



Guidelines for the Management of University of Rwanda Journals

Approved by the Senate meeting of January 17, 2026

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AI: Artificial Intelligence

AJOL: African Journals Online

ARWU: Academic Ranking of World Universities

CAC: College Academic Council

C-DRI: College Director of Research and Innovation

COPE Committee on Publication Ethics

CSAB: Scopus Content Selection and Advisory Board

DOI: Digital Object Identifier

DRI: Director of Research and Innovation

DVC-AAR: Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Research

EiC: Editor-in-Chief

ICT: Information and Communication Technologies

ME: Managing Editor

OJS: Online Journal System

THE: Times Higher Education

UR: University of Rwanda

USD: United States Dollars

WoS: Web of Science

Section I: Guidelines' overview

I.1. Introduction

Aligned with the University of Rwanda Research and Innovation Policy and Agenda, there is a growing imperative to establish a formal, institutional governance framework for all University of Rwanda Journals. While these journals serve as important platforms for disseminating scholarly work to academic communities, policymakers, and society at large, their current management structures require greater coherence, consistency, and institutional oversight.

An institutionalized governance is essential to ensure that UR Journals operate within a unified system that promotes accountability, quality assurance, and sustainability. Such a framework will strengthen the role of journals in enhancing research visibility. Moreover, it will enable the University of Rwanda to standardize editorial processes, enforce rigorous ethical standards, and ensure transparency and predictability in publication timelines. Institutionalizing journal governance is therefore not only a strategic priority but a necessary step toward aligning UR's publishing ecosystem with international best practices, enhancing credibility, and positioning the University as a competitive and reputable research institution globally.

I.2. Objectives of the Guidelines and Strategy

To establish a coherent, institution-wide framework for the governance, management, quality assurance, and international visibility of UR journals, and to guide their systematic progression toward global indexation in Scopus and Web of Science.

I.3. Specific objectives

- Strengthen governance and quality across all UR journals
- Modernize systems and workflows for efficient publishing
- Improve content and international reach of publications
- Obtain reputable indexation and global visibility

I.4. Expected Outcomes

- Regular, high-quality journals published on schedule
- Professional, digital journal operations across all colleges
- More impactful research published by diverse local and global contributors
- UR journals indexed and visible globally in Scopus and Web of Science

I.5. Scope of the Guidelines and Strategy

- Applies to all UR-hosted academic journals
- Covers all aspects of journal management including:
 - Editorial governance and appointments
 - Peer review and ethical standards
 - Publication scheduling and discipline
 - Metadata, DOI registration, and digital archiving
 - Reviewer development and author support
 - Online submission, hosting, and workflow tracking
 - Internal accountability and institutional reporting
- Extends to the indexation pathway, covering:
 - Scopus
 - Web of Science/Clarivate Analytics
- Defines responsibilities across UR governance units:
 - UR Directorate of Research and Innovation
 - College leadership
 - College Director of Research and Innovation (C-DRI)
 - University Library and ICT Directorates

Section II: Governance and Quality Assurance of UR Journals

II.1. Editorial Teams

Purpose of the Editorial Teams:

- Provide academic leadership to ensure the journal fulfills its mandate
- Maintain scholarly quality, integrity, and relevance
- Manage editorial and operational processes according to UR policy and global standards
- Align publication practices with recognized scholarly norms and indexing expectations

Composition and appointment

Editorial Team comprises:

- Editor-in-Chief (Associate Professor/Researcher or Professor/Research Professor)
- Managing Editor (Lecturer/Researcher to Professorial Rank)
- Publications Officer (Research and Innovation Officer (s))

- Editorial Board members (internal and external scholars) (Senior Lecturer/Researcher, Associate Professor/Researcher, Professor/Research Professor)
- Membership shall reflect disciplinary expertise demonstrated through a track record of scholarly publication and active engagement in research, national and international representation, and editorial capacity.

Appointment for the editorial team shall be made by the DVC-AAR

Terms of office

- Editorial Team members serve three-year terms, renewable once
- Renewal shall be based on satisfactory performance and institutional requirements

Roles and Responsibilities

Editor-in-Chief (EiC):

- Provide overall editorial direction and quality assurance
- Makes final decisions on manuscript acceptance, revision, or rejection
- Oversees peer-review, ethical compliance, and editorial integrity
- Defines journal scope, thematic priorities, and publication strategy
- Leads calls for papers, special issues, and scholarly engagement
- Represent the journal in academic fora and strengthen credibility
- Recommends appointment of editorial team members to C-DRI when relevant
- Obtains external funding to support journal activities
- Responsible for disseminating publications using different outlets

