals amongst those with a rating of 4.

RATING DEFINITIONS

In Table 1, the definitions of the journal ratings are set out. This draws on the previous iterations of the AJG.

Table 1: Definitions of journal ratings

Rating	Meaning of Quality Rating
4*	Journals of Distinction. Within the business and management field including economics, there are a small number of grade 4 journals that are recognised world-wide as exemplars of excellence. As the world leading journals in the field, they would be ranked among the highest in terms of impact factor. The initial paper selection and review process would be rigorous and demanding. Accepted papers would typically not only bring to bear large scale data and/or rigour in theory, but also be extremely finely crafted and provide major advances to their field.
4	All journals rated 4 (whether included in the Journal of Distinction category or not) publish the most original and best-executed research. As top journals in their field, these journals typically have high submission and low acceptance rates. Papers are heavily refereed. These top journals generally have among the highest citation impact factors within their field.
3	3 rated journals publish original and well executed research papers and are highly regarded. These journals typically have good submission rates and are very selective in what they publish. Papers are heavily refereed. These highly regarded journals generally have good to excellent journal metrics relative to others in their field, although at present not all journals in this category carry a citation impact factor.
2	Journals in this category publish original research of an acceptable standard. For these well regarded journals in their field, papers are fully refereed according to accepted standards and conventions. Citation impact factors are somewhat more modest in certain cases. Many excellent practitioner-oriented articles are published in 2-rated journals.
1	These journals, in general, publish research of a recognised, but more modest standard in their field. Papers are in many instances refereed relatively lightly according to accepted conventions. Few journals in this category carry a citation impact factor.

Source: Adapted from Harvey et al. (2010)

Why is that Journal Awarded that Rating?

Users of the AJG are not likely to agree with the rating of every journal. The AJG incorporates a wide set of experts on its Scientific Committee and each member has spoken to many individual scholars and scholarly associations. There proved to be a remarkable general consensus concerning most journals, albeit offset with a relatively small number of difficult or contentious cases. One or two ratings may still appear unusual to users, but it is worth considering that the Scientific Committee includes many experts who are party to a wide range of information, that not all may be similarly aware of. More broadly speaking, we have simply awarded journal ratings, and any conclusions as to the worth of the journal the user reaches are their own. Reviewing the AJG, a critical user may conclude that it is only the 4-rated journals (or the JoD category) that are worth considering for their work; others may feel that a rating of 2 is what matters, as it sets these journals apart from those that are rated 1. Still others may find that a rating of 1 is a useful indicator that the journal meets normal scholarly standards, including a general expectation of peer review.

It is important to note that the average number of articles published by a journal within a particular issue will affect how much work is published in 3- or 4-rated outlets in a particular field. In terms of categorising research in a particular national context, the proportion of work by local scholars typically published by that journal is an important consideration; many journals are dominated by contributors from a particular nation or region. A note of caution is also urged in looking at the proportion of 3 and 4-rated journals in a particular field; again, the proportion of 3s and 4s will to a large extent be a product of the number of 1-rated journals included. In very large areas, there is likely to be a large number of journals with low ratings, whilst in smaller fields, the journal ecosystem may be more limited. Hence, readers of the AJG are cautioned against simply counting the number of 3 and 4-rated journals in a particular field, and comparing the result with other fields. Any conclusions that do not take these issues into account might be misleading.

AJG 2021 OUTCOMES

An important *raison d'être* of journal rankings is to encourage good practices in journals and, in doing so, respond to developments in the journal ecosystem in as much as they might impact on quality and the relative concentration of good work in particular places. The 2021 edition of the AJG focused on selected journals that had substantive changes in metrics or esteem, with such changes being identified through Scientific Committee members, and/or where there were significant shifts in metrics when compared against peer journals so as to lead to them being sent out for consultation. It was also the case that the 2021 AJG added to the list a number of journals where it was possible to make an informed judgement and where the Subject Experts were confident that there was sufficient evidence of scholarly standards. The list now comprises 1,703 journals up from slightly less than 1,600 journals in the 2018 AJG, i.e., a 9% increase in journals (see Table 2).

