

Scopus Indexing Checklist

Complete Step-by-Step Guide to Get Your Journal Indexed in Scopus

Elsevier Scopus | SNIP & CiteScore Ready | Peer Review Compliant | Crossref Integrated | OJS Compatible

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62+ Journals Launched | 30+ Scopus Indexed

About this Checklist: Based on real experience indexing 30+ journals in Scopus, this guide walks you through every criterion Elsevier evaluates. Use it as your preparation roadmap — from journal launch to successful Scopus application.

SCOPUS AT A GLANCE — What You're Applying For

Parameter	Details
Database Owner	Elsevier (Netherlands)
Journals Indexed	28,000+ peer-reviewed journals
Application Portal	Scopus Source Submission System (SSSS)
Review Timeline	Typically 12–18 months after submission
Evaluation Body	Content Selection & Advisory Board (CSAB)
Key Metrics	CiteScore, SJR (SCImago Journal Rank), SNIP
Open Access Support	Yes — OA journals are accepted
Re-application Wait	Minimum 1 year after rejection
Discontinuation Risk	Journals can be removed if standards drop

SCOPUS CSAB EVALUATION CRITERIA

How Scopus evaluates your journal: The Content Selection & Advisory Board (CSAB) scores journals on four main areas. You must demonstrate strength in ALL areas — weakness in one can lead to rejection.

Criterion	Weight	Key Factors
Journal Policy	High	Peer review, ethics, retraction policy, COPE membership
Content	High	Scope clarity, article quality, author diversity, self-citation ratio
Journal Standing	Medium	CiteScore/SJR trend, citations from Scopus journals, h-index

Regularity	High	On-time publishing, consistent issue schedule, no publication gaps
Online Availability	Medium	Full-text online, DOI on all articles, stable website
Editorial Board	High	Diversity, affiliation, ORCID IDs, active researchers in field

01 PHASE 1: Journal Foundation & Identity

Basic Requirements

- Obtain a valid ISSN (Online) — apply at portal.issn.org
 - Both print and online ISSN strengthen your application
- Register your journal domain and ensure it is stable and permanently available
 - URL changes after submission can delay or void your application
- Install SSL certificate (HTTPS) — required for all online submissions
- Define a clear, specific Aims & Scope (200-400 words minimum)
 - Vague scope is the #1 reason for CSAB rejection. Be precise about subject area, geography, article types
- Ensure journal name does not conflict with existing Scopus-indexed journals
- Confirm journal is not listed as predatory (check Beall's list at beallslist.net)
- Define and publish the journal's publication frequency (monthly, quarterly, biannual)
 - Frequency must be consistent and maintained after indexing too

Publisher Information

- Register a legal publisher entity (university, institution, or company)
- List publisher name, full address, country, and contact on journal website
- Ensure publisher is not associated with any known predatory publishing network
- Add an 'About the Publisher' page with history and mission

02 PHASE 2: Editorial Board — Scopus' #1 Evaluation Point

Critical: Scopus CSAB gives the highest weight to editorial board quality. A weak, unverifiable, or non-diverse board is the fastest path to rejection. Every editor must be an active, credible researcher in your field.

- Recruit an Editor-in-Chief with a strong publication record in the journal's subject area
 - EiC should ideally have publications in other Scopus-indexed journals
- Build an Editorial Board of minimum 10–15 members from at least 5 different countries
 - International diversity is explicitly evaluated by CSAB
- Ensure all editorial board members have active ORCID iDs (orcid.org)
 - ORCID is now effectively required for Scopus. No ORCID = unverifiable identity
- Verify all board members have current institutional affiliations (not retired, not inactive)
 - Scopus checks if affiliations listed match real active researchers
- List full Name, Title, Institution, Country, and ORCID for each board member on website
- Ensure board members are not serving on too many other journals simultaneously
 - CSAB checks if editors are on an excessive number of journals — a red flag for predatory behavior
- Add Section Editors for each major subject area covered by the journal
- Include Guest Editor policy if you publish special issues
- Obtain written consent from all listed editorial board members

- *Listing someone without permission is an ethics violation*
- Assign section editors with relevant subject expertise — not just affiliated professors
- Enable ORCID Profile Plugin in OJS to display ORCID badges on author/editor pages

03 PHASE 3: Peer Review Process & Ethics

- Implement and document a rigorous peer review process (double-blind recommended)
 - *Must be clearly described on the journal website — not just stated in guidelines*
- Join COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics) at publicationethics.org
 - *COPE membership is a strong positive signal to CSAB and is increasingly required*
- Publish a full Ethics Policy: plagiarism, authorship, conflict of interest, data sharing
- Establish and publish a Retraction/Correction Policy
 - *Journals without a retraction policy fail ethics criteria*
- Use plagiarism detection software (iThenticate / Turnitin) and state this on website
- Define and publish minimum review timeline (e.g., first decision within 6 weeks)
- Maintain reviewer anonymity and implement COI (Conflict of Interest) checks
- Never allow rapid publication without genuine peer review
 - *Fast-track publishing without review is a major rejection trigger*
- Document rejection rates — Scopus prefers selective journals (not 'accept everything')
 - *A very high acceptance rate (>80%) raises flags during evaluation*
- Train editorial team on COPE guidelines and document the training
- Set up reviewer assignment tracking in OJS to create audit trail
- Configure OJS reviewer deadlines and automated reminders

