

Committee on  
Scholarly Publishing  
in South Africa

Report on  
Grouped Peer Review  
of Scholarly Journals in

# Economics and Business Management



**science & innovation**

Department:  
Science and Innovation  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**



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The Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf) was inaugurated in May 1996. It was established in response to the need for an academy of science consonant with the dawn of democracy in South Africa: activist in its mission of using science and scholarship for the benefit of society, with a mandate encompassing all scholarly disciplines that use an open-minded and evidence-based approach to build knowledge. ASSAf thus adopted in its name the term 'science' in the singular as reflecting a common way of enquiring rather than an aggregation of different disciplines. Its members are elected on the basis of a combination of two principal criteria, namely academic excellence and significant contributions to society.

The Parliament of South Africa passed the Academy of Science of South Africa Act (*Act 67 of 2001*), which came into force on 15 May 2002. This made ASSAf the only academy of science in South Africa that is officially recognised by government and represents the country in the international community of science academies and elsewhere.

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# ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

<b>ABDC</b>	Australian Business Deans Council
<b>ABS</b>	Association of Business Schools
<b>AJER</b>	African Journal of Employee Relations
<b>AJOL</b>	African Journals Online
<b>AJPA</b>	African Journal of Public Affairs
<b>APC</b>	Article-Processing Charge
<b>APSDPR</b>	Africa's Public Service Delivery & Performance Review
<b>AREF</b>	African Review of Economics and Finance
<b>ASSA</b>	Actuarial Society of South Africa
<b>ASSADPAM</b>	Association of Southern African Schools and Departments of Public Administration and Management
<b>ASSAf</b>	Academy of Science of South Africa
<b>BER</b>	Bureau of Economic Research
<b>BRICS</b>	Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa bloc of emerging economies
<b>CC BY 4.0</b>	Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence
<b>CC BY-NC-ND 4.0</b>	Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International licence
<b>CC</b>	Creative Commons
<b>CHE</b>	Council on Higher Education
<b>CSPISA</b>	Committee on Scholarly Publishing in South Africa
<b>CV</b>	Curriculum Vitae
<b>DHET</b>	Department of Higher Education and Training
<b>DOAJ</b>	Directory of Open Access Journals
<b>EBSCOhost</b>	Elton B. Stephens Company (EBSCOhost) Research Databases
<b>EHDR</b>	Economic History of Developing Regions
<b>EHSSA</b>	Economic History Society of South Africa
<b>ERA</b>	Excellence in Research Australia
<b>ESCI</b>	Emerging Sources Citation Index
<b>HEQC</b>	Higher Education Quality Committee
<b>IAJ</b>	Investment Analysts Journal
<b>IASSA</b>	Investment Analysts Society of South Africa
<b>IBSS</b>	International Bibliography of the Social Sciences
<b>INASP</b>	International Network for Advancing Science and Policy
<b>ISSN</b>	International Standard Serial Number
<b>IT</b>	Information Technology
<b>JCM</b>	Journal of Contemporary Management
<b>JEF</b>	Journal of Economic and Financial Sciences
<b>JEL</b>	Journal of Economic Literature
<b>JOPA</b>	Journal of Public Administration

<b>JTSCM</b>	Journal of Transport and Supply Chain Management
<b>NISC</b>	National Inquiry Services Centre
<b>NIHSS</b>	National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences
<b>NRF</b>	National Research Foundation
<b>NSEF</b>	National Scholarly Editors' Forum
<b>OJS</b>	Open Journal Systems
<b>PDF</b>	Portable Document Format
<b>PRP</b>	Peer Review Panel
<b>RePEc</b>	Research Papers in Economics
<b>SA</b>	South Africa
<b>SAAJ</b>	South African Actuarial Journal
<b>SAAPAM</b>	South African Association of Public Administration and Management
<b>Sabinet</b>	South African Bibliographic and Information Network
<b>SABR</b>	Southern African Business Review
<b>SADC</b>	Southern African Development Community
<b>SAICA</b>	South African Institute of Chartered Accountants
<b>SAIGA</b>	Southern African Institute of Government Auditors
<b>SAJAAR</b>	Southern African Journal of Accountability and Auditing Research
<b>SAJAR</b>	South African Journal of Accounting Research
<b>SAJBM</b>	South African Journal of Business Management
<b>SAJE</b>	South African Journal of Economics
<b>SAJEMS</b>	South African Journal of Economic and Management Sciences
<b>SAJESBM</b>	Southern African Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management
<b>SAJHRM</b>	South African Journal of Human Resource Management
<b>SciELO SA</b>	Scientific Electronic Library Online South Africa
<b>SEE</b>	Journal for Studies in Economics and Econometrics
<b>SJR</b>	SCImago Journal Rank
<b>STAR</b>	Special Terms for Authors and Researchers
<b>SU</b>	Stellenbosch University
<b>UFH</b>	University of Fort Hare
<b>UJ</b>	University of Johannesburg
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>Unisa</b>	University of South Africa
<b>URL</b>	Uniform Resource Locator
<b>USA</b>	United States of America
<b>VAT</b>	Value-Added Tax
<b>WoS</b>	Web of Science citation index

# PREFACE

## Committee on Scholarly Publishing in South Africa

### *Discipline-grouped peer-review reports on South African scholarly journals*

This is the 13th in the series of discipline-grouped evaluations of South African scholarly journals. Eventually, it is hoped that all scholarly journals in the country will have been subjected to independent, multiple peer review as part of a quality-assurance process initiated by the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf). The quality-assurance process is a precursor to the identification of journal titles to be loaded on to the open-access platform, Scientific Electronic Library Online South Africa (SciELO SA). Only open-access journals of sufficiently high quality will be included in this fully indexed, free online, multinational platform, now also directly featured on Clarivate Analytics Web of Science (WoS) portal.

The traditional focus of peer review is on a single journal article, book chapter or book. It is less common to subject journals to independent, multiple peer review, as these are usually evaluated in qualitative, reputational terms, or bibliometrically, by means of impact factors.

The peer review of South African scholarly journal titles thus required the development of a new methodology that was piloted successfully with the first two discipline-grouped peer-review reports, published in 2010, on the Social Sciences and Related Fields and the Agricultural and Related Basic Life Sciences. This work was not achieved without difficulty, as the process was unfamiliar to reviewers accustomed to reviewing single articles.

ASSAf has confidence in this ambitious programme, which is aimed at ensuring that the bulk of South African scholarly journals are of high quality. The process goes beyond the familiar journal assessment approaches mentioned above by providing concrete recommendations to enable the editor(s) of journals, especially those not deemed to be of a sufficient standard, to take corrective action, and provides an opportunity for them to reapply for evaluation.

The process was centred on multi-perspective, discipline-based evaluation panels appointed by the ASSAf Council on the recommendation of the ASSAf's Committee on Scholarly Publishing in South Africa (CSPiSA); journal editors were requested to complete specially designed questionnaires, and peer reviewers were selected from a spectrum of scholars in the fields concerned. Each editor was asked to provide answers to a set of questions, which were used to address the scope and focus of the peer-reviewed articles in the journals under review, the authorship generally, and the presence or absence of enrichment features, such as editorials, topical reviews, book reviews, and news and views articles. (The editors' questionnaire and peer reviewers' set of questions are appended to this report as Appendices A and B.)

Each discipline-based evaluation panel met to discuss the individual peer reviews and questionnaires and consolidated them into a consensus review for each journal. Final formulations and recommendations were prepared, including suggestions for improvement from both the peer reviewers and the panel. The responsible editors were given an opportunity to check the accuracy of the information in each individual journal report, and the final version of the report was submitted for approval to CSPiSA and the ASSAf Council.

In this report, the latest in the series of reports on the review of discipline-grouped journals, it is evident that much has been learned from the review of previous discipline groups, and that in future the process will become more streamlined, such that subsequent reports will follow in rapid succession.

I would like to thank the chair of the panel, Prof Carolina Koornhof, deputy chair, Prof Micheline Naudé, members of the evaluation panel, and particularly Prof Robin Crewe, who is responsible

for overseeing ASSAf's peer-review panel activities, for his leadership in this quality-assurance process. I acknowledge the important role played by ASSAf staff in supporting the process, in particular Mrs Susan Veldsman, director of the Scholarly Publishing Unit, and the project officer who worked under her direction, Ms Mmaphuthi Mashiachidi. Finally, I acknowledge the contribution of the many individual peer reviewers who have each contributed towards strengthening the quality of South African scholarly journals.

**Prof Himla Soodyall**

*Executive Officer: Academy of Science of South Africa*

# FOREWORD

The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) welcomes yet another scholarly journals peer-review report by the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf). These reviews augur well for the health and integrity of our science system, especially the higher education sector which communicates its scholarly knowledge largely through the journals medium. We wish ASSAf strength and the very best as they continue to improve the quality of journals in the South African higher education system, thereby influencing the standard of research conducted in the various scientific disciplines. Certainly, these reviews uplift the reliability and integrity of our science system at large and that of scholarly publications, as the ASSAf's processes and methodology are rigorous. Besides, the process is developmental as it is iterative and interactive with the journals' editors-in-chief.

The DHET supports the work of ASSAf in ensuring that only quality publications from the higher education system are circulated and utilised within the higher education system and the practitioners at large. The DHET views the work of ensuring quality publications as a collective effort of everyone involved in the knowledge production value chain, from researchers to publishers, practitioners and to users of knowledge. Our effort is supported by the joint statement on ethical research and scholarly publishing practices issued jointly by ASSAf, CHE, DHET, NRF and USAF, which states that the key role players on ensuring the right behaviour and attributes in the publishing of research outputs are the editors, peer reviewers, editorial boards, authors, and higher education institutions.

In addition to the technical criteria in the Research Output Policy of the DHET to determine if a journal qualifies for inclusion in the DHET list of South African journals, ASSAf contributes immensely to the provision of a professionally managed process that mobilises expertise for further assessment of scholarly quality of each new journal addition. Moreover, these periodic reviews help to maintain high standards of the DHET-listed journals. Government subsidy for research relies heavily on this valuable contribution by ASSAf which ensures that the DHET continues to successfully deliver on its stated mission of supporting only publications of high quality leading to the successful implementation of the Research Output Policy.

Over the past few years, the open access and open science movement has intensified. The DHET has heeded the call and supports open access to quality knowledge. As such, in addition to the Scientific Electronic Library Online South Africa (SciELO SA) which is managed by ASSAf, the DHET has recently included the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) as one of the indexes approved for the purposes of research subsidy from published articles by academics at the South African universities. Over and above the effort to broaden the scope of journals for South African academics, the DHET hopes to also send a message about the unjustifiable high costs of publishing and accessing knowledge meant to uplift our society, and that open access knowledge can be both freely accessible and of high quality at the same time.

As we continue to explore various means to support the improvement of quality of publications and as the Research Outputs Policy indicates, the DHET together with representatives from the sector, is working on other improvements of quality of research outputs from the higher education system of South Africa. As stated above, this effort requires active vigilance of everyone involved to maintain high quality of knowledge produced by academics in our higher education system. We hope that everyone involved in the knowledge production line will find this ASSAf review report valuable and make use of its recommendations for the betterment of our higher education system.

Congratulations to ASSAf on yet another achievement.

**Mr Mahlubi Mabizela**

*Higher Education Policy and Research Development*  
Department of Higher Education and Training



(256,00)	7.613,06	365,00	256,00	\$	3.387,00	6,00%
(3.222,00)	2.635,97	3.655,00	3.222,00	\$	2.554,00	97,00%
(5.687,00)	16.812,26	2.225,00	5.687,00	\$	7.912,00	26,00%
(9.833,00)	28.038,03	3.641,00	91.833,00	\$	3.474,00	3,20%
(658,00)	170.053,04	33.879,00	658,00	\$	4.537,00	4,00
(9.855,00)		56.852,00	9.855,00	\$	200,00	74
(3.548,00)		958,00	3.548,00	\$	6.589,00	
(8.741,00)		5,00	8.741,00	\$	2.254,00	
	2.635,97					
	16.691,02		256,00		3.387,00	
	(1.217,00)		3.222,00		(2.554,00)	
	16.812,26		214,00		6.987,00	
	28.038,03		997,00		(1.298	
	344.548,04		5.687,00		7.91	
			9.833,00		13.4	
			(4.887,00)		65	
			230.490,00		21	

00			3.569,00	\$		
00)			2.147,00	\$		
00)	(9	56.852	9.855,00			
00)	(3.54	36.958,00	3.00			
00)	(8.741,00)	22.895,00				
00)	(256,00)	7.613,06	365,00			
00)	(3.222,00)	2.635,97	3.655,00			
7,00	(214,00)	16.691,02	977,00			
3,00)	(997,00)	(1.217,00)	792,00			
7,00	(214,00)	16.691,02	977,00			
8,00)	(997,00)	(1.217,00)	792,00			
9,00	(5.687,00)	16.812,26				
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# SYNOPSIS OF FINDINGS

The process of reviewing a journal comprises a thorough evaluation by peers of questionnaires completed by the respective editors, as well as three independent reviews based on a defined subset of published issues of the journal. The peer reviewers' reports are reviewed by the panel and then synthesised into an appraisal of the journal accompanied by recommendations. In concluding the peer-review process, the panel makes recommendations regarding recognition by DHET for inclusion in the 'List of approved South African journals', as well as recognition by ASSAf for inclusion on the SciELO SA platform.

The recommendation with respect to each of the journals reviewed in this discipline group are summarised in the following table.

	Journal title	Indexed in	Recommended for DHET accreditation	Recommended for SciELO SA	Summary of recommendations
<b>ECONOMICS</b>					
1.	<i>African Review of Economics and Finance</i>	DHET	Yes	No	The journal should consider more exposure in order to attract quality submissions. The reviewers commended the journal on the progress made over the years but noted that there is still room for improvement.
2.	<i>Economic History of Developing Regions</i>	Scopus	Yes	Recommended for the SciELO SA platform should it become open access.	The editor should consider the introduction of a regular book review section, and the appointment of a dedicated book review editor. Consideration should be given to wider dissemination to increase submissions.
3.	<i>Journal of Studies in Economics and Econometrics</i>	DHET and Scopus	Yes	No	The submission process is still manual. The journal is strongly encouraged to change the submission process to an electronic one. The selection of peer reviewers would be enhanced if submissions provided keywords and/or JEL classifications that would assist the editors. A professional language editor should replace the existing language editor. There is considerable inconsistency in the referencing style.
4.	<i>Journal of Economic and Financial Sciences</i>	DHET and DOAJ	Yes	No	The editorial team should be more diverse and reflective of a higher level of global, continental and national scholarship in the fields of economics and financial sciences. A more transparent appointment process should be considered for advisory board members, which might attract more highly regarded scholars to publish in the journal.

	Journal title	Indexed in	Recommended for DHET accreditation	Recommended for SciELO SA	Summary of recommendations
5.	<i>South African Journal of Economic and Management Sciences</i>	DHET, DOAJ, SciELO SA, Scopus and WoS	Yes	Already on the SciELO SA platform.	The promotion of special issues and book reviews should be considered. The editorial board could be restructured into subject editors to divide the workload and give specialised attention to the various sub-disciplines.
6.	<i>South African Journal of Economics</i>	IBSS, Scopus and WoS	Yes	Recommended for the SciELO SA platform should it become open access.	Editorials and book reviews should be encouraged. The editors should consider broadening the coverage of the journal by encouraging contributions on environmental issues, education, gender-related matters, behavioural economics (experimental analysis such as randomised control trials) and impact evaluations.
<b>BUSINESS MANAGEMENT</b>					
7.	<i>Acta Commercii</i>	DHET, DOAJ and SciELO SA	Yes	Already on the SciELO SA platform.	The editor should consider enhancing the international visibility of the journal and should also include members from outside Gauteng on the editorial board.
8.	<i>African Journal of Business Ethics</i>	DOAJ and IBSS	Yes	Yes	The editor should consider investing in the constancy of the editorial board. The frequent changes in the number of editors is flagged as a cause for concern. More should be done to encourage submissions on regional issues from other African countries, rather than just from South Africa.
9.	<i>Journal of Contemporary Management</i>	DHET	Yes	Recommended for the SciELO SA platform should it become open access.	The editor should consider aligning what is published more effectively with the scope of the journal. The panel is of the opinion that the journal is focused mostly on South African issues. It compares well with medium-quality international journals. More should be done to market the journal to leading African universities. Special issues are encouraged, and it is recommended that a team of guest editors, with substantial expertise in the field and from different universities, should be invited to manage such special issues.
10.	<i>Management Dynamics</i>	DHET and IBSS	Yes	Recommended for the SciELO SA platform should it become open access.	The editor should consider ways of improving the visibility of the journal. Consideration should be given to publishing special issues, with internationally established guest editors.

	Journal title	Indexed in	Recommended for DHET accreditation	Recommended for SciELO SA	Summary of recommendations
11.	<i>Southern African Business Review</i>	DHET	Yes	Yes	The editor should ensure that the articles published make a theoretical contribution and should carefully consider the methodological choices of researchers. It is recommended that the journal leverage the policy recommendations made in articles to market the journal beyond academia.
12.	<i>South African Journal of Business Management</i>	DHET, DOAJ, Scopus and WoS	Yes	Yes	The panel recommends that members from African countries be included on the editorial board. The editor could consider publishing more special issues on specific topics, with internationally accredited guest editors. More international reviewers should be appointed.
13.	<i>Southern African Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management</i>	DHET and DOAJ	Yes	Yes	The editor should improve the academic stature of the board by appointing more international board members who specialise in entrepreneurship. More should be done to attract international and African authors. The editorial board might also consider attracting interdisciplinary research articles on recent trends and practices, and on comparative studies with other countries and sectors or industries.
14.	<i>The Retail and Marketing Review</i>	DHET	No	No	The editor should consider improving the academic reputation of the journal by strengthening the current peer-review processes. The panel is of the opinion that the editor should have an international track record in terms of quality peer-reviewed publications. The published papers are of average to low quality. The journal is lightly reviewed and does not compare well with international journals. The published papers do not always reflect new knowledge but are often replications of known concepts. The journal is encouraged to publish original work, as opposed to what is already known but applied in other contexts.

	Journal title	Indexed in	Recommended for DHET accreditation	Recommended for SciELO SA	Summary of recommendations
<b>FINANCE AND ACCOUNTING</b>					
15.	<i>Investment Analysts Journal</i>	DHET, Scopus and WoS	Yes	Recommended for the SciELO SA platform should it become open access.	The editorial board could consider including more student articles. The editorial board should introduce debates about current issues in the field, through editorial comments and reader engagement. The editors might also consider special issues on topical issues that assemble viewpoints from various perspectives. The journal has limited international visibility, and the editors are therefore encouraged to invite international scholars to join the editorial board.
16.	<i>Meditari Accountancy Research</i>	DHET and Scopus	Yes	Recommended for the SciELO SA platform should it become open access.	The editorial board should enhance diversity by attracting papers from other African countries as well as other continents. The editorial team should be expanded to include African scholars. The journal should consider the introduction of scholarly features such as editorials, topical reviews and book reviews.
17.	<i>South African Journal of Accounting Research</i>	DHET and Scopus	Yes	Recommended for the SciELO SA platform should it become open access.	The managing editor should be appointed on a competitive, fixed-term basis to instil innovation in the management and operations of the journal. There is also a need for greater diversity in the authorship of the articles, and for a shift from the current SA focus to a more international focus.
18.	<i>Southern African Journal of Accountability and Auditing Research</i>	DHET	Yes	No	The board should be expanded to include scholars from outside South Africa. The papers are of good quality, but the quality could be further improved.
<b>LABOUR RELATIONS</b>					
19.	<i>African Journal of Employee Relations</i>	DHET	Yes	Recommended for the SciELO SA platform should it become open access.	The panel recommends that the journal should adopt a marketing plan to increase its local and international visibility. Special issues or conferences should be considered, to generate special-interest papers. Clearer guidelines should be provided for contributions, to improve the quality of papers. The journal has considerable potential as an African journal but should also be marketed to sub-Saharan African scholars. Appointing a journal advisory board and having more African scholars on the editorial board would help achieve this.

	Journal title	Indexed in	Recommended for DHET accreditation	Recommended for SciELO SA	Summary of recommendations
20.	<i>South African Journal of Human Resource Management</i>	DHET, DOAJ and Scopus	Yes	Yes	The international standing and visibility of the journal should be increased. The editorial board should include more international academics. The focus on human resource management should be enhanced through special issues, literature reviews, opinion pieces and editorials.
<b>LOGISTICS AND ACTUARIAL SCIENCES</b>					
21.	<i>Journal of Transport and Supply Chain Management</i>	DHET, DOAJ and Scopus	Yes	Yes	Additional issues or articles should be published per year, and more international contributions should be attracted.
22.	<i>South African Actuarial Journal</i>	DHET	Yes	Yes	The journal website should be improved to enhance the visibility of the journal. International board members should be nominated in order to provide an international flair. Attracting more international contributions would also assist in raising the profile of the journal.
<b>PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION</b>					
23.	<i>Administratio Publica</i>	DHET	Yes	No	A higher rejection rate might be considered as a means of improving the quality of the papers published. The editor should pay closer attention to editorial errors.
24.	<i>Africa's Public Service Delivery and Performance Review</i>	DHET and DOAJ	Yes	No	The journal is encouraged to diversify the editorial team by including more international scholars and should consider actively attracting African and internationally-based scholars to publish in the journal.
25.	<i>African Journal of Public Affairs</i>	IBSS	Yes	No	The journal should consider attracting international researchers to the editorial board, and strengthening editorial governance practices, to align with international standards. The editor should consider attracting international scholars to publish in the journal and should consider editorials that go beyond a compilation of the article abstracts, as well as some book reviews.
26.	<i>Journal of Public Administration</i>	DHET	Yes	No	The editor should consider attracting senior researchers to the editorial board and narrowing the disciplinary focus of the articles published in the journal.



## Overall summary

As can be seen from the above table, the ASSAf Peer Review of Scholarly Journals in Economics and Business Management included 26 journals, clustered into the areas of business management, economics, finance and accounting, labour relations, logistics and actuarial sciences, and public administration. The review covered the period from 2016 to 2018. The review covered wide-ranging discipline clusters that, from a research perspective, are at different levels of research maturity and development. The more mature disciplines such as economics demonstrated more established quality, and had more internationally recognised journals, than the less mature disciplines such as public administration. Each cluster was assessed by its convener and panel members. Thereafter, the recommendations were tabled and discussed by the ASSAf review panel.

The main areas of concern raised by the panel were the lack of diversity of editorial boards, the lack of transparency in the appointment of the editors and editorial boards and, in several instances, the extended tenure of the editors. Certain journals with the term 'African' in their title did not demonstrate the necessary diversity in their editorial boards, or in manuscript submission from the African continent, to be considered an African journal.

Many of the reviewers recommended that, in the interests of career development, editors should be encouraged to accommodate quality papers from young and emerging scholars, balanced by contributions from senior scholars. Some of the reviewers raised questions about the risk of journals trying to occupy the same or similar scholarly space.

In general, the journals received fairly good reviews. The quality varied from low to medium, with high and internationally equivalent quality being the exception. The themes of articles seemed to be local or African based and were often focused on qualitative research and case studies, rather than innovative, ground-breaking, quantitative articles that contribute to the development of theory. The review processes used by the journals were, in general, rigorous, demonstrating effective peer-evaluation systems. Most journals were identified as suitable for publishing articles of postgraduate students and young academics.

Of the 26 journals evaluated, one was recommended for removal from the DHET list. The remaining 25 journals remain on the DHET list. Seven journals were invited to join SciELO SA. Nine were not endorsed for inclusion on the SciELO SA platform. Eight journals were invited to participate provided that they implement an open-access model. Two journals were already listed on the SciELO SA platform.

In general, there is a pleasing trend among the editors, editorial boards and advisory boards of journals to continuously improve the quality of South African academic journals and scholarship in economics, business management, finance and related fields.

# 1. Periodic Peer Review of South African Scholarly Journals: Approved Process Guidelines and Criteria

## 1.1 Background

During the launch meeting of the ASSAf-led National Scholarly Editors' Forum (NSEF) held on 25 July 2007, the 112 participants supported ASSAf and its CSPiSA in taking the lead in the implementation of Recommendation No. 5 of the 2006 ASSAf *Report on a Strategic Approach to Research Publishing in South Africa*. This recommendation dealt specifically with the need for a system of quality assurance for the more than 260 of the country's journals that are accredited by DHET (<http://research.assaf.org.za/handle/20.500.11911/49>):

Recommendation No. 5: that ASSAf be mandated jointly by the Departments of Education and Science and Technology to carry out external peer review and associated quality audit of all South African research journals in five-year cycles, probably best done in relation to groups of titles sharing a particular broad disciplinary focus, in order to make recommendations for improved functioning of each journal in the national and international system.

## 1.2 ASSAf Peer Review Panels

The quality-assurance system for journals is conducted primarily through discipline-grouped peer reviews carried out by a series of purpose-appointed peer-review panels (PRPs) drawn from the ranks of researchers and other experienced scholars in and around the fields concerned in each case, as well as persons with practical (technical) publishing experience. The proposed ASSAf PRPs are overseen by the CSPiSA but appointed by the ASSAf Council. Their draft reports are sent to relevant stakeholders for comment and input before finalisation by the PRP concerned, and ultimate consideration by the CSPiSA and then the ASSAf Council.

The following quote from the ASSAf report clarifies the approach to be followed in the review of the journals, and some aspects of the approach proposed:

*The periodic, grouped **quality assurance-directed peer review of South African research periodicals** would function analogously to the quality audits of the Council on Higher Education (CHE) and Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC), would be developed as an outcome of the Editors' Forum, and would focus on: the quality of editorial and review process; fitness of, and for purpose; positioning in the global cycle of new and old journals listed and indexed in databases; financial sustainability; and scope and size issues. The **ASSAf panels** carrying out the reviews would each comprise 6–8 experts, some of whom would not be directly drawn from the areas concerned, and would require data-gathering, interviews, and international comparisons, before reports with recommendations are prepared, approved, and released to stakeholders such as national associations, the Departments of Science and Technology and of Education, the CHE/HEQC, the NRF and Higher Education South Africa (HESA) [now Universities South Africa (USAf)].*

It must be emphasised that the main purpose of the ASSAf review process for journals is to improve the quality of scholarly publication in the country in a manner that is consonant with traditional scholarly practices – primarily voluntary peer review. It is not an attempt to control these publications in any way. ASSAf respects the independence and freedom of researchers, and of the research process itself, as important preconditions for the critical and innovative production of new knowledge. At the same time, the work of South African researchers has to be assessed, both qualitatively and quantitatively, as part of the global community of scholars and scientists, and in this respect ASSAf has an obligation to contribute to improving the quality of such work where possible.

## 1.3 Initial Criteria

A number of criteria were explored in Chapter 4 of the ASSAf report, which dealt with the survey of the over 200 then-current editors of accredited South African scholarly journals. Other possible criteria were proposed in other sections of the report, or have since been suggested by members of the CSPiSA or the NSEF. These are grouped and listed below, and are consolidated in the questionnaire presented in Appendix A.

### 1.3.1 Editorial Process-related Criteria: Generally based on the Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing, Editing and Peer Review Developed by ASSAf

- Longevity of the journal (continuous or discontinuous), in years.
- Number of original peer-reviewed papers published per year during the last five years, plus number of manuscripts submitted, plus number rejected out of hand or after peer review; average length of published papers; and 'author demography' of papers submitted and published.
- Number and nature of peer reviewers used per manuscript, and the overall number per year, including institutional and national or international spread, plus quality, according to the *Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing, Editing and Peer Review* (previously the *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review*), and average length of peer-review reports.
- Average delay before publication of submitted manuscripts, and frequency of publication.
- Professional stature and experience of the editor; how the editor is selected; how long the editor has been in service; and the success or otherwise in addressing the major issues in the field, through commissioning of reviews or articles, editorial comment, etc.
- Number and professional stature/experience of editorial board members, plus selection processes, turnover, and nature of involvement in the handling of manuscripts or other functions. If international members serve on the board (which is desirable), whether they are a mix from developed and developing countries.
- Existence and nature of editorial policy or guidelines, plus how often these are revised or updated; conflict-of-interest policy (e.g. how manuscripts are assessed when submitted by an editor or board member as author or co-author).
- Whether errata are published, and how many per year.
- Value-added features, such as editorials, news and views pieces, correspondence on papers, reviews, policy or topical forums, etc. – how many, and how they are generated. What proportion they constitute of the total pages in journal issues.
- Any peer-review process of the journal already in place (e.g. by a professional association).

### 1.3.2 Business-related Criteria

- Frequency and regularity ('on time') of publication.
- Print runs (redundant stock, direct versus indirect distribution to readers).
- Production model and service provider(s).
- Paid and unpaid advertising.
- Sponsorship and any quid pro quo arrangements.
- Paid and unpaid subscription base, and how this is marketed. Cost level of print and (if applicable) e-subscriptions.

- E-publication. If this is done, the website or portal and access possibilities for users. Whether any evaluation is done, especially in respect of tagging and searchability.
- Whether there are HTML/XML and PDF versions, or only PDF, and whether multimedia is used.
- The portals for open access, if provided. If not e-published, whether this is being considered, and how.
- Total income and expenditure per year.
- Distribution to international destinations.
- Whether indexed in the Web of Science (WoS), the International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBSS), or any other international database. If indexed, for how long and how continuously.
- Offers to purchase from multinational publishers.
- Copyright arrangements.

### 1.3.3 Bibliometric Assessments

- Citation practice – how many authors are listed.
- If applicable, the WoS-type impact factors (and various derivatives) over the last five years.
- Whether reviews are a regular or increasing feature.
- If articles are not in English, whether English abstracts are mandatory.

## 1.4 Process Guidelines for setting up Panels, Peer Reviewers, Panel Meetings and Reports for the Subject Peer Review of Journals

### 1.4.1 Background to ASSAf PRPs

The quality-assurance system for journals is implemented primarily through discipline-grouped peer reviews carried out by a series of purpose-appointed PRPs drawn from the ranks of researchers and other experienced scholars in and around the fields concerned in each case, as well as persons with practical (technical) publishing experience. The proposed ASSAf PRPs are overseen by the CSPiSA but appointed by the ASSAf Council. Their draft reports are sent to relevant stakeholders for comment and input before finalisation by the PRP concerned, and final consideration by the CSPiSA and then the ASSAf Council.

### 1.4.2 Role of the Scholarly Publishing Unit

A project officer of the ASSAf Scholarly Publishing Unit is assigned to support each panel chair, but reports to the director of the Scholarly Publishing Unit in terms of review logistics and the production of draft and final review reports. The project officer is responsible for the following issues and activities:

- selecting and appointing panel members;
- obtaining completed questionnaires from editors;
- organising panel activities, including meetings; selecting independent peer reviewers for each journal or groups of titles;
- drafting consolidated version 1 reports; and
- obtaining CSPiSA and ASSAf Council approval for final, publishable panel reports.

### 1.4.3 Set-up of Panels

The proposed PRPs are chaired by an ASSAf member and appointed by the Council, which assumes accountability for the work of the PRP in helping to develop a credible quality-assurance mechanism for South African scholarly journals.

### 1.4.4 Selection of Panel Members

- The process of appointing PRP members is managed by the chair of the CSPiSA until the panel and its chair have been appointed.
- CSPiSA members are asked to assist in preparing a list of at least 12 or 13 names, four or five of whom shall be considered to be alternates.
- A typical PRP consists of six to eight members.
- Each nomination must be accompanied by critical personal and career details, as well as a brief motivation, to enable the CSPiSA, and later the ASSAf Council, to give due consideration to the constitution of the best possible and most competent PRP.
- The draft list of potential members is published on the ASSAf website and is also circulated for comment to members of the NSEF at least two weeks before the Council meeting at which the appointments are to be made.
- All comments received are noted in making the final decision.
- All provisionally listed persons are required to complete and submit conflict-of-interest forms prior to the Council's consideration of the list of names.