Almost all new journals typically entered the list with a rating of 1 or 2, reflecting their emerging or focused status. Only in very exceptional cases did journals enter the list with a rating of 3. Finally, there were 5 journals that were upgraded from a rating of 4 to Journal of Distinction status following overwhelming support to do so from a broad-based consultation of their respective fields as well as the Scientific Committee. Specifically, these were *Academy of Management Annals*; *Academy of Management, Learning and Education*; *Human Resource Management Journal*; *Journal of the Association of Information Systems*; and *Personnel Psychology*. For each subject area, a number of eminent individuals had been consulted about the proposed new Journal of Distinction and all had supported on the basis that it was an exceptional journal in the subject, with a high impact score.

In this iteration of the AJG, we have taken on board the findings of a survey of business academics (Walker et al., 2019a). Specifically, we have further expanded the size as well as the geographical and gender composition of the Subject Expert group on the Scientific Committee. We also increased the diversity of subjects examined. Specifically, the Subject Expert group has expanded to 53, representing more than a threefold increase since 2010. Since 2010, the proportion of women on the committee has risen from 11% to 33%. And while the members of the Scientific Committee are all internationally respected in their fields, the proportion of scholars based outside the UK has risen from a mere 2% to 38%. This shift also mirrors the usage of the AJG with approximately half of the 40,000 registered users of the AJG residing outside of the UK. It is also encouraging that fields, such as economics, that are represented by the AJG but who frequently work outside the business schools also utilise the guide as a means to recognise the contributions, particularly in interdisciplinary contexts (Walker et al., 2020c).

One element of providing a 'level playing field' is ensuring that the guide aligns to the fields that business and management scholars, and scholars in aligned fields, publish in. While work has shown that the AJG aligns closely to academic users' primary fields (Walker et al., 2019b), we appreciate that a strength of business and management is that it comprises an umbrella of disciplines.

As well as expanding the scope and deepening the extent of expertise of the Subject Expert group, we have further codified the process of evaluation based on clear consultations with the wider academic community through subject experts. Subject Experts have utilised their subject-specific knowledge to examine a broad array of indicators at the journal level by reviewing the journal content, editorial composition and other factors. We consider that the examination of a wide array of journal indicators will lead to a more responsible evaluation framework, in which values such as diversity, transparency and accuracy are valued as well as scholarly impact.

The only change to the quantitative methodology has been the inclusion of a fourth impact factor, the CiteScore, which replaces the IPP that had been discontinued by Elsevier.

CONCLUSION

We hope that the Academic Journal Guide (AJG) will stimulate further dialogue with the peer community at large. No journal rating guide is ever definitive. It could be argued that the supposed objectivity and superiority of purely metrics-based ratings is potentially misleading, as are crude count-based measures (Aguinis et al., 2020). The AJG is based on the conviction that the expertise and experience of a committee of successful researchers provides fertile grounds for including scholarly judgment in the rating of academic journals.

We take the concerns of the peer community very seriously. Hence, the Editors and Management Committee would again welcome informed input and feedback.

Our intention is to update the AJG every three years. We will continue to strive for ever greater rigour, representation and inclusivity, taking account of the concerns across the community of business and management scholarship, whilst retaining the principle of differentiation in research outputs and evading a 'tragedy of the commons'.

Table 2: Data on Subject Areas

The numbers in italic refer to the 2018 Academic Journal Guide.

	Distribution of Journals Across Ratings				
	4	3	2	1	Total
Accounting	6	21	34	28	89
	<i>6</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>34</i>	<i>28</i>	89
Business and Economic History	3	4	13	9	29
	<i>2</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>8</i>	28
Economics, Econometrics and Statistics	27	67	116	124	334
	<i>23</i>	<i>67</i>	<i>118</i>	<i>122</i>	330
Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management	3	6	10	13	32
	<i>3</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>13</i>	30
Finance	8	32	36	37	113
	<i>8</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>39</i>	<i>34</i>	110
General Management, Ethics, Gender and Social Responsibility	9	12	30	64	115
	<i>8</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>31</i>	78
Human Resource Management and Employment Studies	5	9	23	20	57
	<i>5</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>17</i>	53
Information Systems	8	11	36	45	100
	<i>4</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>34</i>	<i>39</i>	94
Innovation	2	5	12	21	40
	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>15</i>	34
International Business and Area Studies	2	7	18	28	55
	<i>2</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>26</i>	52
Management Development and Education	1	3	17	29	50
	<i>1</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>25</i>	46
Marketing	8	12	21	35	76
	<i>8</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>29</i>	70
Operations and Technology Management	4	9	10	46	69
	<i>3</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>39</i>	62
Operations Research and Management Science	5	22	18	24	69
	<i>5</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>22</i>	66
Organisational Studies	5	6	12	15	38
	<i>5</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>9</i>	32
Psychology (General)	12	15	13	27	67
	<i>9</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>25</i>	57
Psychology (Organisational)	8	14	18	26	66
	<i>7</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>27</i>	67
Public Sector and Health Care	5	10	25	15	55
	<i>3</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>15</i>	43
Regional Studies, Planning and Environment	3	9	9	12	33
	<i>3</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>4</i>	24

