

# **JOURNAL QUALITY CLASSIFICATION LISTS**

College of Business

## **Purpose**

The purpose of the discipline-specific journal lists is to provide faculty in the College of Business with target outlets for submission of their scholarly work and to encourage faculty to strive to publish in high quality, nationally recognized journals. These lists acknowledge that Business faculty are encouraged to publish in each field's premier journals and at the same time they affirm that there are many quality outlets through which the faculty can contribute to the scholarly development in their area.

Since no set of lists of this nature can or should be completely comprehensive or static, this document offers an outline of a process to establish journal rankings by discipline and to maintain these lists dynamically over time.

## **Process Overview**

The process of ranking journals by discipline has as its primary goal, to produce a ranking that is as objective (from an external perspective) as possible. The ranking depends upon four (4) different types of general information from outside sources. These are:

- Rankings from peer and aspirant institutions
- Rankings contained in articles from referred scholarly journals
- Citation information from the Social Science Citation Index
- Acceptance rates as reported by Cabells or journal editors

All of these sources of comparative information are independent of the College of Business faculty and reflect judgments from a variety of external sources. Each area's rankings are based on a "preponderance of evidence" test. To ensure that the research output from each discipline within the College of Business is competitive nationally, the primary criterion is the rankings from peer and aspirant institutions. In order to be ranked in the top tier, there must be some general agreement across several of the lists from these institutions. The last three categories of information are used primarily as a check for consistency both within disciplines and across disciplines and to break ties at the margin.

Since journal rankings by other institutions are unique to those institutions, the descriptors and their meaning (in terms of implied quality) for classifying journals is also unique. The College of Business Human Resource Management Committee is responsible for establishing a mapping for ranking descriptors from all examined institutions to a uniform scale to be used for establishing the College of Business rankings. This is to ensure that rankings across disciplines within the College are handled consistently.

Lists of journals at all levels of quality are to be produced for each discipline within the College of Business. Journals included in rankings from any of the above sources are to be considered for

inclusion on the lists. Each of the listed journals is then assigned a ranking based on the descriptor from each of the lists from other institutions. Of course, not all journals are ranked by all institutions and there are idiosyncrasies across institutions. Therefore, when an institution fails to rank (or list) a journal, that journal has missing information for the ranking descriptor for that institution. The list of journal descriptors for each institution are then mapped to the College of Business scale and averaged across all institutions for each journal. To account for the strength of evidence across institutions, the following metric is computed for each journal on the list:

$$RM_i = \frac{\bar{X}_i}{k + m}$$

where  $\bar{X}_i$  is the average of the mapped rankings across all institutions ranking journal  $i$ ,  $k$  is the number of institutions ranking journal  $i$ , and  $m$  is the number of institutions that rank journal  $i$  in the top tier. For instance, if all institutions for which information is available rank *Journal X* a top level journal, the average rank is divided by the number of institutions that ranked it (lots of consistent evidence exists) plus the number that rank it in the top tier. If a journal is ranked by 1 or only a few institutions, or if the ranking across the institutions varies widely (few rank it in the top tier), this reduces the value of the information from the ranking and implies less consistency with the “preponderance of evidence” test. Thus, all else equal, journals ranked by fewer institutions or where there is significant variation in the rank assigned carry smaller weight (have a higher ranking index) in establishing the journal’s College of Business ranking.

The weighting formula used for the empirical article results is similar. Each journal rank is averaged across the empirical article rankings and then weighted by the number of articles rating the journal by dividing by the number of articles ranking the journal.

The final journal rankings in each area are produced from a sorting of the available information using the weighted average scores across institutions as the primary sort criterion, followed by the weighted average scores across empirical articles as the secondary sort criterion. The other criteria such as citation information and acceptance rates are used to check consistency.

To determine the number of journals in the top category (Level 1), the College of Business lists use the complete rankings for each discipline truncated at the average for each discipline across the institutions examined. The discipline-specific lists established by the Human Resource Management Committee represent an average of the lists recognized by both peer and aspirant institutions and should encourage faculty to pursue research outlets that will enhance the national reputation of the College of Business.

### **Transition to New Journal Lists**

The College’s journal lists are dynamic and subject to future review and revision. For purposes of performance appraisal, any new journal lists become effective as soon as they are approved by the College of Business Council. However, individuals have one month from the time of approval of a new list to inform their department head in writing concerning any work that is in progress (research that is under review or in the developmental stage) that is targeted at journals

on the prior lists. Any work deemed to be sufficiently developed as of the date of approval by the department head will be valued according to the prior lists.<sup>1</sup>

For purposes of promotion and tenure consideration, the appropriate journal classification will be determined by the journal list that was current at the time of submission of the article unless:

- A journal falls in quality under the new list (i.e., was previously an elite journal and fell to a Level I, or was a Level I and fell to a Level II) before the time of submission. In this case, the professor can notify his or her department head in writing within one month of a change to the journal list to indicate that s/he has a manuscript in progress for such a journal. If the department head determines that the manuscript is sufficiently developed at that time, the category (Level I or Elite) from the previous journal list will apply.
- A journal improves in quality under the new list (i.e., was previously a Level II journal that improved to a Level I or Elite journal, or was a Level I journal that improved to an Elite journal under the new lists), then previously published articles will be considered at their higher level of quality, even if submitted or published before the change to the new list.

### **List Maintenance and Updating**

The College of Business Council in conjunction with AACSB guidelines is responsible for identifying the set of peer and aspirant institutions used in the construction of the journal lists. In an effort to remain competitive in the business research arena, the journal lists require periodic maintenance and updating to reflect the dynamic nature of future research. Every fifth year, the HRM Committee will reevaluate the journal lists using the process described above and any new information from any of the required sources to produce revised journal lists. Any changes in journal rankings that occur will be governed by the transition policy.

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<sup>1</sup> As the mission of the College of Business evolves, for any departments that are eliminated or phased out, research activity of department members for annual performance appraisals will be at the discretion of the Dean of the College of Business.