### 1.4.5 Criteria for Membership

- The individuals selected to serve on a PRP should have experience and credibility in the disciplines under review, or in related disciplines, or be senior scholars who may be from a completely different discipline. Generally, the composition of a panel, in an approximate ratio of 3:3:2, should be a mix of disciplinary specialists, specialists in areas cognate to the broad disciplinary area concerned, and senior scholars who are knowledgeable in scholarly practices and drawn from any broad disciplinary area.
- The panel members should have demonstrable expertise and experience in both the editing and peer-review aspects of research journals.
- It is not necessary for all PRP members to be experts in both editing and peer-review aspects – a mix of senior academics and a few active editors (of journals not under review) is appropriate – but all should have some appreciation of both journal editing and peer review.
- At least one member should have direct practical (technical) experience of publishing.

Persons selected as panel participants will typically be drawn from among ASSAf's membership, academic institutions, science councils and consultants.

### 1.4.6 Conflicts of Interest

- It will be necessary to take care to avoid real or perceived conflicts of interest.
- Committee expertise, balance and conflicts of interest are discussed at the first meeting of the PRP (and may be discussed again at any subsequent meeting), and recommendations to resolve problematic issues can be presented to the ASSAf Council through the Scholarly Publishing Unit (ASSAf Secretariat) for possible amendment of the composition of PRPs.

- Panel members are requested to submit written conflict-of-interest statements and are bound to report any new potential sources of conflict of interest during the quality-review process.

#### 1.4.7 Organisation of the Panels

The organisation of the panel is conducted by its chair and supported by the assigned project officer. The activities related to organisation typically include:

- planning and costing the review and panel activities;
- obtaining completed questionnaires from each editor or equivalent (concerning publishing logistics);
- identifying suitable peer reviewers for each journal or group of titles (concerning content quality);
- assembling hard copies of journals, or providing access to the journal online;
- setting dates for panel meetings, assigning tasks, and collating materials;
- preparing and distributing pre-meeting and post-meeting materials (e.g. draft version 1 reports, comprising assembled peer reviews and editors' questionnaires in template form);
- taking responsibility for post-meeting activities, including draft version 2 report preparation, circulation for comment to panel members and editors, and preparation and processing of final reports; and
- evaluating panel processes.

#### 1.4.8 Selection of Peer Reviewers

- At least two, but preferably three, independent peer reviewers, as well as alternative reviewers must be agreed upon by the panel for each title or group of similar titles.
- Members of the CSPISA and ASSAf's membership in general will be given an opportunity to volunteer to serve as peer reviewers through a specific written call.
- Other candidates will be sought from reviewer lists of the National Research Foundation (NRF) and from among active science council research staff.
- The process of selection is overseen by the panel chair. The final agreed appointments of willing volunteer reviewers are made by the panel itself.
- Conflicts of interest must be avoided – thus current or former editors cannot become peer reviewers of the journals concerned; this also applies to current members of editorial boards.
- The project officer must arrange access for the peer reviewers to hard copies or e-copies of the journals under review.
- The core questions to be addressed in respect of each journal must be provided to peer reviewers, who should be asked to ensure that all these questions are covered in their reviews.

## 1.4.9 Panel Meetings and Procedures

### 1.4.9.1 Preparations

- The ASSAf project officer is responsible for drawing up the version 1 report on each journal. Each reviewer's answers should be consolidated under the standard headings of the draft, with each input as a separate paragraph. The editor's questionnaire should also be inserted as a single item under 'questionnaire' and 'business aspects'.
- The documentation (editors' questionnaires, peer-review reports) should be sent by email to all panel members at least two weeks prior to the panel meeting. If the peer reviews are not all available at that stage, they should be made available by the date of the meeting, for tabling on the day.
- Panel members should be informed that hard copies of all documentation will be available at the meeting in bundles containing the completed editor's questionnaire and reviewers' reports for each journal title.
- Conveners of subsets of journals should be alerted to their role at the forthcoming panel meeting: to present the journals in the set, and to make recommendations for discussion and elaboration. Any panel member who is unable to attend should be asked to submit written notes for presentation to the panel by the convener.
- Ideally, hard copies of issues of journals to be considered should be available at the meeting, but this can be dispensed with if it is not logistically possible.
- A quorum of at least two-thirds of the members of PRPs must be guaranteed at any meeting, otherwise a new date must be sought.

### 1.4.9.2 Meetings

- Journal titles should be considered in subsets.
- Consensus on each of the criteria should be agreed seriatim, as per a convener's spoken summary and noted by the project officer in attendance.
- Particular attention should be paid to reaching agreement on recommendations in respect of:
  - (a) An invitation to the publisher or editor to join the SciELO SA platform (if the journal is open access and meets the special criteria with respect to frequency of publication and annual number of original peer-reviewed articles).
  - (b) A recommendation to DHET with respect to accreditation on its list of South African journals in which any article is considered as a valid research output.
  - (c) Suggestions for improvement that would facilitate an invitation or recommendation under (a) or (b), if not yet recommended.
  - (d) Suggestions for improvement or general enhancement of functions.

## 1.4.10 Post-meeting Procedures and Panel Reports

- When producing a version 2 report, the three paragraphs in each item must be consolidated to produce a consensus version.
- A detailed and motivated draft version 2 report of each peer-review panel's findings and recommendations is prepared by the assigned project officer, working closely with the panel chair.
- The project officer and convener should reach agreement on the record of the meeting in respect of all outcomes within no more than two weeks.

- The meeting record should be sent to all panel members for comment and ratification (including those who were not able to attend the meeting), and responses should be received within one week.
- The convener should prepare a final version of the meeting record and submit a copy of each journal-specific item as a privileged communication to the editor concerned for written comment within no more than two weeks.
- The convener should identify any comment by the editor that might materially change the recommendations in the record and submit these to the panel for consideration and decision.
- The record, as it is finally agreed upon, should be submitted to the CSPiSA for approval before submission to the ASSAf Council and public release.

## 2. Special Considerations Concerning South African Economics and Business Management Journals

The ASSAf review of economics and business management journals included 26 journals, clustered into business management (8 journals), economics (6 journals), finance and accounting (4 journals), labour relations (2 journals), logistics and actuarial sciences (2 journals) and public administration (4 journals), covering the period from 2016 to 2018. Each cluster had a convener and panel members responsible for the selection of reviewers, the processing of feedback from reviewers and editors, the provision of feedback to the ASSAf review panel and the drafting of the journal reports.

The review covered disciplines (clusters) that, from a research perspective, are at different levels of research maturity and development. As expected, the arguably more mature disciplines such as economics had more established and internationally recognised journals than less mature disciplines in the group. After each cluster had been assessed by its convener and panel members, the recommendations were tabled and discussed by the ASSAf review panel. It is possible that clusters in the research-mature disciplines might have been reviewed more stringently than those in less research-mature disciplines.

Of the 26 journals that were reviewed, two journals (South African Journal of Economic and Management Sciences and *Acta Commercii*) were already listed on the SciELO SA platform. The panel recommended that one journal (The Retail and Marketing Review) should reapply to be listed on the DHET-accredited list. The remaining 25 journals remain on the DHET list. Seven journals were invited to join SciELO SA. Nine were not endorsed for inclusion on the SciELO SA platform. Eight journals were invited to participate on the SciELO SA platform, provided that they implement an open-access model. It was noted with interest that the highest-quality journals in terms of impact, international visibility and accreditation (for example, WoS, Scopus and IBSS), were not open access, but used international publishers. In general, the journals received fairly good reviews; the quality varied from low to medium, with high and internationally equivalent journals being the exception. The themes of articles seemed to be local, or Africa-based, and were often focused on qualitative research and case studies, rather than innovative, ground-breaking, quantitative and theory-developing articles. The review processes of journals were, in general, rigorous, demonstrating effective peer-evaluation systems. Most journals were identified as suitable for publishing articles of postgraduate students and young academics.

The journals had conflict-of-interest and errata policies, and most complied with ASSAf's *Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing Editing and Peer Review*. The technical features of most journals were rated as professional, demonstrating good presentation, copy-editing, layout and use of language.

The main areas of concern raised by the panel were the general lack of diversity of editorial boards, the lack of transparency in the appointment of editors and editorial boards and, in several instances, the extended tenure of the editors. Certain journals with the term 'African' in their title did not demonstrate the necessary geographical diversity in their editorial boards, or in manuscript submissions from the African continent, to be considered an African journal.

From a business perspective, the majority of the open-access journals relied on page fees to fund their expenses, although some received funding from a university or professional body with which they were associated. Minimal income was realised from general subscriptions. Journals associated with publishers were usually funded by them.

The panel noted the significant impact that technology has had on journals. Most editors used online management systems to manage editorial workflow, and articles were published online on either specified or unspecified dates during the year. A low number of printed journal volumes are issued at the end of the year. Editorial and publisher guidelines, the contact details and profile of the editor, and the composition of the editorial board are usually available online.

In conclusion, the purpose of the review is to contribute to the improvement of the quality of the scholarly journals accredited by DHET, and to recommend journals for inclusion on the SciELO SA platform. Some editors may potentially experience these reviews as interference within their terrain and functions. The intention, however, is to contribute to the development and strengthening of research in the respective fields of study in the economic and management sciences group. In general, there is a pleasing trend among editors, editorial boards and advisory boards of journals to continuously improve the quality of South African academic journals and scholarship in economics, business management, finance and related fields.

### 3. Panel Members

1. **Prof Philippe Burger**, Professor of Economics, University of the Free State <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6820-1130>
2. **Prof Chris Callaghan**, Professor in the School of Business Sciences, University of the Witwatersrand <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6554-8363>
3. **Prof Margaret Chitiga-Mabugu**, Director of the School of Public Management and Administration, University of Pretoria <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9894-0452>
4. **Prof David Coldwell**, Professor in the School of Business Sciences, University of the Witwatersrand <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5377-5147>
5. **Prof Rangan Gupta**, Professor in the Department of Economics, University of Pretoria <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5002-3428>
6. **Prof Roula Inglesi-Lotz**, Professor in the Department of Economics, University of Pretoria <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7509-4687>
7. **Dr Habofanwe Koloba**, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Business Management, University of Free State <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0025-6300>
8. **Prof Carolina Koornhof**, Executive Director of Finance, University of Pretoria (Chairperson) <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8169-036X>
9. **Prof Elsabé Loots**, Professor of Economics and Dean of the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, University of Pretoria <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4518-1688>
10. **Prof Thokozani Majozi**, Professor in the School of Chemical and Metallurgical Engineering, University of the Witwatersrand <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0864-2393>
11. **Prof Sure Mataramvura**, Professor in the Department of Actuarial Science, University of Cape Town <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8073-2070>

12. **Prof Viothan Naidoo**, Professor in the Department of Political Studies, University of Cape Town <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9720-8622>
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16. **Prof Kanshukan Rajaratnam**, Director of the School for Data Science and Computational Thinking, Stellenbosch University <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5916-2723>
17. **Prof Jannie Rossouw**, Professor of Economics and Head of School of Economic and Business Sciences, University of the Witwatersrand <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6200-1621>
18. **Dr Karen Stander**, Lecturer in Business Management, University of South Africa <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9247-286X>
19. **Prof Fiona Tregenna**, DSI/NRF South African Research Chair in Industrial Development and Professor of Economics, University of Johannesburg <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5584-5842>
20. **Prof Grietjie Verhoef**, Professor in Economic, Business and Accounting History, University of Johannesburg <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7273-5135>
21. **Prof Albert Wöcke**, Professor at GIBS Business School, Gordon Institute of Business Science <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1377-7754>

**Director, Scholarly Publishing Unit: Mrs Susan Veldsman**

**Project Officer, Scholarly Publishing Unit: Ms Mmaphuthi Mashiachidi**

## 4. Consensus Reviews of Journals in the Group

### 4.1 Economics

#### 4.1.1 *African Review of Economics and Finance*

##### Focus and scope

(Purpose of journal, positioning, focus, scope, readership)

*The African Review of Economics and Finance (AREF)* is a general-interest economics and finance journal. It publishes high-quality peer-reviewed articles in theoretical and empirical economics, heterodox economics, and economics as an interdisciplinary social science, with special emphasis on African economies and how they relate to other economies in the rest of the world. The main discipline is economics and finance, but AREF is also an inter- and a transdisciplinary social sciences journal.

As an accredited publication, AREF is a medium for communicating good, standard theoretical, empirical and policy research in the social sciences. South African academics benefit by using AREF as an outlet for disseminating their research. The journal also provides mentorship for young African academics to develop African economics and finance and to become intellectual leaders. The focus of the journal makes it possible for a wide range of disciplines to be admitted. For instance, the journal sometimes publishes work by sociologists, political scientists, statisticians and environmentalists. This makes AREF a multidisciplinary journal, serving the research needs of the research community in South Africa and further afield in Africa. The journal fills an important gap in the research space, as there are very few economics and finance titles in South Africa with transdisciplinary characteristics.

The primary target is both local and international audiences. The journal has attracted articles from Europe, North America, Australia and predominantly Africa. The contributors have mainly been scholars of international standing, but also emerging scholars and practitioners. The journal is available on a subscription basis from Sabinet and has at least 150 local and international subscribers made up mostly of universities, as well as libraries, research institutes and policy think tanks.

##### Editing functions

(Standing, local institutional spread, international participation)

**Consensus review:** The journal has a renowned academic as the editor-in-chief. The editorial board members are reputable scholars locally and internationally, and they have co-authored many of the papers in the journal in the past few years. It is suggested that there should be a policy against members of the editorial board trying to publish their papers in the journal, to avoid the appearance that this is a self-publishing journal.

##### Questionnaire

(Editorial process-related criteria)

The journal was established in December 2009. It publishes two issues per year. It is available online at <http://www.african-review.com/> and <https://journals.co.za/content/journal/aref>. The top five papers have been viewed about 6000 times in the past 12 months. Using the subscription data, the journal is read in 105 or more countries, 55 of which are from African countries. Citation data suggest that the readership is much wider than the subscription data. As the journal is openly available, it is reasonable to expect that its readership should be wider than its subscription coverage. Issues appear in June and December each year, and there have been no interruptions in publication in the past decade.

Over the three-year review period, 59 full articles and 40 book reviews were published. The book reviews are evaluated by the book review editor, who is also the editor-in-chief of the journal. A total of 270 full articles were received over the same period. The manuscripts rejected without peer review totalled 80. The journal does not reject book reviews, as these are deliberately commissioned by the journal, and suitable readers were selected to review new and topical books for the journal. Only about 20 manuscripts were rejected after peer review. The proportion of peer-reviewed papers that had at least one author with a non-South African address was 45%.

Three peer reviewers may be approached for each submitted manuscript. Two referees are usually approached in the first instance. A third is invited if the reports are conflicting, or if technical aspects of the paper were not the focus of the review by the other two. In rare cases, a single report is adequate to reach a decision. Peer review is conducted in a 'double-blind way'. Reviewer critique and article improvement are rigorously implemented. Authors are expected to address all reviewer comments, and any substantive and editorial comments by the handling editor. Articles are generally not deemed fit for publication without meeting this requirement. Peer reviewers receive follow-up information. Reviewer performance is assessed, and information is captured in a database. In 2018, 17 reviewers were used, 50% of whom had a non-South African address. The peer-review reports were accessibly retained in the journal's records. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its print publication is eight months, and online publication is six months.

By convention, the editor-in-chief is appointed for ten years. The first editor-in-chief was the founder of the journal, and the second editor-in-chief was a founding editorial board member. The members of the editorial board deal with peer review and provide advice on editorial policies and practices. Members of the board are generally appointed for a three-year period. Some members have been in office since the inception of the journal in 2009. The editorial board has been expanded considerably over the past year to make it more representative in terms of gender, fields of research and geographical reach. The membership of inactive board members was discontinued. The appointment of the editorial board is competitive. The appointed members have an established track record in publishing and editing journals and are very familiar with the aims and objectives of the journal, either because they have been reviewers for the journal, or they have been exceptional keynote speakers at the AREF Conference. Members are appointed from within and outside the country to provide specific topical expertise.

The editorial guidelines of the journal are aligned with ASSAf's Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing, Editing and Peer Review. In terms of the conflict-of-interest policy, the journal does not have any written policies on qualifying reviewers, but it does have conventions. Reviewers who are from the same institution as the author are not appointed. There is a policy on errata, but there have been no serious errors since the journal began publishing.

The journal publishes value-added features such as critical editorials, critical topical reviews, analytical book reviews and opinion pieces. The percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material was 95%.

## Content

(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features)

**Consensus review:** The reviewers noted that this is a good-quality journal, but with mostly local and regional contributions. The papers come primarily from a combination of economics and finance by South African and African authors.

## Essential technical features

(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)

**Consensus review:** Some language issues were noted in the journal, but nothing else was of major concern.

## Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

**Consensus review:** In terms of the international comparability of the journal, the reviewers did not concur. Some view the journal as comparable with journals that have a focus on the African region, while others regard the journal as comparable with international journals in the field. The number of papers is restricted, which might present some challenges to publishing the work of young academics.

### Business aspects

(Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)

AREF Consult is the journal owner, and the incumbent publisher is Porthologos Press. The regular print run is about 100 copies per issue. AREF Consult produces and distributes the journal. The journal does not carry any advertising and does not receive any financial sponsorship.

According to the Sabinet database, the journal has 150 paying subscribers. There are no page charges or article-processing charges (APCs). The editorial workflow is managed through a self-administered online management system. The journal is open access in the sense that published issues are immediately available for free download on the journal's website, but because some universities have a subscription via Sabinet, articles accessed via the Sabinet platform are password protected. The journal is part of Sabinet because it enables wider dissemination of the journal's articles. The only commercial e-publication service to which the journal belongs is Sabinet. There are embargos in place, and after two years the articles become freely available on the African Journals Online (AJOL) website. There have been offers from multinational publishers to purchase the journal, but such offers have been declined. Authors own the copyright to the content they publish with the journal.

The journal is indexed by DHET, Sabinet and Research Papers in Economics (RePEc). The journal does not have an impact factor, and altmetric indicators are administered. The 'front details' for papers and English abstracts are mandatory. The journal was peer reviewed by ASSAf in 2012.

### Suggested improvements

**Consensus review:** The journal should consider increased exposure to attract more quality submissions. The reviewers commended the journal on the progress made over the years but noted that there is still room for improvement.

The journal should engage with the ranking systems (even if these are viewed as 'flawed'), as evidence of publication in ranked journals is increasingly required by academics for promotion purposes. This will ensure that the journal continues to receive a range of papers for consideration.

The editors should consider submitting the journal for indexing in, among others, the WoS, IBSS or Association of Business Schools (ABS).

Funding has been indicated as a concern for the journal. One possibility to consider is page fees (as these are often sponsored by the authors' institutions). Advertising or sponsorship could be explored, as these are not a current source of funding for the journal.

The marketing strategy of the journal should be improved to ensure that scholars all over the globe are aware of its existence.

### Panel's consensus view

- i. **The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET-accredited list.**
- ii. **The journal should not be invited to join the SciELO SA platform.**
- iii. **The editor should consider the recommendations suggested in this review, to further improve the journal.**

## 4.1.2 *Economic History of Developing Regions*

### Focus and scope

(Purpose of journal, positioning, focus, scope, readership)

The *Economic History of Developing Regions (EHDR)* journal promotes the study of economic change in the developing world, including Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and eastern Europe. It provides an innovative research forum that explores the influence of historical events on economic development beyond the industrialised North. The journal accepts papers based purely on quantitative or qualitative methods, as well as combinations of the two. It seeks submissions with an economic history focus from disciplines such as general history, development economics, cliometrics, business history, labour history, financial history, development studies and others.

The core focus of the journal is the discipline of economic history. However, economic history draws from a number of disciplines, including history, economics, political science, development studies and other social science fields. Submissions to the journal come from authors with all these discipline backgrounds. Both local and international scholars and researchers are target audiences for the *EHDR*. The journal also has a member subscription base within the Economic History Society of South Africa (EHSSA), as all members receive the journal as part of their society membership. The journal has a growing online international readership.

The *EHDR* is available to readers both in print and online, and through various subsidiaries. About 2460 libraries and institutions internationally have full access to the journal, either through title-level subscriptions or through Taylor & Francis sales deals. Approximately 8000 institutions across developing regions have free or low-cost access to the journal through initiatives such as the Special Terms for Authors and Researchers (STAR), the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP) and Research4Life. All individual members of the EHSSA have access to the journal, but apart from member subscriptions, individual subscriptions are negligible.

### Editing functions

(Standing, local institutional spread, international participation)

**Consensus review:** There was recently a change of editorship. The editorial board has a wide geographic spread and includes some top scholars. There is, however, only one African expert among the editors, editorial board or advisory panel, even though the journal is associated with the EHSSA.

### Questionnaire

(Editorial process-related criteria)

The *EHDR* was established in 1986 and publishes three issues per year. It is available online through the Taylor & Francis platform at <http://www.tandfonline.com/rehd>. Between 2016 and 2018, the journal received 45 043 full-text downloads and 123 161 page visits. Usage continues to increase notably every year. The journal is read regularly in about 120 countries, including countries in Africa, Asia, Australasia, eastern Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, North America, northern and central Europe, South Asia and southern Europe. The top ten countries for usage over the 2016–2018 period was South Africa, the UK, the USA, Finland, the Netherlands, Australia, Canada, India, China and Ethiopia, which gives a good indication of the broad reach of the journal. The *EHDR* was read in more than 30 different African countries in the past year. The top ten African countries using the journal over the 2016–2018 period were South Africa, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, Tanzania, Zambia, Egypt and Uganda. Issues are pre-scheduled to appear on specific dates. The issue deadlines for each volume are decided with the publisher well in advance. There have been no significant interruptions in publication.

During the three-year review period, 29 full articles and two introductions were published. About 70 research articles were submitted in the same period. The rejection rate without peer review was 23% of all full articles submitted, and the rejection rate after peer review was 32%. A total of 26 of the 29 original papers published from 2016 to 2018 had authors with a non-South African address.

Two or three peer reviewers may be selected for each submitted manuscript. When selecting reviewers, the editors aim to balance regional expertise, expertise in the methods used in the submission, and previous experience of the quality and timeliness of referee reports. Papers undergo rigorous double-blind peer review via ScholarOne Manuscripts. Valid reviewer critique and article improvement are rigorously implemented. Revisions are returned to the same referees to ensure that the revisions are thoroughly checked. The editors also assess the degree of article improvement. Peer reviewers receive follow-up information and can view the outcomes via ScholarOne. Reviewer performance is assessed, and information is captured in a database. ScholarOne gives editors the opportunity to rate peer reviewers according to the quality of their review and their adherence to deadlines. Between January 2016 and December 2018, 102 reviewers were used. A total of 88 out of 102 reviewers had a non-South African address. The peer-review reports were accessibly retained in the journal's records. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication online is approximately 15 months. The articles are usually printed soon after online publication.

One of the editors has been in office since January 2018, and the second editor since January 2019. They have been appointed competitively for four years. Members of the editorial board deal with peer review and provide advice on editorial policies and practices. They have been in office for periods ranging between two months and eight years (depending on the member). Their appointment period is flexible and renewable. Members of the board are invited by the editors, and all are from outside South Africa.

There are instructions for authors on the journal webpage at <https://www.tandfonline.com/action/authorSubmission?journalCode=rehd20&page=instructions#.Vd3gNvmqzA>. Conflict of interest is dealt with on a case-by-case basis and, where necessary, in consultation with Taylor & Francis. All authors are required to sign a publishing agreement with Taylor & Francis, as are guest editors. Guidelines are aligned with ASSAf's Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing, Editing and Peer Review. It is the publisher's policy to publish errata, as per the guidelines.

The journal publishes value-added features such as critical editorials and critical topical reviews. Approximately 100% of the pages in each issue represent peer-reviewed original material.

## Content

(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features)

**Consensus review:** The quality of the papers by notable academics in the field was commended by reviewers. The quality, standard and number of papers per year are higher than average and have improved over the years. The published contributors to the journal include notable academics in the field who usually publish in top economic history journals.

## Essential technical features

(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)

**Consensus review:** No issues were identified.

## Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

**Consensus review:** The journal offers a good outlet for local graduate students. It is not yet as globally established as some of the UK or US journals in the field of economic history, but the journal is of a higher standard and quality than most in the Global South.

## Business aspects

### (Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)

The journal is the official publication of the EHSSA, and copyright is vested in the society. Taylor & Francis has the licence to publish the journal. The regular print run is about 100 copies per issue (which varies from year to year). The production of the journal is done by Taylor & Francis. Hard-copy printing and distribution in Africa is handled by the local co-publisher, Unisa Press, and by NISC, whilst all electronic distribution and hard-copy distribution outside of Africa is done by Taylor & Francis. The journal does not carry any advertising. It does not receive regular financial sponsorship. Occasionally, a special issue will receive outside funding.

APCs are not levied. The journal uses ScholarOne, hosted by Taylor & Francis, as an online management system, which records, tracks and manages all submissions throughout the peer-review process. Articles are also loaded on to the website. The journal is not open access and is part of a commercial e-publication service. Taylor & Francis does, however, provide free and low-cost access to the research community in developing countries through initiatives such as STAR, INASP and Research4Life.

There have been no offers from multinational publishers to purchase the journal. The EHSSA retains full ownership and copyright of the journal. However, the journal publisher is multinational. Taylor & Francis and local co-publisher Unisa Press are licensed to publish the journal. Through the copyright agreement form that authors sign upon publication, they are asked to transfer to the EHSSA the copyright to the articles they contribute. This enables Taylor & Francis and Unisa Press, on behalf of the EHSSA, to ensure protection against infringement.

The journal is accredited by DHET and indexed by Google Scholar, IBSS, Scopus and the WoS Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI). The journal was only recently listed by Scopus. Comprehensive metrics had not been released at the time of the review. SCImago published the first impact factor of the journal, based on information indexed in Scopus, in 2020. The SCImago Journal Rank (SJR) is 0.46, and the journal is positioned within the first quartile in History, and the second quartile in Development and Economics, and Econometrics. Altmetric indicators are administered by Taylor & Francis. The 'front details' for papers and English abstracts are mandatory. The journal has been peer reviewed by ASSAf, the WoS, IBSS and Scopus.

## Suggested improvements

**Consensus review:** The editor should consider the introduction of a regular book review section, and the appointment of a dedicated book review editor.

Consideration should be given to wider dissemination and calls for special issues could serve to increase submissions.

Partnerships with academic associations in the field that also support research on developing regions could strengthen the profile of the journal.

## Panel's consensus view

- i. **The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET-accredited list.**
- ii. **The journal should be invited to join the SciELO SA platform should it become open access.**
- iii. **The editor should consider the recommendations suggested in this review, to further improve the journal.**

### 4.1.3 *Journal of Studies in Economics and Econometrics*

#### Focus and scope

(Purpose of journal, positioning, focus, scope, readership)

The *Journal for Studies in Economics and Econometrics (SEE)* publishes articles in the field of economics. It welcomes contributions in diverse subject areas such as political economy and economic history on the one hand, and econometrics and mathematical economics on the other hand. In the American tradition, it also publishes papers in the field of finance.

The focus of the journal is broad and includes all the subject specialisms within economics (rather than being interdisciplinary). The journal has, over the years, published a large body of research covering economic issues in South Africa and Africa, which may be of less interest to those beyond the African continent. In that sense, it has created a publication outlet for papers that may never have seen the light beyond South Africa, not necessarily due to quality deficiencies, but because of a 'mere South African' focus, as once remarked by the editor of a top international journal.

The target audience is both local and international and includes those with an interest in Africa. Between the Bureau of Economic Research (BER) and Sabinet, SEE is distributed to 165 subscribers made up as follows: 72% are libraries, 15% are South African government departments and other public institutions, 8% are private firms, 3% are academic departments at universities and publishers, and 2% are individuals. Of these subscribers, 28% are international and the remainder are local. The journal reaches further readers through the BER's webpage and Sabinet.

#### Editing functions

(Standing, local institutional spread, international participation)

**Consensus review:** The journal, its editor and members of the editorial board have some national recognition, but there is no international spread. The editor-in-chief has a national standing as an academic in the field.

#### Questionnaire

(Editorial process-related criteria)

The *Journal for Studies in Economics and Econometrics* was established in 1976 and publishes three issues per year. It is available on the BER's webpage at <http://www.ber.ac.za/see/2095.aspx>. A redesigned BER webpage was launched in October 2015. It is also available through the Sabinet platform at [http://SABINET.worldcat.org/title/tydskrif-vir-studies-in-ekonomie-en-ekonometrie-journal-for-studies-in-economics-and-econometrics/oclc/9364443&referer=brief\\_results](http://SABINET.worldcat.org/title/tydskrif-vir-studies-in-ekonomie-en-ekonometrie-journal-for-studies-in-economics-and-econometrics/oclc/9364443&referer=brief_results). The information on visitor and download records and readers was not available at the time of the review. In August 2015, ten countries were subscribing to the electronic version of the journal through Sabinet, namely, the USA, the UK, Canada, Australia, Turkey and five African countries. Users in a further four countries were subscribing to the hard copy via the BER, namely, the Netherlands, Spain, Japan and Germany. In addition, users from India, Malaysia, Poland and China were among the ten top users of the 53 000 visitors (in the first eight months of 2015) to the BER's webpage, but it is not possible to ascertain how many of these visitors navigated to the journal's page. Apart from South Africa, the journal was available in four other African countries, namely Namibia, Botswana, Morocco and Zimbabwe.

The journal is pre-scheduled to appear on the last day of April, August and December each year. There have been no recorded interruptions in publication. During the three-year review period, 52 full articles were published. A total of 216 full articles were received over the same period. About 103 full articles were rejected without peer review, and 45 full articles were rejected after peer review. The percentage of peer-reviewed papers that had at least one author with a non-South African address was 7%.

Generally, two peer reviewers are selected for each submitted manuscript following a desk review. Peer reviewers are selected from a database. The first criterion for selection is a common research interest with the authors of the paper, and the second criterion is not to overburden a particular reviewer during the course of a year. All peer reviews are conducted in a 'blind' way. Peer-review recommendations and critique are taken very seriously. When two reviewers agree that the article is publishable, their recommendations for improvement are communicated to the authors, who either implement the suggestions or motivate to the editor why the suggested amendments cannot or should not be made. If two reviewers disagree on whether the article is publishable, the opinion of a third reviewer is sought, or the editor takes a final decision. Any articles in which serious methodological flaws are identified are rejected. Should both reviewers recommend rejection, the article is not published. Reviewers are thanked for their services, but do not receive detailed follow-up information. A database is kept of reviewers who perform their duties fairly, meticulously and within the timeframe required. A total of 67 peer reviewers were used between 2016 and 2018. The percentage of these who had a non-South African address was 32%. The peer-review reports were accessibly retained in the journal's records. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication in print was nine months.

The editor was appointed to office for two years, and the appointment was made by the owners of the journal through direct contact. The period of appointment was not specified. The editorial committee members participate in the review process, and they provide advice on editorial policies and practices in their individual capacities, not as a group. The members of the editorial committee are regularly rotated. The latest rotation took place three years ago. This corresponds to the term of the current members, while some of the older members may have been on the committee for up to six years. Their period of appointment was also not specified. Members are appointed both from within and outside the country to provide specific topical expertise. The journal has an international audience and authors (although its primary focus is on South Africa) that publishes articles in the field of economics (in the widest sense of the word). All contributions are welcomed but are subject to an objective selection procedure to ensure that all published articles meet the criteria of scientific objectivity, importance, competence, replicability and intelligibility. In cases where the data used in the study are not freely available, authors may be requested to provide the referees with their database. There is no conflict-of-interest policy, and the guidelines of the journal are not aligned with ASSAf's Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing, Editing and Peer Review. If any error is brought to the attention of the editor, it is corrected by means of publishing errata, but this has rarely happened.

The journal publishes correspondence on published articles as a value-added feature. Approximately 100% of the pages in each issue represent peer-reviewed original material, and the journal does not publish editorials, book reviews or other non-peer-reviewed material.

## Content

(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features)

**Consensus review:** The content of the journal is of average quality, and the journal is predominantly South African focused, with limited coverage of the African continent. The published papers do not offer any methodological innovation or originality.

