



Committee on  
Scholarly Publishing  
in South Africa

# Report on Grouped Peer Review of Scholarly Journals in Education



science & innovation

Department:  
Science and Innovation  
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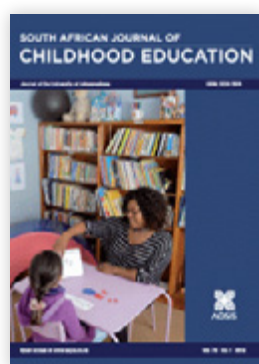
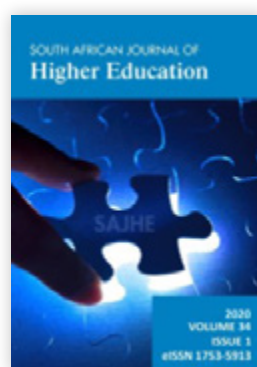
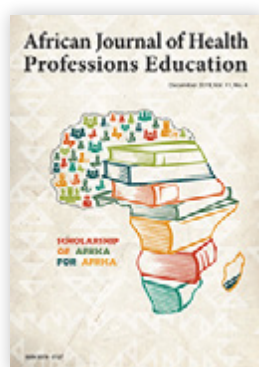
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The Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf) was inaugurated in May 1996. It was formed in response to the need for an Academy of Science consonant with the dawn of democracy in South Africa: activist in its mission of using science and scholarship 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, academic excellence and significant contributions to society.

The Parliament of South Africa passed the Academy of Science of South Africa Act (No 67 of 2001), which came into force on 15 May 2002. This made ASSAf the only academy of science in South Africa officially recognised by government and representing the country in the international community of science academies and elsewhere.







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# ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

<b>ACDE</b>	.....	African Council for Distance Education
<b>AGM</b>	.....	Annual General Meeting
<b>ASA</b>	.....	African Studies Abstracts Online
<b>AJHPE</b>	.....	African Journal of Health Professions Education
<b>AJOL</b>	.....	African Journals Online
<b>AJRMSTE</b>	.....	African Journal of Research in Mathematics, Science and Technology Education
<b>AOSIS</b>	.....	African Online Scientific Information Systems
<b>APCs</b>	.....	Article Processing Charges
<b>ASSAf</b>	.....	Academy of Science of South Africa
<b>CHE</b>	.....	Council on Higher Education
<b>COPE</b>	.....	Committee on Publication Ethics
<b>CPD</b>	.....	Continuous Professional Development
<b>CC</b>	.....	Creative Commons
<b>CoL</b>	.....	Commonwealth of Learning
<b>CSPISA</b>	.....	Committee on Scholarly Publishing in South Africa
<b>DEASA</b>	.....	Distance Education Association of Southern Africa
<b>DHET</b>	.....	Department of Higher Education and Training
<b>DOAJ</b>	.....	Directory of Open Access Journals
<b>DST</b>	.....	Department of Science and Technology
<b>DUTLD</b>	.....	Directorate: University Teaching and Learning Development
<b>DVC</b>	.....	Deputy Vice-Chancellor
<b>EAB</b>	.....	Editorial Advisory Board
<b>EASA</b>	.....	Education Association of South Africa
<b>EE</b>	.....	Environmental Education
<b>EEASA</b>	.....	Environmental Education Association of Southern Africa
<b>EBSCOhost</b>	.....	Elton B. Stephens Company (EBSCOhost) Research Databases
<b>ECD</b>	.....	Early Childhood Development
<b>ERA</b>	.....	Educational Research Abstracts Database
<b>Eric</b>	.....	Education Resources Information Center
<b>ESCI</b>	.....	Emerging Sources Citation Index

<b>ESD</b>	.....	Education for Sustainable Development
<b>EU</b>	.....	European Union
<b>FIPLV</b>	.....	Fédération Internationale des Professeurs de Langues Vivantes/ International Federation of Language Teacher Associations
<b>FPD</b>	.....	Foundation for Professional Development
<b>HEIs</b>	.....	Higher Education Institutions
<b>HELTASA</b>	.....	Higher Education Learning and Teaching Association of South African
<b>HEQC</b>	.....	Higher Education Quality Committee
<b>HESA</b>	.....	Higher Education South Africa (now USAf)
<b>HMPG</b>	.....	Health and Medical and Publishing Group
<b>IBSS</b>	.....	International Bibliography of the Social Sciences
<b>ICT</b>	.....	Information and Communications Technology
<b>IIE</b>	.....	Independent Institute of Education
<b>IJTL</b>	.....	Independent Journal of Teaching and Learning
<b>INASP</b>	.....	International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications
<b>IPP</b>	.....	Impact Per Paper
<b>ISAP</b>	.....	Index to South African Periodicals
<b>ISI</b>	.....	International Scientific Indexing
<b>JES</b>	.....	Journal of Educational Studies
<b>LINK</b>	.....	Learning Information Networking Knowledge Centre
<b>LITASA</b>	.....	Literacy Association of South Africa
<b>LLBA</b>	.....	Linguistic and Language Behaviour Abstracts
<b>MIT</b>	.....	Multi-, inter- and transdisciplinary
<b>NADEOSA</b>	.....	National Association of Distance Education Organisations of South Africa
<b>NISC</b>	.....	National Inquiry Services Centre
<b>NPO</b>	.....	Non-Profit Organisation
<b>NRF</b>	.....	National Research Foundation
<b>NSEF</b>	.....	National Scholarly Editors' Forum
<b>ODeL</b>	.....	Open, Distance and e-Learning
<b>OJS</b>	.....	Open Journal Systems
<b>PiE</b>	.....	Perspectives in Education
<b>PRP</b>	.....	Peer Review Panel
<b>SAALT</b>	.....	South African Association for Language Teaching



<b>SAARMSTE</b>	.....	Southern African Association of Research in Mathematics, Science and Technology Education
<b>SABINET</b>	.....	South African Bibliographic and Information Network
<b>SACHES</b>	.....	Southern African Comparative and History of Education Society
<b>SADC</b>	.....	Southern African Development Community
<b>SAERA</b>	.....	South African Education Research Association
<b>SAFRI</b>	.....	Sub-Saharan Africa Faimer Regional Institute
<b>SAJCE</b>	.....	South African Journal of Childhood Education
<b>SAJE</b>	.....	South African Journal of Education
<b>SAJEE</b>	.....	Southern African Journal of Environmental Education
<b>SAPSE</b>	.....	South African Post-Secondary Education (now DHET)
<b>SARAECE</b>	.....	South African Research Association for Early Childhood Education
<b>SARE</b>	.....	Southern African Review of Education
<b>SAS</b>	.....	South African Studies
<b>SciELO SA</b>	.....	Scientific Electronic Library Online South Africa
<b>SAJHE</b>	.....	South African Journal of Higher Education
<b>SJR</b>	.....	SCImago Journal Rank
<b>SNIP</b>	.....	Source Normalized Impact Per Paper
<b>SSCI</b>	.....	Social Science Citation Index
<b>SU</b>	.....	Stellenbosch University
<b>UCT</b>	.....	University of Cape Town
<b>UFS</b>	.....	University of the Free State
<b>UKZN</b>	.....	University of KwaZulu-Natal
<b>UNISA</b>	.....	University of South Africa
<b>UJ</b>	.....	University of Johannesburg
<b>UP</b>	.....	University of Pretoria
<b>UK</b>	.....	United Kingdom
<b>USA</b>	.....	United States of America
<b>USAf</b>	.....	Universities South Africa (previously HESA)
<b>WoS</b>	.....	Web of Science (Citation Index)



# Preface

## Committee on Scholarly Publishing in South Africa (CSPiSA)

### Discipline-grouped Peer-review Reports on South African Scholarly Journals

This is the tenth 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 (SciELO), South Africa. Only open access journals of a sufficiently high quality will be included in this fully indexed, free online, multi-national platform, now also directly featured on Clarivate Analytics' Web of Science 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 journals 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 a 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 centred on multi-perspective, discipline-based evaluation panels appointed by the Academy's Council on the recommendation of the Academy's 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.)

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 the ASSAf CSPiSA and the ASSAf Council.

As the latest in the series of reports, it is evident that much has been learned from the previous discipline groups and that, going forward, 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, Dr John Butler-Adam and members of the evaluation Panel, and particularly Prof Robin Crewe, who is responsible for overseeing ASSAf's peer review panels' activities, for his leadership in this quality-assurance process. I acknowledge the important role played by the staff of the Academy in supporting the process; Mrs Susan Veldsman, Director of the Scholarly Publishing Unit, and the Project Officers who worked under her direction, namely, Mrs Desré Stead and 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) congratulates ASSAf for yet another discipline-grouped peer review report. The report is aimed at improving the quality of the journals in our higher education system, thereby influencing the standard of research conducted in the respective fields. It is in the interests of our higher education system and society in general that the quality of research conducted in the system should be continuously improved.

The DHET published the *Research Outputs Policy* (2015) in the *Government Gazette* (Vol 597, No 38552). The policy, which is a revised version of the *Policy and Procedures for Measurement of Research Output of Public Higher Education Institutions* of 2003, came about after almost ten years of implementation of the previous version after a long drawn-out process of studying several publications and a consultative process within and outside the higher education sector.

Three additional journal indices were included over and above the initial three. Further changes include the rule that at least 75% of articles published in a journal must emanate from multiple institutions. Overall, though, the effected changes to the policy were aimed at improving the quality of publications from the higher education system. Based on evidence, the *Policy and Procedures for Measurement of Research Output of Public Higher Education Institutions* of 2003 had managed to increase the quantity of publications from the system. However, as part of analysis of data and patterns, the DHET observed that the quality of some publications was questionable. Thus, the policy encourages all South African journals to aim for international standards in order to apply for inclusion in accredited international lists or indices. A number of studies suggest that predatory journals come about partly because of pressure to publish and to accrue maximum subsidy. As such, the policy reminds institutions and academics of the importance of research integrity, ethics and the essence of knowledge dissemination rather than maximum benefits accompanying publications.

The DHET continues to explore various means of improving the quality of publications and to deal with the scourge of predatory journals. We would like universities to pay serious attention to improving the quality of publications using the known measures employed internationally such as peer review and the accepted norms of scholarship. If need be and as the *Research Outputs Policy* indicates, the DHET will even consider introducing penalties to non-complying institutions. The effort towards improvement of quality in our higher education system is everyone's responsibility.

**Mr Mahlubi Mabizela and Ms Nolusindiso Kayi**

University Education Policy

Department of Higher Education and Training

# 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 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 over 260 of the country's journals which are accredited by the DHET:

**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.**

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## 1.2 Peer Review Panels (PRPs)

The quality assurance system for journals is conducted 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 Academy's Council. Their draft reports are sent to relevant stakeholders for comment and input, before finalisation by the PRP concerned, and ultimate consideration sequentially by the CSPiSA and 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 the improvement of quality of such work where possible.

## 1.3 Initial Criteria

A number of criteria were explored in the part of the ASSAf report <http://research.assaf.org.za/handle/20.500.11911/49> (Chapter 4) that 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 National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion 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/international spread, plus quality (as per 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 he/she 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/articles, editorial comment, etc.
- Number and professional stature/experience of editorial board members, plus selection processes, turnover, and nature of involvement in handling of manuscripts or in other functions. If international members serve on the board (desirable), whether they are a mix from developed and developing countries.
- Existence and nature of editorial policy/guidelines, plus how often these are revised/updated; conflict-of-interest policy (e.g. how manuscripts are assessed when submitted by an editor or board member as author/co-author).
- Errata published – how many per year?
- Value-adding features, such as editorials, news and views pieces, correspondence on papers, reviews, policy/topical fora, etc. – how many, and how are they generated? What proportion are they of the total pages in journal issues?
- Any peer-review process of the journal already in place (e.g. by 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 *quid pro quos*.
- 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, what are the website/portal and access possibilities for users? What 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 URLs of portals where the journal issues are available open access. If not e-published, whether this is being considered, and how.
- Total income and expenditure per annum.
- Distribution to international destinations.
- Indexed in Web of Science (WoS) and/or International Bibliography of Social Sciences (IBSS), or any other international database? If indexed, for how long and how continuously?
- Offers to purchase from multi-national publishers.
- Copyright arrangements.

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### 1.3.3 Bibliometric Assessments

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



## 1.4 Process Guidelines for Setting up the 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 Academy Council. Their draft reports are sent to relevant stakeholders for comment and relevant input, before finalisation by the PRP concerned, and final consideration sequentially by the CSPiSA and the ASSAf Council.

### 1.4.2 Role of the Scholarly Publishing Unit (SPU)

An ASSAf project officer of the SPU is assigned to support each panel chair but reports to the Director of the SPU 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 Setting up Panels

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

### 1.4.4 Selecting Panel Members

- The appointment process of 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 – 13 names, of which the last 4 – 5 shall be considered to be potential alternates to the first seven – eight.
- A typical PRP consists of six – eight members.
- Each name must be accompanied by critical personal and career details, as well as by a brief motivation, to enable the CSPiSA, and later the ASSAf Council, to apply its mind to the question of constituting the best possible, 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 where the appointments are to be made.
- All comments received will be 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 in question.

### 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 'wise people' who are steeped 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 that all PRP members 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 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 ASSAf's Membership, academic institutions, science councils and consultants.

### 1.4.6 Conflict of Interest

- It will be necessary to take care to avoid real or perceived conflicts.
- Committee expertise, balance and conflicts of interest are discussed at the first meeting (and may again be discussed at any later meeting) of the PRPs, and recommendations to resolve problematic issues can be brought through the SPU (Secretariat) to the ASSAf Council 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 conflicts of interest during the quality review process.

### 1.4.7 Organising the Panels

The organisation of the panel is conducted by its chair, 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/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.
- Establishing panel meeting dates, assigning tasks, and collating materials.
- Preparing and distributing pre-meeting and post-meeting materials (draft version 1 reports, i.e. 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 panellists and editors, and preparation and processing of final reports.
- Evaluation of panel processes.

## Selection of Peer Reviewers (See above)

- 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 the ASSAf Membership in general will be given an opportunity to volunteer through a specific written call.
- Other candidates will be sought from lists of the NRF and 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 to hard or e-copies of the journals under review by independent experts.
- The core questions to be answered in each case must be provided to peer reviewers, who should be asked to ensure that these questions are all addressed in their reviews.

### 1.4.9 Panel Meetings and Procedures

#### 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; 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 out by email to all panellists at least two weeks prior to the panel meeting.
- Conveners of sub-sets of journals should be alerted at this time to their role at the forthcoming panel meeting – to present the journals in the set, and to make recommendations for discussion and elaboration. If unable to attend, they 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 if logistically impossible, this can be dispensed with.
- 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.
- Panellists should be informed at the same time 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.
- The responsible project officer should ensure that at least two peer reviews, and preferably three, are in hand for each title by the time of the initial send-out of materials, or, by default, by the date of the meeting, for tabling on the day.

## Meeting

- Journal titles should be considered in sub-sets.
- 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/editor to join the SciELO South Africa platform if the journal is open access and meets the required criteria on frequency of publication and annual number of original peer-reviewed articles.
  - b. A recommendation to the DHET on whether the journal should be included/retained in the list of South African journals whose research articles are considered to be valid research outputs.
  - c. If not recommended, suggestions for improvement that would make it possible to be included under (a) and/or (b).
  - d. Suggestions for improvement or enhanced function in general.

### 1.4.10 Post-meeting Procedures and Panel Reports

- When producing a version 2 report, the three paragraphs in each item have to 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 for comment and ratification to all panellists (including those who were not able to attend the meeting) and replies 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 editor's comment that might materially change the recommendations in the record and submit these to the panel for consideration and decision.
- The finally agreed-upon record should be submitted to the CSPiSA for approval before its submission to the ASSAf Council and public release.



# Special Considerations Concerning South African Education Journals

## Context of Education and Education discipline/research and publication

Both the school and post-school systems of education in South Africa (and elsewhere in the world) face challenges that offer rich opportunities for research. With the exception of the privileged parts of the private systems, both are underfunded. Both have faced, and continue to face, turbulence and violence, and both have to deal with the realities of high drop-out and low success rates and related challenges. The 17 South African based journals that form the 'education cluster' (out of over 300 South African journals) provide opportunities for researchers in the field to publish their findings across a wide range of research disciplines. Some of these journals also have to bear the broad (but not necessarily fair) challenge of the low esteem for research in education that is prevalent in academia. It is in this complex context that the journals in this cluster operate – and in which this review has been conducted.

