

## **Launching a Scholarly Journal :** **A Comprehensive Guide for Success and Impact**

Launching a scholarly journal demands meticulous planning and execution to achieve success and make a significant impact within the academic community.

This guide, produced by the University Publication Committee of the Eastern University, Sri Lanka, provides essential strategies and best practices for initiating and managing a high-quality scholarly publication. Covering key aspects such as editorial structure, manuscript management, peer review processes, and indexing, these guidelines aim to help founders create a reputable and impactful journal. By following these principles, founders can enhance their journal's visibility and credibility, contributing significantly to advancing knowledge in their fields.

### **1. Identify the Gap**

Identify the specific niche or unmet need that your journal aims to address within the academic field. Assess how the journal will contribute to and improve information dissemination and knowledge sharing.

### **2. Define the Aim and Scope of the Journal**

Establish a clear aim and scope for your journal to highlight its unique focus. Ensure that these align with the strengths of the Eastern University, Sri Lanka, and, if applicable, the specific disciplines of an associated academic department or faculty.

### **3. Selecting the Journal Name**

Choose a clear, professional, and concise name for your journal. Verify its uniqueness by searching the ISSN Portal (<https://portal.issn.org/>) to avoid similarities with existing titles. Additionally, conduct an internet search to ensure no other publication has the same or a similar name.

### **4. Determine the Type of Publication**

Choose whether your journal will be available in print, online, or both. Determine the access model : subscription-based or open access. Specify the types of content accepted, aligning them with disciplinary norms.

#### **Peer-Reviewed Scholarly Publications**

- **General Types :** Original research, review articles, case studies, conference proceedings,
- **Discipline-specific:** Clinical trials, protocol papers, methods papers, technical reports, registered reports.



### **5. Setting up the Editorial Team**

Form an editorial board consisting of internationally recognized researchers committed to academic publishing, along with local scholars. Select a diverse group with strong professional networks to enhance the journal's reputation. Ensure that the expertise of board members aligns with the journal's scope and that they can dedicate adequate time to their roles. A well-regarded, active Editor-in-Chief and editorial board are crucial for enhancing the journal's prestige and achieving indexing status.

### **6. Determine the Publication Frequency**

Decide how frequently the journal will be published, monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly, bi-annually, annually, or another schedule set by the Editorial Board or academic department. Also, choose whether to organize the journal into volumes, series, or numbers to ensure proper referencing.

### **7. Obtaining a Unique or Official Email Address for the Journal**

Secure a dedicated email address for handling all journal correspondence professionally. Since Eastern University, Sri Lanka has an official website, request the unique email ID for the journal from the CICT webmaster. This ensures a consistent and professional contact point for all journal-related communications.

### **8. Obtaining an ISSN for the Journal**

The International Standard Serial Number (ISSN), which is provided by the National Library and Documentation Services Board (NLDSB), the ISSN International Agency for Sri Lanka, should be obtained through the Librarian. This can be done before or after launching the journal, with a nominal service charge borne by the relevant Faculty. Separate ISSNs are required for print and digital formats. If the journal's title changes, a new ISSN must be requested.

### **9. Establish an Online Presence**

Secure a dedicated space on the official website of Eastern University, Sri Lanka, or the relevant faculty. Ideally, create a unique website for the journal. This site should feature key information, including the journal's name, aim and scope, policies, editor details (with affiliations), author guidelines, archival space, submission procedures, contact information, and promotional content.

### **10. Select Reviewers for the Journal**

Editors should recruit qualified academics and experts in relevant fields to review submitted articles. Reviewers will evaluate and critique manuscripts to ensure they meet the journal's standards or identify necessary revisions. Reviewers may be compensated for their services or contribute on a voluntary basis, depending on the journal's policy and the agreement made with the reviewers.



### **11. Call for papers**

Once foundational steps are in place, editors must actively promote the journal by issuing a call for papers. Utilize personal networks, social media, and direct outreach to universities, organizations, and relevant departments. Spreading the word effectively will attract quality submissions and establish the journal's presence in the academic community.

### **12. Collate submitted papers**

Editors should regularly review submitted articles to ensure they align with the journal's aim and scope. This initial assessment should occur as submissions come in. For journals with a set publication schedule, maintain a minimum two-month window between submission and publication to allow for thorough evaluation and review. This helps ensure high-quality content and prevents issues associated with predatory practices.

### **13. Evaluate Originality with Plagiarism Detection**

To uphold high standards, academic journals must thoroughly check for plagiarism and other unethical practices. Authors should perform a plagiarism check on their manuscripts before submission. Each submitted paper will also undergo a plagiarism review by the editorial team, possibly with the assistance of academic librarians. Papers with a similarity index exceeding 20% (or a stricter limit set by the editors) will be returned to the author for revision and resubmission.