## Essential technical features

(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)

**Consensus review:** There is a lack of consistency in referencing style.

## Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

**Consensus review:** The journal is a good platform for students based in Africa, but it lacks rigorous econometrics contributions. The panel noted that the title of the journal is not necessarily reflective of what is published in the journal and suggested that the editorial board should rethink the focus on econometrics implied in the title.

## Business aspects

### (Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)

The title is owned and published by the BER at Stellenbosch University (SU) and the SU Business School. The regular print run is 80 copies per issue. Production and distribution are managed by the SU Business School and the BER. The journal does not carry advertisements and does not receive any financial sponsorship.

There are no page charges or APCs. The journal uses a manual system to manage the editorial workflow. This is not an open-access journal, and it is part of a commercial e-publication service. There have not been any offers from multinational publishers to purchase the journal. Copyright resides with the SU, and there is no licensing agreement with authors.

The journal is indexed by Google Scholar, Scopus and Thomson Reuters. The Scopus SJR impact factor for 2017 was 0.11. Altmetric indicators are not administered. The 'front details' for papers and English abstracts are mandatory. The journal has been independently reviewed by Thomson Reuters.

## Suggested improvements

**Consensus review:** The submission process is still manual. The journal is strongly encouraged to change to an online process for submissions.

The selection of peer reviewers would be enhanced if submissions provided keywords and/or JEL classifications, which would assist the editors.

A professional language editor is needed, or the existing language editor should be changed. Apart from anomalies in language usage in the journal, there is also considerable inconsistency in the referencing style.

Subscribing to more economic journal databases could contribute to enhancing the reputation and visibility of the journal. RePEc affiliation, for example, should be one of the priorities.

## Panel's consensus view

- i. **The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET-accredited list.**
- ii. **The journal should not be invited to join the SciELO SA platform.**
- iii. **The editor should consider the recommendations suggested in this review, to further improve the journal.**

### 4.1.4 *Journal of Economic and Financial Sciences*

## Focus and scope

### (Purpose of journal, positioning, focus, scope, readership)

*The Journal of Economic and Financial Sciences (JEF)* publishes theoretical and empirical research in the field of economic and financial sciences. Manuscripts published in JEF fall mainly in the areas of auditing, corporate finance, corporate governance, economics, econometrics, financial accounting, financial management, financial planning, investment management, management accounting, and taxation in emerging markets.

JEF is one of the few journals in South Africa with a focus on economic and financial sciences. It allows and values interdisciplinary research, provides an opportunity for researchers to use quantitative and/or qualitative research methodologies, and is one of the few academic journals in the field with a scope extending to taxation and auditing.

The primary target audiences are local, national and international readers. The journal is disseminated to between eight and 25 international readers, 25 libraries and between 55 and 108 national readers. All published issues are also hosted on the Sabinet platform. JEF is an online open-access journal, published by AOSIS at <https://jefjournal.org.za> since 2018.

## Editing functions

(Standing, local institutional spread, international participation)

**Consensus review:** The journal appears to be a 'one-man show', as the editor-in-chief has not changed since 2007, and the selection processes for the appointment of the editor-in-chief are not implemented in a clear and transparent manner. Four members of the editorial board are from the same institution.

## Questionnaire

(Editorial process-related criteria)

The journal was established in April 2007 and publishes at least one issue per year. Articles are published online when they are ready for publication, and then printed in an end-of-year volume. Additional issues may be published for special events such as conferences, and when special themes are addressed. JEF is an open-access journal available through the AOSIS platform at <https://jefjournal.org.za>. The journal started publication with AOSIS only in 2018, before which, articles could be downloaded from the Sabinet website. Based on the most recent data from Sabinet, articles from the journal were either viewed and/or downloaded 11 259 times in 2016, 16 724 times in 2017 and 15 811 times in 2018. According to AOSIS records, there were a total 1 278 visits between 1 January 2018 and 15 January 2019 (from Google Analytics) and 24 094 downloads (from Open Journal Systems). According to Google Analytics, the journal was read in 126 countries worldwide, including 32 African countries.

Issues are not pre-scheduled to appear on specific dates, and there have been no significant interruptions in publication.

During the three-year review period (2016–2018), 105 full articles were published. The number of manuscripts received over the same period was 370. Information on the rejection rate was not available at the time of the review. Until 2017, the administration of the journal was done online through the ScholarOne system, and the editor has no access to this information. About 35 manuscripts were rejected without peer review in 2018, and seven manuscripts were rejected after peer review in the same year. The number of peer-reviewed papers that had at least one author with a non-South African address was three in 2018.

Generally, two peer reviewers are selected for each submitted manuscript. Reviewer selection is critical to the publication process, and the choice is based on many factors, including expertise, reputation, specific recommendations, and previous experience with particular reviewers (the online manuscript management system has a built-in reviewer rating facility). Peer review is conducted in a 'double-blind' manner. Reviewer critique and article improvement are rigorously implemented. Not only does peer review provide an independent assessment of the importance and technical accuracy of the results described, but the feedback from referees that is conveyed to authors with the editor's advice frequently also results in manuscripts being refined so that their structure and logic are more readily apparent to readers. All manuscripts submitted to the journal are screened for scientific overlap with previously published work (plagiarism), which also needs to be addressed by authors during revision. The peer-review process aims to ensure that all published articles present the results of primary scientific research; report results that have not been published elsewhere; are scientifically sound; provide new scientific knowledge where experiments, statistics and other analyses are performed to a high technical standard and are described in sufficient detail so that another researcher would be able to reproduce the experiments or estimations described; provide conclusions that are presented in an appropriate manner and are supported by the data; are presented in an intelligible and logical manner, and are written in clear and unambiguous English; meet all applicable research standards with

regard to the ethics of experimentation and research integrity; and adhere to appropriate reporting guidelines and community standards for data availability. Once the author submits the revised manuscript, the reviewers may be asked to reappraise the manuscript in a second-round review. Only in cases where there are large disparities between the author(s) and reviewers, the editor will make a final decision. In the final editing of articles, the editorial team ensures that the authors have addressed the reviewer comments.

Peer reviewers do not receive follow-up information unless they specifically request it. Reviewer performance is assessed, and information is captured in a database. In 2018, 38 peer reviewers were used, four of whom (10.53%) had a non-South African address. The peer-review reports were accessibly retained in the journal's records. AOSIS started publishing the journal on 1 January 2018. Part of that year was used to transfer all previously submitted articles and to continue with the process of publication. In 2018, the average number of days between the date of submission (or designation of the review version) and publication was 118. The print edition of the journal is compiled annually as a volume.

The editor has been in office since the journal was established in April 2007 and was not appointed competitively. The period of appointment was not specified. The editorial advisory board members are used as reviewers, and the editorial board advises on editorial policies and practices. The editorial board members have been in office for periods ranging between six months and six years. The editorial advisory board members are used as reviewers only as necessary. Some of them have been involved with the journal since its inception. The members of the boards are not appointed competitively, and their appointment period was not specified. They were appointed from within and outside the country. Many of the editorial board members have very specific expertise and research experience.

The journal has made the editorial guidelines available online at <https://jefjournal.org.za/index.php/jef/pages/view/policies>. The publisher's guidelines are also available online at <https://aosis.co.za/legal-centre/publication-policies/#plagiarismandfabrication>. Any relevant conflicts of interests of authors must be communicated to the editors during the review process and declared in the published work. Authors must declare all sources of research funding, including direct and indirect financial support, supply of equipment or materials, or other forms of conflict of interest that might have prevented them from executing and publishing unbiased research; the role of any research funders or sponsors in the research design, execution, analysis, interpretation and reporting; and any other relevant financial or non-financial interests and relationships that might be considered likely to affect the interpretation of their findings, or that the editors, reviewers or readers might reasonably wish to know. This includes any relationship with the journal (for example, if the editors wish to publish their own research). The journal guidelines are aligned with ASSAf's Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing, Editing and Peer Review. The journal has a policy on errata, which is available online at [https://aosis.co.za/policies#correcting\\_record](https://aosis.co.za/policies#correcting_record).

The only value-added feature that the journal publishes is the acknowledgement of reviewers. Approximately 95% of the pages in each issue represent peer-reviewed original material.

## Content

(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features)

**Consensus review:** The reviewers raised concerns about the quality of papers published in the journal and noted that they are rarely at the cutting edge or innovative. There is only one issue each year. Most of the papers focus on South African and African themes.

## Essential technical features

(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)

**Consensus review:** One reviewer suggested a more updated type-setting format for accepted and published journals. This would make the journal look more professional and would be more appealing to researchers.

## Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

**Consensus review:** The journal is a good publishing platform for postgraduates and emerging researchers but lacks comparability to national and international journals.

### Business aspects

(Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)

The owner of the journal is the College of Business and Economics at the University of Johannesburg (UJ), and the publisher is AOSIS. The number of hard copies printed is decreasing with each successive issue. As all the journal content is electronically available on the AOSIS website, the journal tends to print copies only for the editorial board members, libraries and interested parties that request a hard copy. At present, the print run per issue is 200 copies. The Faculty of Economic and Financial Sciences at UJ is responsible for distribution. The journal does not carry advertising and does not receive any financial sponsorship.

The APC for this journal is R1153 (excluding VAT) per A4 output page in PDF format. The average article length is 11 pages. The APC may be changed at any time, at the sole discretion of the publisher. The submitting author is responsible for payment of the APC and must undertake, at the time of submission, to arrange for payment of the APC should the article be accepted for publication. This responsibility may not be delegated to a third party without the agreement of the publisher. Article submission charges do not apply. The editorial workflow is managed through an online management system. This is an open-access journal and is part of a commercial e-publication service (Sabinet).

There have been no offers from multinational publishers to purchase the journal. Authors retain copyright for work published by AOSIS, unless otherwise specified. Authors of published work are required to grant AOSIS unlimited rights to publish the definitive work in any format, language or medium, for any lawful purpose. AOSIS requires journal authors to publish their work in open access under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) licence. The authors retain the non-exclusive right to use the published article, provided that attribution is given to the applicable journal, with details of the original publication as set out in the official citation of the article published in the journal. Authors specifically have the right to post the article on their own website or that of their institution, or in institutional or other repositories.

The journal is indexed by DHET, the Australian Research Council (ERA List), ProQuest and Sabinet. The impact factors according to Google Scholar are an h5-index of 7 and an h5-median of 11. Altmetric indicators are administered. 'Front details' for papers and English abstracts are mandatory. The journal has not been independently peer reviewed before.

### Suggested improvements

**Consensus review:** The journal is encouraged to publish fewer and more-focused original articles per issue, and more issues per year.

The editorial team as a whole should be made more diverse and reflective of a higher level of global, continental and national scholarship in economics and the financial sciences.

A more transparent appointment process should be considered for editorial advisory board members, which might attract a better quality of scholar to publish in the journal.

The journal should also consider publishing review articles (refereed), shorter book reviews and topical pieces from time to time. The journal needs to become more relevant.

The editorial board should aim to place the journal under IDEAS/RePEc for increased visibility and international ranking of the journal. Other local journals such as the South African Journal of Economics, Development Southern Africa and the African Finance Journal, which are listed there, have gained international recognition.

A more updated type-setting format appropriate for published journals could be considered. This would make the journal more appealing to researchers.

### Panel's consensus view

- i. **The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET-accredited list.**
- ii. **The journal should not be invited to join the SciELO SA platform.**
- iii. **The editor should consider the recommendations suggested in this review, to further improve the journal.**

#### 4.1.5 *South African Journal of Economics*

### Focus and scope

(Purpose of journal, positioning, focus, scope, readership)

The *South African Journal of Economics (SAJE)* has a long and distinguished history, ranking amongst the oldest generalist journals in economics. In terms of editorial focus, the journal remains a generalist journal covering all fields in economics, but with a particular focus on developmental and African contexts. The editorial policy of the SAJE emphasises scholarly work on developing countries, with African and southern African development challenges receiving particular attention. While the SAJE remains a generalist journal, it encourages empirical work on developing and African economies. Importantly, the focus is on both theoretical developments and methodological innovations that reflect developing-country and African contexts, and the policy challenges they pose.

The objective of the journal is to be the premier vehicle for the publication of the most innovative work on developing-country, and particularly African, economic problems. It aims to be the journal of choice not only for scholars located in southern Africa, but for any scholar interested in the analysis of development challenges and their African applications. A hallmark of the journal should be that the published work is underpinned by a clear theoretical foundation. Articles that reflect both theoretical and empirical innovation appropriate to the developing-country and African contexts are encouraged.

The journal invites submissions primarily of original research articles, as well as survey articles and book reviews relevant to its scope. In the case of both survey articles and book reviews, authors should note that a key minimum requirement is a critical reflection on the broader context of the existing literature.

The SAJE is an economics journal but, in principle, the journal considers relevant papers from other social science or science disciplines. Its regional focus is Africa and southern Africa, and its subject focus is development challenges. The primary target audience is African researchers, whether or not they work in Africa.

### Editing functions

(Standing, local institutional spread, international participation)

**Consensus review:** The editorial board is of a high disciplinary standing, and the current members are active researchers who are established in their fields. However, the number of board members is very small, and the journal should consider enlarging the board.

### Questionnaire

(Editorial process-related criteria)

The journal was established in 1925 and is published quarterly. It is available online at <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/18136982>. The journal is not freely downloadable. It is read in almost all countries. Issues are pre-scheduled to appear on specific dates, and there have been no significant interruptions in publication.

During the three-year review period, approximately 90 full articles and three obituaries were published. The total number of manuscripts received over the same period was 800. About 500 manuscripts were rejected without peer review, and about 200 after peer review. Information on the proportion of peer-reviewed papers over that period that had at least one author with a non-South African address was not available at the time of the review. For January 2018, 17.3% of the papers received were from South African corresponding authors, while the remainder had a corresponding author outside South Africa. An average of three to four peer reviewers may be selected for each submitted manuscript, chosen by the editor and the associate editors. The selection of the reviewers is based partly on their networks, and partly on their knowledge of researchers in a particular area of economics. Peer review is conducted in a 'blind way'. Valid reviewer critique and article improvement are rigorously implemented. Peer reviewers receive follow-up information. Reviewer performance is assessed, and information is captured in a database. Approximately 600 peer reviewers were used during the three-year review period, about 300 of whom had a non-South African address. The peer-review reports were accessibly retained in the journal's records. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication in print and online was 12 months.

The editor has been in office for six years and was appointed competitively. The editor was appointed for a second four-year term. Members of the editorial board deal with peer review and advise on editorial policies and practices. There are three editorial board members, with one appointed for eight years, another appointed for six years and a third appointed for one year. The journal management committee, which comprises members of the Economic Society of South Africa, meets every six months. The committee has ten members, who have been in their positions for periods ranging from a few years to several decades. The editorial board was appointed for two terms through the journal management committee, and appointment is typically based on need, for example, the appointment of an expert in a particular field in which the journal receives many papers.

Associate editors do not manage any papers submitted from their own institution. The system prevents academics from the same institution from being appointed as reviewers, and also prevents editors from managing their own papers. The guidelines of the journal are not aligned with ASSAf's Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing, Editing and Peer Review. Errata are published when necessary.

The journal does not publish any value-added features. The percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material is 100%.

## Content

(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features)

**Consensus review:** The content is of a high quality; this is attributed particularly to the stringent review process, which was commended by the reviewers. The specific number of published papers allows for careful selection of papers. The journal attempts to publish the 'best work done in the country' in the discipline of economics. It has succeeded in attracting quality papers not only from South Africa, but also from other African countries.

## Essential technical features

(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)

**Consensus review:** There were no issues identified. Articles contain English-language abstracts. The journal pays special attention to the readability of the published papers and adheres to good citation practice, both in the text and in the list of references. The presentation, layout and style conform to the standards of the very best academic journals in economics.

## Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

**Consensus review:** This journal can be considered the best economics journal published in South Africa. The journal has good international exposure and standing, and some of the articles published could have appeared in top international journals. The annual award to a young researcher publishing their first paper in the SAJE (the JJI Middleton Award) is a positive feature not found in other journals.

### Business aspects

(Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)

The journal is owned by the Economic Society of South Africa (ESSA) and is published by Wiley, a multinational publisher. Production and distribution are managed by Wiley. All advertising is done by ESSA and is unpaid. ESSA funds the journal, and the South African Reserve Bank provides further support.

There are no page charges or APCs. The editorial workflow is managed through an online management system. The journal is not open access. It is part of a commercial e-publication service owned and operated by Wiley. Wiley owns the copyrights. The licensing agreement with authors is based on various funding models that Wiley operates.

The journal is indexed by the WoS and Scopus. At the time of the review, the impact factor on the WoS was 0.912, and it is currently 1.035. Altmetric indicators are not administered. 'Front details' for papers and English abstracts are mandatory. This is the first independent peer review of the journal.

### Suggested improvements

**Consensus review:** Editorials and book reviews should be encouraged. The editors should consider broadening the coverage of the journal by encouraging contributions on environmental issues, education, gender-related problems, behavioural economics (experimental analysis such as randomised control trials) and impact evaluations.

### Panel's consensus view

- i. **The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET-accredited list.**
- ii. **The journal should be invited to join the SciELO SA platform should it become open access.**

## 4.1.6 South African Journal of Economic and Management Sciences

### Focus and scope

(Purpose of journal, positioning, focus, scope, readership)

*The South African Journal of Economic and Management Sciences (SAJEMS)* is a nationally recognised South African-based publication for interdisciplinary research in the economic and management sciences. The journal publishes and disseminates good-quality academic articles that contribute to better understanding of the interaction between economic, environmental and social perspectives, as applicable to the broader management sciences in an African environment. The editorial board invites authors to submit their research from areas such as economics, finance, accounting, human capital, marketing and other related disciplines that break down common intellectual silos and prepare a new path for debate on the operation and development of sustainable markets and organisations, as relevant to the broader African context.

The primary target audience is predominantly African scholars. This is an open-access journal, published by AOSIS since 2017. The journal has a worldwide audience.

## Editing functions

(Standing, local institutional spread, international participation)

**Consensus review:** The editorial board consists primarily of South African scholars conducting good research of international standard, and its standing was commended. However, the membership of the board should be broadened to include more international scholars.

## Questionnaire

(Editorial process-related criteria)

The SAJEMS was established in 1988. The journal publishes one issue per year. Articles are published online when ready for publication, and then printed in an end-of-year volume. Additional issues may be published for special events such as conferences, and when special themes are addressed. The journal is available online through the AOSIS platform at <https://sajems.org>. The journal has received 174 491 visits and 323 312 downloads. It was read in 202 countries worldwide, including 52 African countries, according to Google Analytics. Issues are not pre-scheduled to appear on specific dates. There have not been any significant interruptions in publication.

Over the three-year review period, 185 full articles were published. The number of manuscripts received over the same period was 1133. A total of 629 manuscripts were rejected without peer review, and 247 after peer review. The percentage of peer-reviewed papers that had at least one author with a non-South African address was 25% in 2018.

Generally, two peer reviewers are selected for each submitted manuscript. Reviewer selection is critical to the publication process, and the choice is based on many factors, including expertise, reputation, specific recommendations, and previous experience with particular reviewers. Peer review is conducted in a 'blind way'. Valid reviewer critique and article improvement are rigorously implemented. Not only does peer review provide an independent assessment of the importance and technical accuracy of the results described, but the feedback from referees that is conveyed to authors with the editor's advice frequently also results in manuscripts being refined so that their structure and logic are more readily apparent to readers. All manuscripts submitted to the journal are screened for scientific overlap with previously published work (plagiarism), which also needs to be addressed by authors during revision. The peer-review process aims to ensure that all published articles present the results of primary scientific research; report results that have not been published elsewhere; are scientifically sound; provide new scientific knowledge where experiments, statistics and other analyses are performed to a high technical standard and are described in sufficient detail so that another researcher would be able to reproduce the experiments or estimations described; provide conclusions that are presented in an appropriate manner and are supported by the data; are presented in an intelligible and logical manner, and are written in clear and unambiguous English; meet all applicable research standards with regard to the ethics of experimentation and research integrity; and adhere to appropriate reporting guidelines and community standards for data availability. Once the author submits the revised manuscript, the reviewers may be asked to reappraise the manuscript in a second-round review.

Peer reviewers receive follow-up information. The editor keeps reviewers informed about the final decision on the manuscript and is committed to providing reviewers with the reports of other reviewers who participated in the review and giving feedback on the outcome of the manuscript. Reviewer performance is assessed by a rating given by the editor after each completed review. This information is captured in a database. In 2018, 194 reviewers were used, about 27% of whom had a non-South African address. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication online was 209 days in 2018. The printed edition of the journal is compiled annually in a volume.

The editor has been in office since 2018. The advertisement to fill the vacancy was sent to university faculties of economic and management sciences. The editor was selected from the four candidates who applied. The period of appointment was not specified. The members of the

editorial board deal with peer review and advise on editorial policies and practices. Members of the board have been in office for varying lengths of time, ranging from ten years to having been appointed as recently as a year ago. Their appointments were not competitive. They were appointed indefinitely, depending on their availability and performance. The journal is trying to increase the representation of members from outside the country. At present, seven of the 16 board members are from outside South Africa.

The editorial guidelines of the journal are available online at <https://sajems.org/index.php/sajems/pages/view/policies>. The publisher's guidelines are available online at <https://aosis.co.za/legal-centre/publication-policies/>. The editorial guidelines are aligned with ASSAf's Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing, Editing and Peer Review. The journal has a conflict-of-interest policy. Any relevant conflicts of interest of authors must be communicated to the editors during the review process and declared in the published work. Authors must declare all sources of research funding, including direct and indirect financial support, supply of equipment or materials, or other forms of conflict of interest that might have prevented them from executing and publishing unbiased research; the role of any research funders or sponsors in the research design, execution, analysis, interpretation and reporting; and any other relevant financial or non-financial interests and relationships that might be considered likely to affect the interpretation of their findings, or that the editors, reviewers or readers might reasonably wish to know. This includes any relationship with the journal (for example, if the editors wish to publish their own research). The policy on errata is accessible at <https://aosis.co.za/legal-centre/publication-policies/#Correcting-the-record>.

The journal publishes value-added features such as news and views only where these are published as an article examining these aspects. The percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material was 99% in 2018.

## Content

(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features)

**Consensus review:** The quality of the papers is good. The topics and themes published show the multidisciplinary nature of the journal. The journal has a solid presence in international rankings.

## Essential technical features

(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)

**Consensus review:** No issues were identified. The presentation of the journal is of good technical standard in terms of design, layout, style and copy-editing interventions, and satisfactory citation practice is in place.

## Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability:

**Consensus review:** The journal is a good platform for graduate students and emerging researchers. The journal has a presence in international rankings.

## Business aspects

(Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)

The title owner of the journal is the University of Pretoria, and the publisher is AOSIS. There is no regular print run, as the journal is available online and is open access. Production and distribution are not outsourced. The journal carries unpaid advertising. The journal does not receive any financial sponsorship.

The APC for this journal is R1 166 (excluding VAT) per page. The editorial workflow is managed through an online management system. It is also part of a commercial e-publication service (Sabinet) and non-commercial e-publication mechanism (DOAJ). There have been no offers

from multinational publishers to purchase the journal. Authors retain copyright for work published by AOSIS unless otherwise specified. Authors of work published by AOSIS are required to grant AOSIS the unlimited rights to publish the definitive work in any format, language or medium, for any lawful purpose. AOSIS requires journal authors to publish their work in open access under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) licence. The authors retain the non-exclusive right to use the published article, provided that attribution is given to the applicable journal, with details of the original publication, as set out in the official citation of the article published in the journal. Authors specifically have the right to post the article on their own website or that of their institution, or in institutional or other repositories.

The journal is indexed by the Australian Business Deans Council (ABDC) Journal Quality List; AOSIS Library; Clarivate Analytics WoS Core Collection; Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI); DOAJ; Ebscohost; EconLit, the electronic database of the Journal of Economic Literature (JEL); Gale Cengage Learning; Norwegian Register for Scientific Journals, Series and Publishers, Level 1; ProQuest; Sabinet; SciELO SA; and Scopus. The impact factors were 0.26 on WoS and 0.65 on CiteScore, and the journal had an h5-index of 10 on Google Scholar. Altmetric indicators are administered. 'Front details' for papers and English abstracts are mandatory. The journal was reviewed by Scopus and the WoS.

### Suggested improvements

**Consensus review:** The promotion of special issues and book reviews should be considered.

The editorial board could be restructured with subject editors in order to divide the workload and give specialised attention to the various sub-disciplines.

### Panel's consensus view

- i. **The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET-accredited list.**
- ii. **The journal is already on the SciELO SA platform.**

## 4.2 Business Management

### 4.2.1 *Acta Commercii*

#### Focus and scope

(Purpose of journal, positioning, focus, scope, readership)

*Acta Commercii* promotes research within the ambit of management and related disciplines. It serves as a platform for refreshingly new and invigorating approaches to the nature of management and what this means across different contexts, countries and cultures, with the overall objective of providing an African–international dialogue between researchers.

The journal is aimed at improvements in the field of the management sciences. The topics of interest include strategic management, organisational behaviour, organisation theory, corporate governance, managerial economics, cross-cultural management and business ethics.

*Acta Commercii* fosters interest within the South African arena and seeks to understand the possibilities that can be achieved through management influencing various other professions. The primary target audiences are South African and African scholars. This is an open-access journal published by AOSIS since 2013. The journal has a worldwide audience.

## Editing functions

(Standing, local institutional spread, international participation)

**Consensus review:** Membership of the editorial board consists of national and international experts, and there are also section editors. Nine of the eleven editorial board members are from countries outside South Africa. While this adds rigour to the reviews, it means that articles could be rejected because international editorial members are not fully conversant with the South African context.

## Questionnaire

(Editorial process-related criteria)

*Acta Commercii* was established in 2001 and publishes at least one issue each year. Articles are published online when ready for publication, and then printed in an end-of-year volume. Additional issues may be published for special events such as conferences, and when special themes are addressed. The journal is available online at <https://actacommercii.co.za>. Between 2016 and 2018, there were 213 853 visits and 698 396 downloads. The journal was read in 209 countries worldwide, including 51 African countries. Issues are not pre-scheduled to appear on given dates, and there have not been any significant interruptions in publications.

During the three-year review period, 95 full articles were published. The number of manuscripts received over the same period was 303 in all categories. The total number of manuscripts rejected without peer review was 86, and 88 manuscripts were rejected after peer review. The proportion of peer-reviewed papers that had at least one author with a non-South African address was 12.5% in 2016, and 10% in 2017.

Two peer reviewers are usually approached for each submitted manuscript. Reviewer selection is critical to the publication process, and the choice is based on many factors, including expertise, reputation, specific recommendations, and previous experience with particular reviewers. Peer reviews are conducted in a 'blind way', and valid reviewer critique and article improvement are rigorously implemented. Not only does peer review provide an independent assessment of the importance and technical accuracy of the results described, but the feedback from referees conveyed to authors with the editor's advice frequently also results in manuscripts being refined so that their structure and logic are more readily apparent to readers. All manuscripts submitted to the journal are screened for scientific overlap with previously published work (plagiarism), which also needs to be addressed by authors during revision. The peer-review process aims to ensure that all published articles present the results of primary scientific research; report results that have not been published elsewhere; are scientifically sound; provide new scientific knowledge where experiments, statistics and other analyses are performed to a high technical standard and are described in sufficient detail so that another researcher would be able to reproduce the experiments; provide conclusions that are presented in an appropriate manner and are supported by the data; are presented in an intelligible and logical manner, and are written in clear and unambiguous English; meet all applicable research standards with regard to the ethics of experimentation and research integrity; and adhere to appropriate reporting guidelines and community standards for data availability. Once the author submits the revised manuscript, the reviewers may be asked to reappraise the manuscript in a second-round review.

Peer reviewers receive follow-up information; they are informed of the reports of other reviewers who participated in the review and receive feedback on the outcome of the manuscript. Reviewer performance is assessed through a rating given by the editor after each completed review. This information is captured in the journal's database. A total of 128 peer reviewers were used in 2018, 4% of whom had a non-South African address. The peer-review reports were accessibly retained in the journal's records. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication online was 205 days in 2018. The printed edition of the journal is compiled annually at the end of the year.

The editor has been in office since 2009 and was headhunted for the position. The period of appointment was not specified. Members of the editorial board deal with peer review and provide advice on editorial policies and practices. The members of the board have been in office since 2016 and were not competitively appointed. Their period of appointment is five years. They are appointed from within and outside the country to provide specific topical expertise.

The editorial guidelines for the journal are available at <https://actacommercii.co.za/index.php/acta/pages/view/policies>, and guidelines from the publisher are available at <https://aois.co.za/legal-centre/publication-policies/>. The guidelines are aligned with ASSAf's Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing, Editing and Peer Review. The conflict-of-interest policy is available at [https://actacommercii.co.za/index.php/acta/pages/view/policies#part\\_5](https://actacommercii.co.za/index.php/acta/pages/view/policies#part_5). There is an errata policy accessible at <https://aois.co.za/legal-centre/publication-policies/#Correcting-the-record>.

The only value-added feature that the journal publishes is reviewer acknowledgements. Approximately 99% of the pages in each issue represented peer-reviewed original material in 2018.

## Content

(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features)

**Consensus review:** The articles are of good quality, and an above-average number of articles are produced each year (approximately 30). A high number of articles are rejected, many by desk rejection (i.e., before going out for peer review). Most articles focus on local South African research and are written by South African authors from South African universities.

The journal is multidisciplinary in scope and does not provide additional scholarly features such as editorials, topical reviews or academic correspondence.

## Essential technical features

(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)

**Consensus review:** The abstracts are of an acceptable standard of English and are clearly written and properly structured. Citations are efficiently handled and are consistent. Layout, design and technical features of the journal are good. An errata facility is available. The website is easy for readers and authors to use, and ethical issues such as plagiarism are strictly monitored through article-content checks.

## Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

**Consensus review:** The journal offers a useful publication vehicle for both established and emerging South African researchers. While the journal articles are generally of a good standard, the issues and research focus are African, making international comparability difficult. Articles on topics that are of international relevance are comparable in quality to some international journals.

## Business aspects

(Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)

The journal is owned by the University of Johannesburg and published by AOSIS. There is no regular print run. The journal carries unpaid advertising and does not receive financial sponsorship. There are also no paying subscribers.

The journal charges an APC of R1216 per page (excluding VAT). The editorial workflow is managed through an online management system. The journal is freely accessible online. It is part of a commercial e-publication mechanism (Sabinet) as well as a non-commercial e-publication

mechanism (SciELO SA). There have been no offers from multinational publishers to purchase the journal.

Authors retain copyright for work published by AOSIS unless otherwise specified. Authors are required to grant AOSIS the unlimited rights to publish the definitive work in any format, language or medium, for any lawful purpose. AOSIS requires journal authors to publish their work in open access under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) licence. The authors retain the non-exclusive right to use the published article, provided that attribution is given to the applicable journal, with details of the original publication, as set out in the official citation of the article published in the journal. Authors specifically have the right to post the article on their own website or that of their institution, or in institutional or other repositories.

*Acta Commercii* is currently indexed by AOSIS Library; Gale Cengage Learning; Ebscohost; Google Scholar; Norwegian Register for Scientific Journals, Series and Publishers, Level 1; ProQuest; Sabinet; and SciELO SA. The journal had a h5-index of 13 on Google Scholar in 2019. The 'front details' for papers and English abstracts are mandatory. The journal has not been independently peer reviewed before.

### Suggested improvements

**Consensus review:** The journal should include more members on the editorial board from outside Gauteng.

The editor should try to attract more international authorships by inviting academic commentary by established international scholars. It is recommended that an editorial appear in each issue of the journal, discussing pertinent topical academic issues or summarising the contents of a particular volume.

The editor should try to encourage emerging researchers by offering a more development-oriented review process, rather than early rejection.

The journal is functioning well and should continue producing quality articles.