Of the 17 journals, eight are 'specialist' journals, such as the *Southern African Journal of Environmental Education* or the *South African Journal of Childhood Education*, while the remaining nine are more general in nature – for example, the *Journal of Education*, the *South African Journal of Education*, and the *Journal of Educational Studies*.

The ASSAf–DHET review of the journals in this round focused on issues of the journals published in the period 2015 – 2017 with some information updated for 2018. The work was undertaken by three members of the ASSAf staff, six expert panel members and 53 expert scholars. Of the 17 journals, three were recommended for removal from the DHET list and four were 'conditionally' accepted for the DHET list. As for recommendations for inclusion in SciELO SA, five of the journals are already on the platform, three were recommended, three were invited to join subject to the journals implementing an open access model and six were not recommended for inclusion in the SciELO SA platform.

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## Review Concerns and Issues

A challenge faced by a number of the journals reviewed is the appointment of editors-in-chief and the duration of their terms of office. Many were appointed without the position being advertised or have indefinite terms, and some were appointed 'in house' by universities. In one or two rare instances, however, the fields covered by journals are small in terms of academic numbers and finding the right individuals to undertake senior editorial work can be difficult. Managers of journals should aim for transparent, competitive appointments and defined terms of office for senior editorial staff. These principles would necessarily also apply to editorial and advisory boards in addition to which greater institutional diversity is valued. It was also noted that in some (rare) instances, editors continue to publish in their own journals – which is not best practice.

A surprising number of journals had deficient editorial policies or policies that were not made public (on websites, for example). On the other hand, a number of the journals reviewed are to be commended on their comprehensive and publicly stated editorial policies.

Limited, or a lack of, international diversity was noted in a number of areas: in the case of board members, content, reviewers and readership. A previous Chapter<sup>1</sup> of this nature (for another disciplinary area), noted that:

*There also seems to be a dialectical relation between the desire for greater international visibility and participation in the international conversations and a focus on a useful niche for a journal. The danger is of course that a niche can be exclusive and restrictive, which would contradict the ideals of openness and inclusivity in journal publishing. Focusing on a clearly defined niche helps to differentiate a journal from others and to define its particular contribution.*

## **This observation applies equally and appropriately in the case of Education journals.**

Finally, three loosely related matters were common concerns: the absence of 'additional' or 'enriching' material (Editorials, Commentaries, Book Reviews, News and Views items); considerable variation in the quality of published articles (even within journals); and the need to develop or strengthen ways of encouraging and supporting young scholars and novice researchers to read local journals and publish in them.

While eight specialist journals worked specifically in their fields, the aims of the nine 'general' journals revealed a largely consistent common core. Examples drawn from the general-purpose journals include, for example:

**Journal 1** "publishes scholarly articles on current educational issues and in associated disciplines such as sociology, psychology and economics. It encourages debate on theory, policy and practice on a wide range of topics that represent a variety of disciplines..."

**Journal 2** "an interdisciplinary publication which carries original research and writing on education. The focus of the journal is on all levels, stages and processes of education (e.g. formal, informal, non-formal, early childhood, lifelong, schooling, adult education, vocational education and training, higher education). The journal aims to publish articles which show high levels of theoretical insight and / or analytical empirical work..."

**Journal 3:** "publishes articles on current educational issues. It encourages debate, both theoretical and practical, on a wide range of educational topics that represent a variety of interdisciplinary, cross-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary interests."

## **In Twelve Years Later<sup>2</sup> the ASSAf Report on Scholarly Publishing noted:**

*The country clearly has too many journal titles relative to the size of its scholarly base (at about 300 titles, each with between five and 100 articles per annum), the ratio of active researchers (about 24 000) to journal titles is in the region of 1:80. Many of the review panels have recommended mergers between journals covering the same ground – none has occurred.*

1 Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf). 2018. Report on Grouped Peer Review of Scholarly Journals in Humanities II: Visual and Performing Arts. Pretoria: ASSAf. p 16.

2 ASSAf. 2019. Twelve Years Later: Second ASSAf Report on Research Publishing in and from South Africa. ASSAf: Pretoria. p 128.

There is, then, a need for a consideration of the relationships between the general journals and ways in which they might cooperate effectively and economically with one another.

While reviewing this cohort of journals, the panel encountered a number of instances where its recommendations in relation to removal from the DHET list conflicts with the inclusion of the journals in other recognised lists. This source of conflict between recognised lists needs to be resolved with the DHET in the interest of clarity for authors and journals.

As ASSAf and the NRF both support Open Access (and ASSAf is also host to SciELO SA) it is worth noting the Open Access status of Education Journals. Of the 17, five are already on the SciELO Platform, three have been recommended to join, a further three to join conditionally (usually once they become Open Access journals), and six have not been recommended (primarily due to serious problems which the editors/editorial boards have to address).

Finally, the review process revealed a variety of page and/or article charges, ranging from close to zero to over R3000 per article. Clearly, many factors account for charges – support from universities or scholarly societies, modes and costs of production, and levels of subscription fees (if any) – amongst others. But as this is also a matter of concern across the journal publishing spectrum, it is an issue that would best be considered by the National Scholarly Editors' Forum (NSEF).

Note: Panel members who are directly involved with the journals being reviewed did not contribute to the reporting or the recommendations for those particular journals.



# Panel Members

- i. **Dr John Butler-Adam, Higher Education and Editorial Consultant; former Editor-in-Chief, South African Journal of Science.**
- ii. **Prof Rajendra Chetty, Professor: Department of Language Education, University of the Western Cape.**
- iii. **Prof Vitallis Chikoko, Professor: Educational Leadership and Management, University of KwaZulu-Natal.**
- iv. **Dr Angela James, Academic Leader: Community Engagement; Senior Lecturer: Science Education; University of KwaZulu-Natal.**
- v. **Prof Ina Joubert, Executive Academic Director: South African National Tutor Services (SANTS), Private Higher Education Institution; former Head: Department of Early Childhood Education, University of Pretoria.**
- vi. **Prof Jace Pillay, Professor: Faculty of Education, University of Johannesburg / South African Research Chair: Education and Care in Childhood.**
- vii. **Prof Merridy Strydom-Wilson, Researcher: Neil Butcher and Associates; former Associate Professor: Centre for Research on Higher Education and Development (CRHED), University of the Free State.**

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Director, Scholarly Publishing Unit: Mrs Susan Veldsman

Project Officer, Scholarly Publishing Unit: Mrs Desré Stead

Project Administrator, Scholarly Publishing Unit: Ms Mmaphuthi Mashiachidi



# Consensus Reviews of Journals in the Group

## 4.1 Education General

### 4.1.1 Education as Change

#### Focus and scope

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

*Education as Change* is an accredited, peer reviewed scholarly journal that publishes original articles reflecting critically on issues of equality in education and on the ways in which educational practices contribute to transformation in non-formal, formal and informal contexts. Critique, mainly understood in the tradition of critical pedagogies, is a constructive process which contributes towards a better world.

All sectors of education are covered in the journal. These include primary, secondary and tertiary education, adult education, worker education, educational policy and teacher education. The articles may draw on any rigorous research methodology, as well as transdisciplinary approaches.

The journal encourages contributions from and about marginalised communities and from different knowledge traditions. While specialised kinds of research are encouraged, authors are also expected to write for a broader audience of educational researchers and practitioners without losing conceptual and theoretical depth and rigour.

The journal has been accessed from 76 countries.

#### Editing functions

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

**Consensus review:** Concerns were raised about the lack of institutional diversity on the editorial team, especially regarding four members being located at the University of Cape Town (UCT). Furthermore, the editorial team is not well-represented in terms of expertise across the range of educational areas, more especially in higher education. The advisory board seems to be dominated by members from the United States of America (USA). On a positive note the editors have national and international reputations and good publication records. Associate editors publishing in their own journals is not good practice and this should be addressed.

#### Questionnaire

*(Editorial process-related criteria)*

*Education as Change* was established in 1997. It was published three times per annum before continuous publication was introduced.

It is available online at: <https://upjournals.co.za/index.php/EAC/index> and [www.educationaschange.co.za](http://www.educationaschange.co.za).

Between the period 01 Jan 2018 and 21 Feb 2018 there were 735 abstract views and 324 downloads. Users from 76 different countries accessed the journal; of these, 13 were African countries. Issues are pre-scheduled to appear on given dates. The journal has, however, experienced problems with publishing deadlines but plans to address these with a new publishing model. There were no significant interruptions to publication. From 2019 the journal is published continuously.

There is one volume per year without separate issues. This allows for a quicker throughput of articles that are being published. Over the three-year review period, 84 peer-reviewed full articles were published. Five book reviews and two 'comments' were published over the same period. Over a period of two years (2016 to 2017) 257 full articles were received. A hundred and thirty-three manuscripts were rejected without peer review and 40 after peer review – a rejection rate of 67% for that period. Approximately 40% of the peer-reviewed articles published had at least one author with a non-South African address.

Two peer reviewers are usually approached to review each manuscript. The selection is done on the basis of reviewer expertise in the particular field and availability. A special effort is made to use non-South African reviewers. Peer review is conducted in a 'double-blind' basis. Authors are expected to provide detailed reports on the ways they have responded to reviewers' comments. The reports and the changes are evaluated by the editorial team and usually returned to the reviewers for further evaluation and comments. Articles are often returned more than two times to authors for further changes. The editorial board facilitates this process. Occasionally peer reviewers receive follow-up information. Reviewer performance is assessed, and information is captured in a database. In 2016, 134 peer reviewers were used, of whom 53 listed non-South African addresses. Peer review reports were accessibly retained. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication is eight months.

The journal's editor has been in this position since 2013. The appointment was made by the editorial board for a period of five years. The editorial board manages peer review and provides advice on editorial policies and practices. The current members of the editorial board were first appointed in 2013 and new members were appointed in 2017. The number of members in the management committee was reduced to make it more effective. The number of associate editors was increased in order to expand the fields of expertise. The management committee appoints the editors, receives editorial reports, manages the finances and sets the focus and purpose of the journal. The current members of the editorial advisory board were appointed in 2013 and 2014. The appointments were not competitive. Members are selected by the management committee on the basis of their expertise and suitability in relation to the focus of the journal. Appointments are made for a five-year period and members are from South Africa and outside the country. The advisory board is often approached for advice on particular manuscripts and on the general focus of the journal.

The journal's policies are available on the journal's website: <https://upjournals.co.za/index.php/EAC/about>. There is no conflict-of-interest policy. The editorial guidelines are aligned with ASSAf's Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing and Peer Review. The journal publishes errata but there is no policy in place.

Value-adding features such as critical editorials, critical topical reviews, analytical book reviews, and comments are published. The percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material is approximately 90%.

## Content

*(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in South Africa, enrichment features)*

**Consensus review:** The articles published in the journal are of good quality and reflective of the focus and scope of the journal. The articles are contextually relevant and zoom in to a variety of critical concerns about broader political, social and economic issues which affect education in South Africa. Even though the journal gives a good account of local educational concerns it also has a very impressive range of educational issues from a variety of countries across the globe. Concerns were raised about higher and technology education not being well-represented in the journal.

The journal reflects a good number of articles per annum with three issues being published (including one themed issue). There is good geographical presence of contributors from across South Africa. The journal has good representation of scholarly features such as editorials, topical reviews and book reviews.

## Essential technical features

*(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)*

**Consensus review:** The articles have proper English-language abstracts. The reviewers did not come across any errata in the volumes that were reviewed. There was clear evidence of the articles being well-presented and of good design, layout, style, and ethical images being used. The citation practice of the journal was noted as being good and consistent. There is a need for improvement in copy editing of articles published in the journal.

## Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

**Consensus review:** The journal reflects suitability as a general ongoing stimulus for local graduate students and young academics in the discipline concerned. The journal is a useful resource for students in the discipline.

The quality of this journal is comparable with leading international journals, but the journal still needs some improvement, especially in attracting experienced scholars.

## Business aspects

*(Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)*

The University of Johannesburg (UJ) owns the journal and it is published by UNISA Press. The journal has been published online since 2016. Production is done by UNISA Press. No advertising is carried in the journal. Sponsorship for 2017 was received from the Foundation for Human Rights. There are no paying subscribers. Article Processing Charges were levied from March 2018 and fees were set at R6500. Open Journal Systems (OJS) is used to manage the journal. The journal is available on an open access basis on its own website and is also available via SciELO SA. There has been some interest, but no firm offers to purchase the journal. The journal has a Creative Commons (CC) BY copyright license. There is a licensing agreement with authors.

The journal is indexed on the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), Google Scholar, Norwegian list, Scopus, Social Science Citation Index (SSCI), and WoS Citation Index. The impact factor on Scopus CiteScore in 2016 was 0.64 and Incites in 2016 was 0.565. Altmetric indicators are determined for the journal.

There are mandatory 'front details' for papers and English abstracts. The journal has not been independently peer reviewed before.

## Suggested improvements

**Consensus review:** The journal should consider greater diversity on the editorial board. Most of the board members are from the UCT and this should be addressed.

A suggestion was that the journal employ a copy editor and require submissions to be professionally language edited.

The journal needs to position itself to fill a gap. All academics are under great pressure to publish internationally, so unless a local journal creates a very specific need for authors to publish there, all the good work is going to be published outside the country.

The journal could consider more innovative types of writing such as opinion pieces, dialogues, etc.

Although the journal follows ASSAf's Code of Best Practice, the journal should work on developing policies for conflict-of-interest and *errata* and these should be published on the journal's website.

## 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 seriously consider the recommendation of addressing the institutional diversity of the editorial board and the management committee.**

## 4.1.2 Independent Journal of Teaching and Learning

### Focus and scope

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

The *Independent Journal of Teaching and Learning* (IJTL) is an education-focused journal, published twice a year, online and open access, by the Independent Institute of Education (IIE). The aim of the journal is to make a difference to educators at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels, by providing a scholarly forum for academics and education practitioners to share research on teaching and learning.

The *IJTL* publishes original contributions of interest to researchers and practitioners in the field of education. It is intended to be a resource for education practitioners and researchers as it aims to provide useful, research-based resources and to provide a scholarly forum for academics and education practitioners to share in research on educational practices and teaching and learning at various levels.

The *IJTL* adds value to the research community and more specifically those in the field of education, as well as lecturers and teachers in various disciplines, by providing a focused medium for academic writing in the field of education generally, but with an emphasis on teaching and learning. The *IJTL* accepts articles from and about the primary, secondary and tertiary levels, thus providing output across the education sector to multiple practitioners. The journal contributes various articles that have an emphasis on application and can thus be used as best practice or as a stimulus for developing further innovative teaching and learning methods.

The primary target audiences of the *IJTL* are local scholars and educators at primary, secondary and tertiary levels; subject matter experts in fields/disciplines outside of education who are lecturing students and have a very real interest in researching how, via teaching and learning mechanisms and tools, they can improve on, or solve problems within their specific discipline; international scholars; and, scholars from Africa. The journal is read in 19 African countries.



## Editing functions

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

**Consensus review:** The journal reflects high national/international disciplinary reputations/standing of the editor-in-chief, associate editors and members of the editorial board. The management team is successful in administering the journal's editing functions. However, appointments are not made competitively.

[Note: Since the review was completed, the editorial board has been expanded to include more international scholars and is more representative.]

## Questionnaire

*(Editorial process-related criteria)*

The journal was established and first published in 2006. The frequency of publication is biannual. The *IJTL* is open access and available online: <https://ijtl.iie.ac.za/>. From 2013 to 2017 there were 10 570 visits, and 16 165 downloads. Users are from 76 countries worldwide. Of the total, 19 countries are on the African continent.

The journal is pre-scheduled to appear on given dates. There have been no significant interruptions since the journal was established. Thirty-two full articles have been published in the last three years (2015 = eight; 2016 = eight; 2017 = 16). The number of manuscripts received over the same period totalled 92. Five manuscripts were rejected without peer review and 25 rejected after peer review. [This total includes the titles that were awaiting revision and return in late 2017, but most were new submissions received in late 2017 to be considered and reviewed for 2018.] Three percent of the peer-reviewed papers had at least one author with a non-South African address.

Three to five reviewers are usually approached to review each submitted manuscript. There are four standard mechanisms in place for selecting reviewers: database of reviewers; existing reviewers are asked for recommendations of experts in the field; senior academics at the IIE make recommendations of external academics; and online searches are conducted to seek academics in South Africa, Africa and internationally. A double-blind peer review process is used. Implementation of reviewer critique and article improvement is robust and rigorous. If a reviewer requests the outcome, then it is provided without revealing the names of the other reviewer/s. Reviewer performance is assessed and information is captured in a database. In 2017, 53 peer reviewers were used; 25 to 35 reviewers are generally used per issue. The proportion of these who had non-South African addresses in 2016 was 19% (6 reviewers) and 2017 was 17% (9 reviewers). Peer review reports were accessibly retained in the journal's records.