04 PHASE 4: Content Quality & Publishing Standards

- Publish at least 2 complete volumes with consistent schedule before applying
 - *CSAB wants to see publishing track record — not just a new journal with 1 issue*
- Ensure all published articles have: Title, Abstract, Keywords, Author affiliations, References
 - *Incomplete metadata on even a few articles can harm your application*
- All articles must have full English abstracts (even if article is in another language)
- Ensure author diversity — avoid publishing mostly from the same institution
 - *High concentration of articles from one institution/country is a negative signal*
- Maintain self-citation ratio below 20% across all articles
 - *Artificially inflated citations are detected and will lead to rejection or removal*
- Ensure all PDFs are text-searchable — never upload scanned image PDFs
- Produce JATS XML for all articles (NLM/JATS standard)
 - *JATS XML is required for Scopus metadata ingestion and future indexing*
- Enable DOI for every published article and deposit to Crossref
 - *Undeposited DOIs don't resolve — this is detected during Scopus evaluation*
- Add author ORCID iDs in article metadata and on article pages
- Include funding acknowledgment section in articles (increasingly required)
- Use consistent citation style throughout all articles in the journal
- Ensure reference lists are complete and accurately formatted
- Publish articles continuously or in defined issues — never publish in batches retroactively
 - *Backdating publications is a red flag for CSAB*

- Add article-level HTML/full-text reading view (Lens Reader or OJS HTML galley)

05 PHASE 5: Technical Standards & Website Requirements

- Ensure all article pages are publicly accessible without login (Open Access)
 - *Paywalled content cannot be evaluated by CSAB*
- All article metadata (title, abstract, keywords) must be machine-readable in HTML
 - *Google Scholar and Scopus bots read meta tags — use OJS correctly for this*
- Configure Google Scholar meta tags via OJS Google Scholar Plugin
- Ensure journal website loads correctly on mobile devices (responsive design)
- Website must be stable — no broken links, 404 errors, or downtime during evaluation
 - *Scopus evaluators visit your live site during the review period*
- Submit journal sitemap to Google Search Console for indexing verification
- Enable OJS Usage Statistics plugin and track article-level views/downloads
- Implement structured data (schema.org/ScholarlyArticle) for SEO and discoverability
- Ensure all DOI links resolve correctly (test at doi.org before applying)
- Configure CrossRef Reference Linking Plugin for reference DOI resolution
- Enable PKP Preservation Network (PN) or LOCKSS for digital preservation
 - *Long-term content preservation is an evaluation criterion*
- Ensure article pages display publication date, volume, issue, page numbers
- Add a dedicated 'Indexing & Abstracting' page listing all current database memberships

06 PHASE 6: Pre-Application Self-Audit

Before you apply: Run this self-audit to identify gaps. Submitting too early wastes your one application slot per year. Rejected journals must wait 12 months to reapply.

- Complete Scopus pre-evaluation checklist at elsevier.com (unofficial self-check)
- Check if your ISSN is registered in ROAD (road.issn.org) directory
- Ensure your journal is listed in DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals)
 - *DOAJ listing significantly strengthens your Scopus application*
- Verify journal is indexed in Google Scholar (check scholar.google.com search)
- Calculate your self-citation percentage across all published articles
- Count author country diversity — aim for articles from 10+ countries
- Review acceptance rate — ensure it's selective (ideally 30-50% acceptance)
- Confirm editorial board ORCID profiles are all live and updated
- Test every DOI link (random sample of 20 articles) — all must resolve
- Have a colleague or expert review the journal website from a visitor's perspective
- Request external peer review of several published articles to validate quality
- Check that no editor is listed as author on more than 15% of articles
 - *High internal authorship is a major red flag*

07 PHASE 7: Submitting Your Scopus Application

- **Create an account on Scopus Source Submission System (SSSS)**
 - Visit: suggestsources.scopus.com
- **Select correct subject area classification — be precise, not broad**
 - Mis-classification leads to wrong CSAB panel reviewing your journal
- **Upload 5 representative articles (best published articles) as PDF samples**
 - Choose articles that best represent the scope and quality of your journal
- **Provide complete journal metadata: ISSN, publisher, URL, language, start year**
- **List full editorial board details in the application form**
 - Name, affiliation, ORCID, country for every member
- **Provide publication schedule and evidence of consistent publishing**
- **Upload a concise Aims & Scope statement — 150 to 300 words**
- **Provide peer review process description — specific and detailed**
- **List all current indexing databases where journal is already listed**
 - Being in DOAJ, EBSCO, Dimensions already is a positive signal
- **Double-check all form fields before final submission — corrections after submission are limited**
- **Save your application reference/confirmation number**
- **Do NOT submit if you have any known weaknesses — fix them first**
 - One failed application means 12 months wait. Better to delay and succeed