### Panel's consensus view

- i. **The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET-accredited list.**
- ii. **The journal is already on the SciELO SA platform.**
- iii. **The editor should consider increasing the international visibility of the journal, while at the same time adding members to the editorial board who are not associated with any university in Gauteng.**
- iv. **In addition, the panel believes that at this stage, *Acta Commercii* is a medium-quality journal aimed at early-career researchers within the African context. It is recommended that the editor try to further increase the number of articles per year, perhaps through special issues edited by experts in various fields.**
- v. **Moreover, it is recommended that the editor should write a viewpoint for each edition. It is also recommended that each edition should contain a section referred to as 'student research', in which articles published by upcoming young researchers, just finishing their master's or doctoral degree, are published. The review process for such articles might be more intense but needs to be encouraging. The suggested approach would remove these articles from the body of the journal, thereby increasing the quality.**

## 4.2.2 *African Journal of Business Ethics*

### Focus and scope

(Purpose of journal, positioning, focus, scope, readership)

The aim of the *African Journal of Business Ethics* is to contribute to the expansion and establishment of business ethics as an academic field in Africa. In pursuit of this aim, the journal strives not to only build a continental journal of high quality, but also to ensure that it achieves broad international credibility. The aim of the journal is to focus on business ethics.

The *African Journal of Business Ethics* is the only journal of its kind on the African continent. Business ethics is a fast-growing field, and the journal caters to the research community working in this field by providing a high-quality outlet for their scholarship.

The primary target audience is predominantly African business ethics scholars, although the journal is also of interest to the larger international business ethics scholarly community. The journal is open access and does not have the means to track its readership.

### Editing functions

(Standing, local institutional spread, international participation)

**Consensus review:** The electronic version of the journal does not carry any information or details on the editor-in-chief, managing editor and consulting editor. The editorial team is well balanced, with African and other international scholars.

### Questionnaire

(Editorial process-related criteria)

The *African Journal of Business Ethics* was established in 2005. The journal is open access and is available at <http://ajobe.journals.ac.za/pub/index>. Information on visit and download records was not available at the time of the review. The journal had eight authors from non-South African countries in the past five years, as well as eight other international authors from the USA, the UK, Denmark, Australia and Norway. With respect to the reach of the journal in Africa, it can potentially be read in any country on the continent but does not have the means to track this. The journal had four authors from Ghana, and one each from Namibia, Uganda, Nigeria and Cameroon in the three-year review period. Issues are not pre-scheduled to appear on given dates. Since 2005, two editions of the journal have been published annually, with the exception of 2006 and 2010, during which no editions were published; and 2005 (the year of inception), 2008 and 2015, during which only one edition was published. These occurrences were all long before the current editor's tenure. In 2017, only one issue was published, and there were not enough papers to publish the second issue of this volume until March 2018. There was also an unexpected change of editor-in-chief in that year. A new editor took over from 2018 and managed to get the journal back on track in 2018, publishing Vol. 11, No. 1 in June, and No. 2 in November.

During the review period (2016–2018), only 29 full articles were published. The total number of articles received was 75, 46 of which were rejected. There was an overall rejection rate of 61%, including papers rejected before peer review. The proportion of peer-reviewed papers that had at least one author with a non-South African address was 12 out of the 29 articles, or 41%.

Each article undergoes double-blind peer review. Two or three of the reviewers initially approached will undertake to review an article. The editor selects the peer reviewers. Valid reviewer critique and article improvement are rigorously implemented. Once the articles have been revised according to reviewer critique, they are resubmitted to the reviewers for approval. If the reviewers do not wish to view the article again, the editor checks that the reviewer critique has been adequately addressed before approving publication. Peer reviewers receive follow-up information. Reviewer performance is assessed, and information is captured in a database.

In 2018, 25 peer reviewers were used, four of whom had a non-South African address. The peer-review reports were accessibly retained in the journal's records. The names of peer reviewers are published in each edition. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication in print and online is six months.

The current editor was nominated, and the decision to appoint him was taken at the annual meeting of the Business Ethics Network executive committee in 2017. The period of appointment was three years. Members of the editorial board deal with peer review and provide advice on editorial policies and practices if approached. The editorial board was appointed by a previous editor. There are currently 21 members on the board, 11 of whom have been serving on the board since the inception of the journal in 2005. The board members were not appointed competitively, and their period of appointment was not specified. They were appointed from within and outside the country to provide specific topical expertise.

The editorial guidelines are available online at <http://ajobe.journals.ac.za/pub/about>. The journal has an 'ethics and malpractice' statement. The journal's editorial policy is compatible with ASSAf's Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing, Editing and Peer Review. The journal does not have a specific erratum policy and has not received any complaints to date. However, errata can be published as necessary.

## Content

(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features)

**Consensus review:** There were many South African authors and only eight authors from non-South African sources in the three-year review period. Articles are of good quality. There is evidence of the same authors publishing repeatedly in the journal (sometimes twice in the same edition), which suggests that a close network of scholars may have a strong relationship with the management of the journal. There are no additional scholarly features such as editorials, reviews and special issues.

The journal publishes analytical book reviews as a value-added feature. The percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material is 100%.

## Essential technical features

(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)

**Consensus review:** Proper English-language abstracts for all articles are evident. There is a facility for the publication of errata, but this is rarely used. The citation practice is acceptable, but some inconsistencies of application were observed. Presentation and technical design features are regarded as good, and copied images are used only after ethical clearance.

## Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

**Consensus review:** The journal is suitable as a general ongoing stimulus for local postgraduate students and young staff in the discipline. It has succeeded in its aim of establishing business ethics as an academic field in Africa. Leading academics in the field generally used to publish in the *Journal of Business Ethics* before the *African Journal of Business Ethics* was established. The journal has attained international accreditation through IBSS.

## Business aspects

(Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)

The *African Journal of Business Ethics* is the official journal of the Business Ethics Network (BEN) Africa. It is produced and distributed by African Sun Media and hosted by SUNJournals in cooperation with Globethics.net. Since the beginning of 2014, the journal has moved to an online platform. Printed copies are only distributed to authors and key stakeholders.

The journal does not carry any advertising. The dean of the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences at Stellenbosch University (SU) has sponsored two editions, and the SU Business School has sponsored four editions since 2016.

South African authors are required to pay R1500 per published article. The journal uses an online management system to manage the editorial workflow. The journal is open access and freely accessible online.

There have not been any offers from multinational publishers to purchase the journal. The journal is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) licence.

The African Journal of Business Ethics is indexed by IBSS. Impact factors are not available. Altmetric indicators have not been determined. The 'front details' for papers and English abstracts are mandatory. This is the first independent peer review of the journal.

### Suggested improvements

**Consensus review:** The editor-in-chief should consider how to determine the impact factors for the journal, as this will greatly increase its visibility and attract more readers and authors.

There should be more consistency in the number of issues per year, and the number of articles per issue. It would be useful if a brief biography of each author is published alongside the accepted articles.

The editor-in-chief should actively seek and invite experts to contribute to the journal.

The referencing guidelines should be revisited and enforced.

A more structured approach for abstracts is suggested, and the ethical statement in the journal should be expanded. The journal should aim to publish more articles with practical application.

### Panel's consensus view

- i. **The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET-accredited list.**
- ii. **The journal should be invited to join the SciELO SA platform.**
- iii. **The editor should consider investing in the constancy of the editorial board. The frequent changes in the number of editors is flagged as a cause for concern.**
- iv. **In addition, the panel believes that more needs to be done to encourage regional issues from African countries, rather than just from South Africa.**

## 4.2.3 *Journal of Contemporary Management*

### Focus and scope

(Purpose of journal, positioning, focus, scope, readership)

The *Journal of Contemporary Management (JCM)* is an independent scientific e-publication for peer-reviewed contributions both nationally and internationally. The focus of the journal is on the interdisciplinary field of management theory and its application and practice in business and non-commercial organisations. The scope of the journal is thus contemporary management, addressing topical management issues, in the broad field of business management.

The *JCM* provides an opportunity for researchers working within its scope to disseminate their research results, implications and recommendations to a wider scientific network. The journal provides an opportunity for a wide array of subject scientists to evaluate manuscripts submitted for possible publication. Many reviewers indicated that the evaluation process, involving

objective assessment of the research and reporting of their peers, was very valuable for their own development. The journal accepts manuscripts based on research in its focus area and arranges for a team of competent reviewers to make recommendations to the editor whether to accept submitted manuscripts (with or without amendment) or not.

The journal is currently implementing a new section in which authors are invited to submit articles on 'hot topics' in the academic world. This generally takes the form of a special issue with a theme editor and is usually done in conjunction with a particular university, but not limited to that university.

The *JCM* is mainly targeted at academics in South Africa, both at universities and in private and public practice. A number of the articles emanate from completed postgraduate degrees, with the students and supervisors as authors. Interest in the *JCM* is not limited to South African universities and universities of technology. The authors, reviewers and readers of the journal also include researchers from other research institutes and the private sector, as well as researchers from outside South Africa. The journal has moved to open access since September 2019.

### Editing functions

(Standing, local institutional spread, international participation)

**Consensus review:** There is a good range of senior academics from South African institutions serving on the editorial board, but the number of international and local members needs to be expanded.

### Questionnaire

(Editorial process-related criteria)

The *JCM* was established in 2004 and publishes two issues per year. Being an electronic publication, articles can be added throughout the year, as soon as the review process of the article is completed. Special issues under a particular volume are also issued on specific topics. The *JCM* is available online at <https://journals.co.za/journal/jcman>. There were 39 116 title checks and 11 600 downloads between 2016 and 2018. The journal was read in 20 countries, including seven African countries. Issues are not pre-scheduled to appear on given dates. New articles are continuously added when the review and amendment process has been completed. There have not been any significant interruptions in publication.

Over the three-year review period, 141 full articles were published. A total of 359 manuscripts were received over the same period. The total number of manuscripts rejected without peer review was 60, and 136 manuscripts were rejected after peer review. About 22 manuscripts were reworked and resubmitted. The proportion of peer-reviewed papers that had at least one author with a non-South African address was 6%.

Two to three peer reviewers are usually approached for each submitted manuscript. Depending on the situation and availability of reviewers, more reviewers may be approached. Two reviewers submit their reports. Peer reviewers who are approached will usually already have been invited to serve the journal in this capacity and would have completed a form providing their details; new peer reviewers are invited from time to time and may be approached to review a particular paper where suitable expertise in the topic is not available on the list of established peer reviewers. The reviewers consist of current reviewers on file, or reviewers referred by other reviewers as well as authors who have published with the journal. Reviewers are also sourced from specific industries for niche-area articles. Peer review is conducted in a 'double-blind way'. Much care is taken to appoint reviewers from institutions other than that of the author. When a selected reviewer cannot undertake the task at that stage, the reviewer is replaced with another one. Valid reviewer critique and article improvement are rigorously implemented. Authors indicate in detail how they have implemented suggestions from reviewers (or why they did not regard the critique as relevant or applicable), and even in these cases, the editor may sometimes still request that recommendations must be implemented. In some instances, if requested by a

reviewer or indicated by the editor, the manuscript is returned to the reviewer for final approval. The secretariat ensures that the amendments are made as required. In cases of doubt, or when requested by the reviewer, the updated manuscript is again sent (still without identifying the author) to the original reviewer for approval. Quite often, the authors compliment the reviewers and thank them for valuable suggestions made in the review reports that are used to improve the final manuscript.

Peer reviewers sometimes receive follow-up information when the two review reports differ to a large extent. Furthermore, they will see the recommended article when published. Reviewers are provided with information to load the review on Publons for recognition. Some reviewers make enquiries afterwards to confirm that the reports were understood and to ensure that the authors understand the amendments that are expected of them. Reviewer performance is assessed, and information is captured in a database. Approximately 165 reviewers were used in one of the three years, and some of them were used more than once. The proportion of reviewers who had a non-South African address was approximately 4%. The peer-review reports were accessibly retained in the journal's records. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication online is between three and six months, but some articles are published much faster. Depending on the reviewers, the authors and the time taken to complete the reports and to return the amended article, an article could take longer to publish if it has to be sent for review again.

The editor has been in office for four years and was not appointed competitively. The period of appointment was not specified. Members of the editorial board deal with peer review and provide advice on editorial policies and practices. Some members of the board have been in office since the inception of the journal, and others are completing a fourth year of appointment. Their appointments were not competitive, and their term of office was not specified. The members of the board are appointed from within and outside the country, to provide specific topical expertise.

The journal policies include editorial guidelines that are aligned with ASSAf's Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing, Editing and Peer Review. There is no conflict-of-interest policy. Articles are not published without the consent and acceptance of the author that the article is ready for publication, to ensure that any errors are identified.

The journal does not publish any value-added features. The percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material is 100%.

## Content

(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features)

**Consensus review:** The quality of articles is considered reasonable, but not generally of an international level. Articles deal with South African and regional African issues. There are no additional scholarly features in the journal such as editorials, book reviews or invited commentary.

## Essential technical features

(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)

**Consensus review:** Abstracts vary in terms of quality, length and structure. There is no errata facility. Guidelines are provided, and the technical presentation of articles in the journal is of a good standard.

## Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

**Consensus review:** The journal is popular among young emerging researchers and postgraduates. The journal is not ranked internationally.

## Business aspects

### (Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)

The *Journal of Contemporary Management* is registered as a private company, with a single director. The publisher of the journal is Sabinet. There is no regular print run, and the production and distribution are not outsourced. The journal does not carry any advertising and does not receive any financial sponsorship.

The journal charges an APC of R200 per page for all authors. It uses a manual system to manage the editorial workflow. The journal is scheduled to move to an online management system in 2021. The journal is open access and is part of a commercial e-publication service.

There have not been any offers from multinational publishers to purchase the journal. Copyright arrangements are vested in the journal. Authors confirm that they observe all copyright restrictions on material used.

The JCM is indexed by Sabinet, which is now part of AOJ. The journal has not determined its impact factor. Altmetric indicators are administered. The 'front details' for papers and English abstracts are mandatory. The journal was independently peer reviewed by DHET in 2004 at the time of applying for accreditation.

## Suggested improvements

**Consensus review:** There is a need for clarity about the selection of the editorial board.

Since the journal is locally focused, there should be more South African academics on the board.

There is a need to improve the article-review process, find more reviewers and accelerate article turnaround time.

## Panel's consensus view

- i. **The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET-accredited list.**
- ii. **The journal should be invited to join the SciELO SA platform should it become open access.**
- iii. **The editor should consider aligning what is published more effectively with the scope of the journal.**
- iv. **In addition, the panel believes that the journal is more focused on South African issues and compares well with medium-quality international journals. More should be done to advertise the journal to leading African universities. Special issues are encouraged, and it is recommended that a team of guest editors, with substantial expertise in the field and from different universities, should be invited to manage such an issue. Abstracts require much more editorial attention to ensure that they adhere to the journal guidelines with respect to length and structure.**

### 4.2.4 *Management Dynamics: Journal of the Southern Africa Institute for Management Scientists*

## Focus and scope

### (Purpose of journal, positioning, focus, scope, readership)

The scope of the *Management Dynamics* journal is management sciences. It aims to focus on the specific discipline while adopting an interdisciplinary approach. The journal serves the South African research community by publishing quality papers. The primary target audiences are management scientists and managers, in both the public and private sectors.

The journal is distributed to about 200 members of the Southern Africa Institute for Management Scientists, to libraries as well as through EBSCOhost.

## Editing functions

(Standing, local institutional spread, international participation)

**Consensus review:** The editor and the editorial board are internationally recognised for their research reputation.

## Questionnaire

(Editorial process-related criteria)

*Management Dynamics* was established in 1992 and publishes four issues per year. It is accessible online through the Sabinet platform at <https://journals.co.za/content/journal/mandyn>. Information on visits, download, and countries in which the journal is read was not available at the time of the review. The journal is not pre-scheduled to appear on specific dates, and there have been no significant interruptions in publication.

During the three-year review period, 24 full articles were published. The number of manuscripts received over the same period totalled 90 full articles. The number of manuscripts rejected without peer review was about 30%, and about 30% of the manuscripts were rejected after peer review. The proportion of peer-reviewed papers that had at least one author with a non-South African address was very low, if any.

At least two, and sometimes three, peer reviewers are approached for each submitted manuscript. The selection of peer reviewers is based on their expertise. Peer review is conducted in a 'blind way'. Valid reviewer critique and article improvement are rigorously implemented. Peer reviewers do not receive follow-up information. Reviewer performance is not assessed, and information is not captured in a database. The number of peer reviewers used in any one year of the three-year review period was not available at the time of the review. The proportion of the reviewers who had a non-South African address was about 5%. The peer-review reports were accessibly retained in the journal's records. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication is five months in print and online.

The editor has been in office for almost 20 years and was appointed competitively. The period of appointment was not specified. Members of the editorial board occasionally deal with peer review, and they provide advice on editorial policies and practices. The editorial board members have been in office for almost 20 years, while the membership of the editorial advisory board changes over time. New board members are nominated and then approved by the current board. Their period of appointment is not specified. They are appointed from within the country to provide specific topical expertise.

The journal has editorial guidelines that are not in line with ASSAf's Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing, Editing and Peer Review. There is no formal conflict-of-interest policy. With respect to the approach to errata, there was once an error in an article, and a completely new edition was published with the correction.

The journal rarely publishes value-added features. Approximately 40 pages of each issue represent peer-reviewed original material.

## Content

(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features)

**Consensus review:** Many of the articles are authored by the editor and reviewers of the journal; apart from these, the annual output of the journal is low. The authors of the articles are mainly South African. The quality of articles is good. Additional scholarly output such as editorials, book reviews and academic correspondence are regularly published in the journal.

## Essential technical features

(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)

**Consensus review:** The abstracts are informative and of good quality. The standard of English used in the articles is good. The author guidelines are thorough, and the citation practice is good. The journal is well presented in terms of design, layout and style. Copied images are used in an ethical manner.

## Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

**Consensus review:** The journal is a useful resource for the publication of research by postgraduates and young researchers embarking on their research careers. The journal is ranked C in the international ABDC Journal Quality List. There was no information on the ethical procedures used to screen submitted articles. Articles are comparable to those in some international journals but are focused on the South African context.

## Business aspects

(Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)

The journal is owned and published by the South African Institute of Management Scientists (SAIMS). The regular print run is 150 copies per issue. Production and distribution are outsourced. The journal carries paid advertising and receives financial sponsorship from SAIMS.

The number of paying subscribers is 200, ten of which are organisations. The journal charges an APC of R350 per printed page. The journal uses a manual system to manage the editorial workflow. The journal is not open access, and articles are password protected. It is part of a commercial e-publication service (EBSCOhost).

There have been no offers from multinational publishers to purchase the journal. The editorial board has been approached by AOSIS to take over the review and publication process. SAIMS retains ownership of the journal and holds full copyright.

The journal is indexed by IBSS. There are no impact factors or altmetric indicators. The 'front details' for papers and English abstracts are mandatory. This is the journal's first independent peer review.

## Suggested improvements

**Consensus review:** The journal fulfils a useful local research purpose. However, the editorial team should consider ways to increase the international visibility of the journal by expanding the information about the journal and the editorial team on the website, and by encouraging international authors to write book reviews and edit special issues.

## Panel's consensus view

- i. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET-accredited list.
- ii. The journal should be invited to join the SciELO SA platform should it become open access.
- iii. The editor should consider ways to improve the visibility of the journal. ProQuest IBSS could perhaps assist the journal to use appropriate key terms to enable scholars to discover relevant articles. Articles in the journal contained no key words.
- iv. In addition, the panel believes the journal should consider publishing special issues, with internationally established guest editors.

## 4.2.5 *South African Journal of Business Management*

### Focus and scope

(Purpose of journal, positioning, focus, scope, readership)

The *South African Journal of Business Management (SAJBM)* publishes articles with significance for management theory and practice. The papers reflect the mutuality of interests of management scientists and managers; as such, the journal has an interdisciplinary focus on all functional specialties within the wider management discipline. Over the past two decades, the journal has experienced strong internationalisation in its authorship, readership and scope of research. However, the journal has retained a focus on South African issues to a greater extent than is observable in comparable overseas management journals.

The primary target audiences are South African and African scholars. This is an open-access journal, published by AOSIS since 2018. The journal has a worldwide audience.

### Editing functions

(Standing, local institutional spread, international participation)

**Consensus review:** The editor has national standing and a good research reputation. Members of the editorial board are mainly South African with national research reputations.

### Questionnaire

(Editorial process-related criteria)

The *SAJBM* was established in 1969. The journal publishes one issue per year. Articles are published online when ready for publication and are then printed in an end-of-year volume. Additional issues may be published for special events such as conferences, and when special themes are addressed. The journal is accessible online at <https://sajbm.org>. For the period 1 March 2018 to 21 February 2019, there were 25 063 visits and 26 794 downloads. According to Google Analytics, the journal is read in 144 countries worldwide, including 35 are African countries. The journal is not pre-scheduled to appear on specific dates. There have been no significant interruptions in publication. There was a change in publisher at the beginning of 2018; however, and there is no record of the previous editorial and owner regimes.

During the three-year review period, 97 full articles were published. The number of manuscripts received was 706 in 2016, 784 in 2017 and 373 in 2018. The number of manuscripts rejected without peer review was 621 in 2016, 698 in 2017 and 215 in 2018. The number of manuscripts rejected after peer review was 42 in 2016, 44 in 2017 and 35 in 2018. The proportion of peer-reviewed papers that had at least one author with a non-South African address was 38% in 2016, 21% in 2017 and 58% in 2018.

Usually, two peer reviewers are approached for each submitted manuscript. Reviewer selection is critical to the publication process, and the choice is based on many factors, including expertise, reputation, specific recommendations, and previous experience with particular reviewers. Reviewers are selected from among authors who have successfully published in the *SAJBM*, as well as faculty members from reputable universities in South Africa and abroad. Peer review is conducted in a 'blind way'. Valid reviewer critique and article improvement are rigorously implemented. Not only does peer review provide an independent assessment of the importance and technical accuracy of the results described, but the feedback from referees that is conveyed to authors with the editor's advice frequently also results in manuscripts being refined so that their structure and logic are more readily apparent to readers. All submitted manuscripts that are considered for external review are screened for scientific overlap with previously published work (plagiarism) before being sent for external review. Significant instances of similarity result in direct desk rejection, whereas less substantive similarities need to be addressed by the authors during the revision.

The peer-review process aims to ensure that all published articles present the results of primary scientific research; report results that have not been published elsewhere; are scientifically sound; provide new scientific knowledge where experiments, statistics and other analyses are performed to a high technical standard and are described in sufficient detail so that another researcher would be able to reproduce the experiments; provide conclusions that are presented in an appropriate manner and that are supported by the data; are presented in an intelligible and logical manner, and are written in clear and unambiguous English; meet all applicable research standards with regard to the ethics of experimentation and research integrity; and adhere to appropriate reporting guidelines and community standards for data availability. Once the author submits the revised manuscript, the reviewers may be asked to reappraise the manuscript in a second-round review. Peer reviewers receive follow-up information. The editor keeps reviewers informed about the final decision on the manuscript and is committed to providing reviewers with the reports of other reviewers who participated in the review and giving feedback on the outcome of the manuscript.

Reviewer performance is assessed through a rating given by the editor after each completed review. This information is captured in a database. The number of peer reviewers used in 2018 was 42, 26% of whom had a non-South African address. The peer-review reports were accessibly retained in the journal's records. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication online was 260 days of publication in 2016; 270 in 2017; and 114 in 2018. The printed edition of the journal is compiled annually in a volume.

The editor has been in office since August 2018 and was not appointed competitively. The period of appointment was not specified. Members of the editorial board deal with peer review and provide advice on editorial policies and practices. The term of office varies per member. Members are invited by the editor, on the advice of committee members and departmental heads in selected academic institutions, on the basis of their specific expertise. The period of their appointment is three years. They are appointed from within and outside the country to provide specific topical expertise.

The editorial guidelines of the journal are available at <https://sajbm.org/index.php/sajbm/pages/view/policies>, and those of the publisher are available at <https://aosis.co.za/legal-centre/publication-policies/>. The journal has a conflict-of-interest policy. Any relevant conflicts of interest of authors must be communicated to the editors during the review process and declared in the published work. Authors must declare all sources of research funding, including direct and indirect financial support, supply of equipment or materials, or other forms of conflict of interest that might have prevented them from executing and publishing unbiased research; the role of any research funders or sponsors in the research design, execution, analysis, interpretation and reporting; and any other relevant financial or non-financial interests and relationships that might be considered likely to affect the interpretation of their findings, or that the editors, reviewers or readers might reasonably wish to know. This includes any relationship with the journal (for example, if the editors wish to publish their research in their own journal). The journal guidelines are aligned with ASSAf's Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing, Editing and Peer Review. The journal has a policy on errata that can be accessed at <https://aosis.co.za/legal-centre/publication-policies/#Correcting-the-record>.

The journal does not publish any value-added scholarly features. The percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material was 99% in 2018.

## Content

(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features)

**Consensus review:** There have been recent improvements in the quality of articles published in the journal. Most articles focus on African or South African issues and are written by South African scholars. However, international authors do occasionally publish in the journal. Approximately 30 articles are published each year, which is considered acceptable.

## Essential technical features

(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)

**Consensus review:** Abstracts are in English, and the journal publishes errata. A high standard of scholarly English is evident in the journal, and the articles are carefully edited. Clear citation guidelines are provided and managed. The presentation of articles, figures and tables is of professional standard.

## Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

**Consensus review:** The journal covers a wide range of topics and makes a useful contribution to the extant local South African management literature. The focus of the topics is largely regional, which means that the journal has limited relevance or interest to the global scholarly community.

## Business aspects

(Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)

The title owner is the Stellenbosch University Business School, and the publisher is AOSIS. The journal carries unpaid advertising and does not receive any sponsorship. There is an APC of R1026 per page (excluding VAT). An online management system is used for the management of the editorial workflow. The journal is publicly available in open access. It is part of a commercial e-publication service (Sabinet) and a non-commercial e-publication mechanism (DOAJ).

There have been no offers from multinational publishers to purchase the journal. Authors retain copyright for work published by AOSIS unless otherwise specified. Authors are required to grant AOSIS unlimited rights to publish the definitive work in any format, language or medium, for any lawful purpose. AOSIS requires journal authors to publish their work in open access under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) licence. The authors retain the non-exclusive right to use the published article, provided that attribution is given to the applicable journal, with details of the original publication, as set out in the official citation of the article published in the journal. Authors specifically have the right to post the article on their own website or that of their institution, or in institutional or other repositories.

The journal is indexed by AOSIS Library Index; the Academic Journal Guide (2018) of the Chartered Association of Business Schools; SSCI; WoS Core Collection; DOAJ; Norwegian Register for Scientific Journals, Series and Publishers, Level 1; Sabinet; and Scopus. Impact factors are as follows: 0.44 on WoS, 0.9 on CiteScore, and a Google Scholar h5-index of 12.00. Altmetric indicators are administered. The 'front details' for papers and English abstracts are mandatory. The journal has been independently peer reviewed before by Scopus, the WoS and the Chartered Association of Business Schools.

## Suggested improvements

**Consensus review:** The number of international African members on the editorial board should be increased. More members of international research standing should be recruited to the editorial board.

More special issues should be published to encourage internationally acclaimed research scholars to contribute to the journal.

An effort should be made to reduce article turnaround time, although this might not be easy given that this problem is associated with the journal's difficulty of finding competent reviewers.

## Panel's consensus view

- i. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET-accredited list.
- ii. The journal should be invited to join the SciELO SA platform.

- iii. In addition, the panel believes that members from other African countries should be included on the editorial board. The journal could consider publishing more special issues on specific topics, with internationally accredited guest editors. More international reviewers should be appointed.

#### 4.2.6 Southern African Business Review

##### Focus and scope

(Purpose of journal, positioning, focus, scope, readership)

The *Southern African Business Review (SABR)* is a scientific research journal of the College of Economic and Management Sciences at the University of South Africa (Unisa). It was first published in 1997. The SABR is an open-access journal, and since 2008, it has been published only in electronic format. It is a fully independent refereed publication, accredited by DHET. Supported by an international editorial board since 2004, the journal aims to enhance scholarly research and publication in economic and management sciences, and related fields.

Special effort is made to uphold and continuously improve the quality of the journal in an effort to attract high-quality articles. Experience suggests that the most prominent economic and management journals often focus strongly on quantitative articles. However, the SABR encourages diverse scientific methodological approaches.

The primary target audience is scholars from southern Africa and further afield in Africa. This is well expressed in the journal's robustly diverse audience and readership. The editorial board of the journal has been extended to include the deans of all faculties of economic and management sciences at universities in southern Africa, in addition to international scholars. The SABR is an open-access journal with conspicuous visibility on various online platforms. The journal is planning to apply to list on various indices and to communicate directly with economic and management sciences faculties, especially in South Africa.

##### Editing functions

(Standing, local institutional spread, international participation)

**Consensus review:** The editor is well qualified, with an h-index of 250, although this has been earned mainly from citations to articles published in local journals. Both the editor and deputy editor would benefit from strengthening their research portfolios by publishing in international high-ranked journals. The editorial board is constituted mainly by scholars based in South Africa. The international advisory board has scholars from a diverse range of countries, but the function of this board is unclear, and more information in this regard is required on the website.

##### Questionnaire

(Editorial process-related criteria)

The SABR is published annually. The primary URL since 2018 has been <https://upjournals.co.za/index.php/SABR>. Back issues are still being uploaded to this URL. The journal is also available on the Sabinet platform at <https://journals.co.za/content/journal/sabr/browse>, and on the AJOL platform at <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/sabr>. During the period between 17 January 2018 and 18 December 2018, AJOL recorded 21 556 abstract views and 136 871 article downloads. The journal was read in 124 countries, 17 of which are African countries. The SABR uses a continuous publishing model, in which articles are published continuously when they are ready. There have been no significant interruptions in publication.

During the review period between 2016 and 2018, 51 full articles were published. A total of 465 full articles were received during the three-year period: 100 in 2016, 126 in 2017 and 239 in 2018. The percentages of articles rejected without peer review were 48.0% in 2016, 62.7% in 2017 and 67.0% in 2018. More than half the manuscripts were rejected after peer review. The total rejection rate was 71.0% in 2016, 67.9% in 2017 and 74.0% in 2018.

The proportion of peer-reviewed papers that had at least one author with a non-South African address was 7.8%.

Two peer reviewers are selected for each submitted manuscript and are usually selected from the journal's list of 200 reviewers. This list is continually updated with additional specialists especially in new sub-disciplinary fields. Peer reviewers are selected based on their field of speciality, correlated with the subject matter of the manuscript they are asked to review. Peer reviewers should not be from the same institution as the authors of any papers that they review. Peer review is conducted in a 'blind way'. Information on authors and institutions is always blanked out. Valid reviewer critique and article improvement are rigorously implemented. Article revision is expected to accommodate valid reviewer critique. Manuscripts that are subjected to extensive revision are always sent to the original reviewer for re-review. Minor revisions are verified by the editor. Authors are asked to indicate the revisions effected in their manuscript by highlighting the amendments on the manuscript and in the review report, for easy reference during re-review.

All peer reviewers who recommend extensive revision receive the revised manuscripts for re-review. Reviewer performance is assessed. Reviewers who submitted unsatisfactory reports are captured in the reviewer database. The frequency of review requests is also captured in the database. In 2018, 42 reviewers were used, 7% of whom had a non-South African address. All review reports are retained in a database that is easily accessible according to article or manuscript. The average time between the submission of manuscripts and informing authors of the outcome of the review process and the editorial decision to publish or not was between 98 and 160 days. The publication lag period after the scientific response from authors varies from four to six weeks. Online publication occurs immediately after the layout process. No printed copies are produced. In 2018, days to review was 117, and days to publication was 171. Open Journal Systems (OJS) calculates the following statistics for each journal: the 'days to review' is calculated from the date of submission (or designation of the review version) to the initial publishing decision, while the 'days to publish' for accepted submissions is measured from the initial submission until publication.