The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its online publication is 12 months.

The editor has held the position since the inception of the journal. It was not a competitive appointment. The contract is reviewed and renewed every two years. However, continuity is very important. The editorial board members handle peer review as and when needed. Some members advise on editorial policies and practices. The members of editorial board have been in office since the inception of the *IJTL* in 2006. The appointment of members was not competitive.

As of 2017, the term of office for membership of the editorial board is three years and members can serve a maximum of two sequential terms of office and must then retire from office for at least one full calendar year before making themselves available for re-election. Members are appointed from both inside and outside country. They provide specific topical expertise. The journal does not have a separate advisory board.

In terms of policies, the journal does provide editorial guidelines and there is a conflict-of-interest policy. The journal's guidelines have been aligned with ASSAf's *Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing, Editing and Peer Review*. Errata are published if necessary. The policy is to publish any errata that are brought to the editors' attention post publishing.

[Since the review was completed, the editorial policy was updated to be clear on ethical and malpractice issues such as conflict of interest.]

A topical editorial is published for each edition. Additional features include a Practitioners' Corner and Doctoral Corner (that features research by doctoral students).

The percentage of pages that represent peer-reviewed original material is 86%.

## Content

*(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in South Africa, enrichment features)*

**Consensus review:** The quality of the articles published in the journal range from good to outstanding. The journal caters for a diverse audience and 'bridges the gap' between theory and practice. The accepted articles are contextually good but too much emphasis is placed on South African publications.

Publications should be extended to the African continent and other parts of the globe. The journal should be exposed to well-known academics from a diverse range of education fields.

Looking into the history of the journal, it has been constant in producing a single issue per year, and from 2017 the *IJTL* has produced two issues per annum which is a signal of growth. The number of articles is adequate.

The additional feature of the Doctoral Corner is a good innovation that can support the dissemination of work of developing academics.

## Essential technical features

*(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)*

**Consensus review:** The articles have proper English-language abstracts and are of high quality. There was a small percentage of errors in the citations, within the publications of 2015 to 2016 and these were addressed in the 2017 issues otherwise the citation practice of the journal was noted as being good. The layout and style are excellent. There was clear evidence of the articles having good presentation, design, copy-editing interventions and images were used in an ethical manner.

## Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

**Consensus review:** This journal is a suitable and crucial research journal and is a stimulus for local students at post graduate level and young researchers in the field of Education. The Doctoral Corner feature is a great contributor to giving doctoral students work visibility and for encouraging doctoral students to publish their work.

The quality of this journal is comparable to leading international journals, but it still needs some time to make an impact on a larger audience. Articles that emerge from collaborative research projects, especially with international scholars, will enhance the impact of the journal.

## Business aspects

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

The IIE own and publish the journal. When the journal was in print (2006-2016) 400 copies of each issue were produced. As of 2017, the *IJTL* has appeared fully online. Production is outsourced to Digi-Litho and the IIE does the distribution. No advertising is carried and the IIE carries the full costs of producing the journal. There are no paying subscribers as the journal is distributed free of charge. No article-processing or page fees are charged. The journal uses an online journal management system (Online Journal Systems) to manage workflow. Only the final version of the articles and the journal itself are uploaded onto the web. The *IJTL* is an open access journal. The journal has not received any offers to purchase from multi-national publishers.

The journal does have copyright guidelines and licensing agreements with authors. The *IJTL* is available on the African Journal Archive; EBSCOhost, Google Scholar; IIE Institutional Repository; ISSUU and the South African Bibliographic and Information Network (Sabinet) ePublications. It is not indexed on any international indices. Impact factor (IF) is calculated according to citations on Google Scholar, but because of questionable accuracy of IF and most IF metrics, the journal does its own performance monitoring and is considering various steps to increase IF. Altmetric indicators have been determined for the journal. 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 needs to become a 'household' name at institutions at all levels, as per the focus of the journal. It is highly recommended that the journal increases the number of international publications as well as the number of articles per annum to grow its impact. It should maintain the production of two issues per annum.

It is recommended that the journal work on improving its impact factor, for example by including regular editorials in issues even though these do not attract subsidies.

Articles that project collaborative research between international and national education systems should be included.

The appointment of editor and editorial boards should be a competitive process, for example it could include the advertisement of the post.

The journal is commended for its feature, Doctoral Corner, which is supportive of emerging scholars.

### 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/editorial board should seriously consider the recommendation of addressing the competitive appointment of the editorship.**
- iv. **In addition, the panel believes that increasing the number of articles published each year will add value to the impact of the journal.**

### 4.1.3 Journal of Education

#### Focus and scope

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

The *Journal of Education* is an interdisciplinary publication which carries original research and writing on education. The focus of the journal is on all levels, stages and processes of education (e.g. formal, informal, non-formal, early childhood, lifelong, schooling, adult education, vocational education and training, higher education). The journal aims to publish articles which show high levels of theoretical insight and /or analytical empirical work and gives preference to articles that demonstrate engagement on the key issues that face South African education. Issues internal to education rather than external forces impacting on education are given preference. While it is intended that the journal will remain academic in nature, the readers are considered to be educational generalists and articles which are of interest to such readers will receive preference. The *Journal of Education* is the periodical of the South African Education Research Association (SAERA).

It firstly offers publishing opportunities for educational scholars who combine theory and practice in order to deal with key issues in South African education. It secondly encourages debate, as can be seen by the editorials and the debates inside the journal over key issues. Thirdly, it offers academics a chance to articulate their research findings in a way that speaks to a broader academic community.

The primary target audience is predominantly local scholars and the members of the Association.

#### Editing functions

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

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**Consensus review:** The current editor-in-chief has held the position for two years. Of the 12 members of the advisory board, six are from institutions outside South Africa (with one member from Botswana). The editorial committee is almost exclusively made up of academics in the University of KwaZulu-Natal and the Durban University of Technology. This is concerning as it raises a conflict-of-interest risk and it seems that the journal does not have a policy regarding this. In addition, the process of election of editorial board members does not follow an advertisement route.

Concerns were raised about the management of the journal still functioning as a university-driven journal although it is now aligned to SAERA.

#### Questionnaire

*(Editorial process-related criteria)*

The journal was established in 1969 as largely an 'in-house' publication of the University of Natal Department of Education. It was recognised by South African Post-Secondary Education (SAPSE now DHET) in 1997. The *Journal of Education* was the official journal of the Kenton Education Association, which was dissolved in 2014. It was then established as the official journal of SAERA, although still largely within the ambit of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). The publication frequency is between two to four issues per year.

The journal is available online: <http://journals.ukzn.ac.za/index.php/joe/index>.



Visit and download records were not available at the time of the review. The journal is accessed by readers from a number of countries: Botswana, France, Germany, Italy, Mozambique, United Kingdom (UK), United States of America (USA), and Zimbabwe. Other countries from the African continent that access the journal are Namibia, Nigeria, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe.

Since 2017, issues have been pre-scheduled to appear in June and December each year, and the SAERA conference issue is published in October each year. Since 2002, there have been at least two issues per year, except for 2014. The reason for this is that the education research landscape shifted with the launch of the new SAERA in January 2013.

During the last three years, 35 full articles, one review article, one book review, and six conference papers have been published. The number of manuscripts received over the same period totalled 198 full articles. The number of manuscripts rejected without peer review was 137 (70%). Three papers were rejected after peer review. The proportion of peer-reviewed papers that had at least one author with a non-South African address totalled 97 articles.

Three peer reviewers are usually approached to review each submitted manuscript. The editorial committee suggests a set of reviewers who have expertise in the topic of the article. On the new OJS system, all authors who submit manuscripts are also registered as reviewers which broadens the base of reviewers. Peer review is conducted in a 'blind way'. The process of reviewer critique is taken very seriously by the editor. The feedback from reviewers is well-considered, the editor makes a judgement call based on reading the paper and the reviews and recommends which criticisms should be paid attention to. Papers that need extensive reworking, are sent back to the reviewer. The changes have to be carefully listed by the author and reasons given for changes not implemented. Again, this is a process to which the editor pays attention, and on which judgement calls are made. Peer reviewers do not receive follow-up information. Reviewer performance is not assessed but the editor reads all reviews and makes assessments based on these. However, the OJS system does have the capacity for the editor to rate reviewers. The number of peer reviewers used in one of the last three years totalled 37. At least two peer reviewers had non-South African addresses. Peer review reports are accessibly retained in the journal's records. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication online is 14 months.

The previous editor held the position from 2005 to 2016. In 2017 a new editor was appointed. The appointment process was competitive, but the position was not advertised. This is now a yearly appointment subject to annual review, but there has historically not been a limit placed on the renewal of appointments.

The editorial committee handles peer review and advises on editorial policies and practices. The editorial committee's term of office has varied over the long history of the journal, but the appointments are reviewed each year. The editorial committee makes decisions as to whether a submission will go forward to review or not and makes recommendations for suitable reviewers. The advisory board has been in place for a number of years and was reviewed in 2017. This board will be in place for the next five years. The appointments were not competitive but are reviewed every year (historically there has been no limit). The journal is in the process of implementing a five-year limit.

Currently the advisory board comprises 12 academics, of whom seven are international.

The journal's editorial policy is available online at: <https://journals.ukzn.ac.za/index.php/joe/Authorguidelines>.

There is no conflict-of-interest policy. Most of the journal's editorial guidelines are aligned to ASSAf's *Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing and Peer Review*. A section on retractions and errata is on the website: <https://journals.ukzn.ac.za/index.php/joe/about>

The following value-added features are included in the journal: critical editorials, 'news and views' analyses of articles being published, critical topical reviews, analytical book reviews, and correspondence on published articles.

Book reviews and editorials are not peer-reviewed. However, the remainder of each volume represents peer-reviewed original material.

## Content

*(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in South Africa, enrichment features)*

**Consensus review:** The articles published in the journal are of good quality and are reflective of the focus of the journal, but more clarity needs to be provided on the scope of the journal. The articles are contextually relevant and very interdisciplinary but mainly qualitative in nature. The journal needs to clarify what it means by interdisciplinary. Most articles published in the journal are of local value. Some space should be created for articles from other parts of Africa and internationally. There is a good range of papers across the different phases and areas of education. The numbering (or sequencing) of the issue (volume) numbers is confusing on the website: Vol. 68, 69, 67. But the journal also seems to publish multiple volumes per year instead of issue numbers. It is suggested that the number of issues be stabilised. Editorials and book reviews are included but do not dominate or make a substantial contribution.

## Essential technical features

*(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)*

**Consensus review:** The articles have proper English-language abstracts. *Errata* were not observed in the volumes under review. There was clear evidence of the articles having good presentation, design, layout, style, copy-editing interventions and images were used ethically.

## Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

**Consensus review:** The journal reflects suitability as a general ongoing stimulus for local graduate students/young staff in the discipline concerned.

The quality of this journal is currently not comparable with leading international journals mainly because of its local focus, and this probably affects its impact factor.

## Business aspects

*(Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)*

The journal is owned and published by SAERA and UKZN. In 2016, 450 print copies were produced. Layout and production of proofs were done in-house until 2017 (it is now outsourced). When copies were printed, the UKZN Multicopy office produced the hard copies. Distribution was undertaken by the administrator when the journal was printed. There is a part time journal administrator, who assists the editor by corresponding with reviewers, uploading new reviewers' details onto OJS, liaising with the copy editor/ layout person. There is no advertising in the journal. The journal is sponsored

by SAERA in that R100 of the membership fee of each SAERA member is allocated to the running of the journal. There is no subscription fee. In 2019, the article-processing charges were R4 500 per article. Since October 2017, the *Journal of Education* has been hosted on the OJS platform at UKZN. From 2018, all articles have been submitted online. The journal is an open access publication.

There have been no offers to purchase the journal. The *Journal of Education* makes scholarly articles available under the CC Attribution-Non Commercial-No Derivatives 4.0 International License. Authors retain copyright of their work, with first non-exclusive publication rights granted to the journal. Authors agree that any subsequent publication of the article will credit the journal as the site of first publication.

The journal has been included on the SciELO SA platform since December 2017. There are no impact factors or Altmetrics as yet. There are mandatory 'front details' for papers and English abstracts. This is the journal's first independent peer review.

### Suggested improvements

**Consensus review:** The panel recommends that the journal address the concerns that the editorial committee is made up of mostly members from the UKZN and that a conflict-of-interest policy does not exist. A conflict-of-interest policy should be made available and it should state that the journal aims to be more diverse in terms of institutions or international links. The journal needs to get its management in order especially in terms of its policies. There is an impression that the editor makes all the decisions and this needs to be addressed.

The advisory board could draw on more expertise from the African continent and the journal could attract more articles by international scholars.

Appointment of editorial team and board members should follow a competitive process.

The scope of the journal should be clarified, and the journal needs to define what it means by interdisciplinary.

The planned (and inevitable) linking of the journal with international bibliometric indices will help increase the readership and hopefully contributors to the journal.

Guidelines should be developed for managing errata and the journal's guidelines should be aligned with the ASSAf's *Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing, Editing and Peer Review*.

### Panel's consensus view

- i. **The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET accredited list on condition that the suggested improvements are implemented by the end of 2021.**
- ii. **The journal is already on the SciELO SA platform which is recognised/accredited by the DHET. If the journal does not attend to the suggested improvements, its retention on the SciELO SA platform would be reconsidered.**
- iii. **The editor should seriously consider improving the journal's management and develop policies which will clearly state who should serve on the editorial committee and board.**

## 4.1.4 Journal of Educational Studies

### Focus and scope

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

The *Journal of Educational Studies* (JES) is a scholarly, peer-reviewed journal that publishes articles on current educational issues. It encourages debate, both theoretical and practical, on a wide range of educational topics that represent a variety of interdisciplinary, cross-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary interests. The journal seeks to arouse reader's interests and stimulate debate on education and transformation with respect to education in its broadest sense, and to be accessible to the broad readership of the education community. It focuses on education and promotes a multidisciplinary approach to research issues in the field of education.

It serves researchers in both basic and higher education to debate on a wide range of educational problems and topics. The primary target audiences are educator-teachers, administrators/managers, policy-makers, and lecturers in the field of education. Journal subscribers and readership include government departments, national and international universities, individual scholars and researchers from South Africa, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region, sub-saharan Africa, Europe and the United States of America.

### Editing functions

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

**Consensus review:** The lack of scholarly standing of the editorial management committee members was noted by the majority of reviewers. One reviewer expressed serious concerns about the 'emerging researcher' standing of the editor-in-chief who does not appear to be well-published or an experienced researcher on the university's website. It was also noted that this appointment was done by virtue of their position as Dean of the Faculty of Education at the university where the journal is hosted. Similarly, with the editorial board, members are appointed by the university management. Furthermore, the list of board members was not available on the Sabinet website.

### Questionnaire

*(Editorial process-related criteria)*

The JES was established in 2001 and it is published biannually. The journal is on Sabinet's SA ePublications platform: <https://journals.co.za/content/journal/jeds>

The record of visits and downloads is managed by Sabinet, but these statistics were not provided in the questionnaire. The journal is accessed by readers in over 20 countries mostly from the African continent. Issues are not pre-scheduled to appear on given dates however both issues are published at least within 12 months. In 2013 and 2014 there was an interruption to publication due to the delay in submission of review reports. However, this backlog has now been addressed.

Over the three-year review period, 97 full articles and 28 conference papers were published. There were 241 manuscripts received for the period 2015 to 2017. The number of manuscripts rejected without peer review totalled 31 full articles and 26 were rejected after peer review. There were no peer reviewed papers by authors with a non-South African address.

At least three peer reviewers are usually approached for each submitted manuscript. Selection is based on reviewers' fields of specialisation. The journal uses a 'blind' peer review process. After peer review, these papers are presented to the full board for scrutiny and accepted manuscripts are returned to authors for corrections. Peer reviewers do receive follow-up information. Reviewer performance is assessed by the editorial board and information captured in a database. The reviewers who are not performing are removed from the database. The database has 155 reviewers of whom 18 are from outside the country. All peer review reports are filed accessibly.

The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication in print is at least six months and immediate for online publication after the print version is out. The editor-in-chief has held the position for over seven years. The appointment was made according to university policy which is linked to deanship of the School of Education. The period of appointment is for five years but the appointment is renewable. The editorial board manages peer review and provides advice on editorial policies and practices. The editorial board (management committee) has been in office for at least five years and the editorial advisory board (editorial board) for at least eight years. Appointments to the committee/board are made on the advice of the Dean, the journal's editorial management committee, the research director and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) of the university. The period of appointment is five years. Members are appointed from both inside and outside the country. Educational expertise is considered.