Managing Editor (ME):

- Oversees day-to-day journal workflow and operational processes
- Manages submission pipelines, review timelines, and author communication
- Coordinates copy-editing, layout, and publication schedules
- Ensures manuscripts follow submission guidelines and editorial policies
- Maintains records, editorial systems, and archives
- Implements of the EiC and editorial leadership decisions
- Perform other tasks as per request from the Editor-in-Chief
- Verify plagiarism, including AI-generated text

Publications Officer (s):

- Oversee technical production, copy-editing, and formatting
- Manages online hosting, archiving, and dissemination
- Ensures metadata completeness and indexing requirements
- Enhances journal visibility through dissemination channels

- Maintains publication records and supports DOI and citation tracking
- Perform other tasks as per request from the EiC and ME
- Verify plagiarism, including AI-generated text

Editorial Board Members:

- Provides academic support and advisory oversight
- Conducts preliminary reviews of submitted manuscripts and contributes to expert evaluation
- Helps define editorial direction and review journal scope
- Mobilizes outreach to researchers and professional communities

Meetings and Reporting:

- Editorial Team meets at least twice annually, with flexibility for urgent meetings
- Meetings may be virtual, face-to-face, or hybrid
- EiC submits progress updates and performance reports twice a year to:
 - College Director of Research and Innovation, who will present them in the College Academic Council (CAC)
 - Copy to UR Director of Research and Innovation and to UR DVC-AAR
- Reporting includes publication schedules, submission, peer-review status, and challenges

II.2. Publication Discipline and Standards

- Minimum requirement: Two published issues per year, every year
- No skipped issues, missed volumes, or ad-hoc publication patterns
- Performance monitored quarterly and reported to DVC-AAR through C-DRI and UR-DRI
- Journals must comply with:
 - Open Access practices
 - Indexing Metadata Standards
 - DOI registration and archiving
- Quality assurance embedded in workflow from submission to publication
- Article Processing Charges for 200 USD after acceptance of the manuscript

II.3. Institutional Support and Expected Outcomes

- The University of Rwanda will strengthen technical support for centralized systems, including:
 - Online Journal System (OJS) management
 - DOI and indexing administration
 - Repository and archiving assistance
 - Reviewer training and editorial mentoring

- Colleges shall retain operational responsibility while benefiting from shared services
- Regular and disciplined publishing will:
 - Build author trust and submission volume
 - Improve postgraduate research dissemination
 - Position journals for Scopus and Web of Science indexation
 - Enhance citation impact and scholarly reputation
 - Strengthen UR's institutional research profile nationally and globally

II.4. Ethical and Quality Standards

Journals must adhere to:

- UR Journal publications guideline
- International publishing norms
- Peer-review integrity and academic honesty
- Journals must preserve editorial independence while ensuring accountability

II.5. Role of the Directorate of Research and Innovation

Core Contributes:

- Provide strategic oversight without interfering in editorial decisions
- Ensures alignment with university research and innovation policy and agenda
- Guarantees compliance with ethical standards and national/international norms
- Facilitate institutional resources, including:
 - Budget allocation
 - Digital publication infrastructure
 - Capacity building for editorial board members
- Monitors visibility, performance metrics, and progress toward indexation
- Supports partnerships that enhance journal quality, citations, and networks.

Section III. UR Journal Indexation Strategy

III.1. Introduction and Purpose

The University of Rwanda aims to elevate its research visibility and global academic standing through the systematic indexing of its scholarly journals in internationally recognized databases. This indexation strategy provides a structured roadmap to secure indexing in Scopus and the Web of Science.

This strategic direction aligns with the UR Research and Innovation Policy and the Agenda, which prioritize increased research dissemination, strengthened publication quality, and greater contribution to national and global knowledge systems.

It is also driven by the growing importance of international indexing in global university rankings. Major ranking bodies such as Times Higher Education (THE) and others, use publication output in indexed journals, citation metrics, and research visibility as core indicators when evaluating institutional research performance. Universities with journals and researchers publishing in Scopus or Web of Science receive higher recognition in these systems, while those without indexed outputs face limitations in competitiveness, institutional reputation, and rankings mobility.

Therefore, achieving Scopus and Web of Science indexation is not only a scholarly imperative but also a strategic requirement for UR to achieve its global positioning, attract partnerships, recruit high-caliber staff and students, and strengthen Rwanda's regional leadership in research and innovation.