The editor has been in office since 2017. The post of chief editor was advertised in the College of Economic and Management Sciences at Unisa. A selection committee conducted the interviews. The editorial tenure expires at the end of March 2020. Four of the seven editorial board members are occasionally involved in the peer review of manuscripts due to their specialised knowledge. A full report on the editorial practices of the journal is compiled annually, including the number of manuscripts received, the review process, publication and rejection rates, timelines, and technical aspects such as language editing and layout as well as the image of the journal. A full report is also submitted to the College of Economic and Management Sciences for input and suggestions. Editorial board members may be asked to comment and express their views on any aspects of the journal. Members were invited to join the board between 2015 and 2017. Editorial board members were identified based on their specialised knowledge to provide topical expertise, as well as on their geographical representation. Their period of appointment was not specified. Two board members are from South Africa, and the remainder are from New Zealand, Canada, Belgium, Sweden and Eswatini.

The journal's policy and guidelines for authors are available online at <https://upjournals.co.za/index.php/SABR/about>. The guidelines are aligned with ASSAf's Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing, Editing and Peer Review. There is no conflict-of-interest policy. The journal is published online only. Errors are corrected on the electronic version, and errata are published in the current volume. No errors were recorded during the two-year review period.

There are no value-added features published in the journal. Up until 2018, only peer-reviewed original material was published.

## Content

(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features)

**Consensus review:** The articles range from good to low quality, with most being average. The number of articles published in the journal each year is low. Articles are mostly written by South African authors and focus on South African issues, although contributions from international African authors are occasionally published. The articles tend to have a low citation rate and low impact on general scholarly discourse. The journal does not publish any additional scholarly features.

## Essential technical features

(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)

**Consensus review:** Abstracts are written using acceptable English. An errata facility is available but seldom used. Citation is consistent, and clear guidelines are provided. The presentation, layout, design and style are clear and neat.

## Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

**Consensus review:** The journal can play an important role for postgraduate students and emerging researchers to gain experience in publishing their research.

Articles published in the journal cannot be realistically compared to leading international journals but are nevertheless of acceptable quality. The journal website and information for authors are of a good internationally comparable standard.

## Business aspects

(Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)

The owner and publisher of the journal is the College of Economic and Management Sciences at Unisa. The journal is not printed. Production and distribution are done by Unisa Press. There are no advertisements, and the journal does not receive any financial sponsorship. The journal charges a publication fee of R6500 per article. The journal uses an online management system and uploads articles to the web to manage the editorial workflow. The SABR is an open-access journal. There have been no offers from multinational publishers to purchase the journal. Copyright resides with the authors. The work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International licence.

The SABR is indexed by AJOL; Cabell's directories; Genamics JournalSeek; Sabinet; Ulrichsweb; and the repositories of the University of Pretoria and Unisa. The journal does not have an impact factor. Altmetric indicators are administered by AJOL and by Unisa online statistics. The 'front details' for papers and English abstracts are mandatory. The journal was independently peer reviewed by DHET in 2011.

## Suggested improvements

**Consensus review:** The editor should aim to increase the number of articles published each year. The journal should aim to become part of a reputable international citation index.

The journal brand could be enhanced by raising the quality of articles through stricter selection of articles, and attempts should be made to invite more articles from international authors. The editor should invite reviews, academic commentary and editorials, and consider publishing special issues.

The journal should consider organising workshops or other kinds of events that will build the 'brand' of the journal and associate it in prospective authors' minds with particular themes or

debates. This could also involve broadening the repertoire of the journal to include review articles, debates, commentary, and editorials by international and well-established local scholars. It is further recommended that special issues be considered. These efforts could improve the citation rate of the journal.

The editor might wish to consider a branding exercise for the journal, involving a concerted effort to lessen the association – in people's minds, at least – between the journal and the Unisa college.

### Panel's consensus view

- i. **The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET-accredited list.**
- ii. **The journal should be invited to join the SciELO SA platform.**
- iii. **The editor should consider ensuring that the articles published make a theoretical contribution.**
- iv. **The editor should carefully consider the methodological choices of researchers.**
- v. **In addition, the panel believes that the journal should leverage the policy recommendations made in articles in order to market the journal beyond academia.**

#### 4.2.7 *Southern African Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management*

### Focus and scope

(Purpose of journal, positioning, focus, scope, readership)

The *Southern African Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management (SAJESBM)* is a peer-reviewed journal that is aimed at providing practical guidance and empirical evidence to researchers and practitioners specialising in the fields of entrepreneurship and small business management. The journal provides a communication forum to advance entrepreneurship, innovation, small business management and family business theory, as well as their application in practice. The aim of the journal is to improve and further develop these fields, and it is designed to appeal to both practitioners and academics. A 'double-blind' review process is followed, supported by a national and international editorial review board. The mission of the SAJESBM is to publish empirical and theoretical contributions in the form of fieldwork, laboratory research, case studies, and qualitative, quantitative and conceptual papers. The relevant and functional significance of the findings is applied in the entrepreneurial and management fields. The SAJESBM aspires to serve as a platform for presenting information that is central to the concerns of practitioners and academics in such a way that the research not only grows out of the concerns of practitioners, but simultaneously shapes theories for future practice.

The body of knowledge pertaining to the disciplinary focus of the journal is relatively new in the southern African context. The key focus of the journal is to obtain new knowledge to enhance its field, with eventual socio-economic impact, for example, through economic growth and job creation. The primary target audiences are South African and African scholars, although scholars from across the world are invited to publish in the journal. It is an open-access journal, published by AOSIS since 2016. The journal has a worldwide audience.

### Editing functions

(Standing, local institutional spread, international participation)

**Consensus review:** The editor and the editorial board are mainly South African and have high national and international standing. There are four international members. The authors of articles are mainly South African. The section editors are considered to be of solid academic standing.

## Questionnaire

### (Editorial process-related criteria)

The journal was established in 2008 and publishes one issue per year. Articles are published online when ready for publication and are then printed in an end-of-year volume. Additional issues may be published for special events such as conferences, and when special themes are addressed. The journal is available online through the AOSIS platform at <https://sajesbm.co.za>. The SAJESBM received 25 362 views and 53 211 downloads over the three-year review period. The journal is read in 168 countries worldwide, including 45 African countries, according to Google Analytics. Issues are not pre-scheduled to appear on specific dates. There have been significant interruptions in publication due to unforeseen circumstances when the previous editor fell ill, resulting in a backlog of manuscripts. Since 2016, the journal has grown substantially, and it now focuses on quality-driven submissions and publications.

During the three-year review period, 23 full articles were published. A total of 148 manuscripts were received over the same period; 59 were rejected without peer review, and 40 after peer review. The proportion of peer-reviewed papers that had at least one author with a non-South African address was 0%.

Generally, two peer reviewers are approached for each submitted manuscript. Reviewer selection is critical to the publication process, and the choice is based on many factors, including expertise, reputation, specific recommendations, and previous experience with particular reviewers. Peer review is conducted in a 'blind way'. Valid reviewer critique and article improvement are rigorously implemented. Not only does peer review provide an independent assessment of the importance and technical accuracy of the results described, but the feedback from referees that is conveyed to authors with the editor's advice frequently also results in manuscripts being refined so that their structure and logic are more readily apparent to readers. All manuscripts submitted to the journal are screened for scientific overlap on previously published work (plagiarism), which also needs to be addressed by authors during revision. The peer-review process aims to ensure that all published articles present the results of primary scientific research; report results that have not been published elsewhere; are scientifically sound; provide new scientific knowledge where experiments, statistics and other analyses are performed to a high technical standard and are described in sufficient detail so that another researcher would be able to reproduce the experiments; provide conclusions that are presented in an appropriate manner and are supported by the data; are presented in an intelligible and logical manner, and are written in clear and unambiguous English; meet all applicable research standards with regard to the ethics of experimentation and research integrity; and adhere to appropriate reporting guidelines and community standards for data availability. Once the author submits the revised manuscript, the reviewers may be asked to reappraise the manuscript in a second-round review.

Peer reviewers receive follow-up information. The editor keeps reviewers informed about the final decision on the manuscript and is committed to providing reviewers with the reports of other reviewers who participated in the review and giving feedback on the outcome of the manuscript. Reviewer performance is assessed through a rating by the editor after each completed review. This information is captured in a database. The number of peer reviewers used in 2018 was 51, 2% of whom had a non-South African address. The peer-review reports were accessibly retained in the journal's records. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication online was 214 days in 2018. The printed edition of the journal is compiled annually in a volume.

The editor has been in office since 2016 and was not appointed competitively. The period of appointment was not specified. The members of the editorial board deal with peer review and provide advice on editorial policies and practices. Members of the board were appointed for three years, and their appointment was not competitive. The scientific community in the field of entrepreneurship is very small. The appointments tend to be based on availability to review rather than selection. Members are appointed predominantly from within South Africa to provide

specific topical expertise. International scholars are approached, but they are generally not available as they are involved in their own journals. The process of strengthening the expertise of the board will continue in order to enhance the international standing of the journal.

The editorial guidelines of the journal are available online at <https://sajesbm.co.za/index.php/sajesbm/pages/view/policies>. The publisher's guidelines are also available online at <https://aosis.co.za/legal-centre/publication-policies/>. The guidelines are aligned with ASSAf's Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing, Editing and Peer Review. There is a conflict-of-interest policy. Any relevant conflicts of interests of authors must be communicated to the editors during the review process and declared in the published work. Authors must declare all sources of research funding, including direct and indirect financial support, supply of equipment or materials, or other forms of conflict of interest that might have prevented them from executing and publishing unbiased research; the role of any research funders or sponsors in the research design, execution, analysis, interpretation and reporting; and any other relevant financial or non-financial interests and relationships that might be considered likely to affect the interpretation of the findings, or that the editors, reviewers or readers might reasonably wish to know. This includes any relationship with the journal (for example, if the editors wish to publish their own research in the journal). The policy on errata is available online at <https://aosis.co.za/legal-centre/publication-policies/#Correcting-the-record>.

The journal publishes critical editorials as a value-added feature. The percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material was 99% in 2018.

## Content

(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features)

**Consensus review:** Published articles are generally of a good standard. The number of articles published annually is increasing and is currently approximately 12 articles per year. The journal covers research work in African countries, mostly by South African authors on regional issues. The South African authors are from a diverse range of national institutions of higher learning. There is very little work published by international authors outside South Africa and Africa. The journal should consider publishing additional scholarly output, as the only value-added feature currently being produced is critical editorials.

## Essential technical features

(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)

**Consensus review:** Abstracts are clear and are presented in correct English. There is evidence of good citation practice. The layout and style are practical, easy to follow and well presented. An errata facility is available but is not easy to find on the website.

## Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

**Consensus review:** The journal is a solid and useful vehicle for emerging and established South African researchers. It compares favourably with some international journals, but not the leading ones in the field.

## Business aspects

(Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)

The title owner is the Department of Business Management at the University of Pretoria, and the publisher is AOSIS. There is no regular print run, as the journal is published online in open access. The journal carries unpaid advertising. There is no financial sponsorship apart from the non-quantified hours spent in editing and managing the journal.

There are no paying subscribers. The journal charges an APC of R1244 per page (excluding VAT).

The editorial workflow is managed through an online management system. The journal is open access and is part of a non-commercial e-publication mechanism through DOAJ.

There have not been any offers from multinational publishers to purchase the journal. Authors retain copyright for work published by AOSIS unless otherwise specified. Authors of work published by AOSIS are required to grant AOSIS the unlimited rights to publish the definitive work in any format, language or medium, for any lawful purpose. AOSIS requires journal authors to publish their work in open access under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) licence. The authors retain the non-exclusive right to use the published article, provided that attribution is given to the applicable journal, with details of the original publication, as set out in the official citation of the article published in the journal. Authors specifically have the right to post the article on their own website or that of their institution, or in institutional or other repositories.

The *Southern African Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management* is indexed by AOSIS Library; Gale Cengage Learning; DHET; DOAJ; Norwegian Register for Scientific Journals, Series and Publishers, Level 1; ProQuest; and Sabinet. The journal does not have an impact factor. Altmetric indicators are administered. The 'front details' for papers and English abstracts are mandatory. The journal was independently peer reviewed by DOAJ.

### Suggested improvements

**Consensus review:** The journal needs to attract international authors from Africa and other countries beyond the African continent through the recruitment of associate editors from other African countries and further abroad.

The journal should consider publishing more special issues, driven by guest editors who are highly respected academics in the field and who encourage research collaboration with international scholars.

The editorial board should be expanded to include more scholars from other African countries and further abroad.

The number of issues published each year should be increased, and other scholarly outputs such as book reviews, scholarly commentary and editorials by invited international scholars should be included.

The inclusion of 'Southern African' in the title could be a limiting factor in attracting a broader scholarly target audience. If possible, consideration should be given to changing the title by removing the 'Southern African' epithet.

The journal should consider co-sponsorship of an annual international conference focused exclusively on entrepreneurship.

### Panel's consensus view

- i. **The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET-accredited list.**
- ii. **The journal should be invited to join the SciELO SA platform.**
- iii. **The editor should consider increasing the standing of the board, perhaps by appointing more international board members who specialise in entrepreneurship.**
- iv. **In addition, the panel believes that more should be done to attract international and African authors. The editorial board might consider attracting interdisciplinary research articles on recent trends and practices, and on comparative studies with other countries, and a variety of sectors and industries. It is recommended that the journal issues should be pre-scheduled.**

## 4.2.8 The Retail and Marketing Review

### Focus and scope

(Purpose of journal, positioning, focus, scope, readership)

The focus of the journal is on the identification of trends and developments in the field of marketing and retail, both locally and internationally, and on the impact of these trends and developments on teaching and industry. Submissions are accepted from both academia and industry, and an interdisciplinary approach is encouraged. As business is becoming more integrated and cross-pollinated, it is important to be aware of the impact of various different disciplines on business. Academic articles are strongly encouraged in order to expand the body of knowledge and stimulate debate among peers.

The aim of the journal is to encourage the interdisciplinary nature of business and consider how business and academia impact on each other. Submissions are requested from a range of disciplines, including social sciences, education and finance, as long as a proper link to retail and marketing can be established. It is assumed that in this way, better understanding and integration of the various disciplines can be established, and that it will also be advantageous for business and academia in the long run. An interdisciplinary approach is followed, with a focus on retail and marketing to stimulate debate and foster understanding of the role and importance of various disciplines in the success of businesses. New areas of debate lead to new areas of research; in the process, the body of knowledge is expanded. Many topics are very focused on the needs and wants of local institutions, and many local and international students benefit from the articles for their postgraduate studies.

The primary target audience is local scholars and, to a lesser extent, international scholars. There has, however, been an increase in the number of international scholars who have shown an interest in the journal and its content for various reasons and purposes. There has also been much interest from scholars in other African countries, including Namibia, Nigeria, Ghana and Uganda. The journal is focused primarily on institutional subscribers and is available on the Sabinet system at a number of institutions. Several commercial institutions also subscribe to the journal, and from time to time, provide insights on trends or opinions to the journal.

### Editing functions

(Standing, local institutional spread, international participation)

**Consensus review:** The editor has a national rather than an international reputation. The details of the editorial board are not available on the Sabinet website.

### Questionnaire

(Editorial process-related criteria)

The first issue of the journal appeared in 2003, with the title of *The International Retail and Marketing Review*. In 2014, the name was officially changed to *The Retail and Marketing Review*. The journal is published biannually through the Sabinet platform at [http://reference.sabinet.co.za/sa\\_epublication/irmr1](http://reference.sabinet.co.za/sa_epublication/irmr1). Information on visits and download records was not available at the time of the review. The journal is read in 20 countries, including four African countries. Issues are not pre-scheduled to appear on specific dates but do appear by June/July and November/December each year. There have been no recorded interruptions in publication.

During the three-year review period, 26 full articles and three opinion pieces were published. The total number of manuscripts received was 74 full articles and three opinion pieces. Six full articles were rejected without peer review, and 31 after peer review. Two full peer-reviewed articles had at least one author with a non-South African address.

A minimum of two peer reviewers are usually selected for each submitted manuscript, but there can be up to four reviewers, depending on the topic and complexity of the article. Peer reviewers are selected based on their research interest and experience in the particular field. Peer reviewers are not selected to review articles emanating from their own institution. Peer review is conducted in a 'blind way'. The names and affiliations of the authors are removed from the article. Valid reviewer critique and article improvement are rigorously implemented. Authors need to submit a document with the final submission of their article, indicating exactly how the reviewers' critique and comments have been addressed. Peer reviewers receive follow-up information. If major changes are suggested or an article is resubmitted, it is sent back to the original reviewers for comment. The same reviewers need to approve it for publication or rejection. Reviewer performance is assessed, and information is captured in a database. A total of 49 peer reviewers were used in one year over the three-year review period; of these, six reviewers had a non-South African address. The peer-review reports were accessibly retained in the journal's records. The average time between receipt of a manuscript and its publication online is between six and 18 months.

The editor-in-chief has been in office since the inception of the journal. The aim was to obtain accreditation based on the standard and quality of the journal, and to drive the process forward. It was initially thought that the editor-in-chief would be appointed for a period of five years after the accreditation of the journal. Due to the complexities around journals and the time involved in finding a new editor, the advisory board suggested that the editor-in-chief stay on another for three years. The appointment of the editor-in-chief was not competitive. The Retail and Marketing Review was launched after identifying the need for a journal that could address issues in retail and marketing. As there were no funds or administrative assistance available, the focus was on establishing the journal as a recognised scholarly journal, driven by someone with a passion to achieve the aims of the journal. The position of editor-in-chief will be re-evaluated at the end of 2021.

The editorial board members deal with peer review. The level of expertise of these members makes a significant contribution to the quality and standard of the journal. Members of the board also advise on the editorial policy and practices. The editorial board was changed at the end of 2018 to involve new members with a passion and interest in the journal. It was also decided to have a larger international presence. Only one of the previous board members is still serving and has been on the board for several years. Members are not appointed competitively. They are invited to join the board based on their academic standing and contributions in the past. The current board was appointed for four years. The board has four members from outside the country, and one from South Africa. Their role is to provide guidance to the editor-in-chief, make suggestions regarding policy and other relevant matters, and give critical feedback on all issues pertaining to the management of the journal.

The journal has editorial guidelines that are aligned with ASSAf's Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing, Editing and Peer Review. There is a conflict-of-interest policy. The journal has an errata policy in place. The value-added features include opinion pieces and book reviews. Book reviews are a new feature that was introduced in 2019. These kinds of contributions are evaluated on merit and published as a work in progress, without any subsidy benefits. The main aim was to stimulate interest in research and to stimulate discussion. The percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material is 90%.

## Content

(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features)

**Consensus review:** The articles published are of average to low quality, dealing mostly with South African issues. The number of articles published annually is adequate, with a good mix of local authors from universities across South Africa, as well as a few international articles. During the period under review, the journal did not publish any additional scholarly outputs such as editorials, book reviews or scholarly correspondence.

## Essential technical features

(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)

**Consensus review:** Abstracts are in clear and grammatical English. There is a good citation practice. The presentation, design, layout and style used in the journal are clear, and copied images are used in an ethical manner.

## Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

**Consensus review:** Graduate students and early-career staff find the journal useful for research publication. It does not attract senior South African marketing research academics. The journal is not comparable to leading international journals in the field. It is lightly reviewed, lacks academic rigour, and is not internationally accredited in reputable citation indices.

## Business aspects

(Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)

The journal is a publication of the Department of Marketing Management at the University of South Africa (Unisa) and that the publisher is MC Cant. There is no regular print run, and the production and distribution are not outsourced. The journal does not carry advertising and does not receive financial sponsorship. Subscribers can subscribe only through Sabinet.

The journal charges an APC. Only approved articles are required to pay page charges. For 2018, this equated to R6000 for articles up to 15 pages, and R8000 for articles longer than 15 pages. The charges have remained unchanged for several years and are expected to remain unaltered for the foreseeable future. The revenue generated through the APC is used to cover some of the costs of managing the journal, the administrative costs, and in some cases the cost of editing articles. The journal uses a manual system to manage the editorial workflow. The journal is not open access. It is part of a commercial e-publication service (Sabinet).

There have not been any formal offers from multinational publishers to purchase the journal, but there have been exploratory talks with a private educational institution. In terms of the copyright arrangements, once an article is submitted for review, authors are not allowed to submit the article for review to another journal. Once the article has been published, authors are not allowed to publish the article elsewhere. The copyright of articles published in The Retail and Marketing Review belongs to the journal, and reproduction is allowed only with the permission of the journal.

The journal is currently listed with Sabinet and is in the progress of being indexed with the WoS, IBSS and Google Scholar. The journal does not have impact factors but is gaining prestige. Altmetric indicators are administered by Sabinet. The 'front details' for papers and English abstracts are mandatory. The journal has been independently peer reviewed by Juta and DHET.

## Suggested improvements

**Consensus review:** Fewer articles should be accepted for publication in the journal. South African and international academics in the field of marketing and retail should be invited to contribute to the journal.

The editorial board should be strengthened by inviting international academics to serve, and the details of the board should be displayed on the website.

## Panel's consensus view:

- i. The journal should not continue to be listed on the DHET-accredited list.
- ii. The journal should not be invited to join the SciELO SA platform.

- iii. **The editor should consider improving the academic reputation of the journal by reviewing the current peer-review processes so as to become more stringent.**
- iv. **In addition, the panel believes that the editor does not appear to have an international track record in terms of quality peer-reviewed journals and seems to be more of a textbook author. The papers published in the journal are of average to low quality. The journal is only lightly edited and does not compare favourably with international journals. The published papers do not reflect new knowledge, but rather replications of known concepts. The journal is encouraged to publish original work as opposed to what is already known but applied in other contexts. This will enhance the quality of the journal.**

## 4.3 Finance and Accounting

### 4.3.1 *Investment Analysts Journal*

#### Focus and scope

(Purpose of journal, positioning, focus, scope, readership)

The *Investment Analysts Journal (IAJ)* is an international peer-reviewed journal that publishes high-quality and original research in finance and investment and seeks to establish a balance between theoretical and empirical studies. Papers in any areas of finance, investment, corporate finance, accounting and financial economics are considered for publication. All contributions are welcome but are subject to an objective selection procedure to ensure that published articles meet the criteria of scientific objectivity, importance and replicability.

The journal aims to serve as a dissemination and discussion platform for researchers in finance, investment, corporate finance, accounting and financial economics both in South Africa and internationally. It encourages submissions specifically from African countries, given the focus on research from throughout the region. From 2017, a special issue was introduced to publish papers presented at the annual conference of the Southern African Finance Association held in Cape Town. Like other papers submitted to the journal, these special issue papers are also subject to the stringent 'double-blind' peer-review process.

The target audience is both local and international institutions, including academic institutions and scholars. The *IAJ* is the official publication of the Investment Analysts Society of South Africa (IASSA). It is an international journal, published by Taylor & Francis in the UK, that continues to emphasise local relevance. In 2018, for example, 33% of the journal downloads came from Africa, but South Africa remains the top country for usage and submissions.

The *IAJ* is available to readers both in print and online, through various subsidiaries. Between 2016 and 2018, about 2400 institutions globally had access to the journal through Taylor & Francis sales deals. There are a negligible number of personal subscribers, excluding IASSA member subscriptions. With respect to usage, currently about 33% of downloads come from Africa, 22% from Europe, 14% from Asia-Pacific and 10% from the USA, with smaller percentages from other regions around the world.

#### Editing functions

(Standing, local institutional spread, international participation)

**Consensus review:** The editor-in-chief and some of the editors are highly respected thought leaders and academic leaders in finance and investment in South Africa. The editorial board includes many members with a national disciplinary reputation and many excellent local publications. However, with a few notable exceptions, there appear to be relatively few internationally recognised scholars on the editorial board.

## Questionnaire

### (Editorial process-related criteria)

The journal was established in 1972. It publishes four issues online and two print issues per year. Each print issue consists of two combined online issues. The journal is accessible through the Taylor & Francis platform at [www.tandfonline.com/riaj](http://www.tandfonline.com/riaj). The usage of the journal has been increasing annually, with 7400 full-text downloads in 2018. Page views are visible at article level on the journal website. Since partnering with Taylor & Francis as from 2015, the IAJ has been read in more than 80 countries, including countries in Africa, Asia, Australasia, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, North America and South Asia. The IAJ is regularly read in at least 14 African countries, including South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania, Egypt, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Ethiopia, Tunisia, Botswana, Ghana and Malawi.

Issues are pre-scheduled to appear on specific dates. The two print issues are usually scheduled for release in May/June and October annually. There have been interruptions in publication, as issues are scheduled in advance but may suffer delays.

Over the three-year review period, 58 peer-reviewed original papers were published. In the full-article category, 410 manuscripts were submitted over the same period, and the rejection rate was about 86%. A total of 258 (65%) manuscripts were rejected without peer review, and 87 (22%) after peer review. Of the 58 papers published, 36 (62%) had at least one non-South African author.

Two peer reviewers are selected for each submitted manuscript. Reviewers are selected from a database of reviewers who list at least three fields of expertise. The editors then match the research topic with the field of expertise of the reviewer. At least one international reviewer is assigned for each manuscript under review. The editors also endeavour to spread the load and not to overload reviewers. The reviewers are all rated individually, based on the quality of each specific review. Furthermore, reviewers are selected based on objective criteria such as their h-index. The IAJ makes use of 'double-blind' peer review. The recommendations and critique of reviewers are of paramount importance to the editors, who will rarely make a decision against the reviewers' recommendation. When there is a substantial disparity in the recommendations of the two reviewers, a third reviewer is appointed. There is a very rigorous process in place, through the editorial assistant, to ensure that all recommendations by the reviewers are implemented by the authors. Peer reviewers receive follow-up information. Furthermore, the editor-in-chief writes a personal note of thanks to reviewers after completion.

Reviewer performance is assessed, and information is captured in a database. The IAJ has been using the Editorial Manager system since the beginning of 2015. The reviewers' information and performance ratings are stored in Editorial Manager. The office of the editor-in-chief also keeps a record of the reviewers and their critique and recommendations. An average of 120 peer reviewers were used in one of the past three years, 62% of whom had a non-South African address. The peer-review reports were accessibly retained in the journal's records. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication online is eight months from original submission of the paper to the Editorial Manager system until online publication.

The editor-in-chief and the editor were both appointed in June 2015 for a three-year period, and in July 2018 their appointment was extended for a further three years. An additional editor was appointed in November 2016 for a three-year period, and in December 2019 his appointment was extended for a further three years. The editors were approached by the proprietor of the journal, the board of the Investment Analysts Society of South Africa. Since the academic field of investment and corporate finance is highly specialised in South Africa, and almost all the notable academics in the field are known to one another, there was considered to be no point in advertising the position. The board members serve as reviewers as and when necessary, depending on their fields of expertise. They also advise on editorial policies and practices. The editorial board comprises a blend of top research academics and top practitioners in the field of investment and corporate finance. The board was constituted shortly after the editor-in-chief was

appointed. Each member of the newly constituted editorial board was individually approached by the editor-in-chief, and the period of appointment of the board was not specified. Seven board members are from South Africa, and seven are international. Collectively, the board has vast expertise and knowledge to serve the main purpose and aim of the journal, namely, to publish significant original research in finance and investment that seeks to establish a balance between theoretical and professional studies.

The journal makes the instructions for authors available on the journal webpage at <https://www.tandfonline.com/action/authorSubmission?journalCode=riaj20&page=instructions#.VdcM9mqzA>. Conflict of interest is dealt with on a case-by-case basis, but all authors, as well as guest editors, are required to sign a publishing agreement with Taylor & Francis. The guidelines are not formally aligned with ASSAf's Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing, Editing and Peer Review. According to the guidelines, it is the publisher's policy to publish errata.

The journal does not publish any value-added features. The percentage of pages in each issue that represented peer reviewed original material was 100%.

## Content

(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features)

**Consensus review:** The journal publishes rigorous research of a high standard. The papers are topical and incorporate the latest knowledge in the field. The journal publishes a relatively large number of papers each year. Albeit few in number, the journal contains samples of the best research work in South Africa, addressing issues and problems with a southern African focus. There is a balanced spread of national and international subject matter. There are no additional scholarly features such as editorials, topical reviews, book reviews or scholarly correspondence on the journal's online platform, although some such features have previously appeared in the printed version of the journal.

## Essential technical features

(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)

**Consensus review:** Proper English language usage is evident in the abstracts of all articles. There is no visible evidence of errata on the journal website. Good citation practice is applied for in-text references and lists of bibliographical sources. Overall, the journal conforms to standard technical norms. The journal uses good presentation, design, layout, style and copy-editing interventions, and images are used in an ethical manner.

## Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

**Consensus review:** The journal provides a useful capacity-development opportunity for young scholars. The articles serve to stimulate research among local graduate students and young staff in this field.

In terms of quality, the journal compares well with international standards in this field. It is worth noting that this journal provides a perspective that is not available in other leading international journals, namely, a unique complementary offering of high quality that is comparable to related international journals.

## Business aspects

(Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)

The IAJ is owned by IASSA, and copyright is vested in the society, while Taylor & Francis holds the global rights to publish the journal. The regular print run was 50 copies per issue. Taylor & Francis is responsible for production, and hard-copy distribution in Africa is managed by NISC. Electronic distribution and international hard-copy distribution are handled by Taylor & Francis.

The journal does not carry any advertising. There is no financial sponsorship, but the journal intends to investigate sponsorship opportunities.

The journal does not charge an APC. The editorial workflow is managed through an online management system, and articles are loaded on to the website. The journal is not open access, and it is part of a commercial (pay-to-view and/or pay-to-subscribe) e-publication service. Taylor & Francis does, however, provide free and low-cost access to the research community in developing countries through initiatives such as STAR, INASP and Research4Life.

The publisher is multinational but has a South African-based office and works with a local co-publisher, NISC. They have not offered to purchase the journal. IASSA retains ownership and copyright of the journal. The licensing agreement with authors requires them to sign a copyright agreement form upon publication. Authors are asked to transfer to IASSA the copyright for the articles to which they contribute. This enables Taylor & Francis, on behalf of IASSA and the IAJ, to ensure protection against infringement.

The journal is accredited by DHET and is included in Scopus and the WoS. The impact factor on WoS Journal Citation Reports was 0.710 in 2017. Altmetric indicators are administered by Taylor & Francis. 'Front details' for papers and English abstracts are mandatory. The journal has not been independently peer reviewed before.

### Suggested improvements

**Consensus review:** The editorial board of the journal might consider including more student articles. The editorial board should introduce debates about current issues in the field through editorial comments and reader engagement.

The editors might also consider special issues that assemble viewpoints from various perspectives. The journal has limited international visibility. The editors are therefore encouraged to invite international scholars to serve on the editorial board, which would assist in elevating the international visibility of the journal.

### Panel's consensus view

- i. **The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET-accredited list.**
- ii. **The journal should be invited to join the SciELO SA platform should it become open access.**

## 4.3.2 *Meditari Accountancy Research*

### Focus and scope

(Purpose of journal, positioning, focus, scope, readership)

*Meditari* takes its name from the Latin for 'constantly pondering', suggesting a journey towards a better understanding of accountancy-related matters through research. Innovative and interdisciplinary approaches are encouraged. The journal is a 'double-blind' refereed publication. It welcomes manuscripts that use diverse research methods and address a wide range of accountancy-related topics. In the context of the journal, the terms 'accountancy' and 'accounting' are interpreted broadly. Manuscripts should be theoretically underpinned.

The primary target audience is international accounting scholars. The readership comprises international scholars at universities, through the Emerald database.

## Editing functions

(Standing, local institutional spread, international participation)

**Consensus review:** The editors and the editorial board are of the highest academic standing, and the journal has national, regional and continental appeal. The editor-in-chief and the co-editor both have high standing in the accounting discipline. Similarly, the associate editors are representatives from well-known international and South African universities and are reputable authors in their own right. The editorial advisory board consists of scholars from various universities around the world.

## Questionnaire

(Editorial process-related criteria)

*Meditari* Accountancy Research was established in 1993 and publishes six issues per year. It is available online through the Emerald platform at <https://www.emeraldgroupublishing.com/products/journals/journals.htm?id=medar>. Information on visits, downloads and the number of countries in which the journal is read was not provided at the time of the review. Issues are pre-scheduled to appear on specific dates. There have been no significant interruptions in publication.

During the three-year review period, 101 full articles were published. Approximately 600 full articles were received over the same period. Approximately 250 manuscripts were rejected without peer review, and 250 were rejected after peer review. The proportion of peer-reviewed papers that had at least one author with a non-South African address was 90%.