The journal has editorial guidelines, but they are not yet aligned with ASSAf's *Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing, Editing and Peer Review*. The journal has no formal policy for conflict-of-interest but addresses this through 'blind' peer review and reviewers who do not review papers of colleagues in the same institution. Authors are informed of errors but there is no formal policy for managing *errata*. The journal encourages value-adding features such as book reviews and correspondence but responses from authors are very low. Each entire issue represents peer-reviewed original material.

## Content

*(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in South Africa, enrichment features)*

**Consensus review:** The quality of the articles varies, but the overall standard is average, with some good articles. It was noted by one reviewer that the submissions for the special issue were of a higher quality and better theorised. Considering the resources available, the journal manages to publish an adequate number of articles annually. The work could not be described as a good sample of the best work done in the country in the field of Education. The articles are strongly focussed on local issues by authors from South African universities but there are very few articles published by international scholars. It was noticed by one reviewer that the journal contributes to local research and offers valuable insights to emerging researchers and practitioners. Useful additional scholarly features like editorials, topical reviews, book reviews, etc. are not included and this area could do with more attention.

## Essential technical features

*(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)*

**Consensus review:** All articles include proper English-language abstracts. No *errata* were observed in the volumes under review. Citation is consistent and applies acceptable practice. The articles are well-presented, and the design, layout and style are good. The copy-editing appears to be done efficiently and the images are illustrative, clear and used in an ethical manner.



## Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

**Consensus review:** The journal reflects suitability as a general ongoing stimulus for local graduate students, especially for young and upcoming researchers in the field of education, as the articles are very practice-based and often offer recommendations for practice.

The quality of this journal is comparable with some other DHET listed journals, but it cannot yet be compared with international journals.

## Business aspects

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

The School of Education of the University of Venda owns and publishes the journal. The regular print run (number of copies) was not specified. Production is done in-house, and distribution of print copies is outsourced. The journal does not usually carry advertising, but this is permissible in terms of the journal policy. There is no financial sponsorship but there are subscription fees and publication page fees. All the subscribers are institutional libraries. Page charges are R300.00 per page and authors are encouraged to limit word count to 8000 words. Management of editorial workflow is done via an online management system and loading of articles onto the web which is managed by Sabinet; Manual systems are managed by the journal editorial secretariat of three members. The journal is online with limited access managed by Sabinet and through subscription for full access through Sabinet. The journal has not received offers to purchase from multi-national publishers.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronically, photocopying or otherwise without the prior permission of the journal's editorial board. See: [https://reference.sabinet.co.za/documents/journal\\_documents/editorial\\_information/1680-7456\\_628.pdf](https://reference.sabinet.co.za/documents/journal_documents/editorial_information/1680-7456_628.pdf)

The journal is not indexed and there is no impact factor. Altmetric indicators are available through Sabinet. The 'front details' for papers and English abstracts are included and are mandatory. This is the journal's first independent peer review.

## Suggested improvements

**Consensus review:** The journal should reconsider the automatic appointment of the Dean of the School of Education as editor-in-chief. The editor should seriously consider the recommendation of addressing the diversity of the editorial board.

The guidelines need to be brought in line with international best practice and made readily available on the journal's website. There needs to be a conflict of interest policy, and an *erratum* policy.

The journal should work on attracting articles by experienced international scholars and expand the reviewer database with more international reviewers.

The journal should broaden its scope to include more articles beyond South Africa and the African continent. The journal should also consider accepting more articles pertaining to the tertiary sector, to better balance the current emphasis on educational issues pertaining to the school sector.

Special issues tend to draw articles from a wider spread of universities across the country so inclusion of one special issue per annum is recommended.

The publication of issues seems to be delayed and publication frequency thus needs to be addressed. The appointment of a full-time administration might assist in this regard.

It is recommended that the journal include an editorial with every issue and encourage additional features such as book reviews and correspondence.

### 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 seriously consider the suggested recommendations for improvement.

## 4.1.5 Perspectives in Education

### Focus and scope

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

*Perspectives in Education (PiE)* is a professional, refereed journal, which focuses on contemporary educational issues within the local South African context and the international arena. As a journal that represents a variety of cross-disciplinary interests, both theoretical and practical, it seeks to stimulate debates on a wide range of topics. PiE invites manuscripts employing innovative qualitative and quantitative methods and approaches including (but not limited to) ethnographic observation and interviewing, grounded theory, life history, case study, curriculum analysis and critique, policy studies, ethnomethodology, social and educational critique, phenomenology, deconstruction, and genealogy. Debates on epistemology, methodology, or ethics, from a range of perspectives including post-positivism, interpretivism, constructivism, critical theory, feminism, and post-modernism are also invited. PiE seeks to stimulate important dialogues and intellectual exchange on education and democratic transition with respect to schools, colleges, non-governmental organisations, universities and technikons in South Africa and beyond.

It represents a variety of cross-disciplinary interests within the educational context. The journal is committed to the process of capacity building in the area of scholarly writing and publication among new writers. It aims to accelerate the development of capacity among black and women educationists in South Africa. The primary target audience is local and international audiences.

### Editing functions

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

**Consensus review:** The editor-in-chief appears to have some level of recognition in that he/she publishes regularly and is reasonably well-cited according to Google Scholar. Concerns were raised about the lack of institutional diversity on the editorial board, especially as the majority are from one institution. The editor-in-chief and members of the board are also from the host university. The international board members appear to have limited scholarly standing. It is also concerning that there is no clear process of appointing both the editor-in-chief and the editorial board members, and that the appointments are all permanent. One reviewer noted that the review process needs attention.

## Questionnaire

### *(Editorial process-related criteria)*

The journal was established in February 1976. It is published biannually. The journal is available online at: <http://journals.ufs.ac.za/index.php/pie>. According to the journal's records from between October 2017 to February 2018 there were 125 total home page views and 1,325 total article downloads. There were no statistics provided on the number of countries accessing the journal. The journal is published in June and December every year but occasionally the journal only appears later. The journal experienced delays in publication due to student protests in 2015 and 2016. The change in management and editorial staff in 2016 and 2017 also caused major disruptions.

Approximately 230 manuscripts were received and approximately 90 full articles were published over the three-year review period. Forty manuscripts were rejected without peer review and 80 papers were rejected after peer review. Six peer-reviewed papers had at least one author with a non-South African address.

A minimum of two and maximum of four peer reviewers are approached for each manuscript depending on the reviewers' availability. The reviewers are selected based on their expertise in line with the topic of the manuscript. The journal's peer review process is 'double-blind'. It is very important that the articles are improved according to reviewer comments before they are published (if they are chosen for publication). Peer reviewers receive follow-up information on request. Reviewer performance is tracked, and information is captured in a database. Approximately 26 peer reviewers were used in one year over the review period and four of these reviewers were from outside the country. Peer review reports are accessibly retained. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication is between two and three months.

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The editor has occupied this position since January 2016. It was not a competitive appointment and the appointment is permanent. The current editorial board and advisory board have been in office since March 2016 and members were not appointed competitively. These appointments are also permanent. The editorial board advises on editorial policies and manages peer review. Members of the boards are from both inside the country and abroad. The role of the advisory board is to provide specific topical expertise.

The editorial guidelines of the *PiE* journal are available on the journal's website. The guidelines are aligned with ASSAf's *Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing, Editing and Peer Review*. There is a policy for conflict-of-interest which is available on the journal's website (<http://journals.ufs.ac.za/index.php/pie/conflicts>). An *errata* policy does exist. No value-adding features such as critical editorials are published. The majority of the content in each issue represents peer-reviewed original material.

## Content

### *(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in South Africa, enrichment features)*

**Consensus review:** The quality of the articles was identified as occasionally good but generally weak or extremely poor. One reviewer was inclined to ascribe this to the question of rigour in the review process. Another reviewer stated that the journal is more like a "magazine than a scientific journal". The number of articles per year is adequate although there is inconsistency in publishing on time and the journal does not adhere to its indicated periodicity.

While the South African context is generally covered in the journal articles, the international arena is not well-addressed in the journal. There is a lack of international articles with a broader focus than the national. This has to improve to align the contents of the journal to the stated focus and scope of the journal. The review processes also reflect the lack of contributions from the international community. The majority of articles are written by authors from different universities around the country. It would seem that many scholars of high standing would choose to publish elsewhere, and the journal was not identified as a sample of the best work in the country. There were no useful additional scholarly features in recent volumes, and it was noted that inclusion of these would be useful.

## Essential technical features

*(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)*

**Consensus review:** The articles have proper English-language abstracts. There were no *errata* published in the reviewed volumes however there is a policy in place. As a whole the journal has good presentation, design, layout, style, copy-editing interventions and ethical images are used. There should, however, be consistency in the inclusion of authors' titles, their institutional affiliations and their contact details. The citation practice of the journal could be strengthened. Often, there are arbitrary citations that do not have any relevance as they do not refer to research evidence and it is not clear what they are referring to.

## Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

**Consensus review:** The journal's suitability as a general ongoing stimulus for local graduate students and young staff in the discipline concerned was questioned. The journal does publish articles written by emerging researchers including doctoral students and postdoctoral research fellows.

The journal is comparable with leading international journals in terms of its focus and scope, however, in terms of the scholarliness of the articles published, the journal must still benchmark itself internationally to ensure that all published papers compete well internationally. It still needs some improvement, especially in attracting experienced scholars.

## Business aspects

*(Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)*

The University of the Free State (UFS) owns the journal and SUN MeDIA Bloemfontein publishes it. The print run was not specified; at the time of the review the journal was switching to online publication only. The University has a contract with SUN MeDIA which handles the publication of all UFS journals. The journal does not carry advertising and it is not financially sponsored. The UFS pays the layout and design costs for all its journals but all other running costs are paid by the journal itself. There are no paying subscribers. For each published article the author is charged a standard R3500 page fee.

The editorial workflow was managed manually at the time of the review. The *PiE* journal is freely accessible online (open access). There has been some collaboration with international publishers but there have been no offers to purchase the journal. Authors retain copyright but all reprints must indicate correct reference to the original publication in *PiE*.

The journal was indexed in IBSS and Scopus in 2018. It has no impact factor at this stage and altmetric indicators have not been established for the journal. English abstracts are mandatory and 'front details' for papers are provided. This is the journal's first independent peer review.

## Suggested improvements

**Consensus review:** The journal should clarify its purpose and define whether it is a professional or academic journal or both, and what this means in terms of the kind of articles it publishes. The articles do not reflect theoretical and disciplinary embeddedness.

The journal should consider diversifying the editorial board with members of high national standing. Most of the board members are from the UFS and this should be addressed. International scholars with high academic standing should be appointed to the international advisory board.

A clear process should be established for all appointments. The journal should also consider revising the permanent status of these positions as lifelong appointments are not ideal (especially in the case of the editor-in-chief).

Some articles are of a poor standard and are not considered scholarly. The quality of articles could generally be improved.

It appears that the journal is not keeping to a regular publishing schedule and this should be addressed as a priority. Regular publication within the specified timeframes is absolutely fundamental to the credibility of the journal.

The journal should consider a strategy to attract articles of international scholars with high academic standing.

The quality of the review process should be addressed. Reviewers of high standing should also be invited to improve the rigour of the articles.

The journal has only recently established its online system (OJS) and so does not seem to have much by way of statistics. It is assumed that this will now be attended to. Thorough record-keeping and an improvement in workflow systems is required in order to track the journal's impact.

The journal should strive to include enrichment features such as book reviews and topical reviews.

### Panel's consensus view

- i. **The journal should not continue to be listed on the DHET accredited list, irrespective of its inclusion in the IBSS and Scopus indices.**
- ii. **The journal should not be invited to the SciELO SA platform.**
- iii. **The editor should address all the recommendations in the review because the journal is not performing as well as it could, and the journal is not considered scholarly.**



## 4.1.6 South African Journal of Childhood Education

### Focus and scope

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

The *South African Journal of Childhood Education* (SAJCE) provides a forum for the dissemination of research in childhood learning and development and the care and education of children from birth to 12 years. The journal is interdisciplinary in scope and seeks to stimulate the exchange of ideas in a variety of subjects, contexts, and issues in childhood education and childcare.

These include statistical research on young children's learning and development, large scale surveys of learning environments, evaluation studies of teaching practice and school management, as well as ethnographic- and case- studies of individuals and groups of children, or their teachers and care providers. Additionally, the editors are keen to receive theoretical work on learning, development and conceptual change during the early years of schooling in a variety of contexts and will, furthermore, give special preference to manuscripts that report on longitudinal studies.

The journal has relevance to policy makers, researchers, classroom teachers, school managers and teacher educators in childhood education and care.

The primary target audiences are African scholars as well as researchers in other parts of the world.

### Editing functions

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

**Consensus review:** Concerns were raised about the lack of institutional diversity on the editorial team, especially in reference to the editor and four section editors who are affiliated with the hosting university. On a positive note the editors have national and international reputations and good publication records. Concerning the editorial board, the members reflect the diverse range of issues which are covered by the journal. There is a good balance of both local and international members and a couple are from other countries in Africa.

### Questionnaire

*(Editorial process-related criteria)*

The SAJCE was founded in 2011 and published between two to three issues per year prior to 2016. Since it has been published by AOSIS, individual articles are published as soon as they are ready for publication (rolling publication format). Special issues may be added on an *ad hoc* basis to the journal throughout a particular year.

The journal is available online: <http://www.sajce.co.za>. The visit and the download statistics from Google Analytics from January 2016 to January 2018 were as follows: Visits – 49 125; Downloads – 103 744. The journal is accessed by users from 151 countries worldwide of which 33 countries are from the African continent. Issues are not pre-scheduled to appear on given dates. There was a significant interruption after 2016 when the publisher was changed, and the publication frequency was changed to rolling publication.

During the three-year review period, 93 full articles and one letter were published. Over the same period, 143 manuscripts were received. Forty four manuscripts were rejected without review and 62 after review. [Please note that the statistics may not be accurate because of the rolling publication.] Of the peer-reviewed papers, 17.59% had at least one author with a non-South African address. Usually two peer reviewers are invited to review each submitted manuscript. Reviewer selection is critical to the publication process, and the editors base their choice on many factors, including expertise, reputation, specific recommendations and their own previous experience of a reviewer's characteristics. Double-blind peer review is conducted. 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 editors' advice) frequently also results in manuscripts being refined for increased coherence and readability. The editor keeps reviewers informed on the final decision on the manuscript and provides feedback. Performance is assessed by rating and information is captured in a database. In 2017, a total of 44 reviewers were used; of these reviewers 20.45% had a non-South African address. 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 is approximately three months.

The founding editor has held the position since 2011. The appointment was made by the Executive Dean and the DVC of Research as part of the founding of the Childhood Education Programme at the University of Johannesburg. The period of appointment is for seven years however the current editor hopes to hand over to a suitable successor.

The editorial board handles peer review and advises on editorial policies and practices. Board membership is reviewed during the Annual General Meeting (AGM). Some members have been on the board for six years. The executive committee (editor-in-chief and section editors) of the journal's board constitute its core members. The editorial board membership is also reviewed annually and as vacancies arise. Appointments to the board are competitive since advertisements are sent to the South African Research Association for Early Childhood Education (SARAECE) board and members and to all other institutions in Southern Africa. The period of appointment is for a minimum of three years (for continuity) and a maximum of eight years. Both local (domestic) and international members are appointed. The advisory board provides specific topical expertise.

The journal's editorial guidelines are available online and have been aligned with ASSAf's *Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing, Editing and Peer Review*: <http://sajce.co.za/index.php/sajce/pages/view/policies>. The publisher has a copyright policy: [http://aosis.co.za/policies#copyright\\_licensing](http://aosis.co.za/policies#copyright_licensing). With regards to conflict-of-interest, any relevant competing interests of authors must be available to editors during the review process and must be declared by authors in the published work. The publisher has an *errata* policy.

Each volume is accompanied by an editorial, including the special issues, with guest editor editorials (which is the trend in rolling publication). There has been one critical topical review per year since 2014. The executive committee has recently decided to include book reviews. Reviews on books for childhood education research have not been forthcoming since the field is still underdeveloped in South Africa. International books are also targeted for review in future. Other features include policy analysis.

The percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material is 99% of the content.

## Content

*(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in South Africa, enrichment features)*

**Consensus review:** The articles published in the journal are of good quality and are reflective of high-quality research. The journal website is excellent and compares with international standards. The peer review process is solid and appears to be rigorous. There are varied numbers of volumes per year but of recent there are an adequate number of articles per annum.

