

## Definition of a South African Journal for inclusion in the DHET list of South African Journals

### INTRODUCTION

The DHET application process has the following statement:

"South African journals which, in the opinion of the editor, comply with the following criteria may apply to the Department for inclusion in the list of accredited **South African Journals**:"

This statement is not accompanied by a definition of a South African Journal and the onus has been on those applying for such a listing to explain why they consider their journal to be a South African journal. In many cases such an explanation has not even been attempted in the application.

The purpose for introducing a list of South African journals is clearly stated in the DHET regulations, as well as the Department's expectations of the pathway that such journals should follow as they develop their scholarly impact. Some of the provisions of the policy are given here:

5.1 Journals refer to peer reviewed periodical publications devoted to the dissemination of original research and new developments within specific disciplines, sub-disciplines or fields of study. These include original articles, research letters, research papers and review articles. Journals must have a peer review policy.

5.2 Only articles published in approved scholarly journals are subsidised. The Department will determine, in consultation with the sector, which lists of accredited journals and indices are approved in terms of this policy. The Department will issue, on or before 31 January each year, updated official lists of journals for each reporting year. In order to ensure stability of the system, approved lists will not change drastically from year to year or in a way that would cause confusion.

5.8 The Department of Higher Education and Training maintains a **list of South African journals** that meet the criteria set out in this policy. South African journals not appearing on the approved lists of journals, but meeting the policy's minimum criteria, can apply for accreditation. All South African journals currently not listed in any international index **are encouraged to seek inclusion in such indexes** and meet the **stringent criteria for high quality international journals**. SA journals which do not achieve inclusion in any of these indexes and which continue to meet the criteria for accreditation to a separate list of South African journals remain in the latter list.

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Emphasis has been added by the author.

With the growing internationalization of scholarly publishing, the question of the definition of a South African Journal needs to be refined since there does not appear to be a commonly held view of what a South African journal is.

### GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR THE RECOGNITION OF A SOUTH AFRICAN JOURNAL

The following principles need to be applied jointly and severally in assessing whether a journal can be recognised for inclusion in the DHET SA List of Journals:

**1) The process for the establishment of the journal must be in South Africa. The nature of this process and its rationale needs to be carefully explained in the application for its inclusion.**

**2) The naming of the journal is not an issue for its recognition. Some South African journals have been renamed to “African .....**, Southern African ....., etc.” and this not regarded as being definitive enough for recognition.

**3) It should have been initiated by a South African institution (a university, scholarly society or similar institution) or by a group of South African based scholars. Intellectual ownership should be retained by the initiators.**

**4) The participation of South African scholars as authors of the material in the journals must be at a level where at least 40% of the research articles published in a two-year period indicates that the intellectual project espoused by the journal has significant South African participation and even leadership.**

**5) The focus of the journal should be on scholarly work emanating from South Africa.**

**6) The Editor must be based in South Africa, and the Editorial Board should have significant representation from South Africa.**

#### JOURNALS EXCLUDED FROM CONSIDERATION:

1) A journal established by an international organisation, or an organisation located outside South Africa, would not qualify for consideration.

2) The permanent residence of an Editor in South Africa does not make the journal a South African journal as envisaged by the DHET regulations.

3) A journal that is published by a South African publisher or with a South African address does not make the journal a South African journal unless it fulfils the GENERAL PRINCIPLES listed for the definition of a South African journal given above.

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