Two peer reviewers are selected for each submitted manuscript. The selection of peer reviewers is based on international expertise in the field. Peer review is conducted in a 'blind way'. Valid reviewer critique and article improvement are rigorously implemented. Peer reviewers receive follow-up information. Reviewer performance is assessed, and information is captured in a database. A total of 300 peer reviewers were used in one year of the review period. The proportion of the reviewers who had a non-South African address was about 25%. The peer-review reports were accessibly retained in the journal's records. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication in print and online was 250 days.

The editor has been in office for eight years and was appointed competitively. The period of appointment was extended in two-year periods. The members of the editorial board deal with peer review and provide advice on editorial policies and practices. The term of office of members of the board varies; some have been in office for as long as ten to 15 years, while others were appointed recently. Members of the board were appointed based on the recommendation of editors and associate editors. Their period of office was not specified, and they were appointed from outside the country to provide specific topical expertise.

The editorial guidelines of the journal follow international best practice. To avoid conflict of interest, the editors and reviewers of a paper cannot be from the same institution as the author. The editorial guidelines are not aligned with ASSAf's Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing, Editing and Peer Review. The journal does not have an errata policy.

The journal does not publish any value-added features. The percentage of pages in each issue that represent peer-reviewed original material was 100%.

## Content

(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features)

**Consensus review:** The papers published are of high quality. Most of the papers published in *Meditari* Accountancy Research demonstrate both academic rigour in terms of theoretical

underpinning as well as having a practical bearing. The journal contains a good mixture of local and international authors. Accepted and published authors compare favourably with those in similar accounting journals, and the number of published papers has increased over the years. There are few editorials, appearing mostly in special issues. Other additional scholarly features such as book reviews do not feature in the published issues.

### Essential technical features

(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)

**Consensus review:** The technical features are of a very high standard. All articles published over the three-year review period have proper abstracts that comply with the Emerald format. Errata do not feature in the journal. All articles show good presentation, layout, style and copy-editing. The articles demonstrate a very high standard of English Language usage. Citations were properly done, and all articles carry a full list of references corresponding with the text.

### Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

**Consensus review:** The journal provides a high-capacity development opportunity to young scholars. Students and staff members in the discipline will benefit from reading articles in this journal that pertain to their field of interest. The journal is comparable to top-ranked accounting and interdisciplinary journals. The journal offers a blend of academic rigour and practical application, as suitable for a journal of accounting as a professional discipline.

### Business aspects

(Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)

The owner and publisher of the journal is Emerald, a multinational publisher. Production and distribution are not outsourced. The journal does not carry advertising. The journal does not receive financial sponsorship. Information on the number of paying subscribers was not available at the time of the review.

There are currently no page charges or APCs. The journal uses an online management system (ScholarOne) and loads articles on to the website to manage the editorial workflow. The journal is not open access and is held behind a paywall. It is part of a commercial e-publication service. Information on copyright arrangements and licensing agreements with authors was not available at the time of the review.

The journal is indexed by the Italian National Agency for the Evaluation of Universities and Research Institutes (ANVUR) Category A; Association of Business Schools' (ABS) Academic Journal Guide (2015); ABDC Journal Quality List; Australian Research Council (ERA List) Journal List; ESSEC Ranking of Journals (2016); the Publication Forum (Finland); ABI/INFORM Complete and ABI/INFORM Global databases(ProQuest); Academic Search Alumni Edition, Academic Search Complete, Academic Search Elite, Academic Search Premier (EBSCOhost); Accounting, Tax & Banking Collection (ProQuest); Business Source Alumni Edition, Business Source Complete, Business Source Corporate Plus, Business Source Elite, Business Source Premier (EBSCOhost); Cabell's Directory of Publishing Opportunities in Accounting; Professional ABI/INFORM Complete, Professional ProQuest Central; ReadCube Discover; and Scopus.

*Meditari* is one of the top accounting journals in the world, according to Scopus CiteScore (ranking 14th out of 137 journals) and SCImago (quartile 1). Altmetric indicators are not administered. The 'front details' for papers and English abstracts are mandatory. The journal has been reviewed by Scopus.

### Suggested improvements

**Consensus review:** The editorial board of the journal should enhance diversity by attracting papers from African countries and other continents. The editorial team should be expanded to include African scholars.

The journal should consider the introduction of scholarly features such as editorials, topical reviews and book reviews.

### Panel's consensus view

- i. **The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET-accredited list.**
- ii. **The journal should be invited to join the SciELO SA platform should it becomes open access.**

#### 4.3.3 *South African Journal of Accounting Research*

### Focus and scope

(Purpose of journal, positioning, focus, scope, readership)

The *South African Journal of Accounting Research (SAJAR)* publishes peer-reviewed original research papers, notes and commentaries that address issues relevant to accounting academics and professional accountants in southern Africa and elsewhere. This includes areas of interest in the study and practice of financial accounting, auditing, taxation, financial management, management accounting, finance, ethics and information systems. To provide a balanced presentation, contributions are welcomed from all these fields, as well as related areas such as environmental accounting, corporate law, corporate governance and accounting education. These fields may be approached from a wide variety of perspectives, including behavioural, technological, institutional, organisational, regulatory, societal, educational or environmental.

The SAJAR aims to provide a platform for discussing issues relevant to accounting researchers in South Africa and beyond. Although the target audience of the SAJAR includes international and African scholars, the main market tends to be scholars in southern African, serving mainly the South African research community, since the content is based largely on South African accounting research and tends to be geographically limited. However, in recent years there has been increased interest from North Africa and from emerging countries elsewhere.

The SAJAR is available to readers both in print and online, and through various subsidiaries. Approximately 2000 individual members of the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA) receive the journal as part of their membership package. About 2500 institutions and libraries have access to the journal globally as part of the Taylor & Francis sales deals and through title-level subscriptions. These figures also include access through Sabinet and development initiatives such as INASP and Research4Life.

### Editing functions

(Standing, local institutional spread, international participation)

**Consensus review:** The national standing of the editor-in-chief and associate editors is high, as they are well-known researchers from different South African universities. However, the membership of the editorial board appears to be predominantly (if not exclusively) South African. A more diverse editorial board, with international membership, would improve the standing of the journal in relation to journals elsewhere with a similar focus.

### Questionnaire

(Editorial process-related criteria)

The SAJAR was established in 1987 and publishes three online issues per year, which are combined into an annual print volume. It is available online through the Taylor & Francis platform at [www.tandfonline.com/rsar](http://www.tandfonline.com/rsar). Between 2016 and 2018, the journal received about 22 600 full-text downloads and significantly higher page views. Usage figures continue to rise substantially every year. Since partnering with Taylor & Francis in 2015, the SAJAR has been read in more than 80 countries, including countries in Africa, Asia, Australasia, eastern Europe, Latin America, the

Middle East, North America, northern and central Europe, as well as South Asia and southern Europe. The top ten countries using the journal between 2016 and 2018 were South Africa, the USA, the UK, Australia, China, Malaysia, Kenya, Pakistan, India and Ghana. The SAJAR is read regularly in about 15 different African countries. The top ten African countries using the journal between 2016 and 2018 were South Africa, Kenya, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Uganda, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Namibia and Zambia.

Issues are pre-scheduled to appear on specific dates, and deadlines are agreed with the publishers before the beginning of each year. A few years ago, there was a paucity of acceptable papers, and some issues were delayed. There have not been any significant delays in publication in the period under review.

During the three-year review period, 38 full articles were published. A total of 98 papers were submitted to the journal between 2016 and 2018. Over this period, the total rejection rate of full research articles was about 64%. The proportion of peer-reviewed papers that had at least one author with a non-South African address was one out of 38 papers. The vast majority of the journal's authors are South African.

A minimum of two peer reviewers are selected for each submitted manuscript; sometimes, more than two may be approached, as some may decline. The selection of peer reviewers is based on topic expertise, experience and development opportunity. The SAJAR makes use of 'double-blind' peer review. Reviewer comments are implemented quite rigorously; however, the reviewers' critique is evaluated by the associate editors and editor-in-chief and managed, if deemed necessary. Papers from early-career researchers that are rejected, receive constructive input from the editor, with the aim of assisting the author to improve the manuscript. Peer reviewers receive follow-up information unless the reviewers indicate that they do not wish to be involved in further rounds of revision of a manuscript. Reviewer performance is assessed, and information is captured in a database. Previously, reviewer performance was assessed and stored manually, but now the journal uses the Editorial Manager system to process all aspects of peer review, and reviewers are rated on the system. Approximately 60 peer reviewers were used in 2017, 7% (5 out of the 60) of whom had a non-South African address. All peer-review records are available via the journal's Editorial Manager system. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication online was approximately 16 months from submission to online publication, although turnaround times on individual papers are often significantly shorter. The journal is printed only once a year, once all issues are complete.

The editor-in-chief has been in office for two years and was appointed competitively. The period of appointment was not specified. The members of the editorial board provide advice on editorial policies and practices, and occasionally deal with peer review if specific knowledge is scarce. Their period of appointment was not specified, and they were not appointed competitively. Members of the board are appointed from within and outside the country.

There are instructions for authors on the journal webpage at <https://www.tandfonline.com/action/authorSubmission?journalCode=rsar20&page=instructions>. Conflict of interest is dealt with on a case-by-case basis, where necessary in consultation with Taylor & Francis. All authors are required to sign a publishing agreement with Taylor & Francis, as are guest editors. Reviewers from the same institution as the author will not be selected. With respect to publication ethics, the SAJAR abides by the guidelines of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE). The editor was not aware of ASSAf's Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing, Editing and Peer Review at the time of the review. It is the publisher's policy to publish errata, according to the guidelines. The SAJAR publishes notes and commentaries as value-added features. The percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material was 100%.

## Content

(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features)

**Consensus review:** A selection of articles from each issue over the three-year review period, 2016 to 2018, reveals that the articles are of a reasonably good quality. The articles published in the journal are dominated almost exclusively by South African authors. Moreover, the focus is mostly on issues from a South African perspective, related especially to accounting education, taxation, audit and governance. During the review period, only research papers were published. No useful additional scholarly features such as editorials, topical reviews, book reviews or scholarly correspondence were included.

## Essential technical features

(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)

**Consensus review:** This journal has vibrant editorial guidelines. All articles are in English and are preceded by appropriate abstracts in English. The editor asserts that errata are published, but no indications of errata were observed in the copies under review. The citation practice of the journal is thorough. The editorial presentation, layout, style and copy-editing are appropriate. Ethical standards were upheld in the reviewed samples.

## Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

**Consensus review:** The journal is suitable for the development of graduate students and young staff members in this discipline. The journal is indexed in international indices as an indicator of good international standing. Nevertheless, it has the potential to target international growth similar to journals such as the Journal of Accounting Research, Journal of Management Accounting Research and Accounting, Organizations and Society.

## Business aspects

(Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)

The SAJAR is owned by the editorial board, and copyright is vested in the journal, while Taylor & Francis holds the global rights to publish the journal. Taylor & Francis is assisted in Africa by the local co-publisher, NISC. The regular print run is about 600 copies per issue. NISC and Taylor & Francis collaborate on production. Hard-copy distribution in Africa is managed by NISC. Electronic distribution globally is done by Taylor & Francis, which also handles all hard-copy distribution outside of Africa. The journal does not carry any advertising. SAICA contributes annually towards membership subscription access as well as the publication of the journal.

No article-processing or page fees are charged. As the SAJAR is a hybrid journal, if authors opt to publish in open access, they will be charged an APC, but this is entirely voluntary. The journal uses an online management system and loads articles on to the website to manage the editorial workflow. The journal is not open access and is part of a commercial (pay-to-view and/or pay-to-subscribe) publication service. Taylor & Francis does, however, provide free or low-cost access to the research community in developing countries through initiatives such as STAR, INASP and Research4Life.

The publisher is multinational, has a South African-based office and works with a local co-publisher, NISC. They have not offered to purchase the journal. The editorial board retains ownership and copyright of the journal. Authors are asked to sign a copyright agreement form upon publication, and to transfer to the SAJAR the copyright for the articles to which they contribute. This enables Taylor & Francis, on behalf of the SAJAR, to ensure protection against infringement.

The SAJAR is indexed by DHET, WoS ESCI, Google Scholar, Scopus, the Chartered Association of Business Schools (ABS) Academic Journal Guide, and the ABDC Journal Quality List. The journal does not have an impact factor. Altmetric indicators are administered by Taylor & Francis. The

'front details' for papers and English abstracts are mandatory. The journal was independently peer reviewed by ASSAf, Scopus and WoS when considered for inclusion.

### Suggested improvements

**Consensus review:** The panel recommended that the managing editor be appointed competitively on a term basis in order to instil innovation in the management and operation of the journal.

There is need for greater diversity of authorship in the journal, and a shift from the current South African focus to a more international focus in the published articles.

In addition, the average 16-month turnaround time should be accelerated to avoid apparent obsolescence of the research content before it is published. It is also suggested that the journal's international peer-review database should be increased.

### Panel's consensus view

- i. **The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET-accredited list.**
- ii. **The journal should be invited to join SciELO SA should it become open access.**
- iii. **There is a concern that the members of the editorial board are drawn from South Africa only. Diversification is recommended.**

#### 4.3.4 *Southern African Journal of Accountability and Auditing Research*

### Focus and scope

(Purpose of journal, positioning, focus, scope, readership)

The focus of the *Southern African Journal of Accountability and Auditing Research (SAJAAR)* is on the broad scope of auditing, accountability and related sub-disciplines. Since the journal is hosted by the Southern African Institute of Government Auditors (SAIGA), the publication of research in the public sector domain is encouraged. The journal also has an interdisciplinary focus. Due to the journal's encouragement of research in the public sector domain, some of the articles may, in addition to auditing and accountability, also be allocated to the disciplines of public sector financial management (public management and administration), public finance (economics) and internal auditing, which includes internal control, IT auditing and risk management.

SAJAAR is the only South African journal in the disciplines of auditing and accountability that has an affinity with the public sector. It provides the academic and practice community in South Africa with new knowledge on current developments, and the international community with a perspective on developing economies. The implementation and operation of financial management and accountability systems, especially in the public sector, are unique to each country, although internationally principled. There are lessons to be learned from similarities and differences of practice between different countries.

The primary target audiences are the auditing profession, local scholars and the public sector. The journal is available and managed on the Sabinet platform to which all South African and many international academic libraries subscribe. It is also available on the EBSCOhost and WoS Clarivate Analytics databases. The journal is distributed to all members of SAIGA, the Office of the Auditor-General of South Africa and National Treasury.

## Editing functions

(Standing, local institutional spread, international participation)

**Consensus review:** The editorial board has good national and international standing. The associate editors are eminent scholars in their field. Furthermore, all editorial board members have high national and international reputations in the fields of accounting, auditing or finance. However, the board is made up exclusively of South African scholars, without international participation in the editing function of the journal.

## Questionnaire

(Editorial process-related criteria)

The journal was established in 1998 and is an annual publication, but requests for special issues may be considered. SAJAAR is available online through the Sabinet platform at <https://journals.co.za/content/journal/sajaar>. The journal received 1110 page views in 2017, 1247 in 2018, and 1663 in 2019. The full-text download records were 1765 in 2017, 2675 in 2018, and 1524 in 2019. The journal is read in 16 countries, six of which are African countries. It is not pre-scheduled to appear on specific dates but is normally published at the end of the year. The issues have consistently been published at the start of December each year. There have been no significant interruptions in publication.

During the three-year review period, 30 full articles were published. A total of 67 manuscripts were received over the same period. Seven manuscripts were rejected without peer review, and one was retracted after discussion with the author. Twenty-six manuscripts were rejected after peer review, and three are still in the review process. None of the peer-reviewed papers had an author with a non-South African address.

Two peer reviewers are selected for each submitted manuscript. If necessary, a third reviewer may be approached for particular expertise, for example, statistics. Peer reviewers are selected based on their knowledge on the specific topic. Peer review is conducted in a 'double blind' way. Valid reviewer critique and article improvement are rigorously implemented. All authors are requested to state how they responded to each of the reviewer comments in a separate document. A major revision decision is subjected to re-review by the reviewers. All responses to reviewer comments are monitored by the editor-in-chief. Authors must respond to all reviewer comments to the satisfaction of the reviewers and editor. Peer reviewers are sent follow-up information and receive a copy of the annual publication. The editor informally assesses reviewer performance for future reference. The information is not captured in a database. The number of reviewers used was 37 in 2017, 30 in 2018, and 28 in 2019. The proportion of the reviewers who had a non-South African address was one (2.7%) in 2017, six (20.0%) in 2018, and five (17.8%) in 2019. Since the change in editor in 2016, SAJAAR has continued to increase its national and international reviewer base. The peer-review reports were accessibly retained in the journal's records. The journal is an annual publication. Manuscripts carried over from a previous year or submitted at the beginning of a calendar year have to wait until the end of the year to be published. The period from submission until the decision outcome, unless desk rejected, is normally between two and four months.

The editor has been in office for four years and was not appointed competitively. The editor was initially appointed as an interim replacement, and was then appointed on an annual basis, after which the term continued unspecified. The editor reports annually to the editorial board and to the SAIGA board. Members of the editorial board deal with peer review from time to time and advise on editorial policies and practices. The editorial board members have been in office for four years and were appointed on request, based on their expertise and diverse academic representation. Their period of appointment was not specified. The board currently comprises only South African scholars.

The editorial guidelines are available on the last few pages of each edition of the journal, as well as on the Sabinet and SAIGA webpages. There is no conflict-of-interest policy. SAJAAR

adopted a publication ethics and malpractice statement for the purposes of the Scopus listing application. Errata are published when necessary.

The journal does not publish value-added features. The percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material was 100%.

## Content

(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features)

**Consensus review:** The papers are of a reasonably good quality and cover relevant and timely discussion of South African issues. To a very large extent, the authors of published articles span the length and breadth of southern Africa, but there are very few, if any, international contributions. This is considered to be a flaw that needs to be addressed by featuring articles by international authors. The journal contains negligible additional scholarly features such as editorials, topical reviews, book reviews and similar content.

## Essential technical features

(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)

**Consensus review:** Proper English is generally utilised in the abstracts, although the language style needs improvement to align with international scholarly language style. Errata did not feature in the reviewed samples. Errata should be published whenever an error is noticed or pointed out by a third party who notifies the journal. Good, consistent citation practice was observed throughout the journal. To a very large extent, the presentation, design, layout, style and copy-editing interventions are good, and images were used in an ethical manner throughout the journal.

## Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

**Consensus review:** The journal provides capacity development for young researchers. There is room for further improvement of the journal to emulate the standards of similar international publications.

## Business aspects

(Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)

The owner and publisher of the journal is SAIGA. Information on the regular print run was not provided at the time of the review. Production and distribution are not outsourced. SAJAAR is fully supported by SAIGA and does not carry any advertising.

There are no paying subscribers. For 2019, the journal charged authors a fee of R345 per page, plus R805 for every ten pages, for language editing. SAJAAR did not levy page fees in 2017 but reconsidered the decision since page fees are an accepted source of funding for South African journals, based on the income that universities derive from publication through the DHET research output subsidy. The page fees cover only a small portion of the annual costs of the journal to SAIGA. SAJAAR used a manual system to manage the editorial workflow until 2019 and will be moving the Sabinet online system from 2020. The journal is not open access and is part of a commercial e-publication service (through Sabinet and the EBSCOhost database).

There have not been any offers from multinational publishers to purchase the journal. All copyrights are reserved, and there is no licensing agreement with authors.

The journal is accredited by DHET. It is one of the strategic objectives of SAJAAR to continuously improve the quality and standards required for successful application for a Scopus or IBSS listing. The journal does not have an impact factor or altmetric indicators. The 'front details' for

papers and English abstracts are mandatory. In 2019, Scopus invited SAJAAR to be subjected to objective scrutiny with the intention of being listed. After a thorough review, the Scopus panel concluded that there are still several aspects that need attention before a listing on Scopus is possible. These aspects will be discussed at the next editorial board meeting and decisions taken on how they should be addressed.

### Suggested improvements

**Consensus review:** The editorial board should be expanded to include scholars outside South Africa.

The journal needs to include more scholarly features such as editorials, topical reviews, book reviews and similar contents.

The editor should avoid repeatedly using the same set of local reviewers and should strive for greater diversity by involving international reviewers.

### Panel's consensus view

- i. **The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET-accredited list.**
- ii. **The journal should not be invited to join the SciELO SA platform.**
- iii. **The panel recommends that the board should be expanded to include scholars outside South Africa.**
- iv. **In addition, the panel believes that the papers are of good quality, but the quality could be further improved.**

## 4.4 Labour Relations

### 4.4.1 *African Journal of Employee Relations*

#### Focus and scope

##### (Purpose of journal, positioning, focus, scope, readership)

Apart from research-based articles of an academic nature, the *African Journal of Employee Relations (AJER)* publishes commentaries, analyses, overviews, case studies, survey results and reports on aspects related to employee relations (in the broadest sense) in the African context. While interested authors from any country are invited to submit their work for possible publication, Africa-related themes are especially encouraged in the context of the dire need to develop indigenous theory and understanding of people management in the African context. Articles on relevant international issues as they relate to current ideas, theory building and developments in practice are also considered. *AJER* welcomes contributions at societal, academic, policy development, practical organisational and management levels.

The journal focuses on themes in employment relations, which broadly includes the areas of work, employment and unemployment; human resources, organisational behaviour and industrial psychology; leadership and ethics; and industrial relations.

*AJER* aims to provide a learning forum for anyone interested and involved in the management of human resources in the African region and developing-country context by:

- offering an accredited forum for academic writing and reporting on relevant research findings;
- providing a forum that promotes understanding of, and stimulates thought on, the dynamics related to people and their working lives;
- offering a vehicle for ongoing learning in the broader field of employee relations;

- representing an avenue for the expression of independent opinion and the stimulation of constructive debate;
- offering overviews of trends and developments in local and international employee relations dynamics;
- providing a medium for the wider dissemination of academic as well as practical information related to employment dynamics; and
- representing a forum for cross-pollination of the insights and experiences of practitioners, researchers, policymakers, academics, students, and anyone with a general interest in the field of employee relations.

AJER is of interest to practitioners, researchers, academics, trainers, educators and policymakers in the private, public and semi-public sectors of South Africa, southern Africa, elsewhere in Africa, and other countries. The primary target audience is Africa. The journal is available to readers both in print through Unisa Press, and online through the Sabinet platform.

## Editing functions

(Standing, local institutional spread, international participation)

**Consensus review:** The editorial board consists of well-known and highly regarded South African and international scholars with international research profiles.

## Questionnaire

(Editorial process-related criteria)

AJER (formerly the South African Journal of Labour Relations) was established in 1977. Between 1977 and 2005, four issues were published per year. Between 2006 and 2016, two issues were published per year, and between 2017 and 2018, only one issue was published each year. Articles are electronically published once they have been accepted.

The journal is available online at <http://www.unisa.ac.za/sajlr> for journal-related information, and <http://journals.co.za/content/journal/labour> for electronic access. In 2015, there were 23 777 visits and 7932 downloads, and in 2016 (up to September) there were 16 275 visits and 4875 downloads. For 2017 there were 15 525 visits and 5761 downloads. For 2018 there were 12 487 visits and 800 downloads through OJS. Subscriptions to the journal come from 14 countries (Australia, Botswana, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Namibia, South Africa, Eswatini, Switzerland, the UK, the USA and Zimbabwe), five of which are African countries. Issues are scheduled to appear in December, and there have been no significant interruptions in publication since inception.

During the three-year review period, 26 full articles and four forum sections were published. Over the same period, 64 full article manuscripts and nine forum sections were received; 19 full article manuscripts were rejected without peer review, and 17 after peer review. The number of peer-reviewed papers that had at least one author with a non-South African address was one in 2016, four in 2017 and four in 2018. Generally, two peer reviewers are selected for each submitted manuscript. Peer reviewers are selected by the editor from a list of reviewers, based on their published research and research interests. Reviewers are selected if their field of speciality corresponds with the subject matter of the manuscript they are asked to review. The list of reviewers is continually updated with additional specialists, especially in new sub-disciplinary fields. Peer reviewers should not be from the same institution as the authors. Peer review is conducted in a 'blind way'. Reviewers do not receive any information on the authors or the institution to which they are affiliated. Valid reviewer critique and article improvement are rigorously implemented. Revised articles are expected to include feedback on how reviewer recommendations and valid critique were addressed. Manuscripts that are subjected to extensive revision are often resubmitted to the original reviewer for re-review. Minor revisions are verified by the editor.

Peer reviewers receive follow-up information. In instances where extensive revisions were required, revised articles are returned to the initial reviewers to determine whether their concerns were adequately addressed. In instances where minor revisions are required, the editor accepts the article if the reviewers' concerns have been adequately addressed. In such instances, no further correspondence is sent to the reviewers. Reviewer reports are retained. The turnaround time for reviews is recorded. If a reviewer submits an unsatisfactory report or is often unavailable to conduct reviews, this is captured in the reviewer database. The frequency of review requests is also captured in a database. The number of peer reviewers used was 19 in 2016, 11 in 2017, and 10 in 2018. The proportion of the reviewers who had a non-South African address was one (5.3%) in 2016, three (27.3%) in 2017 and three (30.0%) in 2018. The peer-review reports were accessibly retained in the journal's records.

The average period between submission of a manuscript and feedback to the author (as to whether the article was accepted, rejected, or required to be resubmitted) was 11 weeks between 2013 and October 2016. The period from submission to publication is, however, affected by two factors, namely, when the article is accepted in relation to the publication date of the next issue, and the number of articles from a single institution already approved for publication at the time of acceptance. If the number of articles by authors from a single institution exceed the limit determined by DHET, an article will be retained for publication in a subsequent issue. To provide for the early dissemination of research, DHET granted permission for the journal to publish only one annual issue of the journal from 2017. Articles are published online when they are accepted, and a single issue is available in hard copy at the end of the year.

The editor-in-chief has been in office since 2018. The appointment of the editor was through a process of succession management and progression of a section editor, which ensured knowledge retention and continuity of service to the journal. The editor was appointed for a five-year period to assist in stabilising and growing the journal during the transition involving the change of the name of the journal and extension of its scope, implemented in 2018. Some of the current editorial committee members are occasionally involved in the peer review of manuscripts due to their specialised knowledge. The editorial committee is, however, currently being restructured to differentiate between the editorial board (which has an advisory function) and the editorial committee (which attends to the day-to-day management, administration and editing of the journal). In future, members of the editorial board will not be involved in peer review but will be responsible mainly for evaluating the scholarly standard and content as well as the technical quality of the journal and advising the editor-in-chief on the general direction of the journal. From 2019, a full report on the editorial practices of the journal, including the number of manuscripts received, the review process, publication and rejection rates, timelines, and technical aspects such as language editing and layout as well as the image of the journal, will be compiled and sent to members of the editorial board. Editorial board members may be asked to comment and express their views on any aspects of the journal. The newly appointed editorial board had been in office for less than three months at the time of the review. The editorial board members are identified based on their specialised knowledge as well as their geographical representation, and they are invited to serve on the board. In terms of the new constitution, members of the editorial board serve on the board for a period of five years, and their term of office may be renewed. Currently, seven members of the international editorial committee reside outside South Africa (either in the UK or the USA). These members will be retained on the editorial board. A recruitment drive was under way in 2018 to identify additional members from African countries, five of whom are currently on the editorial board. Editorial board members are appointed to provide topical expertise and to ensure geographical representation.

The journal's policy guidelines and guidelines to authors are available on the website at <http://www.unisa.ac.za/sajlr> and <https://upjournals.co.za/index.php/SAJLR>. A conflict-of-interest policy is also available on the website. The guidelines are aligned with ASSAf's Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing, Editing and Peer Review. If errors occur, they are corrected on the electronic version of the journal and errata are published in the next hard copy published. No recent errors have been recorded.

The journal publishes critical topical reviews as a value-added feature. Only peer-reviewed original material is published. The review criteria are more stringent for the accredited academic section, where acceptance is based on the soundness of the research base and the academic rigour of the arguments presented. The non-accredited forum section includes, for example, comment or reports on interesting and relevant developments, and case studies with significant practical value but not necessarily underpinned by academic theory.

## Content

(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features)

**Consensus review:** AJER is a medium-quality journal that publishes a limited number of articles (six or seven per year). It publishes articles that tend to be more practical and that straddle the division between academics and practitioners. The quality of articles is reasonable, but not of top quality. This is possibly due to the broad scope of the journal. The journal does not publish any scholarly commentary, book reviews or scholarly correspondence.

The journal is mainly South African focused, and predominantly Gauteng based. The lack of international contributions and visibility is a major limitation for the journal.

## Essential technical features

(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)

**Consensus review:** Abstracts are good and clear, and the editorial services offered by the journal were mentioned as excellent for non-English first-language speakers. No errata have been published. Citations and referencing are generally good, but reviewers noticed that tables are sometimes handled inconsistently.

## Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

**Consensus review:** The articles are generally useful and practical for graduates and young scholars. They do tend not to make major contributions to theory but are useful for local practice and teaching at universities.

## Business aspects

(Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)

The owner and publisher of the journal is the Unisa Graduate School of Business Leadership. A total of 150 hard copies of all issues are printed and distributed to subscribers and other stakeholders, including institutions, professional bodies and government representatives. Unisa Press manages the production and distribution of the journal. The journal does not carry advertising and does not receive financial sponsorship.

There are 140 national and international institutions that pay to subscribe to the journal. A page fee of R80 per page (in 2016) is payable by authors on acceptance of an article for publication. The journal uses online management systems, and articles are loaded on to the website to manage the editorial workflow. The journal is not open access. It is part of a commercial e-publication service (Sabinet).

There have been no offers from multinational publishers to purchase the journal. Authors are required to indicate whether their manuscript has been submitted or published elsewhere, even in a different form such as a paper at a conference. Furthermore, authors who submit manuscripts for publication have to guarantee that the work contains nothing that may infringe on any existing copyright and indemnify the publisher against any breach of such warranties. Authors relinquish copyright for their manuscripts to AJER and accept and adhere to the journal's publication policy. Articles may not be published or reproduced in any form without the prior consent of the editor-in-chief.

The journal is indexed on Sabinet and the Unisa repository. The following third-party harvesters obtain the metadata for all articles indexed on Sabinet: Primo Central Index (Ex Libris), the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC), Summon Serials Solutions, EBSCO Discovery Service, CNKI and Baidu. The journal has an h-index of 4, calculated by Harzing.com's Publish or Perish. There are no altmetric indicators. The journal has mandatory 'front details' for papers and English abstracts. *AJER* has not previously been independently peer reviewed.

### Suggested improvements

**Consensus review:** The panel noted that the strength of the journal is derived from articles that straddle the gulf between practitioners and academics. This is an area that could be developed through special issues, editorials, opinion pieces or similar initiatives to build the profile of the journal. The panel also recommended that the journal should publish more frequently.

The panel noted that the journal does not enjoy the international, and particularly African, standing that it should. It is recommended that the editor-in-chief should build personal relationships with universities across the continent and invite a wider range of scholars from sub-Saharan Africa to join the editorial board.

Other recommendations were to strengthen the guidelines in order to improve the theoretical quality of the articles. It was noted that the journal produces quantitative articles that are methodologically rigorous, but the qualitative articles do not exhibit the same rigour.

### Panel's consensus view

- i. **The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET-accredited list.**
- ii. **The journal should be invited to join the SciELO SA platform should it become open access.**
- iii. **The panel recommends that the journal should adopt a marketing plan to increase its local and international visibility.**
- iv. **Special issues or conferences should be considered to generate special-interest papers.**
- v. **Clearer guidelines should be provided for contributions to improve the quality of papers.**
- vi. **In addition, the panel believes that the journal has considerable potential as an African journal but needs to market itself to sub-Saharan African scholars. A journal advisory board and more African scholars on the editorial board would help achieve this.**

#### 4.4.2 *South African Journal of Human Resource Management*

### Focus and scope

(Purpose of journal, positioning, focus, scope, readership)

The *South African Journal of Human Resource Management (SAJHRM)* explores aspects related and relevant to human resource management in various organisational settings. It aims to emphasise and promote the theory and good practices of human resource management within Africa's vulnerable labour-market groups, which have unique economic, cultural, political and social concerns. The journal is aimed at the improvement of people management throughout business-relationship structures, policies and systems. Topics of interest include, but are not limited to, education, training and development practices, human resource maintenance and retention, compensation practices, performance management practices and employee relations.