The overall focus of the journal is reflective of local and regional materials and problems. The main focus of SAJCE is on Early Childhood Development (ECD), primary school education, and development in childhood with some work on early years or Foundation Phase education. It is suggested that the focus change to Primary Years Education as there seems to be an absence of the conceptualisation of childhood with only a few articles published on the early years of childhood. This shift might attract more international scholars to publish in this journal.

The journal content certainly reflects some of the problems in South Africa in particular in relation to reading, literacy, mathematics, and teacher education in primary school education. The special issue helped boost the journal's profile by also addressing regional problems in Botswana, Uganda and Kenya drawing in African researchers from the continent. Evidence suggests that articles are mainly from and by South African academics in Schools of Education from a considerable number of universities. There are fewer international contributions but examples of these were by authors from Canada, United States of America, Norway, Finland, United Kingdom, Nigeria, Zambia, etc. More can be achieved by growing the number of South African scholars in their diversity and reaching the global field of scholarship.

There was some doubt, however, that the articles consistently reflect best work done in the country in this field.

There are editorials -- however the journal should encourage scholarly features such as analytical book reviews and correspondence on articles.

## Essential technical features

*(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)*

**Consensus review:** The articles have detailed and proper English-language abstracts. The journal publishes *errata* and corrigenda according to the publisher's policy. There was clear evidence of the articles being well-presented and the design, layout and style are all good. Copy-editing interventions are good and illustrations (e.g. tables and figures) were used appropriately and in an ethical manner. The citation practice of the journal was noted as being consistent throughout.

## Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

**Consensus review:** The journal reflects suitability as a general ongoing stimulus and is user-friendly for local graduate students/young staff in the discipline concerned.

The quality of this journal is comparable with some leading international journals, but it still needs some improvement, especially in attracting experienced scholars.

## Business aspects

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

The publication is owned by the University of Johannesburg (UJ) and is published by AOSIS. Prior print runs were 400 per issue. There is no longer a print run as the journal is now online. Production and distribution are outsourced to AOSIS. The journal carries unpaid advertising. The journal was partly subsidised for the first three years, 2011 to 2013, via a DHET-European Union (EU) grant. There are no paying subscribers. The UJ sponsors some of the article processing fees (APCs) which is R399,00 (excl. VAT) per A4 output page in PDF format. The non-sponsored APC is R937,79 (excl. VAT) per A4 output page in PDF format. An online management system is used to manage workflow.

The SAJCE is an open access online journal. It is also part of a non-commercial e-publication mechanism by being on the SciELO SA platform. There have been offers to purchase from multinational publishers, but these details were not specified. The author(s) retains copyright on work published by AOSIS unless specified otherwise. There is a licensing agreement with authors which states that author(s) of work published by AOSIS are required to grant AOSIS the unlimited rights to publish the definitive work in any format, language and medium, for any lawful purpose. AOSIS requires journal authors to publish their work in open access under the CC Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) licence.

The journal is indexed by AOSIS Library Index; CENGAGE Learning; DOAJ; Clarivate Analytics' Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI); Gale, Google Scholar; IBSS; Norwegian Register for Scientific Journals, Series and Publishers ProQuest; Sabinet SA ePublications; SciELO SA; and Web of Science.

The journal has an *h*-index of 8 on Google Scholar. Altmetric indicators are used to track the journal's progress. There are mandatory 'front details' for papers and English abstracts. The journal has been assessed by Clarivate Analytics (previously Thomson Reuters) Web of Science for inclusion in the index.

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### Suggested improvements

**Consensus review:** The journal should address the University of Johannesburg bias in its editorial team membership (editor and section editors). SAJCE should diversify its editorial team by encouraging black researchers to participate to contribute meaningfully to the body of knowledge and thus develop more academics and practitioners in this important field.

Editors and editorial board members publishing articles regularly in their own journals (other than editorials) is not good practice and this should be addressed.

It is suggested that the journal consider changing its focus to Primary Years Education which might attract more international scholars to publish in the journal.

The journal should continue to have special themed issues on occasion and in this way a wider body of scholars outside the boundaries of South Africa can be accessed.

The journal is encouraged to increase the global research publication of the journal.

If the editors decide that they would like to provide more opportunities for graduate students to publish, they might consider a literature review section. Literature reviews are a good first step for graduate students.

The journal should consider additional enrichment features, in particular book reviews.

### 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 seriously consider the recommendation of addressing the institutional diversity of the editorial team.
- iv. Furthermore, the journal should consider redefining its focus.

## 4.1.7 South African Journal of Education

### Focus and scope

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

The *South African Journal of Education* (SAJE) is the official publication of the Education Association of South Africa (EASA). SAJE publishes review articles intended for the professional scientist and which critically evaluate the research undertaken in a specific field in education. Submissions need to indicate the relevance of the study for education research where the education system is characterised by transformation, and/or an emerging economy/development state, and/or scarce resources.

The focus is on education as it relates to (i) a range of schools synonymous with a global south context; and (ii) teacher training. Evidence and insights disseminated focus on investigations into education issues that matter in a transitioning young democracy.

The primary targets are national and international readers. The journal has 4525 registered users from all over the world.

### Editing functions

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

**Consensus review:** The editors and editorial committee have high national and international reputations.

The members of both national and international editorial boards have high national and international recognition based on reported institutional affiliations and they come from different countries, institutions and perspectives. The national board members are from a range of institutions across the country.

### Questionnaire

*(Editorial process-related criteria)*

The journal was established in 1980 and is published quarterly. An additional one or two special issues are published annually. It is available online: <http://www.sajournalofeducation.co.za/index.php/saje>. The total number of visits to the SAJE website are 39 681 for February 2018 with 252 834 hits (i.e. the index had been opened) during this report period. Users from approximately 85 countries worldwide access the journal. Users from the African continent are from 20 different countries: Algeria, Botswana, Cameroon, Eritrea, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Swaziland, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda, Venda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Issues are pre-scheduled to appear on given dates, no later than the last day of February, May, August and November. There have been no significant interruptions in publication.



Over the three-year review period, 151 full original research articles were published. A total of 826 manuscripts were received over this period. The total number of manuscripts rejected without peer review were 261 (32%) and 152 (18,4%) were rejected after peer review (2015-2017). The overall rejection rate was 50%. Over a period of six years, a total of 69 papers (24%) of peer-reviewed papers had at least one author with a non-South African address.

Two to three peer reviewers are usually approached for each submitted manuscript. The executive editor assigns one national and one international reviewer based on a database of international and local education researchers. 'Blind' peer review is conducted, and valid reviewer critique and article improvement are rigorously implemented. Peer reviewers do receive follow-up information when contacted to monitor requested revisions, except for a summary of the ways in which the author/s have addressed reviewer comments. Reviewer performance is assessed by the executive editor and is based on the quality of their reports as well as the time taken to complete reviews. Relevant information is captured in the reviewer database. In 2017, 311 peer reviewers were used; of these reviewers 133 (43%) had non-South African addresses. The SAJE has online records of reviewer reports. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication online is approximately five months.

The editor has held the position for a period of two years. The editor is normally elected every five years at an Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Education Association of South Africa (EASA). Following a call for applications, nominated people are put to a vote at an EASA General Assembly. The editor's period of appointment is from 2017 to 2021. The editorial board manages peer review and provides guidance on editorial policies. They also provide specific topical expertise. The national editorial board's length of office is three years (2017-2019). The international board also serve for a period of three years and have been in office since 2017. The terms are renewable. The elected editor is required to announce the editorial committee within one month of election, which is confirmed by management.

The journal's policies include editorial guidelines which have been aligned with ASSAf's Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing and Peer Review. There is no conflict-of-interest policy. The journal has an *errata* policy which is available on the journal website. Critical editorials are published in special issues. There are no other value-added features included in the journal. The entire journal represents peer-reviewed original material.

## Content

*(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in South Africa, enrichment features)*

**Consensus review:** The articles published are of a high standard and they represent the best scholarly work in the fields of education and teacher education in South Africa. The journal publishes articles by authors across South Africa and the international community. The number of international submissions has increased significantly. Greater efforts should be made to engage more African authors in article submissions. The journal focuses on the educational problems encountered in the country and the region.

The number of articles per annum is impressive and seems appropriate for this audience. With the growth in the number of submissions, those selected for inclusion are of high quality.

The journal does not include additional scholarly features such as book reviews or critical topical reviews.

## Essential technical features

*(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)*

**Consensus review:** The abstracts are well-written in English. There were no *errata* evident in the issues under review. As reported, the guidelines regarding appropriate citation are clearly provided and appropriate citation of individual articles is demonstrated in the published articles.

The general design, presentation, layout, style and copy-editing are good. There were a few images and illustrations, and these were used ethically.

## Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

**Consensus review:** The journal serves as a good ongoing stimulus and the articles are appropriate and suitable for local graduate students and young staff in the discipline. The level of rigour appears to be appropriate for both a journal of this stature in the field and its targeted readership.

The journal is comparable to leading international journals in education and teacher education. Its strength is that the studies are clearly scholarly and held to a high standard for publication, and the subject matter of the articles are clearly aligned with the field. The articles are used to inform practice and scholarship, rather than being narrowly focused on a specific type of research.

## Business aspects

*(Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)*

SAJE is the official publication of the EASA which also serves as publisher. Approximately 50 copies per issue are published for authors who published in that specific issue. Production and distribution are outsourced. The journal does not carry advertising. It is partially supported financially by the University of Pretoria (UP) and Sabinet's subscription sales. EASA contributes towards the salary of the administrative editor, office equipment, publication and marketing. APCs are charged at R5500.00 per article for South Africans and USD \$525.00 for international authors. Management of editorial workflow is done via an online management system (OJS) and loading of issues online.

The SAJE is an open access journal but is also part of a commercial e-publication service via SciELO SA. There have been offers from multi-national publishers to purchase the journal but the EASA maintains ownership. Copyright of all published material is vested in the EASA. All articles published in this journal are licensed under the CC Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) license, unless otherwise stated. The journal is indexed in AJOL; EBSCOhost; IBSS; Journal Citation Reports; Sabinet SA ePublications; SSCI; Social Scisearch; SciELO SA; and Web of Science.

Altmetric indicators are available via OJS and generated by Webalizer Version 2.23. The journal's impact factor is 0.693 (originating in the 2018 Journal Citation Reports®, Web of Science Group, 2019). 'Front details' for papers and English abstracts for articles are mandatory. The journal has been independently peer reviewed before for purposes of IBSS and WoS indexing.

## Suggested improvements

**Consensus review:** The journal can be commended for filling an important place within education/ teacher education.

The special issues are of good quality and they should be continued.

The journal needs to include a conflict-of-interest policy and a policy statement regarding *errata*.

The editor should consider including additional enrichment features such as reviews (critical topical and analytical).

The inclusion of more regional material should be encouraged particularly from other African countries.

## Panel's consensus view

- i. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET accredited list.
- ii. The journal is already on SciELO SA platform.
- iii. The panel recommends that the journal follow the suggested improvements to further improve the publication.

## 4.2 Education Review

### 4.2.1 Africa Education Review

#### Focus and scope

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

Africa Education Review publishes scholarly articles on current educational issues and in associated disciplines such as sociology, psychology and economics. It encourages debate on theory, policy and practice on a wide range of topics that represent a variety of disciplines, interdisciplinary, cross-disciplinary and transdisciplinary interests on a global scale.

The journal has a keen interest in stimulating scholarly and intellectual debate on education in general, challenges and issues facing primary and secondary in general, and higher education in particular. The journal welcomes contributions based on sound theoretical framework relating to policy issues and practice on the various aspects of higher education. The journal targets educators, in the schooling and post-schooling sectors, though the majority of contributors are university education lecturers and researchers.

#### Editing functions

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

**Consensus review:** The editor and deputy are scholars of high standing. The journal has a strong team of local and international team members on the editorial and advisory boards. The editor and deputy are both from the University of South Africa (UNISA) and five out of the ten members of the editorial board are from UNISA.

Members of the editorial board are mostly from South Africa but there are three members one each from Namibia, Uganda and Zimbabwe. The advisory board is constituted by renowned scholars across the spectrum of contexts Botswana, Kenya, South Africa, Denmark, France, New Zealand, United Kingdom, and United States of America.

## Questionnaire

### *(Editorial process-related criteria)*

The journal was established in 1972 as *Educare*. For many years it served as the in-house publication vehicle for members of staff in the Faculty of Education at UNISA. It is published quarterly and is available online: [www.tandfonline.com/loi/raer20](http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/raer20). In 2014 the journal's full-text download usage was 8 308. Users were from 114 countries worldwide and 23 countries on the African continent. Issues are pre-scheduled to appear on given dates and appear regularly on these dates. No significant interruptions in publication were noted by the editor.

Over the three-year review period (2015 to 2017), 119 full research articles were published. A total of 485 full articles and 36 review articles were received over the same period. Between 15 to 25 manuscripts were rejected without peer review and around 12 were rejected after peer review. The proportion of peer-reviewed papers that had at least one author with a non-South African address was about 23.

Between three and five peer reviewers are usually approached per manuscript. The selection of peer reviewers is done by assessing academic qualifications and subject expertise. Peer review is conducted in a 'blind way', and reviewer critique and article improvement is rigorous. Follow-up information is usually sent to peer reviewers. Reviewer performance is not formally assessed. Over 400 peer reviewers were used in one year over the review period; 100 of these reviewers were living outside the country. Peer review reports are retained and are accessible.

The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication is between eight and 12 months.

The editor-in-chief has been in the position since 2014 and the deputy since 2008. Appointments were made after a competitive process. The period of appointment is for as long as the editor is at UNISA. The editorial board screens manuscripts and members review them if accepted. The purpose of the editorial board is to advise on editorial policies and practices. The editor-in-chief is answerable to the journal's editorial board. The length of office of the current editorial board varies; there have been retirements and replacements over the years. Members of the advisory board are appointed competitively; standing members of the editorial board review the recommendation. Board members are appointed for as long as they are willing to serve and provide specific topical expertise. Advisory board members are appointed from both inside and outside the country.

The editorial guidelines include a peer review policy. The journal's publisher, Taylor & Francis (Routledge), is a member of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) and *Africa Education Review* abides by the COPE guidelines on publication ethics: <http://publicationethics.org/about>. Guidelines are not yet aligned with ASSAf's *Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing and Peer Review*. It is the publisher's policy to publish *errata*, as per the guidelines here: <https://authorservices.taylorandfrancis.com/corrections-to-published-articles/>.

Critical editorials, analytical book reviews and correspondence on published articles are some of the scholarly features published in the journal. Between 85-90% of the content of each issue represents peer-reviewed original material.

## Content

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

**Consensus review:** Articles are of a very good standard and are by reputable scholars. Articles cover a wide range of disciplinary and sectorial areas. Secondary education seems to dominate. What is commendable is that the journal covers both secondary and higher education issues without moving outside its scope.

The journal is consistent in its issues, publishing a good number of articles per year. There are local and international articles addressing educational issues from a multidisciplinary perspective but contributions from other African countries could be encouraged.

Articles by South African authors are spread across a wide spectrum of institutions.

There were no editorials, book reviews or scholarly correspondence in the volumes under review.

## Essential technical features

(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)

**Consensus review:** All articles have proper abstracts in English. Guidelines on the *errata* publication are readily available on the website of the publisher but no *errata* were observed in the issues that were reviewed.

One reviewer noted that in the journal's guidelines it is instructed that accepted manuscripts must comply with British English spelling however it was observed that there was a mix of British and American English.

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The journal reflects good and consistent citation practice. The presentation, design, layout and style are good and comparable with other reputable journals. Where images are used, there is demonstrated consideration of research ethics.

## Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

**Consensus Review:** This is a suitable journal for young and aspiring educational researchers in Africa to gain experience and get published. Locally, the journal remains a good choice for many scholars.

The journal is comparable with international counterparts. The uniqueness of this journal is the multidisciplinary, transdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary nature of the educational articles it covers. It can be ranked with reputable international journals on the basis that scholars who publish in international journals are also publishing in this journal.

## Business aspects

(Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)

UNISA Press owns and co-publishes the journal with Taylor & Francis (Routledge). Roughly 70 print copies are produced for South Africa and the United Kingdom. Printing is done by UNISA Press and electronic issues are produced by Taylor & Francis. The journal does not carry advertising and it does not receive financial sponsorship. It is the policy of UNISA Press that no page fees shall be charged. The management of editorial workflow is done via ScholarOne, an online management system, and loading of articles onto the web. Only certain individual articles where the authors have selected Gold or Green Open Access are available free online. The journal is also part of a commercial e-publication service. The publisher is multi-national but has a South African-based office and has not offered to purchase the journal.