### **14. Blind Peer Review Process for Submitted Manuscripts**

Manuscripts that pass the initial plagiarism check will undergo double-blind peer review by two independent reviewers, with author anonymity ensured to promote impartiality. Reviewers are required to provide detailed feedback, and editors may use a standardized evaluation form to enhance consistency in the review process. For a manuscript to be considered for publication, both reviewers must provide positive assessments. In cases where one review is favorable and the other is not, the manuscript will be sent to a third reviewer.

### **15. Editors' Decision Process**

Editors will assess the reviewers' feedback to make final publication decisions. If the majority of comments from the reviewers indicate that the manuscript is not recommended for publication, it will be rejected. Editors may provide the author with the reasons for the rejection. Authors may be allowed to revise their manuscript based on the feedback and resubmit it for a subsequent round of evaluation.

### **16. Publication Fees for Accepted Articles**

Determine whether there will be a fee for publishing accepted articles in the journal. If applicable, specify whether authors must pay this fee before the review process or only after their article has been reviewed and accepted. Clearly outline the fee structure and payment procedures in the journal's guidelines.

### 17. Publication Schedule

Articles should be published following their acceptance in accordance with the journal's publication schedule. Editors will determine the number of articles to be included in each issue. It is not mandatory to release an issue of the journal if no accepted articles are available for publication at the designated time.

### 18. Utilizing Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs)

In the digital age, persistent identifiers are crucial for accurate referencing and retrieval. Among them, Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs), ISSNs, Handles, Archival Resource Keys (ARKs), and Persistent Uniform Resource Locators (PURLs) stand out.

DOIs are particularly essential for uniquely identifying and accessing digital content, such as individual articles and journal issues. Managed by organizations like CrossRef, DOIs consist of a prefix identifying the publisher and a suffix for the specific content. They are case-insensitive and can include a variety of Unicode characters.

- For more information on DOIs, visit <https://www.doi.org/the-identifier/resources/handbook/>
- To become a CrossRef member and register DOIs for your content, visit <https://www.crossref.org/membership/>.

### 19. Application for Indexing

After publishing the first volume or operating for one year, editors may apply for inclusion in major indexing organizations such as:

- Web of Science: <https://clarivate.com/products/scientific-and-academic-research/research-publishing-solutions/publisher-portal/newusers/>
- PubMed: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/pub/addjournal/>
- SCOPUS: <https://www.elsevier.com/products/scopus/content/content-policy-and-selection>
- Google Scholar: <https://scholar.google.com/intl/en/scholar/inclusion.html#indexing>
- Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ): <https://doaj.org/application/new>

Indexing is crucial for broadening the journal's reach and enhancing its academic reputation. Each indexing service has specific inclusion criteria, such as publishing a minimum number of articles (e.g., at least 20), maintaining publication for a specified period (e.g., at least 2 years), or being an open-access journal. Review and ensure compliance with each service's criteria before submitting an application.

### 20. Effective Strategies for Journal Promotion

Once you've established your journal, use these strategies to promote it effectively:

- **Initial Contributions:** Emphasize the importance of quality submissions for the first and second issues to set the journal's tone and reputation.



- **Close Circle:** Promote your journal within your immediate network of colleagues, friends, and professional contacts.
- **Social Media:** Use platforms like Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook to announce new issues, highlight key articles, and engage with the academic community.
- **Email Campaigns:** Build a mailing list of potential readers and contributors. Send newsletters with the latest research, calls for papers, and updates.
- **Academic Conferences:** Present your journal at relevant conferences and workshops. Distribute flyers, offer sample issues, and network with attendees.
- **Institutional Collaboration:** Partner with universities, research institutions, and professional organizations to co-host events, feature in newsletters, and gain endorsements.
- **Search Engine Optimization (SEO) :** Optimize your journal's website for search engines with relevant keywords, high-quality content, and backlinks to increase visibility.
- **Indexing Services:** Get your journal indexed in reputable databases and abstracting services to enhance discoverability and credibility.
- **Author Engagement:** Encourage authors to share their work on personal and institutional websites, social media, and academic networks. Provide promotional materials and guidelines.
- **Consistent Quality:** Maintain high standards in the articles you publish to attract more submissions and establish your journal's reputation.
- **Gradual Outreach:** Expand your outreach to broader academic and professional networks as your journal gains recognition to ensure a steady flow of quality submissions.

**Note :** For journals that are already well-established, it is beneficial to periodically review and update the journal's scope, objectives, and thematic focus to ensure continued accuracy and relevance in the evolving academic landscape.

By implementing these guidelines, prospective journal founders can navigate the complexities of establishing and managing a scholarly journal with confidence. These best practices provide a foundation for ensuring rigorous peer review, effective editorial management, and broad dissemination. Commitment to these principles will not only enhance the journal's credibility but also foster meaningful contributions to the academic field. As the journal evolves, ongoing adherence to these standards will be key to sustaining its impact and relevance.