The focus of the journal is to provide a critical link between quality academic research and the practical implications for business practice in South Africa, and possibly the African continent. The primary target audiences are South African and African scholars. The *SAJHRM* is an open-access journal, published by AOSIS since 2009. The journal has a worldwide audience.

## Editing functions

### (Standing, local institutional spread, international participation)

**Consensus review:** The editorial board has a high local reputation but limited international standing. The general view is that the editorial board is appropriate for a local journal and better than for most local journals. Most reviewers felt that, while the editorial board consists of well-known South African academics, there were reservations about the limited international profile of board members, which might detract from the potential international impact of the journal.

## Questionnaire

### (Editorial process-related criteria)

The SAJHRM was established in 2003 and publishes one issue per year. Articles are published online when they are ready for publication, and then printed in an end-of-year volume. Additional issues may be published for special events such as conferences, and when special themes are addressed. The journal is accessible online through the AOSIS platform at <https://sajhrm.co.za>. Over the review period, the journal recorded 522 363 visits and 1 540 011 downloads. It was read in 222 countries worldwide, 58 of which are African countries. Issues are not pre-scheduled to appear on specific dates. There have been no significant interruptions in publication.

During the three-year review period, 110 full articles and one letter were published. The number of manuscripts received over the same period were 273 full articles, one review article and one book review. A total of 51 manuscripts were rejected without peer review, and 109 were rejected after peer review. The proportion of peer-reviewed papers that had at least one author with a non-South African address was 4%.

Two peer reviewers are selected for each submitted manuscript. Reviewer selection is critical to the publication process, and the choice is based on many factors, including expertise, reputation, specific recommendations, and previous experience with particular reviewers. Peer review is conducted in a 'blind way'. Valid reviewer critique and article improvement are rigorously implemented. Not only does peer review provide an independent assessment of the importance and technical accuracy of the results described, but the feedback from referees that is conveyed to authors with the editor's advice frequently results in manuscripts being refined so that their structure and logic are more readily apparent to readers. All manuscripts submitted to the journal are screened for scientific overlap with previously published work (plagiarism), which also needs to be addressed by authors during revision. The peer-review process aims to ensure that all published articles present the results of primary scientific research; report results that have not been published elsewhere; are scientifically sound; provide new scientific knowledge where experiments, statistics and other analyses are performed to a high technical standard and are described in sufficient detail so that another researcher would be able to reproduce the experiments; provide conclusions that are presented in an appropriate manner and are supported by the data; are presented in an intelligible and logical manner, and are written in clear and unambiguous English; meet all applicable research standards with regard to the ethics of experimentation and research integrity; and adhere to appropriate reporting guidelines and community standards for data availability. Once the author submits the revised manuscript, the reviewers may be asked to reappraise the manuscript in a second-round review. The editors keep reviewers informed about the final decision on the manuscript and are committed to providing reviewers with the reports of other reviewers who participated in the review and giving feedback on the outcome of the manuscript.

Reviewers' performance is assessed through a rating given by the editor after each completed review. This information is captured in a database. In 2018, 117 reviewers were used, 23% of whom had a non-South African address. The peer-review reports were accessibly retained in the journal's records. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication online was 279 days in 2018. The printed edition of the journal is compiled annually, at the end of a volume.

The editor has been in office since November 2013 and was appointed competitively for three years. The editorial board handles peer review and provides advice on editorial policies and practices. A new editorial board was established in December 2016 to serve for five years, and the editorial advisory board has been in office for two years. The board was not appointed competitively and was appointed from within and outside the country to provide specific topical expertise.

The editorial guidelines of the journal are available at <https://sajhrm.co.za/index.php/sajhrm/pages/view/policies>. The publisher's guidelines can be accessed at <https://aosis.co.za/legal-centre/publication-policies/>.

The journal has a conflict-of-interest policy. Any relevant conflicts of interest of authors must be communicated to the editors during the review process and declared in the published work. The guidelines of the journal are aligned with ASSAF's Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing, Editing and Peer Review. The journal publishes errata, and the policy can be accessed at <https://aosis.co.za/legal-centre/publication-policies/#Correcting-the-record>.

The value-added features published in the journal include critical editorials, critical topical reviews, analytical book reviews and opinion papers. The percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material was 99%.

## Content

(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features)

**Consensus review:** The quantity of articles published per year is good, and the papers are topical for South African human resource academics. The contributors are mainly South African, with very few international contributors. This is reflected in the content, which relates mainly to South African companies and issues, reflecting South African debates and topics of interest at South African universities; however, this limits the journal's international impact and relevance.

The editorials and opinion pieces are of a good quality but are too few and infrequent.

## Essential technical features

(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)

**Consensus review:** Abstracts and the publication of errata are good and appropriate. The structure and flow of articles may not be equivalent to top journals in the field but are appropriate for a good regional journal. Citation and language usage are good, and articles are generally well structured, with data and analytical practices clearly explained.

## Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

**Consensus review:** The journal is very suitable for local graduate students and young staff. The journal has a good local standing, and its status is growing. However, it lacks international standing, which limits its impact and use for senior academics.

## Business aspects

(Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)

The title owner of the publication is the University of Johannesburg (UJ), and the publisher is AOSIS. There is no regular print run. Production and distribution are not outsourced. The journal carries unpaid advertising and receives financial sponsorship from UJ. The journal charges an APC of R1170 per page. An online management system is used to manage the editorial workflow. The journal is open access and is part of a non-commercial e-publication mechanism through DOAJ.

There have been no offers to purchase from multinational publishers. Authors retain copyright for work published by AOSIS, unless otherwise specified. Authors of work published by AOSIS are required to grant AOSIS the unlimited rights to publish the definitive work in any format, language or medium, for any lawful purpose. AOSIS requires journal authors to publish their work in open access under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) licence. The authors retain the non-exclusive right to use the published article, provided that attribution is given to the applicable journal, with details of the original publication, as set out in the official citation of the article published in the journal. Authors specifically have the right to post the article on their own website or that of their institution, or in institutional or other repositories.

The journal is indexed by AOSIS Library Index; DHET; DOAJ; Ebscohost; Gale Cengage Learning; Google Scholar; Norwegian Register for Scientific Journals, Series and Publishers, Level 1; ProQuest; Sabinet; Scopus; and WoS ESCI. The journal has an impact factor of 14 and an h5-index through Google Scholar. There are altmetric indicators. The 'front details' for papers and English abstracts are mandatory. The journal has previously been reviewed by DOAJ and Scopus.

## Suggested improvements

**Consensus review:** It is crucially important to improve the international standing and visibility of the journal, suggestions for which include:

- Invite international academics to serve on the editorial board.
- Strengthen statistical and data analysis in submissions to improve the quality of articles.
- Differentiate the journal from industrial psychology journals through a tighter focus on human resource management.
- Consider publishing special issues and reducing the turnaround times between review and publication.

## Panel's consensus view

- The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET-accredited list.**
- The journal should be invited to join the SciELO SA platform.**
- The panel recommends that the journal increase its international standing and visibility.**
- In addition, the panel believes that the editorial board should include more international academics, increase international visibility, and focus on human resource management through special issues, literature reviews, opinion pieces and editorials.**

## 4.5 Logistics and Actuarial Sciences

### 4.5.1 *Journal of Transport and Supply Chain Management*

#### Focus and scope

(Purpose of journal, positioning, focus, scope, readership)

The *Journal of Transport and Supply Chain Management (JTSCM)* is a highly relevant scholarly research journal focusing on all aspects related to the organisational value chain across local and global departments, processes, and continents in today's highly competitive markets. The journal seeks to understand the management of the flow of goods and services that forms part of the design, planning, execution, control, and monitoring of supply chain activities. The objective of these activities should be the creation of net value, building of a competitive infrastructure, leveraging of worldwide logistics, synchronisation of supply with demand, and measurement of performance globally.

The journal endeavours to serve as a platform for refreshingly new and invigorating approaches to research related to transport management, logistics and associated disciplines. It provides

researched discourse on the value chain, which can inform policymakers and legislative stakeholders on the development of more-effective policies, programmes, and applied planning to reduce revenue losses. The primary target audiences are South African and African scholars. It is an open-access journal and has a worldwide audience.

## Editing functions

(Standing, local institutional spread, international participation)

**Consensus review:** The editor-in-chief and members of the editorial board reflect diversity and a high level of competence within the team. However, there are several limitations. Six of the editorial board members (including the editor-in-chief and co-editor) are employees or affiliates of the University of Johannesburg (UJ), which is the custodian of the journal. Some South African universities have multiple representatives on the board, while other institutions that are active in research in the discipline have no representation. Some of the editorial board members are not active or prolific researchers.

## Questionnaire

(Editorial process-related criteria)

The *JTSCM* was established in 2007 and publishes at least one issue per year. Articles are published online when ready for publication and are then printed in an end-of-year compilation. Additional issues may be published for special events such as conferences, and when special themes are addressed. The journal is available online through the AOSIS platform at <https://jtscm.co.za>. Statistics from 2013 until 31 January 2019 indicate that there were 195 654 visits and 564 065 downloads. The journal is read in 211 countries worldwide, 53 of which are African countries. Issues are not pre-scheduled to appear on specific dates, and there have been no significant interruptions in publication.

During the three-year review period, 59 full articles were published. A total of 156 manuscripts were received over the same period. The number of manuscripts rejected without peer review was 28, and 63 manuscripts were rejected after peer review. The proportion of peer-reviewed papers that had at least one author with a non-South African address was 5.26% in 2016, 19.00% in 2017, and 10.52% in 2018.

Two peer reviewers are selected for each submitted manuscript. Reviewer selection is critical to the publication process, and the choice is based on many factors, including expertise, reputation, specific recommendations, and previous experience with particular reviewers. Peer review is conducted in a 'blind way'. Valid reviewer critique and article improvement are rigorously implemented. Not only does peer review provide an independent assessment of the importance and technical accuracy of the results described, but the feedback from referees conveyed to authors with the editor's advice frequently also results in manuscripts being refined so that their structure and logic are apparent to readers. All manuscripts submitted to the journal are screened for scientific overlap with previously published work (plagiarism), which also needs to be addressed by authors during revision. The peer-review process aims to ensure that all published articles present the results of primary scientific research; report results that have not been published elsewhere; are scientifically sound; provide new scientific knowledge where experiments, statistics and other analyses are performed to a high technical standard and are described in sufficient detail so that another researcher would be able to reproduce the experiments; provide conclusions that are presented in an appropriate manner and supported by the data; are presented in an intelligible and logical manner, and are written in clear and unambiguous English; meet all applicable research standards with regard to the ethics of experimentation and research integrity; and adhere to appropriate reporting guidelines and community standards for data availability. Once the author submits the revised manuscript, the reviewers may be asked to reappraise the manuscript in a second-round review.

The editor keeps reviewers informed about the final decision on the manuscript and is committed to providing reviewers with the reports of other reviewers who participated in the review and giving feedback on the outcome of the manuscript. Reviewer performance is assessed through a rating given by the editor after each completed review. This information is captured in a database. In 2018, 58 reviewers were used, 16 of whom had a non-South African address. The peer-review reports were accessibly retained in the journal's records. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication online was 155 days in 2016, 142 days in 2017, and 127 days in 2018. The printed edition of the journal is compiled annually in a volume.

The editor has been in office since 2012 and was headhunted for the position. The period of appointment will come to an end in 2020. Members of the editorial board deal with peer review and provide advice on editorial policies and practices. The board was established in 2011, and some members were reappointed after three years. The editorial board members were approached by the journal, based on their experience, and invited to serve for a three-year term, or longer in some cases, as requested by the board. Members are from within and outside the country.

The editorial guidelines of the journal are available on its website at <https://jtscm.co.za/index.php/jtscm/pages/view/policies>. The publisher's guidelines are accessible at <https://aosis.co.za/legal-centre/publication-policies/>. The conflict-of-interest policy and errata policy are available on the journal's website. The guidelines of the journal are aligned with ASSAf's Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing, Editing and Peer Review.

The journal publishes critical editorials as value-added features. The percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material was 97.41% in 2018.

## Content

(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features)

**Consensus review:** The articles published in the journal are mostly of a good standard and compare well with similar international journals. The journal consistently publishes about 20 articles per year. This is an acceptable number, as the number of researchers working in this field is limited in southern and eastern Africa.

Many academics in the field in South Africa utilise articles from the journal as additional reading for postgraduate students to analyse and produce reports. The *JTSCM* has a significant impact in applied topics.

## Essential technical features

(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)

**Consensus review:** There are clear editorial guidelines and contact details for editors. All articles are in English and are introduced by appropriate abstracts in English.

No errata were observed in the copies under review. The citation practice is sound. The presentation, layout, style and copy-editing are all of good standard. Ethical standards were maintained in the reviewed volumes.

## Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

**Consensus review:** This is an excellent journal for young and aspiring educational researchers in Africa to gain experience and be published. The journal compares well with international journals in important areas such as editorial policy, editorial board diversity, coverage and content.

## Business aspects

### (Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)

The title owner of the journal is UJ, and the publisher is AOSIS. There is no regular print run. The journal carries unpaid advertising. The Department of Transport and Supply Chain Management at UJ provides financial sponsorship for the journal.

The journal charges an APC of R635 per page (excluding VAT). The editorial workflow is managed through an online management system. The journal is open access and is part of a non-commercial e-publication mechanism (AOSIS Library). There have been no offers from multinational publishers to purchase the journal.

Authors retain copyright for work published by AOSIS unless otherwise specified. Authors of work published by AOSIS are required to grant AOSIS the unlimited rights to publish the definitive work in any format, language or medium, for any lawful purpose. AOSIS requires journal authors to publish their work in open access under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) licence. The authors retain the non-exclusive right to use the published articles, provided that attribution is given to the applicable journal, with details of the original publication, as set out in the official citation of the article published in the journal. Authors specifically have the right to post the article on their own website or that of their institution, or in institutional or other repositories.

The journal is indexed by AOSIS Library Index; DOAJ; Ebscohost; Gale Cengage Learning; Google Scholar; Norwegian Register for Scientific Journals, Series and Publishers, Level 1; ProQuest; Sabinet; Scopus; and WoS ESCI. The journal has no impact factors. Altmetric indicators are administered. 'Front details' for papers and English abstracts are mandatory. The journal has been reviewed by DOAJ.

## Suggested improvements.

**Consensus review:** The journal should apply for indexing in SciELO and WoS to improve the visibility of the publications.

The selection and appointment process of the editorial board should be reviewed.

Given the high quality of the articles, the journal could publish additional issues or articles per year.

A strategy to encourage more submissions to the journal should be considered. Attracting more international contributions would also assist in raising the profile of the journal.

The visibility of the journal could be raised by publishing calls for papers on relevant mailing lists linked to current conferences, for example.

## Panel's consensus view

- i. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET-accredited list.
- ii. The journal should be invited to join the SciELO SA platform.
- iii. The panel recommends that the journal publish additional issues per year and attract more international contributions.

## 4.5.2 South African Actuarial Journal

### Focus and scope:

(Purpose of journal, positioning, focus, scope, readership)

The *South African Actuarial Journal (SAAJ)* focuses on research pertinent to actuaries and those in related disciplines working in South Africa, but the authors and readers are not limited to the country. The name suggests that the journal is focused on the field of actuarial science, but the application of actuarial work is broad, and the journal welcomes submissions from areas that may impact on actuaries, even if not directly actuarial in nature or content.

The community of actuaries and those involved in training actuaries at universities benefit directly from the original and applied research published in the *SAAJ*, and the journal also has applications for actuaries working in professional fields or conducting research in related fields such as demography, economics, financial markets and insurance. Local scholars and practitioners form the primary target audience, but actuaries from around the world may access the journal for material of relevance to their work or research.

Until 2019, almost 3000 printed copies of the journal were distributed, primarily to fellow and student members of the Actuarial Society of South Africa (ASSA), universities in South Africa and elsewhere in Africa that train actuaries, and friends of the profession. More recently, there has been a move away from printed copies, since the demand is currently almost exclusively for the online version of the journal.

### Editing functions:

(Standing, local institutional spread, international participation)

**Consensus review:** Reviewers were concerned that the journal website gives only the editor-in-chief. It is recommended that details of the broader editorial structure of the journal should be available on the website. It is good practice to have the full editorial board listed on the website so that readers are well informed of the composition and diversity of the board. The editor-in-chief is known to be a good scholar and actuary. Searches on research platforms such as ResearchGate and Google Scholar support this supposition.

### Questionnaire

(Editorial process-related criteria)

The journal was established in 2000 and is published annually. It is available at <http://www.actuarialsociety.org.za/Professionalresources/SAActuarialJournal.aspx>. Google Analytics was implemented on 3 June 2015, and between that date and 28 August 2015, the journal had 863 page views, and 830 page views on specific journal paper pages; however, it cannot be verified whether the papers were downloaded. Of the 830 page views on specific journal paper pages, 697 were on papers published in the most recent issue and 137 on past journals. The site has been accessed by users from 130 countries, 34 of which are African countries including South Africa. Of the users from the 33 African countries outside of South Africa, the most frequent were from Kenya, Zimbabwe, Namibia and Botswana. The issue is published in November or December of each calendar year. With the exception of the 2014 issue, the journal has been published on time and without any interruption since inception.

During the three-year review period, 14 full articles, one book review and a guest editorial were published. The total number of manuscripts received was 26 papers, one book review, two editorials and one guest editorial. Approximately 10% (3 out of 26) of manuscripts were rejected without peer review. A third of the submissions were rejected after peer review. Three of the peer-reviewed papers had at least one author with a non-South African address.

Three or four reviewers are typically selected with the intention of securing the commitment of two of them to review the paper. The journal has an advisory panel consisting of experts from

South Africa and a number of other countries. They are used to recommend reviewers and may personally volunteer to review. In rare instances, other channels need to be followed because the panel is not able to recommend anyone, or because those whom they recommend declined the request. Peer review is conducted in a 'blind way'. Valid reviewer critique and article improvement are rigorously implemented. Reviewers are requested to assess the extent to which the changes that they recommend are applied before the paper moves into the editing process. Peer reviewers are always asked to confirm their satisfaction with the response to the reviews. Reviewers are sometimes approached to discuss where their recommendations may be in conflict with another reviewer. In general, however, reviewers are not kept up to date with the progress of the paper following review. Reviewer performance is assessed, and the information is captured in a database. Twelve reviewers were used to produce the 2020 edition, some of them on papers submitted before 2020. Six of these reviewers were based outside of South Africa. The peer-review reports are accessibly retained in the journal's records. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication is between three and six months for online publication but could be longer. Since the journal is published once a year in print, the delay could be longer for printed articles, and could occasionally continue into the following year, although such instances are the exception.

The current editor has been in office since June 2018. An advertisement was issued, and the applications were discussed with the editorial advisory board of the journal. The period of appointment is open ended. Members of the editorial advisory board deal with peer reviews from time to time and provide advice on editorial policies and practices when requested. Two previous editors were in office from 2001 to 2013, and 2014 to 2018 respectively.

Members of the advisory board were selected in discussion with other members of the board and senior members of ASSA based on their standing, track record and expertise and the mix of skills required. Their appointment period is open ended. Members were appointed from within and outside the country. Currently, the journal has board members from four countries outside of South Africa. Members of the board were appointed to cover the range of subjects addressed by submissions to the journal, and to provide specific topical expertise. Some members have been in office since the inception of the journal in 2000, and the most recent appointment was in 2014. The introduction of term limits for advisory board members and editors is planned. This should be done without disrupting continuity or the operations of the journal.

The journal has instructions to authors and guidelines on style, available at <http://www.actuarialsociety.org.za/Portals/2/Documents/SAAJ-InstructionstoAuthors-20141031.pdf> and <http://www.actuarialsociety.org.za/Portals/2/Documents/SAAJ-GuidelinesonStyle-20141031.pdf>. The guidelines are aligned with ASSAf's Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing, Editing and Peer Review. The conflict-of-interest policy is included in the instructions to authors. The authors of a paper submitted for publication in the SAAJ must declare in the paper any interests they may have in the outcome of the research, and all funding sources must be acknowledged. Errata are published when necessary.

Analytical book reviews are published from time to time as value-added features. In the 2019 edition, peer-reviewed original material made up 77% of the publication. This ratio is also typical of previous years' publications.

### **Content:**

(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features)

**Consensus review:** The published articles are of good quality, but are focused on local consumption, as shown by the topics of the published titles. The journal consistently publishes about five articles per year. This is a low number given the breath of scope found in actuarial schools and research activities in South Africa.

### Essential technical features:

(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)

**Consensus review:** There are clear editorial guidelines and contact details for the editor. All articles are in English and are introduced by appropriate abstracts, also in English. No errata were observed in the copies under review. The citation practice is sound. The presentation, layout, style and copy-editing are all good. Ethical standards were maintained in the reviewed volumes.

### Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability:

**Consensus review:** This is an excellent journal for young and aspiring researchers in Africa to gain experience and be published. The journal compares well with international journals in important areas such as editorial policy, editorial board diversity, coverage and content.

### Business aspects

(Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)

The title owner and publisher of the journal is ASSA. The regular print run of hard copies was maintained. Distribution is not outsourced. Production of the journal is outsourced; desktop publishing is done by User Friendly in Cape Town, and the cover design is by The Fire Room in Cape Town. After 2014, printed copies were reduced due to declining demand for the printed format. It is foreseen that the demand for printed copies will further diminish. The journal carries no advertising, and there is no financial sponsorship. There are no paying subscribers, as the journal is provided free of charge to members of ASSA and distributed freely to universities involved in teaching actuarial science and to a number of members of the community close to the actuarial community. The journal does not charge APCs. The SAAJ uses a manual system for the management of the editorial workflow. The introduction of an automated system is planned for 2021. This is an open-access journal.

There have been no offers from multinational publishers to purchase the journal. Content is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 licence. Prospective authors must confirm that the manuscript is not under consideration by another journal and will not be submitted to another journal unless publication is declined by the SAAJ.

The journal is accredited by DHET. Impact factors and altmetric indicators have not been determined. The 'front details' for papers and English abstracts are mandatory. The journal has not been independently reviewed.

### Suggested improvements:

**Consensus review:** The journal website should be improved to be more visible. The names and affiliations of the editorial board should be listed, and if possible, their photographs should be included.

International board members should be nominated, to provide an international flair. The journal is encouraged to apply for listing on an international index such as Scopus.

To improve its marketability and visibility, the SAAJ should select an international or regional conference from which to publish special articles that fall within the scope of the journal.

### Panel's consensus view:

- i. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET-accredited list.
- ii. The journal should be invited to join the SciELO SA platform.
- iii. The panel recommends that the journal should publish additional issues per year and attract more international contributions.

## 4.6 Public Administration

### 4.6.1 *Administratio Publica*

#### Focus and scope

(Purpose of journal, positioning, focus, scope, readership)

*Administratio Publica* is a journal that promotes academic scholarship in public administration, public management and public governance. The journal is hosted by the Association of Southern African Schools and Departments of Public Administration and Management (ASSADPAM). It publishes original, analytical, theoretical and empirical manuscripts that make an original contribution to the current body of knowledge in the field. This includes articles, debates, research notes, review articles and book reviews.

The journal focuses primarily on public administration, public management and governance, and may also include a focus on related cognate disciplines. The journal provides scholarship and opportunities for researchers from the southern African research community and beyond to publish cutting-edge research in the discipline, aimed at providing practical solutions to problems facing South Africa in particular, and the southern African region in general.

The primary target is southern African scholars. However, from a strategic perspective, a wider net is being cast to attract scholars from across the African diaspora and beyond. The journal reaches schools and departments of public administration and management across southern Africa. The journal subscribers include non-members of ASSADPAM. Approximately 4% are international subscribers or institutions, and the remainder are domestic.

#### Editing functions

(Standing, local institutional spread, international participation)

**Consensus review:** The editorial team comprises well-known researchers with national and international standing in the discipline.

#### Questionnaire

(Editorial process-related criteria)

The journal was established in 2002 and publishes four issues per year in printed format. The journal is also uploaded on to the ASSADPAM website <https://assadpam.net> as an official publication of the association. The journal transitioned to a fully online platform at the end of 2020. The possibility of using an external management service provider such as Sabinet is being considered, but one of the challenges in this regard is that the editorship does not reside at a particular academic institution, as the journal belongs to an association and not to any one university. Information on visits, downloads and the number of countries in which the journal is read was not available at the time of the review. Issues are pre-scheduled to appear in March, June, September and December. There have been no significant interruptions in publication.

During the three-year review period, 101 full articles and four book reviews were published. A total of 147 manuscripts and four book reviews were received over the same period. Approximately six manuscripts were rejected by the editor prior to peer review as they did not meet the journal's mandate. The remaining manuscripts were subjected to peer review. The proportion of peer-reviewed papers that had at least one author with a non-South African address was 25%.

Two peer reviewers are usually selected for each submitted manuscript. Peer reviewers are selected based on their expertise on the topic or theme of the paper. Every effort is made to consider a wide audience of researchers. ASSADPAM keeps a dedicated membership list, which is updated annually and includes the areas of expertise of all members. Peer review is conducted in a 'blind way'. Valid reviewer critique and article improvement are rigorously implemented.

A reviewer template with specific areas of focus is sent to reviewers. Reviewers also make comments on the manuscript, usually in 'track changes' mode, although occasionally a reviewer might make comments physically in pen. In some instances where discrepancies between the reviewers are deemed too divergent, the intervention of a third reviewer is sought. The editorial committee is notified of such cases. Peer reviewers do not receive follow-up information, but reviewers make recommendations to the editor-in-chief for consideration. The editor-in-chief combines the reviewers' reports into an editorial report that is sent to the author to consider, make adjustments and resubmit. In the event that a manuscript is rejected, a comprehensive editor's report is submitted, providing the reasons for rejection. The last editorial board meeting passed a resolution to provide feedback to reviewers, and to send a letter acknowledging their input. Reviewer performance is assessed, and a reviewer report is maintained by the editor. In 2015, 94 peer reviewers were used, approximately 8% of whom had a non-South African address. The peer-review reports were retained and are accessible in the journal's records. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication in print was approximately eight weeks. Given the challenges experienced with online submission, the manuscripts submitted online (very few to date) are printed by the editor and then forwarded to reviewers.

The editor has been in office for three years as at the end of 2018. The appointment was competitive through a subject association nomination process. The period of appointment was five years. Each editorial board or committee member has an obligation to review at least two manuscripts during their term. In certain instances, given their expertise, the editorial advisory board or editorial council is called on to review manuscripts. The members of the board provide advice on editorial policies and practices, and the editorial policy is updated annually. Whenever manuscripts are sent to reviewers, the editorial policy serves as an attachment. The editorial board and advisory board members are appointed for three to six years. A nomination process is followed during their appointment. The board must be demographically representative in terms of gender and race and supported by merit. Members are appointed from within and outside the country to provide specific topical expertise.

The editorial guidelines of the journal are available on the association's website at <https://assadpam.net/>. The journal has a conflict-of-interest policy. The editor manages the process to ensure that the manuscripts received, and the reviewers chosen, are not from the same institution. The editorial guidelines are aligned with the charter of the association, which encapsulates the guidelines of ASSAf's Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing, Editing and Peer Review. Where necessary, errata are included in the editorial comments in the next issue.

The journal publishes value-added features such as critical editorials and analytical book reviews. The percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material was 98%, excluding book reviews.

## Content

(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features)

**Consensus review:** The journal focuses on publishing articles covering a range of topics in public administration and public policy in South Africa, with increasing contributions from other African countries. Although limited, the journal encourages publications from outside of Africa. One of the aims of the journal is to provide a platform for emerging scholars in South Africa, including graduate students; consequently, not many established or international scholars publish in the journal. The papers are generally case studies, or comparative case study in nature, with a noticeable absence of more quantitative or statistically oriented papers. The rejection rate is low compared to international journals, perhaps by design to accommodate emerging researchers. While the quality is good, it could be substantially improved.

The number of articles per journal is consistent and acceptable. There seem to have been good additional scholarly features such as editorials, topical reviews and book reviews, although these could be increased.

## Essential technical features

(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)

**Consensus review:** The technical quality of the publications, including language and referencing, is of good quality, although there were a few errata at the time of the review. Furthermore, the design, layout, style and copy-editing styles are appropriate. Ethical practice is evident in the use of images and secondary material.

## Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

**Consensus review:** The journal excels in serving emerging researchers and graduate researchers. This also means that there is considerable potential to improve its offerings by attracting more senior scholars and international researchers of note, as well as contributions from non-members of ASSADPAM.

## Business aspects

(Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)

*Administratio Publica* is hosted by ASSADPAM. Details on the regular print run were not available at the time of the review. Production of the journal is outsourced, but the distribution is done by the editor and his assistant. The journal does not carry advertisements and does not receive any financial sponsorship.

There were 185 paying subscribers in 2015. All subscribers are institutions. The journal charges a page fee of R300 per page, and graphics are charged at R150 per graphic. The editorial workflow is managed through an online management system and a manual system. The journal transitioned to open access at the end of 2020. The articles are available for download on the ASSADPAM website. The journal is currently in the process of exploring options of developing an open access system for online article submission.

There have been no offers from multinational publishers to purchase the journal. The copyright arrangements are listed in the editorial policy. The copyright of the journal and related material rests with the association, but the authors bear the full responsibility for the content of their contributions. The opinions expressed in the journal are those of the authors and are not necessarily subscribed to by the editor-in-chief, the editorial committee, the editorial board, or the executive committee of ASSADPAM. In terms of licensing agreements with authors, manuscripts are accompanied by a statement in which the author indicates that the manuscript has not been published or is not being considered for publication elsewhere, unless rejected by the editorial committee. The authors also need to declare that they will pay page fees if the article is accepted for publication. Finally, authors must provide a plagiarism similarity report with the final submission and declare that the manuscript is not plagiarised.

*Administratio Publica* has appointed a committee to manage the transition to IBSS listing, and the process is ongoing. The journal has no impact factor, and altmetric indicators have not been determined. 'Front details' for papers and English abstracts are mandatory. The journal was independently peer reviewed by ASSAf in 2010.

## Suggested improvements

**Consensus review:** The journal should consider moving to an online submission platform and should encourage contributions from more senior as well as international scholars.

More papers focused on quantitative methodologies are encouraged. The journal should broaden its readership by attracting a more international audience.

The editorial team should be expanded to include more international members.

## Panel's consensus view

- i. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET-accredited list.
- ii. The journal should not be invited to join the SciELO SA platform.
- iii. The panel recommends that the journal should consider a higher rejection rate as a means of increasing the quality of the papers published. The editor should pay closer attention to editorial errors.

### 4.6.2 Africa's Public Service Delivery & Performance Review

#### Focus and scope

(Purpose of journal, positioning, focus, scope, readership)

*Africa's Public Service Delivery & Performance Review (APSDPR)* is a peer-reviewed journal in the niche area of public service monitoring and evaluation, aimed at the promotion and sharing of knowledge, skills and innovations in government and the wider public-sector environment in South Africa and abroad. With its multidisciplinary outlook, the journal stimulates service delivery and scholarly debate with a view to addressing the innumerable service delivery and performance challenges facing governments.

The journal aims to provide an innovative approach to the scholarship of monitoring and evaluation through independent monitoring of implementable interventions related to public service delivery and its expected outcomes. It thus foresees a role in bridging the gaps between public service delivery and the envisaged 'trickle-down effects' on the targeted beneficiaries. Articles are invited in four broad themes, (a) public policy, planning, performance monitoring and evaluation, (b) development cooperation and development assistance management, (c) Africa's regional socioeconomic integration, and (d) agriculture and food security policy.

The primary target audience is African scholars. This is an open-access journal published by AOSIS since 2017. It was previously published by the Institute for Development Assistance Management at the University of Fort Hare (UFH). The journal has a worldwide audience.