Copyright is vested in the UNISA Research Directorate Copyright Policy. There is no licensing agreement with authors.

The *African Education Review* is indexed on the IBSS and Scopus. The journal has not determined its impact factor. All statistics are available upon request.

The journal has mandatory 'front details' for papers and English abstracts. This is the journal's first independent peer review.

### Suggested improvements

**Consensus review:** Significantly increase the number of authors from outside South Africa.

The editorial board could be broadened to include scholars from other institutions in South Africa. It is not necessary to limit the editorship to UNISA staff members (even though the selection is competitive). More information about the credentials of editorial board members should be provided on the journal's website.

The journal could make better attempts to stimulate postgraduate students and young academics to publish in it. This could be done through special issues or any themed publication, perhaps even focusing on a conference.

The editor should look at the publication timeframe as there is a significant delay between acceptance of articles and their publication.

Spelling should be consistent and according to the journal's guidelines.

Scholarly features could be improved to include regular editorials. Additional features such as more book reviews can encourage emerging researchers to publish in 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 the relationship with its publisher change and it becomes open access.
- iii. The panel believes that there is room for the journal to attract more international contributions.

## 4.2.2 Southern African Review of Education

### Focus and scope

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

The *Southern African Review of Education* (SARE) focuses on educational issues that have specific reference to educational policy, comparative education, sociology of education, history of education, and, education with production. The journal has a strong interdisciplinary focus that emphasises the lenses of sociology, history and comparative education when analysing systemic and policy perspectives in education. It is an important contributor to the research community by providing a critical academic space where conceptual and critical analysis of educational issues are addressed.

The SARE serves national, regional, and international audiences. It remains, however, Southern African in focus and demonstrates what can be shared amongst scholars in the region about common conceptual challenges. Local readership is 90% and international readership is 10%. Subscribers include libraries from many universities in countries like Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

## Editing functions

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

**Consensus Review:** The editor is a well-known scholar in the field. The editorial board members are all well-respected and have a wide range of relevant expertise. Information and details about the scholars and their affiliations should be published on the journal's website.

## Questionnaire

*(Editorial process-related criteria)*

When this initiative first started in the early 1990s, the journal was called *Education with Production*. At that time, it was primarily a newspaper-type publication when academics, activists and political thinkers all contributed. The journal became the *South African Review of Education* in 1995. But to respect and acknowledge the journal's beginnings it was decided that the title would respectfully acknowledge 'Education with Production' on its cover so its full title is *South African Review of Education (incorporating Education with Production)* however the journal is commonly referred to as SARE.

The journal was established in 1995 and is published biannually. It is available through Sabinet: <https://journals.co.za/content/journal/sare> although members are sent electronic copies. The journal is distributed mostly in South Africa and countries in Southern Africa. However, critical academics in countries like the United Kingdom, United States of America and European countries, and in other parts of the world, regularly access the journal both in terms of readership and for publishing their Southern African work (for local dissemination and to open debate). The journal is read in at least 20 African countries and is regarded as an important 'critical voice' journal in South Africa.

Issues are pre-scheduled and appear in July and December annually. The journal appeared regularly on the scheduled dates up until 2015. From 2016 to 2018, only one issue was published.

A total of 25 full articles and two book reviews were published over the three-year review period. The number of manuscripts received over the same period is as follows: 56 full articles; three review articles; and three book reviews. The number of manuscripts rejected without peer review: 14 full articles (25%); and two review articles. A total of 17 manuscripts were rejected after peer review (40%). Ten percent of the journal's papers had authors with a non-South African address.

Three peer reviewers are invited to review each article. Peer reviewers are strictly chosen based on their publication records and their proven expertise in the area of the submission. Peer review is conducted on a 'double-blind' basis. The processes that are followed when dealing with the reviewers' critique and article improvement is rigorous. Peer reviewers do not receive follow-up information, but they do receive copies of the volume for which they reviewed articles. Reviewer performance is assessed by the editor and information is captured in a database. A total of 98 reviewers were used over the three-year period but some reviewers undertook more than one review. The proportion of these who had non-South African addresses was 25%. Peer review reports are accessibly retained in the records system. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication in print is between six and ten months, and online is between seven and 12 months.

The previous editor held the position for seven years (2009 – 2015) and the current editor since March 2016. The editor was appointed via a nomination and selection process for a period of seven years. The editorial board handles peer review and advises on editorial policies and practices. The term of office of the editorial board is between two and 15 years and the editorial advisory board between four and ten years. The appointments were made via a selection process. Appointments are for a period of ten years however some members on the editorial board are previous editors of the journal whose experience is thus deemed invaluable. Members are from South Africa and outside the country. The board provides topical expertise and advice on the quality and content of the journal.

There are no editorial guidelines. There is no formal conflict-of-interest policy. This is dealt with internally and amongst board members. Guidelines are aligned with ASSAf's *Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing and Peer Review*. The journal publishes *errata* when necessary. Value-adding features such as critical editorials and topical reviews are not included in the journal. The percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material is between 85% and 90%.

## Content

*(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in South Africa, enrichment features)*

**Consensus review:** Articles published are of an acceptable standard. The articles reflected good quality and rigorous scholarship. The articles published are rather too few in number, only 25 in total over the three-year review period. The reviewers also identified a declining trend in terms of the number of issues per annum as well as articles per issue.

The focus is both local and regional however publications from across South Africa dominate the publications. The South African articles are from institutions across the country.

The journal mostly attracts South African contributions. More could be done to harness articles from researchers outside South Africa and especially from the SADC region. The journal attracts articles from various sub-disciplines.

The journal has not fared well regarding topical reviews, book reviews and scholarly correspondence, and these additional features should be encouraged.

## Essential technical features

*(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)*

**Consensus review:** The abstracts are in English and are well-edited and appropriate. Some inconsistencies with citations were noted but in general the citation practice is acceptable.

The presentation, design, layout and style are good. Copy-editing is of an acceptable standard. Images and figures were acceptable and show consideration of research ethics.

No *errata* were observed in the copies under review.

## Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

**Consensus review:** This is a suitable journal for young and aspiring educational researchers in Africa to gain experience and get published provided it increases the volume of articles. Research conducted serves as a good example of problems and challenges experienced in the education system in the country.

The journal still needs to make some improvements in order to be ranked along with reputable international journals.

## Business aspects

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

The journal is published under the auspices of the Southern African Comparative and History of Education Society (SACHES). The editor reports to both the board and to SACHES. The journal has no institutional location although the university to which the editor is aligned serves as the institutional location for correspondence. The regular print run is 350 copies. Production is outsourced to Word Publishers and the journal is distributed by the SARE's treasurer. The journal carries paid advertising. It is partially sponsored through membership fees paid to SACHES. There are 200 paying subscribers, ten of which are organisations as opposed to individuals. Article processing charges are charged at R2500 per article, though a few are subsidised when applications are made for assistance. Editorial workflow is managed manually. The journal is part of a commercial e-publication service via Sabinet.

The journal has received offers to purchase from a multi-national publisher, but no information was provided. Copyright is vested in the journal and the authors are given permission to republish on request. Authors sign an agreement when their articles are accepted for publication.

The journal is not indexed and does not have an impact factor. Altmetric indicators have not been determined for the journal. 'Front details' for papers and English abstracts are mandatory. The journal has not been independently peer reviewed before.

## Suggested improvements

**Consensus Review:** Recruit young local scholars onto the editorial board so as to transfer skills and ensure sustainability.

Information on the members of the boards needs to be provided on the journal's website.

The journal is behind on its publishing schedule and needs to clear its backlog. The journal should significantly increase the number of articles published per annum.

Increase the number of authors from outside South Africa. Efforts should be made to attract more authors from the SADC region and the rest of the African continent.

The journal should improve its online presence. Making the journal available through open access will improve its visibility and impact.

Additional scholarly features such as book reviews and critical topical reviews should be encouraged.

The journal should develop editorial guidelines according to best practice and these should be published on the journal's website. The journal should also clearly state on its website how it handles conflict-of-interest and *errata*.

## Panel's consensus view

- i. **The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET accredited list provided that it returns to its publishing schedule and clears the backlog in a period of two years.**
- ii. **The journal should not be invited to join the SciELO SA platform.**
- iii. **The Panel recommends that the journal return to its publishing schedule of publishing two issues per annum. The panel also recommends that the journal publishes more articles per annum and attracts more international contributions.**

## 4.3 Higher Education and Distance Learning

### 4.3.1 Progressio: South African Journal for Open and Distance Learning Practice

#### Focus and scope

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

*Progressio: South African Journal for Open and Distance Learning Practice* provides an opportunity for researchers and practitioners in open, distance and e-learning (ODEL) to publish their research. The focus of *Progressio* is on research on the phenomenon and practice of open, distance and e-learning. The journal enjoys the support of the Commonwealth of Learning (CoL) and the National Association of Distance Education Organisations of South Africa (NADEOSA).

The journal subscribes to a multi-, inter- and transdisciplinary approach (MIT) where articles are invited from various disciplines and fields with the proviso that the research reported in the articles is focussed on ODEL. Scholars from a range of disciplines submit ODEL articles that reveal aspects of its application in the teaching of the discipline or subject.

Scholars in South Africa and the rest of the African continent and further afield are targeted. Readership is major Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in South Africa, the rest of Africa and internationally, research councils, parastatals, and private sector institutions.

#### Editing functions

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

**Consensus review:** The editorial board includes a small number of representatives from some of the leading universities involved in ODEL internationally. One recommendation was that the journal consider targeting all open learning universities on the continent to broaden membership on the editorial board. A concern was raised about the standing of the current editorial board both nationally and internationally, with several members not being well-known in the field.

#### Questionnaire

*(Editorial process-related criteria)*

*Progressio* is one of the oldest education journals in South Africa and was established in 1979. It is published biannually and is available online: <http://upjournals.co.za/index.php/Progressio/index> and <http://journals.co.za/content/journal/progress>. The visit and download records for 2017 were 10847 abstract views and 3548 full-text downloads. Readers from 25 countries worldwide and ten African countries access the journal. Issues are pre-scheduled to appear regularly in June/July and November/December however the journal fell behind schedule in 2018 due to internal processes. Numbers 1 and 2 have been combined in Vol 40 in 2018.

A total of 39 original papers and one editorial were published over the three-year review period (2015 – 2017). There were 86 submissions of full articles received over the same period. Approximately ten manuscripts were rejected without peer review and 33 were rejected after peer review (four articles were still in the review process). Three peer-reviewed papers had at least one author with a non-South African address.



Two to three reviewers are selected to review each manuscript based upon their areas of expertise. Double-blind peer review is conducted. Reviewer critique and article improvement is rigorous and provided by means of a reviewers' feedback rubric. Peer reviewers' contributions to the journal are acknowledged but they do not generally receive follow-up information. Reviewer performance is assessed, and information is then captured in a database. In 2017, 112 reviewers were used. Since November 2015 reviewer reports can be accessed online. Prior to this, reviewer reports were retained manually. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication is between eight and 12 months.

The current editor has held this position for two years. The appointment was made competitively for a period of three years. There is only one board which is the editorial board. The board handles peer review, advises on editorial policies and practices, and provides specific topical expertise. The term of office ranges from current to three years. Members of the board are appointed from South Africa and internationally for a period of three years. Appointments are made competitively.

With regards to policies, the journal has editorial guidelines, a conflict-of-interest policy and publishes *errata*. The guidelines have not yet been aligned with ASSAf's *Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing and Peer Review*.

The journal does not publish any additional value-adding 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 South Africa, enrichment features)*

**Consensus review:** The quality of the articles is good, although the articles were typically of limited scope and significance. There are usually two issues a year, traditionally with between eight and ten articles per issue, although issues have tended to have fewer articles over recent years. The articles published focus on issues of interest to distance education providers in South Africa and Africa more generally, and by extension to other developing contexts e.g. learner support, language, use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), etc. There also does not seem to be a common editorial approach or focus for the journal, beyond a broad focus on ODeL.

The majority of the authors are staff members at UNISA (which is not surprising since UNISA is the main ODeL university in the country) although the number of institutions offering distance learning is growing. Where other institutions are represented, it is often because of co-authorship with a UNISA academic.

There are only a few international contributions. For the most part the focus is on local and some regional issues. One reviewer suggested that the journal more actively seek to include private ODeL institutions to broaden the scope. It was noted that leading ODeL scholars in South Africa do not seem to publish in this journal, and so the journal does not contain examples of the best work in the country in the area of ODeL.

The journal does not currently include additional scholarly features such as editorials, topical reviews or book reviews.

## Essential technical features

*(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)*

**Consensus review:** The technical aspects of the journal are strong, with proper English abstracts for all articles, good citation practice and a common referencing format consistently applied. No *errata* were observed in recent issues. The journal reflects good presentation, design, layout and copy-editing interventions. Images were used in an ethical manner. No recommendations for improvement were made here.

## Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

**Consensus review:** It was noted that the journal seems particularly useful for postgraduate students and emerging researchers as a publication outlet. Since international journals often have quite a slow turnaround time, *Progressio* might fill a gap for postgraduate students and emerging researchers who need to build up a publication record more quickly.

The articles in the journal do not compare well with those of leading international journals in this field, often due to the narrow scope of the papers. Leaders in the field in South Africa are not publishing in the journal.

## Business aspects

*(Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)*

The journal is co-ordinated, managed and administered by the Directorate: University Teaching and Learning Development (DUTLD) of UNISA, with the support of UNISA Press. Currently only 40 copies are printed for Legal deposit, authors, marketing and a small number of print subscribers. Production and distribution are handled in-house. No advertising is carried in *Progressio*. UNISA carries the full cost of the journal.

In 2018 *Progressio* had 66 institutional subscribers via Sabinet:

- 36% of institutional subscriptions are from Higher Education Institutions within South Africa.
- 4% are from Higher Education Institutions from other African countries.
- 18% are from Higher Education Institutions outside of Africa.
- 42% are Government departments and other institutions.

There are currently no page charges or article-processing charges. Management of editorial workflow is done via an online management system (Open Journal Systems) and loading of articles onto the web. Accessibility online is through Sabinet (commercial e-publication service) and via subscription. The journal has not had offers to purchase from multi-national publishers.

Copyright is vested in UNISA Press. However, as long as authors do not use the article in ways which would directly conflict with the publisher's business interests, then they retain the right to use their own article (provided you acknowledge the published version of the article). A copyright notice is available on the journal's website.

The journal is indexed on Sabinet. There is no impact factor at this stage and altmetric indicators have not been determined for the journal. 'Front details' for papers and English abstracts are included and are mandatory. The journal has not been independently peer reviewed before.

## Suggested improvements

**Consensus review:** *Progressio* is the only local accredited journal focused on ODeL provision and could play an important role for those involved in ODeL provision in South Africa and more widely. The journal should consider moving to open access as this is likely to increase the reach, readership and citation of journal articles.

The editorial board should be broadened to include a wider range of institutional affiliations and to attract some of the leading ODeL scholars in the country and region.

The editor should consider introducing a clearer editorial focus. It was noted by reviewers that at present, the statement of the journal's focus being 'on research on the phenomenon and practice of open, distance and e-learning' is very open and broad and seems to imply that the journal is a 'catch-all' for anyone working on ODeL. A tighter focus is likely to better position the journal. For example, one of the reviewers noted that there have not been recent editions of the regional *Distance Education Association of Southern Africa (DEASA)* journal nor the journal of the continental African Council for Distance Education (ACDE) and this is a gap that *Progressio* might fill, particularly with a more clearly articles focus. It was also suggested that the journal might consider taking up a greater advocacy role in the areas of OER, OEP and open policy more broadly which has become of such importance in the field.

The editorial guidelines need to be aligned with international best practice.

The journal does not currently feature well-respected authors in the field, and there is a need for the journal to play a role in fostering debate about key issues in ODeL.

Another gap that might be worth exploring is private providers of ODeL, especially with the growing incidence of online learning. The journal should establish relationships with some of the ODeL universities in other developing countries.

The journal could also consider publishing themed or special issues.

### Panel's consensus view

- i. **The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET accredited list on condition that the suggested improvements are implemented by the end of 2021.**
- ii. **The journal should not be invited to join the SciELO SA platform.**
- iii. **The panel strongly recommends that the publication clear its backlog and the journal gets back on its schedule of publishing two issues per annum.**
- iv. **The panel believes that the journal could be filling its important role more adequately by sharpening its focus and widening its scholarship.**

## 4.3.2 South African Journal of Higher Education

### Focus and scope

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

The *South African Journal of Higher Education* (SAJHE) serves as a medium for articles of interest to researchers and practitioners in higher education. The journal provides a focal point for the publication of educational research throughout the world including research done by members of prominent education associations in the country, in particular the Higher Education Learning and Teaching Association of South African (HELTASA). The journal is interdisciplinary in approach, and its purpose is to provide institutions of higher education and professional readers with scholarly information on major innovations in higher education, research projects and trends. The focus is higher education studies.