	Distribution of Journals Across Ratings				
	4	3	2	1	Total
Sports, Leisure, Tourism and Sector Studies	5	10	38	55	108
	5	10	38	54	107
Social Sciences	8	29	29	22	88
	8	29	29	7	73
Strategy	2	2	5	11	20
	1	3	4	9	17
All subject areas	139	315	543	706	1,703
	121	311	532	598	1,562

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APPENDIX 1

Overview of the AJG 2021 Review Process



APPENDIX 2

Consultation with Academic Community

Overview and Guiding Principles

The formal consultation process and documented assessment with review forms, piloted in the AJG 2018 interim review process was further strengthened, refined and formalised and rolled out comprehensively in the AJG 2021 process. It involved a consistent, transparent, verifiable and robust consultation with learned societies/scholarly associations and peer community panels in each AJG subject area. The consultation process formed an integral part of the AJG review process. As well as expanding the scope and deepening the extent of expertise of the Subject Area Expert teams of the Scientific Committee, the systematic roll-out of a comprehensive, verifiable and formalised consultation process with the wider academic community ensured a codified process of evaluation based on consultation and expertise residing in both AJG subject area teams and the Scientific Committee across subject areas.

Journals subject to Consultation Process

All journals falling within the remit of “Review with Consultation” in the AJG 2021 Review Process (see Appendix 1).

Consultation Target Audience in the Academic Community

- Where possible and where they exist: main worldwide, regional (e.g. European) and UK based learned societies and scholarly associations in the specific subject area, and with relevant special interest groups in general management and business and related learned societies.
- Peer Group Panel of recognised experts in the field, having regard to appropriate international spread and gender balance.
- Beyond the consultations above, subject experts were welcomed to conduct further consultations with the wider peer community and other stakeholders.

Consultation Process

- Subject area experts were furnished with a bespoke spreadsheet for consultees to record their assessment and to provide comments and narrative if they so wished, as well as with an official Chartered ABS letter to accompany the consultation requests, setting out inter alia the purpose, remit and importance of the consultation process, data protection, ethics, confidentiality undertakings.
- Subject experts provided to Editors and Chair of Scientific Committee on a confidential basis the list of peers (anonymised) and learned societies consulted, which they reviewed to ensure sufficiency and adequacy of consultation in the subject area and consistency across subject areas.

Computation of the Consultation Outcome

- Subject experts retained a record of the consultations.
- The outcome of the consultation process was formally recorded and on a dedicated spreadsheet for each subject area. In addition, a number of subject areas also provided documents with detailed comments and narratives from consultees.
- All consultation records were reviewed by the Editors and Chair of Scientific Committee and logged in the Chartered ABS AJG system with restricted access for the Editors, Chair of Scientific Committee, Methodologists and the Chartered ABS AJG team.

Evaluation of Consultation Outcome and Completion of Journal Review Form

- For all journals that underwent consultations, subject area experts computed a numerical summary assessment of the consultation results in terms of averages and/or means and median for peer group consultations and for the consultations with learned societies, as well as a short synthesis summarizing the subject area experts' assessment of the consultation results. These were made available to Scientific Committee members.
- This information was also documented in the Journal Review Form and made available to Scientific Committee members. Review forms were completed if after completion of the consultation process, and based on the metrics, the results of consultation, other information that may be available and subject area experts' assessment, subject experts recommend a change in journal grade, a change in JoD status/addition, or adding a journal which is new to the AJG with a grade of 3 or higher.
- Based on the holistic assessment of the consultation outcome and the other journal grade criteria, this entailed also a reasoned summary assessment to support the recommendation. The completed Journal Review Forms were reviewed by the Editors and made available to Scientific Committee, allowing the Committee as a whole to review proposed rankings/changes of the journals under consideration in their entirety and facilitate informed decision making at the Scientific Committee meeting.



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