#### Editing functions

(Standing, local institutional spread, international participation)

**Consensus review:** The editor-in-chief is known in South Africa but is less well known internationally. The editor-in-chief is based at UFH, together with the managing editor, the book review editor and one of the three associate editors. This lack of institutional diversity was raised as a concern.

Furthermore, although many members of the editorial board have a strong national reputation in the field of public administration, the vast majority do not have a high international scholarly impact, judging by their h-indices and citation records. There is only one international member (from the USA) on the editorial board. The readership of the journal extends to Africa and abroad. Although such readership is commendable, there is a general lack of contributions from beyond Africa.

#### Questionnaire

(Editorial process-related criteria)

The journal was founded in 2012. It published three to four issues per year prior to 2017. Since 2017, the journal has published one issue per year. Articles are published online when ready for publication, and then printed in an end-of-year volume. Additional issues may be published for special events such as conferences, and when special themes are addressed. The journal is available through the AOSIS platform at <https://apsdpr.org/index.php/apsdpr>. There were 117 549 visits and 387 725 downloads during the review period. The journal was read in 189 countries, 47 of which are African countries. Issues are not pre-scheduled to appear on specific

dates. There have been no significant interruptions in publication. When the journal moved to AOSIS as the new publisher in 2017, the first issue of that year appeared in May instead of the customary March issue at the time.

During the three-year review period, 44 full articles, one letter, three review articles and one book review were published. A total of 175 manuscripts were received; 65 manuscripts were rejected without peer review and 24 were rejected after peer review. The proportion of peer-reviewed papers that had at least one author with a non-South African address was 50%.

Two peer reviewers are selected for each submitted manuscript. Reviewer selection is critical to the publication process, and the choice is based on many factors, including expertise, reputation, specific recommendations, and previous experience with particular reviewers. Peer review is conducted in a 'double-blind' way. Valid reviewer critique and article improvement are rigorously implemented. Not only does peer review provide an independent assessment of the importance and technical accuracy of the content of a manuscript, but the feedback from referees conveyed to authors with the editor's advice frequently also results in manuscripts being refined for improved coherence and readability. All manuscripts submitted to the journal are screened for scientific overlap with previously published work (plagiarism), which also needs to be addressed by authors during revision. The peer-review process aims to ensure that all published articles present the results of primary scientific research; report results that have not been published elsewhere; are scientifically sound; provide new scientific knowledge where experiments, statistics and other analyses are performed to a high technical standard and are described in sufficient detail so that another researcher would be able to reproduce the experiments; provide conclusions that are presented in an appropriate manner and are supported by the data; are presented in an intelligible and coherent manner, and are written in clear and unambiguous English; meet all applicable research standards with regard to the ethics of experimentation and research integrity; and adhere to appropriate reporting guidelines and community standards for data availability. Once the author submits the revised manuscript, the reviewers may be asked to reappraise the manuscript in a second-round review.

The editor keeps reviewers informed about the final decision on the manuscript and is committed to providing reviewers with the reports of other reviewers who participated in the review and giving feedback on the outcome of the manuscript. Reviewer performance is assessed through a rating given by the editor after each completed review. This information is captured in a database. In 2019, 38 peer reviewers were used. The proportion of the reviewers who had a non-South African address was 31.6%. The peer-review reports are retained and are accessible in the journal's records. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication online was 176 days in 2019. The number of days is calculated from the date of acceptance until publication. The printed edition of the journal is compiled annually, at the end of a volume.

The editor has been in office for three years. The editor is the founding editor chosen by the group as academic leader and editor of the journal. The editor was appointed to serve until the journal became established and sustainable. Members of the editorial board deal with peer review and advise on editorial policies and practices. The members of the board were appointed for a period of five years. They were appointed competitively related to their professional and academic visibility. Members are appointed from within and outside the country to provide specific topical expertise.

The journal's editorial guidelines are aligned with ASSAf's Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing, Editing and Peer Review, and can be accessed at <https://apsdpr.org/index.php/apsdpr/pages/view/policie>. There is a conflict-of-interest policy accessible at [https://apsdpr.org/index.php/apsdpr/pages/view/policies#part\\_5](https://apsdpr.org/index.php/apsdpr/pages/view/policies#part_5). The journal has an errata policy in place available at [https://apsdpr.org/index.php/apsdpr/pages/view/policies#part\\_1](https://apsdpr.org/index.php/apsdpr/pages/view/policies#part_1) and [https://aosis.co.za/legal-centre/#correcting\\_record](https://aosis.co.za/legal-centre/#correcting_record).

The journal publishes value-added features. The percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material was 99.52% in 2019.

## Content

(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features)

**Consensus review:** The main focus of the articles is South Africa and Africa. There are negligible instances of papers from outside of Africa. The journal suffers from a lack of non-African-based scholarly contributions. The journal publishes articles on a diverse array of topics affecting the practice of public administration in sub-Saharan Africa, including public-sector reform, public finance, local economic development, corruption, performance management, as well as monitoring and evaluation, although this topic, which the journal claims to be a focus area, did not appear to be effectively articulated in the published output. The majority of the articles are empirical and qualitatively descriptive in nature, and single-country and issue oriented. There is an absence of theory-building papers, and very few papers that use statistical inferential analysis. This is noticeably different from international public administration papers, which, over the past 15 years or so, have become more quantitative as well as contributing to theory.

The number of issues per year shows some divergence, with four issues in 2016 but only one issue each in 2017 and 2018. There seem to be limited scholarly value-adding features, with only five (letters, article reviews and book reviews) over the review period.

## Essential technical features

(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)

**Consensus review:** The technical quality of the publications, including language and referencing, needs to be improved. Spelling and grammatical errors were noticed in articles published during the review period. There is no uniform format for abstracts of the journal papers. The design and layout of the journal was considered pleasing and of good quality.

## Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

**Consensus review:** The journal is relevant to emerging scholars and graduate students but does not measure up to the methodological rigour and topical focus of international journals. There is room to substantially increase the appeal of the journal to international scholars by including papers from more senior as well as international authors.

A shift from the predominance of case study articles would also assist students who need to be well grounded in theory and methodologies.

## Business aspects

(Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)

The title owner of the journal is the UFH Institute for Development Assistance Management, and the publisher is AOSIS. There is no regular print run, as the journal is freely available online. Production and distribution are not outsourced. The journal does not carry advertisements and does not receive financial sponsorship.

The journal charges an APC of R1 191 per page (excluding VAT). The average length of an article is ten pages. The APC may be changed at any time, at the sole discretion of the publisher. The submitting author is responsible for payment of the APC and must undertake, at the time of submission, to arrange for payment of the APC should the article be accepted for publication. This responsibility may not be delegated to a third party without the agreement of the publisher. The journal uses an online management system to manage the editorial workflow. The journal is open access.

There have not been any offers from multinational publishers to purchase the journal. The authors retain copyright of work published by AOSIS unless otherwise specified. Authors of work published by AOSIS are required to grant AOSIS the unlimited rights to publish the definitive work

in any format, language or medium, for any lawful purpose. AOSIS requires journal authors to publish their work in open access under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) licence. The authors retain the non-exclusive right to use the published article, provided that attribution is given to the applicable journal, with details of the original publication, as set out in the official citation of the article published in the journal. Authors specifically have the right to post the article on their own website or that of their institution, or in institutional or other repositories.

The journal is indexed by DHET; DOAJ; Gale Cengage Learning; Norwegian Register for Scientific Journals, Series and Publishers, Level 1; and ProQuest. The journal has a Google Scholar h-index of 5. There are altmetric indicators. The 'front details' for papers and English abstracts are mandatory. The journal was independently peer reviewed by DHET for accreditation.

### Suggested improvements

**Consensus review:** The journal is encouraged to diversify the editorial team by including more international scholars, and should consider actively attracting scholars from outside Africa, including the Global North, to publish in the journal.

The journal should attract more quantitative contributions and papers that test theories, and not just descriptive or case-study papers.

The rigour of the peer-review process should be strengthened. This journal seems to operate at a similar level to other South African public administration journals. However, most South African public administration journals fall far below international standards.

International public administration research has moved to being more quantitative in nature, but South African papers published in this journal have not substantially made this shift. Qualitative papers need to make a significant contribution to the field of knowledge, and not constitute merely a compilation of literature.

### Panel's consensus view

- i. **The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET-accredited list.**
- ii. **The journal should not be invited to join the SciELO SA platform.**

#### 4.6.3 *African Journal of Public Affairs*

### Focus and scope

(Purpose of journal, positioning, focus, scope, readership)

The *African Journal of Public Affairs (AJPA)* publishes under the auspices of the African Consortium of Public Administration Journals and covers a broad range of issues related to African development, the African diaspora, politics, economics, public policy, African public administration and African diaspora leadership issues.

The aim of the journal is to focus on public administration and public affairs as encapsulated in the mission statement. The journal serves the South African research, academic and political communities in the publication of current and research-intensive issues in African public administration, local governance and constructive African leadership, and in support of research-based conversations in the three spheres of government.

The primary target audiences are scholars in public administration, public policy management, African development, and African and Commonwealth public administration issues. The journal is accessible online and can be accessed on the Sabinet platform.

## Editing functions

(Standing, local institutional spread, international participation)

**Consensus review:** The editor-in-chief is established and committed to the field of public administration. However, he publishes mainly in a small pool of journals such as the Journal of Public Administration and the *AJPA*. The editorial board consists largely of scholars with relatively low Google Scholar metrics. However, a strength of the editorial team is the incorporation of practitioners. There is also an opportunity to strengthen the journal's engagement with international developments in public administration and management by broadening its editorial board. Finally, there seems to be an impression that the editor-in-chief works in isolation from the editorial board.

## Questionnaire

(Editorial process-related criteria)

The journal was established in 2007 and publishes four issues per year. It is accessible online at <https://journals.co.za/content/journal/ajpa>. A total of 32 472 downloads were recorded for 2018 and 2019. The journal is read in the USA, North America, most of anglophone Africa, India and Bangladesh. It is also read in most anglophone countries and some francophone countries. Issues are pre-scheduled to appear on specific dates. No significant interruptions in publication have been recorded.

During the three-year review period, an average of eight articles per issue were published. Information on the number of manuscripts received over the same period was not provided. About 15% of manuscripts were rejected without peer review, and about 25% were rejected after peer review. The proportion of peer-reviewed papers that had at least one author with a non-South African address was 20%.

Two peer reviewers are usually selected for each submitted manuscript. Peer reviewers are selected based on their area of specialisation and due diligence to the discipline. Peer review is conducted in a 'blind way'. Valid reviewer critique and article improvement are rigorously implemented. Articles are returned to the respective authors for review, and in some cases, authors are assisted to improve article clarity. Articles are then requested to be resubmitted for final approval. Peer reviewers receive follow-up information only when necessary or requested. Reviewer performance is assessed, and information is captured in a database. The expert knowledge of the reviewer must be respected with respect to their areas of specialisation and contribution to the quality of the article under review. Eight peer reviewers were used in cyclical rotation; of these, about 60% had a non-South African address. The peer-review reports were retained and are accessible in the journal's records. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication online and in print is 12 months.

The editor is the founding editor-in-chief and has been in office since 2007. The period of appointment was not specified. The members of the editorial board deal with peer review when their expertise is needed, and also provide advice on editorial policies and practices. Members of the editorial and advisory board were appointed based on their availability, and according to a cyclical rotational platform. Their period of appointment is between three and five years. They were appointed from within and outside the country to provide specific topical expertise.

The journal has editorial guidelines that are aligned with ASSAf's Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing, Editing and Peer Review. Conflict-of-interest issues are addressed by the board, and ASSAf protocols are utilised. The journal has an errata policy.

The value-added features currently published in the journal include critical editorials and critical topical reviews. All pages in each issue represent peer-reviewed original material.

## Content

(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features)

**Consensus review:** Most of the articles are contributions from scholars in South Africa and other English-speaking sub-Saharan African countries. There is a core group of frequently published authors, including some editorial board members, which is of concern. The papers are generally of good quality, well written and uniform, covering a variety of topics, although the copy-editing could be improved. The number of issues produced per year, as well as the number of articles per issue, is not consistent from year to year, or issue to issue.

## Essential technical features

(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)

**Consensus review:** The technical quality of the publications, including abstract, language, referencing and layout, is good. All papers have abstracts written in English.

## Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

**Consensus review:** The journal is relevant and useful to students studying public administration, African affairs, political science and governance. It also provides an outlet for emerging scholars in these fields in a local and regional context. The journal could, however, seek to attract papers from a more diverse pool of contributors that demonstrate more innovative research methods in these fields. This journal seems to operate at a similar level to other South African public administration journals. However, most South African public administration journals fall far below comparable international journals in this field. International public administration research has moved to being more quantitative and interdisciplinary. The public administration research themes in Africa would benefit substantially by doing more quantitative and interdisciplinary analysis.

## Business aspects

(Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)

The journal is owned and published by the African Consortium of Public Administration Journals. The regular print run is between 500 and 1000 copies per issue. Production and distribution are outsourced to Little Monster Printers in Pretoria. The journal carries no advertisements and does not receive financial sponsorship.

The journal charges a page fee of R500 per page, and graphics are charged at R350 per graph. The journal uses an online management system, and articles are loaded on to the website for the management of the editorial workflow through Sabinet. This is an open-access journal.

There have been some offers from South African publishers to purchase the journal. The information on copyright arrangements and licensing agreements with authors was not provided at the time of the review.

The journal was discontinued from the IBSS index in 2019 but has been listed again since 2021. Impact factors and altmetric indicators have not been determined. The 'front details' for papers and English abstracts are mandatory. The journal has been reviewed by IBSS.

## Suggested improvements

**Consensus review:** The journal should consider attracting international researchers to the editorial board and strengthening editorial governance practices to align with international standards.

The journal should consider attracting articles from international scholars, and publishing editorials that go beyond just a compilation of the article abstracts, as well as some book reviews.

## Panel's consensus view

- i. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET-accredited list.
- ii. The journal should not be invited to join the SciELO SA platform.

### 4.6.4 *Journal of Public Administration*

#### Focus and scope

(Purpose of journal, positioning, focus, scope, readership)

The *Journal of Public Administration (JOPA)* is a quarterly scholarly publication issued on behalf of the South African Association of Public Administration and Management (SAAPAM). Its purpose is to further the understanding of the science and praxis of governance. It publishes peer-reviewed articles, review articles, case studies, exemplar profiles, viewpoints and research results on a variety of issues related to managing public affairs.

The journal aims to maintain an interdisciplinary focus. Its essence transcends the mono-disciplinary approach that for years circumscribed governance to systems and processes of state administration. The advisory council has taken a decision that the journal should evolve with the vicissitudes of the 21st century, assuming the posture that the future of the discipline is interdisciplinary.

The audience of the journal is anyone with an interest in public affairs, primarily local and international scholars in the field. This includes students of governance at various universities around the world, especially those undertaking postgraduate studies, as well as state officials, including those who work for multilateral organisations such as the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund. Increasingly, civil society, including the media, is developing a keen interest in the publication. Some of the articles in the journal have been reprinted in the mainstream media, especially the editorial perspectives of the editor, who often writes about topical issues of governance.

The readership of the journal is diverse, comprising scholars, government officials, politicians, the media, all libraries in South Africa, as well as Parliament. The subscribers include more than 200 scholars and researchers from diverse geographical areas including Europe, America and other African countries such as Nigeria, Uganda, Tanzania, Botswana, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Kenya. The wider reach of the journal is optimised through the Sabinet e-publication service.

#### Editing functions

(Standing, local institutional spread, international participation)

**Consensus review:** The editorial board consists of scholars from a number of countries and includes two or three members with good international standing. Although there is some international representation on the board, it is recommended that the editorial team should involve more international scholars, including from other BRICS countries.

#### Questionnaire

(Editorial process-related criteria)

Attempts to establish the journal could be traced back to 1947, at the time when the *South African Institute of Public Administration (SAIPA)* was established, although subsequently disbanded, only to be resuscitated in 1962. *JOPA* was formally established in 1965. It boasts more than half a century of existence. The journal is a quarterly publication, with issues in March, June, September and December. Special issues may be published in any month, should there be the need for a special issue (for example, on a topic such as local government elections) that requires a dedicated focus and the attention of scholarship.

The journal has applied for an ISSN number for online publication. The journal is currently accessible online through the Sabinet platform at <http://www.journals.co.za/content/journal/jpad/browse>. It is also available on the SAAPAM website at <http://saapam.co.za/jopa.html>. There were an average of 18 573 downloads per year. This translates to approximately 55 719 downloads over a period of three years. Issues are pre-scheduled to appear on specific dates. There have been no significant interruptions in the publication of the journal since its inception.

During the three-year review period, 154 full articles and 20 book reviews were published. A total of 230 full articles, one review article and 22 book reviews were received over the same period. Six full articles and one review article were rejected without peer review, and 70 articles were rejected after peer review. A total of 17 peer-reviewed articles published over the same period had authors with a non-South African address.

A manuscript is peer-reviewed anonymously by three specialist referees, focusing on the content and the factual accuracy of the arguments. The SAAPAM website issues an annual call for expression of interest to be included in the journal's reviewer database. Peer reviewers are selected on the basis of their standing in the discipline. Those who are interested are requested to submit their CV, which the editor tables at an editorial committee meeting. After considering their expertise, those found to be suitable are included in the reviewer database. The data are reviewed annually and updated on the basis of the performance of the reviewers.

Peer review is conducted in a 'blind way'. All manuscripts are circulated anonymously to specialist referees for evaluation. The name and institutional affiliation of authors are blanked out. Peer-review reports may be made available to authors, but the names of the referees are withheld. All these arrangements are important to protect the integrity of the editorial process. The journal encourages rigour in the evaluation of manuscripts, which should be approached in a constructive manner, with the intention of assisting authors to improve their articles. Before communicating the peer-review reports to authors, the editor studies them to establish their validity. Authors are then advised accordingly. The editor checks the corrected or revised versions of manuscripts to verify the extent to which valid comments and critique of the reviewers were considered. Any article that fails to incorporate the reviewer comments that the editor considers valid would not be published.

Peer reviewers receive a message of appreciation for their rigorous review of the manuscripts, which assists the journal to maintain its standing. Reviewer performance is assessed, and information is captured in a database. A total of 690 reviewers were used during the three-year review period, ten of whom had a non-South African address. All peer-review reports are filed and are retained and accessible for audit purposes. It takes at least four months from the time of receipt for an article to be published in print.

The editor was appointed in 2012 through a competitive process. A call for nominations was issued, and the SAAPAM board deliberated on all nominations received for the editorship of the journal. The editor was appointed for a five-year period, which was renewable based on performance. The quality of a journal depends largely on the editor, the review panel, the editorial committee and the board. The SAAPAM board appoints the editorial committee, which works closely with the editor. For each edition of the journal, the editor presents a report on the articles accepted or rejected for publication. All manuscripts and reviewer reports are shared with members of the editorial committee for scrutiny. The editorial committee, which is chaired by the editor, is accountable to the editorial board, largely on matters that relate to the journal's editorial policy and practices. The board is appointed for a period of five years, which is renewable based on its performance. The members of the board are drawn from within and outside the country. Almost all universities in South Africa are represented on the editorial committee. All members of the board were appointed through a competitive process of the association. A call for nominations was made, and nominees were required to submit their CV to the board, through the office of its executive director. The role of the editorial board is mainly to advise the editor and the editorial committee on the policy and scope of the journal, although all board members provide specific topical expertise, especially in relation to the themes of

special issues of the journal, and they review articles submitted for such issues. The editor and the editorial committee deal with peer review of individual manuscripts.

The journal has an editorial policy and manuscript specifications, which are easily accessible. They are published in the journal and placed on the SAAPAM and Sabinet websites. The editorial policy and guidelines of the journal are largely aligned with ASSAf's Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing, Editing and Peer Review. The journal has conflict-of-interest and errata policies.

Critical editorials, analytical book reviews and topical reviews are value-added features published in the journal. The percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material is 100%.

## Content

(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features)

**Consensus review:** Most of the articles are contributions from student research. The majority of the papers are descriptive and are case study based, and there are also frequently appearing themes such as local government. There seems to be a preponderance of papers from the University of South Africa, Tshwane University of Technology, the University of Limpopo, and the University of Fort Hare.

In general, there is limited diversity among the scholars who publish in the journal, with only a few from African countries other than South Africa, and a negligible number of contributions from scholars from further afield.

The number of issues per year, as well as the number of articles per issue, seems consistent and acceptable. The journal produces four issues per year, with an average of eight articles per issue. There is generally a special issue per year, which is in line with international standards.

## Essential technical features

(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)

**Consensus review:** The technical quality of the publications, including language and referencing, is good. All papers have abstracts written in English.

## Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

**Consensus review:** The journal is relevant to emerging scholars as well as students but falls short of measuring up to comparable international journals. Most of the articles reflect already well-researched topics and are thus mainly reactive, rather than new contributions to the field of knowledge. Most papers are not theoretical, but tend to be compilations of literature reviews, with very few based on primary research. The research published in *JOPA* therefore offers only a limited contribution to new knowledge or to topical international public administration issues. Another concern is that the journal content strays from a focus on core public administration topics and tends to straddle interdisciplinary boundaries. As such, there is a danger that its core disciplinary focus as a public administration journal could be obscured.

*JOPA* seems to operate at a similar level to other South African public administration journals. However, most South African public administration journals fall far below comparable international journals in this field.

International public administration research has moved to being more quantitative and interdisciplinary. The journal is publishing more quantitative papers than in the past, but these have not kept up with international trends. Qualitative papers need to make a significant contribution to the field of knowledge, and not constitute merely a compilation of literature.

## Business aspects

### (Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)

SAAPAM is the legal owner and publisher of the journal and is registered as a non-profit organisation. Details on the regular print run were not available at the time of the review. The design, layout, typesetting, printing and distribution are outsourced to Beta Products in Centurion. The journal carries unpaid advertising. There is no financial sponsorship, and the journal depends on page and subscription fees. However, in this reporting cycle, a special issue on local government elections was sponsored by the National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences (NIHSS).

There are 255 paying subscribers, 40 of which are organisations. The journal sustains itself through page fees. Authors are required to pay a fee of R650 per page. Payment is due on receiving confirmation from the editor that an article is to be published in a particular issue of the journal. The editorial workflow of the journal is managed manually. This is not an open-access journal.

The Routledge Taylor & Francis Group expressed an interest in purchasing the journal in 2013, but SAAPAM decided not to enter into any arrangement at that stage. The copyright of the journal is vested in SAAPAM, and no part may be reproduced in whole or in part without the express written permission of the association. Any opinions expressed in the articles published in the journal are the responsibility of the individual authors of the articles, and not of the editor, the editorial committee, the editorial board, or any of SAAPAM's funders or sponsors. Before articles are published, authors are required to sign a licensing agreement in which they grant the JOPA an exclusive publishing and distribution licence that covers any tables, illustrations or information submitted as part of the articles accepted for publication.

The journal is accredited by DHET and indexed in IBSS and Sabinet. The impact factor was 3.24 in 2018. The journal uses the SAAPAM Facebook page to monitor its performance through the comments of those who follow the page. The website has been upgraded to optimise the altmetric calculation for indicators in relation to the number of visits to the journal website, downloads and citations on social media. The 'front details' for papers and English abstracts are mandatory. The journal was independently peer reviewed by DHET and ASSAf for accreditation.

## Suggested improvements

**Consensus review:** The journal should consider attracting senior researchers to the editorial board and narrowing the disciplinary focus of the articles published in the journal.

The journal should consider more rigorous primary research contributions, not just literature reviews. Papers using more theory and theory building, and addressing topics such as leadership, bureaucracy, the Sustainable Development Goals and climate change, which are topical in international public administration debates, should be considered.

International scholars should be encouraged to publish in the journal.

The editor and the editorial board should consider reducing their publications in the journal and encouraging other South African institutions and international scholars to submit papers.

## Panel's consensus view

- i. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET-accredited list.
- ii. The journal should not be invited to join the SciELO SA platform.



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(3.222,00)	2.635,97	3.655,00	3.222,00	\$	2.554,00	97,00%
(5.687,00)	16.812,26	2.225,00	5.687,00	\$	7.912,00	26,00%
(9.833,00)	28.038,03	3.641,00	91.833,00	\$	3.474,00	3,20%
(658,00)	170.053,04	33.879,00	658,00	\$	4.537,00	4,00%
(9.855,00)		56.852,00	9.855,00	\$	200,00	74,00%
(3.548,00)		958,00	3.548,00	\$	6.589,00	
(8.741,00)	2.635,97	5,00	8.741,00	\$	2.254,00	
	16.691,02		256,00		3.387,00	
	(1.217,00)		3.222,00		(2.554,00)	
	16.812,26		214,00		6.987,00	
	28.038,03		997,00		(1.298,00)	
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			230.490,00		21,00%	



# APPENDIX A:

## Questionnaire sent to editors of journals under review

[Note: The questionnaire was revised in 2018 before the reviews took place.]

### 1. Purpose of journal, positioning, focus, scope, readership, etc.:

- 1.1 What is the focus and scope of the journal (i.e. what does it say about this in your masthead)?
- 1.2 Is the journal's aim to focus on a specific discipline or field or does it (also) include an interdisciplinary focus?
- 1.3 How does the journal serve the South African research community in relation to its focus and scope?
- 1.4 Who are your primary target audiences (predominantly local scholars or also further afield)?
- 1.5 What is the journal's reach and how is the readership composed (i.e. international subscribers, institutions, and/or individuals in terms of numbers and/or percentages)?

### 2. Editorial process-related criteria:

- 2.1 When was the journal established?
- 2.2 What is the publication frequency of your journal, per year?
- 2.3 If online,
  - 2.3.1 What is its URL?
  - 2.3.2 What is the visit and download record?
  - 2.3.3 In how many countries is the journal read?
  - 2.3.4 In how many African countries is the journal read?
- 2.4 Scheduled issues:
  - 2.4.1 Are issues of your journal pre-scheduled to appear on given dates?
  - 2.4.2 If scheduled, do the issues in fact appear regularly on the scheduled dates?
- 2.5 Have there been significant interruptions in publication since the journal's inception? If so, provide details.
- 2.6 Peer-reviewed original papers:
  - 2.6.1 How many peer-reviewed original papers have you published during the last three years:
    - a. Full articles?
    - b. Letters?
    - c. Review articles?
    - d. Book reviews?
    - e. 'Conference papers'?
    - f. Other?
  - 2.6.2 How many manuscripts in each of the above categories were received in the last three years?
- 2.7 Rejection rate:

- 2.7.1 Approximately how many manuscripts in each category were rejected without peer review (as a pre-peer-review decision)?
- 2.7.2 How many were rejected after peer review?
- 2.8 What proportion of peer-reviewed papers of all kinds that you published had at least one author with a non-South African address?
- 2.9 Peer reviewers:
  - 2.9.1 How many peer reviewers are usually approached for each submitted manuscript?
  - 2.9.2 How are peer reviewers selected?
- 2.10 Is peer review conducted in a 'blind way', i.e. authors and institutions blinded out?
- 2.11 How rigorous is the implementation of valid reviewer critique and article improvement?
- 2.12 Do peer reviewers receive follow-up information, e.g. outcomes of the reviews?
- 2.13 Is reviewer performance assessed and is such information captured in a database?
- 2.14 Total of peer reviewers:
  - 2.14.1 How many peer reviewers were used in total, in any one of the last three years?
  - 2.14.2 What proportion of these had non-South African addresses?
- 2.15 Are peer-review reports accessibly retained in your records?
- 2.16 What is the average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication:
  - In print?
  - Online?
- 2.17 Editor/editor-in-chief:
  - 2.17.1 How long have you been editor/editor-in-chief of this journal?
  - 2.17.2 Were you appointed competitively (i.e. following advertisement and a selection process)?
  - 2.17.3 For what period have you been appointed?
- 2.18 Do members of your editorial board and/or editorial advisory board:
  - 2.18.1 Handle peer review of individual manuscripts?
  - 2.18.2 Advise on editorial policies/practices?
  - 2.18.3 How long have they been in office:
    - Editorial board?
    - Editorial advisory board?
  - 2.18.4 Are they appointed competitively (i.e. following advertisement and a selection process)?
  - 2.18.5 For what period?
  - 2.18.6 From inside and outside the country?
  - 2.18.7 To provide specific topical expertise?
- 2.19 Policies:
  - 2.19.1 Do you have published editorial/policy guidelines? What is the policy? (Please send us a copy)

- 2.19.2 Is there a conflict-of-interest policy? If so, please provide details.
- 2.19.3 Have your editorial/policy guidelines been aligned with ASSAf's Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing, Editing and Peer Review?
- 2.20 Do you publish errata in all cases where errors have become apparent? What is your policy?
- 2.21 Does your journal contain value-added features such as:
  - Critical editorials?
  - 'News and views' analyses of articles being published?
  - Critical topical reviews?
  - Analytical book reviews?
  - Correspondence on published articles?
  - Other?
- 2.22 What is the percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material?

### **3. Business-related criteria:**

- 3.1 Who is the actual title owner (legally) of the journal? And the publisher?
- 3.2 What is the regular print run of your journal, if it is printed?
- 3.3 Is production and distribution outsourced? If so, provide details.
- 3.4 Do you carry advertising which is
  - Paid?
  - Unpaid?
- 3.5 Do you receive financial sponsorship(s)? If so, please list the sponsors and provide details.
- 3.6 What is the number of paying subscribers?
- 3.7 How many of the subscribers are organisations as opposed to individuals?
- 3.8 Do you impose page charges or article-processing charges on authors? If so, provide details.
- 3.9 How is the editorial workflow of the journal managed?
  - Online management system
  - Loading of articles onto web
  - Manual system
  - Other
- 3.10 If your journal appears online:
  - Is it free online (open access)?
  - Is it free online but password protected?
  - Is it part of a commercial (pay-to-view and/or pay-to-subscribe) e-publication service?
  - Is it part of a non-commercial e-publication mechanism (e.g. MEDLINE)?
- 3.11 What is the journal's estimated total cost per year?
- 3.12 Has the journal had offers to purchase from multinational publishers?
- 3.13 What are your copyright arrangements?

3.14 What licensing agreement do you have with authors?

**4. Bibliometric assessments:**

- 4.1 Could you provide us with a list of the indices in which the journal is indexed (including Web of Science and/or the IBSS, Google Scholar, Scopus as well as others)?
- 4.2 Have impact factors (e.g. Google Scholar, WoS or Scopus) ever been determined for your journal? If so, what were they?
- 4.3 Do you use any altmetric indicators (number of visits to journal website, number of downloads, citations on social media) to monitor the journal's 'performance'?
- 4.4 Are 'front details' for papers like titles, authors, addresses, affiliations and English abstracts mandatory?
- 4.5 Has your journal ever been independently peer reviewed before and by whom?

**5. General:**

- 5.1 Is there any other information or do you have any comments that may be useful to the panel?
- 5.2 What do you regard as the main challenges that your journal and editorial team face?

# APPENDIX B:

## Requests to independent peer reviewers

### 1. Do the hard copies of the last 2–3 years of issues of the journal reflect:

- 1.1 high national/international disciplinary reputations/standing of the editor-in-chief/ associate editors/members of the editorial board?
- 1.2 a high/good (general/average) quality of the articles accepted/published?
- 1.3 a (contextually) adequate/good number of articles per year?
- 1.4 an (adequate/good) sample of the best work done in the country in the discipline/field?
- 1.5 a focus on local/regional kinds of materials/problems?
- 1.6 publication of articles by authors from across the country, and internationally?
- 1.7 useful additional scholarly features such as editorials, topical reviews, book reviews, scholarly correspondence?
- 1.8 appropriate (English-language) abstracts for all articles?
- 1.9 suitable publication of errata?
- 1.10 good citation practice?
- 1.11 good presentation, design, layout, style, copy-editing interventions, images are used in an ethical manner?
- 1.12 suitability as a general ongoing stimulus for local graduate students and young staff in the discipline concerned?
- 1.13 some kind of comparability with leading international journals in the field?

### 2. Please list your suggestions for an improvement programme for the journal.



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