08 PHASE 8: After Application — What to Do While Waiting

- **Continue publishing on schedule — do NOT pause publishing after applying**
 - CSAB monitors journals during review. Publication gaps are a negative signal
- **Continue improving editorial board if possible — add more international members**
- **Maintain website stability — Scopus evaluators visit the live site during review**
 - critical
- **Do NOT change journal URL, name, or scope during the review period**
- **Monitor email for CSAB queries or requests for additional information**
 - Scopus may contact you for clarification — respond within stated deadlines
- **Continue building citations by promoting published articles on ResearchGate, Academia.edu**
- **Apply for Web of Science (Clarivate) simultaneously if eligible — diversify indexing**
- **If rejected, request detailed feedback from Scopus and create a remediation plan**
 - Review feedback carefully and address every point before reapplying after 12 months
- **If accepted, set up Scopus API integration for article-level metrics on your website**
- **After indexing, maintain all standards — journals can be removed for declining quality**

REALISTIC SCOPUS INDEXING TIMELINE

Phase	Timeline	Milestone
Journal Setup & Launch	Month 1–2	OJS installed, ISSN obtained, editorial board formed
First Volume Published	Month 3–8	Volume 1: 2–3 issues published with quality content
DOAJ Application & Acceptance	Month 6–12	Apply DOAJ after 1 volume; approval takes 3–6 months
Second Volume Consistency	Month 9–18	Volume 2 published on schedule — demonstrates regularity

Pre-Application Audit	Month 18–20	Full self-audit, fix all gaps, prepare sample articles
Scopus Application Submitted	Month 20–22	Submit via SSSS with complete documentation
CSAB Review Period	Month 22–36	Typically 12–18 months for first decision
Indexing Decision	Month 34–40	Accepted, Rejected, or Re-evaluation requested
Articles Appear in Scopus	+2–4 months	After acceptance, articles are ingested into database

TOP REASONS JOURNALS GET REJECTED BY SCOPUS

1	Weak Editorial Board Editors with no active publications, fake affiliations, or too many journals listed simultaneously
2	Vague Aims & Scope Scope too broad, too vague, or not matching published content — the board can't evaluate fit
3	Inconsistent Publishing Gaps in publication schedule, backdated articles, or irregular issue frequency
4	High Self-Citation Rate Articles citing other articles in same journal excessively — artificially inflates CiteScore
5	Poor Peer Review Evidence No documentation of review process, or evidence of acceptance without genuine review
6	No Ethics Policy Missing retraction policy, plagiarism policy, or COPE membership/compliance
7	Missing or Broken DOIs DOIs assigned in OJS but not deposited to Crossref — don't resolve when clicked
8	Missing JATS XML No structured metadata for articles — Scopus cannot ingest content without it
9	Low Author Diversity Most authors from same institution or country — indicates a 'house journal'
10	Applying Too Early Submitting before establishing track record — no DOAJ, no 2 volumes, no citations

KEY RESOURCES FOR SCOPUS INDEXING

Resource	URL	Purpose
Scopus Source Submission	suggestsources.scopus.com	Submit your journal application
Scopus Journal Metrics	scopus.com/sources	Check existing journal metrics
COPE	publicationethics.org	Ethics membership & guidelines
DOAJ	doaj.org	Open Access directory listing

ORCID	orcid.org	Author/editor identity verification
Crossref	crossref.org	DOI registration & deposit
ISSN Portal	portal.issn.org	Register journal ISSN
JATS4R	jats4r.org	JATS XML compliance guidelines
Beall's List	beallslist.net	Verify journal is not flagged
PKP OJS Docs	docs.pkp.sfu.ca	OJS technical documentation
Google Scholar Help	scholar.google.com/intl/en/scholar/inclusion.html	Scholar inclusion guidelines

Need Expert Help Getting Your Journal into Scopus?

I have personally guided 30+ journals to successful Scopus indexing. I know exactly what CSAB looks for — and how to get your journal ready. Don't waste a year on a rejected application.

Scopus Indexing Services I Offer:

■ Full Scopus Readiness Audit	Complete review of all CSAB criteria with gap analysis report
■ Editorial Board Strengthening	Recruitment strategy, ORCID setup, diversity optimization
■ JATS XML Production	Article-level structured XML for all indexing requirements
■ DOAJ Application Support	Full DOAJ preparation and submission — prerequisite for Scopus
■ Crossref & DOI Integration	Complete DOI setup, deposit, and metadata management
■ OJS Technical Optimization	Configure OJS correctly for Scopus metadata standards
■ Application Writing Support	Help crafting your SSSS submission for maximum impact
■ Rejection Recovery Consulting	Post-rejection audit and 12-month remediation roadmap

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Worldwide | 30+ Scopus
Indexed

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■ Businesses:	OJS Expert Solutions Digital Bisht OJS Academy AskBisht

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