III.2. Strategic Indexation Goals

By 2030, UR will:

- Maintain full visibility of all its journals on AJOL and global discovery systems
- Secure Scopus indexing for all UR journals
- Achieve inclusion of all journals in Web of Science
- Build the institutional systems required to sustain indexing

III.3. Guiding Principles

The Indexation Strategy is grounded in four institutional commitments:

- a. **Quality and Editorial Rigor:** UR journals must consistently demonstrate adherence to international standards of peer-review, academic integrity, publication ethics, and editorial leadership.
- b. **Predictable Publishing Cadence:** All journals will maintain a minimum of two issues per year, published on time, with no skipped volumes or backdated issues;
- c. **Professionalized journal management:** Journals must transition from informal volunteer-dependent to fully accountable governance, with mandated roles and reporting structures;
- d. **Global Orientation and Collaboration:** Journals must show increasing internationalization through board membership, authorship, diversity, and citations.

III.4. Prerequisites for Indexation

To be eligible for Scopus or Web of Science, journals must demonstrate:

- a. Editorial and Policy Requirements
 - Formally appointed editorial team with transparent roles
 - Clearly stated journal scope, aims, and peer-review processes
 - Published ethics policy aligned to COPE standards
 - Internationally recognizable governance (EiC at Associate Professor/Researcher or Professor/Research Professor rank)
- b. Technical and Access Requirements
 - ISSN registration and stable web presence
 - Use of a recognized online submission and editorial management system (e.g., OJS)
 - DOIs assigned to all published articles
 - Publicly accessible archives and indexing metadata
- c. Content and Publication Regularity
 - At least four consecutive punctual issues with original peer-reviewed articles
 - Increasing representation of international editors, reviewers, and authors
 - Citation activity visible through Google Scholar, Dimensions, or discipline-specific databases.

III.5. Selection of Candidate Journals

Candidate priority journals will be selected based on:

- Publication continuity and current backlog status
- Strengths of editorial leadership and board composition
- Disciplinary significance and alignment with national research priorities
- Author submission volume and readership potential

III.6. Institutional Roles and Responsibilities

UR Directorate of Research and Innovation (DRI)

- Lead implementation of indexation strategy
- Provide capacity building, editorial support, and compliance monitoring
- Coordinate Scopus/WoS submission process

Colleges

- Ensure appointed editors, staffing, and workload allocation
- Lead manuscript solicitation, peer review, and publication pipelines

- Maintain publication discipline and resolve operational delays

University Library and ICT

- Support DOI registration and metadata integrity
- Manage digital platform hosting, OJS maintenance, and repository archiving
- Ensure discoverability through scholarly search systems

III.7. Monitoring and Evaluation

- Annual reporting to UR Senate, by UR DRI, on:
 - Journal regularity
 - Author diversity
 - Peer-review timelines
 - Indexation progress
- UR DRI to maintain the institutional dashboard showing:
 - Publication performance
 - Turnaround time metrics
 - Submission and acceptance data
 - Indexation status by journal

III.8. Sustainability and Expansion

- Indexed journals must maintain quality as citation impact grows

III.9. Expected Outcomes

- Improved visibility of the Rwanda scholarship globally
- Improved citation performance for UR researchers
- Expanded postgraduate publication pipelines
- Strong positioning of UR in continental and global research rankings
- Sustainable, professional journal ecosystem that supports the UR's research mission



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Appendix

Activities and Timeline

Phase 1: Foundation and Compliance (Month 1-6)

- Confirm full editorial teams and term of office letters
- Standardize journal policies, ethics statements, and author guidelines
- Migrate journals to unified online submission and tracking systems
- Clear or publish backlog content
- Set and publish two-year publication calendars

Deliverables

- Editorial teams in place
- OJS system live
- Calendar published
- Backlog cleared

Phase 2: Publication and Quality Strengthening (Months 6-18)

- Publish at least three issues during this period on schedule
- Introduce thematic special issues aligned to UR research priorities
- Increase international participation on editorial boards and reviewer lists
- Implement routine plagiarism screening and citation checks
- Provide technical and language editing support to accepted manuscripts

Deliverables

- Four consecutive on-time issues
- Improve content quality
- International board participation
- DOIs and metadata functioning

Phase 3: Application and Continuous improvement (Months 18-24)

- Conduct pre-submission audits against Scopus and WoS criteria
- Submit journals for indexing:
 - Scopus Content Selection and Advisory Board
 - Web of Science
- Respond to feedback from reviewers
- Strengthen weak areas identified in reviews
- Develop sustainability plans for post-acceptance monitoring

Deliverables

- Scopus submission
- WoS submission
- Response to CSAB/Clarivate feedback
- Framework for next journal cohort.