SAJHE mostly publishes work produced by South African academics from predominantly public higher education institutions in the areas of pedagogy and discipline-related knowledge and its applications. The primary target audiences are both local and international scholars.

### Editing functions

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

**Consensus review:** The standing of the editorial committee, international board of advisors and consultant editors is generally good, although there is an over-representation of members from one university. The main editorial concern with this journal is the 20-year appointment of the editor-in-chief and the ten-year appointment of editorial board members. It was also noted that the editor-in-chief regularly publishes in the journal which is not best practice.

### Questionnaire

*(Editorial process-related criteria)*

The SAJHE was established in 1985. The journal is published six times a year – with an additional 'special section' whenever applicable. This journal provides immediate open access to its content on the principle that making research freely available to the public supports a greater global exchange of knowledge. From 2016 it has been available online: <http://www.journals.ac.za/index.php/sajhe>. Journal items are published collectively online as part of an issue. Data from January to December 2017: 89 705 page views; 56 356 unique page views; 1 455 total searches on website. It is accessed by countries worldwide.

Since going online publications are scheduled per annum and do in fact appear on scheduled dates. Throughout its 30 plus years of existence SAJHE has been published without interruptions. Printed hard copies were published up to 2015 until 2016 when it became an online publication. During the three-year review period, the following peer reviewed original papers were published: 290 full articles, eight book reviews, five special sections (per annum), and 13 leading articles. The number of manuscripts received from 2013 to 2015 included 644 full articles, eight review articles, eight book reviews, 13 leading articles and 45 conference papers. The number of manuscripts rejected without peer review over the same period totalled 39; the number rejected after peer review was 123. Approximately ten per cent of the peer-reviewed papers had at least one author with a non-South African address.

All research articles submitted to *SAJHE* undergo rigorous peer review which involves initial editor screening and anonymised refereeing by at least two referees. The reviewers are requested to complete a brief written report along with a completion of a score sheet of whether the article is suitable for publication in the journal. Reviewers are assigned according to their disciplinary strengths and expertise in and about higher education studies. Peer review is conducted 'blind' and authors are requested to avoid self-identification in the manuscript. Articles which are not rejected are expected to be revised according to reviewers' recommendations. Peer reviewers do receive follow-up information. Performance is assessed and information captured in a database. In one year over the review period, between 20 and 45 reviewers were used. The proportion of these reviewers with non-South African addresses was five per cent. Records are kept of the peer review reports and these are accessible. On average, the period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication is between five and eight months.

The editor was appointed by Higher Education South Africa (HESA) (now Universities South Africa (USAF)) in November 2006. The period of appointment is 20 years. The editorial board handles peer review, but selectively, and also advises on editorial policies and practices. There are eight members in total who have been appointed for a period of ten years. The editorial advisory board members are appointed based on their research and experience in higher education, and for a period of ten years. Members are from both inside and outside the country. The board provides specific topical expertise.

The journal has editorial policies and some are aligned with ASSAf's *Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing and Peer Review*. A conflict of interest policy is integrated into the guidelines to authors. The online open access publication system makes it possible to correct errors immediately. In the past there have been four cases of publishing *errata* however no errors have been reported since January 2016.

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The journal publishes editorials which are critically orientated towards the advocacy of a position. Occasionally critical book reviews appear as review articles. Approximately 95 per cent of the pages in each issue represents peer-reviewed original material.

## Content

*(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in South Africa, enrichment features)*

**Consensus review:** A good number of articles are produced each year, although one reviewer felt that perhaps the number of articles could be reduced. Some questions were raised about the acceptance rate of 65% on average and whether this might be a little high. Reviewers raised concerns about the quality of the peer review process based on the number of articles processed per year and the number of peer reviewers the journal reported using. A further concern about possible plagiarism was also noted by one reviewer.

The topics covered in the articles are varied and speak to key issues in higher education in the country. However, it was felt that there is too strong a bias towards small scale qualitative studies located within critical frameworks. While such topics are of course relevant and important, questions were raised about other approaches in higher education research, particularly the gap in terms of political-economy or policy-focused articles. It is recommended that the journal seek to broaden the scope of approaches to higher education represented in the journal to more comprehensively reflect the scope of research on higher education in the country.



Some of the articles published are of very good quality, and others less so, as reflected in citation figures and qualitative reviews of articles performed by reviewers. It was also noted that most of the leading higher education researchers in the country have published in the journal at some point, which indicates recognition of the value of the journal in sharing higher education research locally. The majority of the articles are published by South African authors, with only a handful of international authors publishing, often together with South African authors. The local or regional focus of the journal is thus strong. For example, of 23 articles, only one was authored by someone in the region and one was co-authored by a local academic and an international academic.

Some issues of the journal include additional scholarly features such as editorials or leading articles and occasionally a book review. Reviewers agreed that these additional scholarly features add value to the journal and should be included more regularly. The need to include more book reviews was particularly noted.

### Essential technical features

*(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)*

**Consensus review:** The technical aspects of the journal are strong, the quality of language was good, abstracts were clear, and referencing was accurate and consistent. A few small editorial inconsistencies were noted in the more recent online volumes, such as titles not being consistently formatted. *Errata* are published when appropriate although no corrections were noted in the volumes that were reviewed. Overall, the journal does well with respect to technical features.

### Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

**Consensus review:** As noted above, the journal largely has a local/regional authorship. While the value of the journal in the South African context was recognised, reviewers did not find the journal to be of equivalent standard in comparison with leading international journals in higher education such as *Higher Education*, *Teaching in Higher Education*, *Studies in Higher Education* or *Higher Education Research and Development*. While the journal does provide a space for South African graduate students and early career researchers to publish their work, reviewers expressed a concern that perhaps the journal was not setting the bar sufficiently high to build capacity for international level research.

### Business aspects

*(Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)*

The title owner is HESA (now USAf) and it is published by the Stellenbosch University Open Access Journal System. As mentioned previously the journal is fully online but issues can be printed on request. Production is handled in-house. The journal does not carry advertising and it is not financially sponsored. Up to December 2015 there were 375 paying subscribers, but that is no longer applicable. Of the 375 subscriptions, 47 were organisations. Page fees for 2017 were R320.00 per page. An online management system is used to manage the workflow and articles are published on the web. The SAJHE is open access and free online but is password protected. There have been no offers to purchase the journal.

There is a licensing agreement with authors. Authors retain copyright and grant the journal right of first publication with the work simultaneously licensed under a CC Attribution License that allows others to share the work with an acknowledgement of the work's authorship and initial publication in the journal. Authors are able to enter into separate, additional contractual arrangements for the non-exclusive distribution of the journal's published version of the work (e.g. post it to an institutional repository or publish it in a book), with an acknowledgement of its initial publication in the journal.

The journal is predominantly indexed by Google Scholar. The *SAJHE* is ranked 49th amongst more than 14 000 journals on the African continent in the last African Journals Survey. It is possible to access altmetric indicators with the online system. 'Front details' for papers are mandatory and English abstracts are published with each full article.

The *SAJHE* has not been independently peer reviewed before.

### Suggested improvements

**Consensus review:** It is recommended that a new editor-in-chief be appointed, for a shorter term, and additional appointments be made to the editorial team reflecting a broader range of South African universities.

The journal should carefully reflect on its peer review process to ensure that peer review is rigorous, and that a larger group of peer reviewers are called on given the number of articles submitted to the journal.

The journal should pay attention to the concerns raised about possible plagiarism.

[Note: The panel acknowledges that the journal uses the Turnitin programme. It is thus recommended that the journal review and make explicit criteria for recognising plagiarism, and mechanisms of dealing with it, including review by the editor-in-chief of reports with high similarity indexes, to rule out commonly or inevitably used phrases and to then make decisions on this refined basis.]

The Panel emphasises that it is not good practice for the editor to regularly publish in their own journal unless that particular issue is handled by a guest editor.

Book reviews and other scholarly features such as editorials should be included more regularly. Given the high standard of the articles, having editorial comment when special editions or themes emerge would elevate the journal even more. The leading articles are particularly interesting, and the journal should endeavour to increase the number of such articles.

The journal should assess whether the current standard of articles, and benchmarks being set for graduate students and early career researchers, is of a sufficient standard to promote international quality work.

Publication in the journal needs to be marketed to prospective regional and international academic authors.

### Panel's consensus view

- i. **The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET accredited list on condition that the suggested improvements are implemented by the end of 2021**
- ii. **The journal should be invited to join the SciELO SA platform, once recommended improvements have been implemented.**
- iii. **In addition, the Panel believes that the journal makes a useful contribution to the discipline of higher education studies in the country and region, and a discipline-focused journal of this nature is critical in the scholarly landscape. If implemented, the recommendations would lead to an even more useful contribution.**

## 4.4 Language Education

### 4.4.1 Journal for Language Teaching

#### Focus and scope

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

The *Journal for Language Teaching*, which is published by the South African Association for Language Teaching (SAALT), focuses on the publication of research in the domains of language teaching and applied language studies. The journal gives preference to the publication of research results with an empirical base (quantitative and/or qualitative). Applied linguistic or applied language studies research is by nature interdisciplinary. This is not a specific aim of the journal, but the nature of the research often includes interdisciplinary (e.g. educational, sociological, anthropological) angles that are valued in this community of practice.

The journal provides a quality outlet of language teaching research that is not often considered by other South African journals that focus on micro-linguistics. This is an important role given the reports about the relationship between language and academic success in South Africa and elsewhere. If we understand better how to teach languages, we could enhance the academic experiences of the majority of learners in South Africa, and abroad, substantially.

The journal is of great value to students, scholars and teachers involved in language teaching and/or research. The journal has a strong national readership among academics and postgraduate students, but it is clear that articles by top academics in this journal are also read internationally.

#### Editing functions

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

**Consensus review:** The editor and members of the editorial board are established researchers and there is a good mix of local and international academics. Local board members are affiliated to a range of local institutions. Internationally, members hail from, among others, Bahrain, Fédération Internationale des Professeurs de Langues Vivantes/International Federation of Language Teacher Associations (FIPLV), Netherlands, New Zealand, United Kingdom and the United States of America. They are primarily involved with language teaching and applied language studies. There is, however, a noticeable absence of scholars from the African continent.

#### Questionnaire

*(Editorial process-related criteria)*

The *Journal for Language Teaching* was founded in 1966. Two issues are published per year (biannual). It is available online through the African Journals Online (AJOL) and Sabinet platforms: <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/jlt> and <https://journals.co.za/content/journal/langt>. The visit and download records and the location of users were not available at the time of the review since neither the Association nor the journal hosts the online version of the journal. The journal has however seen an increase in submissions from international scholars.

Issues are pre-scheduled to appear in June/July and December/January and issues are on time. There have been no recorded interruptions to publication. A total of 53 peer-reviewed full articles and one tribute were published over the three-year review period.

A total of 116 manuscripts were received over the same period. On average, the rejection rate was 55% over the three years. Approximately two authors per issue have non-South African addresses.

Usually two reviewers are approached for peer review and they are selected based on their expertise and specific field of focus in the article. Peer review is conducted in a 'double-blind' basis. The editor ensures that there is rigorous implementation of valid reviewer critique and article improvement to maintain the quality of the articles. Peer reviewers receive follow-up information if requested. Reviewer performance is assessed but this information is not captured in a database. In 2017, 72 peer reviewers were used. In total there were 232 peer reviewers used over the three years, of whom around 5% were non-South African. Reports are accessibly retained. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication is variable and depends on the date the article was submitted, and/or date it was sent to reviewers. Articles are sent for review in batch format once every six months.

The editor took over leadership of the journal in June 2016. Usually the editor-in-chief is appointed for a term of four years, but this can be changed by the Executive Committee (ExCo) of the SAALT. Appointment is based on the Association's constitution – nominations are invited of possible reviewers and then voted upon at an AGM. The editorial board members are involved as reviewers in cases where they are considered to be national or international experts. Board members also advise and give input on editorial policies. The editorial board members serve indefinitely up and until they formally resign, or if the SAALT executive deems it necessary to remove them from the editorial board. The editorial board is considered to be the advisory board, and any contributions from members at the AGM are considered. Appointments are made after consultation with members of the editorial board and new members are presented to the ExCo for notification and ratification. There is no set period for appointment of board members. The board comprises national and international experts in the field of language teaching. Members provide topical expertise.

The journal provides a set of guidelines to authors. This has stood the organisation in good stead over the last few decades and the journal continues treating matters in a highly responsible and transparent manner, including amending practices. There is no formal conflict-of-interest policy, but the editors may not publish in the journal during their terms. If guest editors are appointed to manage a special issue, and the editor-in-chief is not involved in the process at all, they are allowed to publish if the submission is approved and if they adhere to the guidelines. ASSAf's *Code of Best Practice* was considered when setting up the guidelines. There is no formal *errata* policy but where errors become apparent *errata* are published in the next edition.

Analytical book reviews and festschrifts of a specific colleague's work are published occasionally. Approximately 90% of the content represents peer-reviewed original material. Other pages are used for front and back matters, and editorial notes.

## Content

*(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in South Africa, enrichment features)*

**Consensus Review:** The articles are interesting, competent and generally of a good standard. However, there is limited engagement with fundamental language issues facing the field nationally and internationally and there is little contribution to new knowledge in the field. The focus seems to be on local language issues and the authors are mostly South African academics. The danger of the inter-disciplinary perspective is that the core discipline of language teaching and essential objectives of the journal may be marginalised when the focus is very wide.

The journal focuses on full original articles. The addition of other value-adding scholarly features such as critical editorials and topical reviews would be an advantage.

## Essential technical features

*(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)*

**Consensus review:** Abstracts are clearly written in English and include relevant information. There is no evidence of publication of *errata*. The citation practice is consistent, and citations are uniformly applied. Attention is paid to technical details like presentation, design, layout and style. Articles based on empirical research have to ensure that there is adherence to principles of ethics.

## Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

**Consensus review:** The contributions to the journal are mostly from established scholars. Emerging researchers and postgraduate students should be encouraged to send articles to the journal as a capacity building initiative in the field of language teaching.

The focus is on local language education matters with a few articles from international authors. The journal is gaining regional influence. However, articles should also align with an international readership in the discipline of language teaching for the journal to gain international influence.

## Business aspects

*(Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)*

The *Journal for Language Teaching* is owned by SAALT which is also its publisher. The production and distribution are done in-house and through a printing house. The regular print run is 150 copies per issue. As per AGM decision the journal will reduce the number of print copies as there is an intention to go fully online in the near future and to make the journal available on open access platforms. No advertising is carried in the journal.

The journal is not financially sponsored. Since membership arrangements changed in 2015/2016, no 'paid members' exist. Between 40 and 50 libraries and other research entities receive the journal for purposes of indexing and to increase the readership. The national libraries receive the journal free of charge and other libraries pay for hard copies. The journal is funded wholly via page fees. It is currently set at R2 500.00 per article to a maximum of 20 pages. Every page over and above 20 pages, is calculated at an additional R250.00 per page.

The management of editorial workflow is done manually but the journal is in the process of investigating the implementation of an online system. The journal is not accessible free of charge but is available on certain platforms at a cost. There have been no offers to purchase the journal. Articles are copyrighted by SAALT and cannot be published in another journal, unless permission is given by the editor to do so. There is no formal licensing agreement with authors.

This journal is indexed on AJOL; EBSCOhost; Sociological Abstracts INC.; Linguistic and Language Behaviour Abstracts (LLBA); South African Studies (SAS); and Sabinet Online. Impact factors and altmetric indicators have not been established. The majority of the articles published have been in English and English abstracts and front details are mandatory. The few Afrikaans articles were printed in Afrikaans with English abstracts and title details. This is the journal's first independent peer review.



## Suggested improvements

**Consensus review:** The editorial board could be broadened to include scholars from the African continent.

The journal is encouraged to develop and make public an editorial policy.

The focus of the journal should be on language teaching as the inter-disciplinary stance is not enhancing the journal's core objectives. The journal should look at its scope. There is no deep understanding of how the contributions in the journal are related to fundamental issues facing language education.

It was noted that there were many single-authored articles. The journal should seek out more collaborative research opportunities.

The value of academic journals is greatly enhanced through 'arranged debate' in special issues, featuring invited international contributors in dialogue with local scholars.

Attention should be focused on longitudinal studies and large-scale studies on contemporary language dilemmas to ensure that the journal contributes significantly to enhancing knowledge in the discipline.

The journal should consider value-adding content such as editorial comments, book reviews, commentaries and correspondence to augment its impact.

Opening up the journal to articles in other South African languages would prove very useful to teachers and researchers of those languages. The Panel recommends that the journal focus on its core objectives.

### 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 encourages the journal to implement the suggested recommendations in order to further improve the quality.

## 4.4.2 Per Linguam: A Journal of Language Learning

### Focus and scope

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

The journal focuses on topics related to language learning and applied linguistics, as well as issues related to multilingualism and educational psychology. The interdisciplinary focus emerges in articles that focus on psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic elements of language acquisition. In South Africa the majority of learners and students use an additional language for academic purposes. Our society is a multilingual one where languages are in constant contact and often conflict. How (language) learning can be facilitated is a major priority for education at all levels. *Per Linguam* facilitates the dissemination of research about these important issues by and to scholars and educators.

The target audience is South African, but since going open source, there have been more contributions from the rest of Africa and from the Middle East, probably because of the similarity in our contexts. It is estimated that readership is 90% South African, and 10% international (rest of Africa, China, Middle East).

## Editing functions

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

**Consensus review:** The editor-in-chief has a sound background in the field of language education. The editorial board has six members who are not active scholars/researchers in the field of language education. Also, it is noted that the list of editorial board members needs to be updated. There is only one member from another African country. It is concerning that the only two South African universities featuring on the editorial panel are from the Western Cape; and only one African university; yet the journal is based in Africa and the research activity published in the journal reflects African issues. A strong African representation would enhance a journal that aims to reflect African issues. Another concern is that the editor-in-chief and editorial panel members are appointed permanently, and their appointments do not follow a competitive process. The journal reflects neither a nationally nor internationally high reputation.

## Questionnaire

*(Editorial process-related criteria)*

*Per Linguam* was established in 1984. The publication frequency is two issues per year, occasionally with a third special issue. It is available online at: <http://perlinguam.journals.ac.za>. As of 2018 there are 8444 registered users and 8309 registered readers (these figures may overlap since users may also be readers). There have been 52 702 abstract views (all issues) since going live, and a total of 99 791 galley views (with issue 28(1) getting 3529 galley views). The readership is unknown, but the journal has received submissions from at least 20 different countries, with the majority from South Africa and the African continent namely Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania and Zimbabwe, as well as countries ranging from the Middle East and China to New Zealand.

The journal usually appears in June/July and November/December. There have not been any interruptions in the current editor's tenure. Fifty full articles were published from 2015 to 2017. The total number of manuscripts received during this period was 126. Ten manuscripts were rejected without peer review and 21 after peer review – a rejection rate of just under 25%. It is difficult to determine how many peer-reviewed papers had at least one author with a non-South African address because many authors from African countries may be living in South Africa, but the estimate is probably around 15%.

Usually, two peer reviewers are approached for each submitted manuscript. The selection of peer reviewers is based on their expertise and availability. Double-blind peer review is conducted. Authors are required to respond to reviewers' comments in a separate document when they re-submit. In the case of small revisions, the editors check against the reviewer comments whether the revisions have been made. If the reviewers asked the author(s) to revise and resubmit, the revised copy goes back to the reviewers for a second round of review. Peer reviewers do not receive follow-up information, but it can be provided upon request. The online system can assess reviewer performance, but this has not been implemented as yet. The editors have a list of unsuitable reviewers. Around 129 peer reviewers have been used in one of the last three years. Eight of these reviewers had non-South African addresses. Since 2011, peer review reports are accessibly retained in the journal's records. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication online is nine months.

The current editor took up the position in 2009. The journal is regarded as a university publication and thus the appointment was not competitive. The period of appointment is indefinite. An associate editor was employed after consultation with the editorial panel. The editorial panel (board) does not manage peer review but does advise on editorial policies and practices. The length of office is unspecified. The members of the editorial advisory board were already serving on the board when the current editor took the position in 2009 and the editor invited three new members. Appointments are not competitive, and the period of appointment is indefinite. Members are appointed from inside and outside the country. The board provides specific topical expertise.

The journal has editorial guidelines which are aligned with ASSAf's *Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing, Editing and Peer Review*. There is no formal conflict-of-interest policy but if errors do occur, then the online version is revised, and *errata* are published in the next copy.

Analytical book reviews are published. Other value-adding features include editorials for special editions as well as the language teaching notes, which are articles that present the latest research insights for teachers. In the online version all the pages in the journal are devoted to scholarly articles. In the paper version 5% is taken up with the table of contents and the style requirements.

## Content

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

**Consensus review:** The journal focuses on a wide range of research areas and includes language learning and teaching, applied linguistics, multilingualism and educational psychology. Some methodologically and theoretically weak articles were identified with problems in research design, research questions, data analyses, conceptual clarity, literature reviews and referencing. The scientific standard of articles is generally low with limited advancement in scholarship. The journal does not consistently attract top scholars in the field of language education. Value-added scholarly features like editorials and scholarly correspondence have not been included.

## Essential technical features

*(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)*

**Consensus review:** Abstracts are written in English but may not follow standard practice. No *errata* appeared in the volumes reviewed. Works cited are not recent and citations are inadequate. The journal webpage has outdated information and should be updated. Presentation, design, layout, style, and copy-editing interventions are satisfactory.

## Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

**Consensus review:** A small percentage of articles are written by emerging researchers. Although the majority of authors are established researchers, the scientific and academic quality of articles do not contribute to knowledge in the discipline of language education.

The journal is focused on local language issues, does not attract many international authors and does not compare favourably with international journals in language education.

## Business aspects

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

Stellenbosch University owns and publishes the journal. The production and distribution are handled in-house. The journal does not carry advertising and it is not financially sponsored. There are around 150 paying subscribers; 54 are individual subscribers. Since the journal became available online, the number of individual subscribers has declined sharply. There are 8314 registered readers (i.e. persons who have registered to receive notifications of new issues). The page fees are R250.00 per page. Management of editorial workflow is via an online management system. The journal is available online and is open access.

There have been no offers from multi-national publishers to purchase the journal. All articles are published under the CC BY-NC-ND license; copyright is retained by the authors. There is no licensing agreement with authors.

The journal was not indexed at the time of the review and has no impact factor at this stage. The journal has recently been indexed by Scopus. Altmetric indicators are drawn from the online site and from Google analytics. The university's library services also provide altmetric indicators. Mandatory 'front details' for papers and English abstracts are provided. A 'bio note' is included after the article with e-mail addresses.

The journal has not been independently peer reviewed before.

[Note: The journal was accepted for inclusion in Scopus in October 2019.]

## Suggested improvements

**Consensus review:** The editor-in-chief should be appointed for a limited period and the appointment should follow a competitive process.

Attempts should be made to invite South African, African and international scholars in the field of language education to serve on the editorial panel. Again, the appointment processes should be competitive that include advertising to a broader pool of potential senior academics/researchers.

Abstracts for articles could be improved and brought in line with standard best practice.

It is recommended that the journal develop policies for the publication of *errata* and conflict of interest and that these policies be made visible on the journal's website.

The scope of the journal is too wide and includes a range of highly specialised matters like Literacy, Language Education, Academic Literacy, Academic Writing, Applied Linguistics, etc. There are journals that are dedicated to those sub-fields of language matters. The danger of not keeping the focus on issues around language teaching and learning is that the contribution to language education may be compromised.

The criteria for publishing in the journal should be made accessible on the journal's website. The provision of clear guidelines for authors may prevent the lack of methodological and scholarly rigour in the articles and abstracts.

The scholarship with regard to the key purpose of the journal, i.e. language education, would be enhanced if it is not simply restricted to articles. It is recommended that the journal includes regular editorials, contemporary language debates, book reviews, and scholarly correspondence.

### Panel's consensus view

- i. The journal should not continue to be listed on the DHET accredited list, regardless of its inclusion in the Scopus index. The resolution of the conflict between indices used by DHET needs to be addressed in the interest of clarity for authors and journals.
- ii. The journal should not be invited to join the SciELO SA platform.
- iii. The panel recommends that the journal seriously consider the suggested recommendations in this review.

## 4.4.3 Reading & Writing

### Focus and scope

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

*Reading & Writing* is an inter-disciplinary and inter-professional journal that explores how literacy is defined, enacted and promoted in a range of institutional, socio-cultural and disciplinary contexts, particularly within Africa and other developing countries. The journal publishes original articles that provoke debate, explore issues and posit solutions about literacy interventions, practices and education. It focuses on and relates to transnational and 'translocal' literacies associated with immigrants and mobile people in African settings. The aim is to design literacy practices in education that will stimulate community-based, socio-economic transformation and development in Africa. The journal offers the breadth of outlook to promote interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary approaches that can stretch and invigorate our sense of what concepts and approaches are productive in the field of literacy education.

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The focus is on literacy but could be literacy in relation to other disciplines as well.

The journal aims to improve the teaching and learning of the literacies in South Africa through the research articles that it publishes.

The journal's primary target audiences are the national and international scholars and teachers. The journal has a worldwide audience.

### Editing functions

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

**Consensus review:** The editor is an academic with a good national reputation and is actively engaged with knowledge in the field of literacy. The editorial board consists of a high number of nationally and internationally respected scholars in the discipline. A large number of editorial board members were appointed at the journal's inception and are still serving members. This should be addressed.



## Questionnaire

### *(Editorial process-related criteria)*

*Reading & Writing* was established in 2010 and is published annually. Individual articles are published as soon as they are ready for publication by adding them to the table of contents of the 'current' volume and issue. Special issues may be added on an ad hoc basis to the journal throughout a particular year and will form part of consecutive issues thereafter. The journal is available online: <http://www.rw.org.za>. According to the journal's records from 2012 to January 2018, there have been 106 292 visits and 254 463 downloads. Users from 198 countries worldwide including 48 African countries access the journal. Issues are not pre-scheduled to appear on given dates. Continuous publication has not been interrupted since 2012. No reason was given for the interruption prior to this.

A total of 39 full articles were published over the three-year review period. The manuscripts received totalled 101. Thirty-three manuscripts were rejected without peer review, and 19 were rejected after review. According to the journal's records, the proportion of peer-reviewed papers that had at least one author with a non-South African address was 12.82%. Two peer reviewers are usually approached to review each submitted manuscript. The editor bases their selection on many factors, including expertise, reputation, specific recommendations and their own previous experience of a reviewer's characteristics. Peer review is conducted in a 'double-blind' way.

Peer review provides an independent assessment of the importance and technical accuracy of the results described, but the feedback from referees conveyed to authors (with the editors' advice) frequently also results in manuscripts being refined so that their structure and logic are more readily apparent to readers. The editor keeps reviewers informed on the final decision on the manuscript and is committed to providing feedback on the outcome of the manuscript. Reviewers' performance is rated, and information is captured in a database. Twenty-five peer reviewers were used in 2016; 36% of these reviewers were based outside South Africa. Peer review reports were accessibly retained in the journal's records. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication is 34 weeks.

The current editor was appointed competitively for a five-year term. The editor has held the position for two years. The editorial board manages peer review; they also provide advice on editorial policies and practices. The editorial board members are not appointed competitively but they are nominated by the Association. The length of office is four years. The editorial advisory board members serve for a period of five years. Members are local and international, and they provide topical expertise.

The journal has an editorial policy and there are policies for conflict-of-interest and *errata*. The guidelines have been aligned with ASSAf's *Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing and Peer Review*.

*Reading & Writing* does not publish value-adding features such as critical editorials, book reviews or correspondence on articles. Approximately 99% of the content represents peer-reviewed original material.

## Content

*(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in South Africa, enrichment features)*

**Consensus review:** The articles, some of which are empirical, vary in quality from “poor” to “excellent”. The standard of the weak articles needs to be addressed specifically in terms of their contribution to knowledge in the field of literacy.

The journal focuses mainly on South African issues and there is limited international participation. The journal should increase contributions from the African continent given the continental literacy crisis. After initially showing a tendency to have a larger number of articles from a single institution, the distribution of contributors has improved progressively over the years. By 2017 the spread impressively included almost all South African universities (including universities of technology), as well as contributors from Botswana and Lesotho. A small number of contributors are even based outside Africa. One more strength is the trend of co-authorship that includes members of research institutes pertinent to the subject of research.

There are no additional scholarly features like editorials and contemporary debates. Referees are mostly authors who have published in the journal with little to no contribution from the editorial board as reviewers. The publishing of articles by the same authors, sometimes in the same edition, and the publishing of articles by the editor in consecutive issues of the journal is not good practice.

## Essential technical features

*(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)*

**Consensus review:** The abstracts do not follow the normal conventions, do not provide a good synopsis of what the reader can expect in the article and the use of headings is not appropriate. There is no publication of *errata* in the volumes under review. The journal reflects good citation practice and author guidelines are provided. The design, presentation, layout and style are generally good. Ethical issues regarding anonymity, confidentiality and access to the data are also explained in detail. The journal should take cognisance of technical details with regard to language usage, copy-editing and proofreading of articles.

## Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

**Consensus review:** The journal has published articles by respected local academics, doctoral candidates and emerging researchers, and so will likely provide a valuable stimulus for younger researchers and postgraduate students. The co-authorship practice and involvement of undergraduate and post-graduate students in empirical research leading to publications, are likely to mentor junior members of faculty and prospective young academics into productive research.

The focus is on local literacy issues and the journal is gaining regional influence. The journal is not comparable with leading international journals in the discipline. The cited sources include authoritative texts globally.

## Business aspects

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

The title owner is the Literacy Association of South Africa (LITASA) and AOSIS publishes the journal. There is no regular print run because it is an online journal. AOSIS manages the production and distribution. The journal carries advertising which is unpaid. It receives financial sponsorship from the LITASA. There are no paying subscribers. APCs are charged at R1 268.00 (excl. VAT) per A4 output page. The editorial workflow is managed via an online management system.

*Reading & Writing* is open access. The journal has not received offers to purchase. Ownership of copyright of the manuscript contents remains with the authors. There is a licensing agreement with authors. Author(s) of work published by AOSIS are required to grant AOSIS the unlimited rights to publish the definitive work in any format, language and medium, for any lawful purpose. AOSIS requires journal authors to publish their work in open access under the CC Attribution 4.0 International (CC-BY-4.0) licence.

The journal is indexed in: AOSIS Library Index; Citation Index; DOAJ; EBSCOhost; GALE, CENGAGE Learning; Norwegian Register for Scientific Journals, Series and Publishers; ProQuest; Sabinet; SciELO SA; and Web of Science Emerging Sources. The journal has an index of 8 on the Google Scholar h5-index. Altmetric indicators are determined to track the journal's progress. English abstracts are mandatory as well as 'front details' for papers. The DOAJ accepted the journal into the Directory on 2016.

[Note: The journal was accepted at the beginning of August 2019 for inclusion into Scopus.]

## Suggested improvements

**Consensus review:** More attention should be paid to drawing in scholars from other African countries both as authors and members of the editorial board.

A better mix of South African and other African and/or developing countries' case studies could be included in the journal.

More could be done to attract articles involving case studies on immigrants and mobile people in Africa, since, according to the focus and scope of the journal "It focusses on and relates to transnational and translocal literacies associated with immigrants and mobile people in African settings".

The annual LITASA conference should garner publishable material.

The standard of the weak articles needs improvement, specifically in terms of their contribution to knowledge in the field of literacy.

Addition of value-adding content such as editorial comments, book reviews, commentaries and correspondence would augment the impact and improve the quality of the journal. The field addressed by this journal is critical to the future of the country. This predicament should be highlighted in short, punchy editorials.

The editorial best practices need consideration with regard to copy-editing, proofreading and academic quality of articles. A copy editor should be appointed to enhance the academic quality of the articles. Article abstracts need improvement and should follow the normal conventions. The same authors should not appear in subsequent editions or twice in the same edition of the journal.

### 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 journal should seriously consider the suggested recommendations in this review.

## 4.5 Mathematics and Natural Sciences

### 4.5.1 African Journal of Health Professions Education

#### Focus and scope

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

The *African Journal of Health Professions Education* (AJHPE) is a journal for health professions educators. It carries research articles, short scientific reports, letters, editorials, education practice, personal opinion and other topics related to the education of health care professionals. It also features African education-related news, obituaries and general correspondence. The journal aims to focus on all fields of health professions education.

The target audience is primarily South African and African-based health professions education scholars.

#### Editing functions

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

**Consensus review:** The journal editor and editorial team have good standing nationally and internationally in health professions education and clinical medicine. The majority of associate editors who comprise the editorial board are linked to the Sub-Saharan Africa Famer Regional Institute (SAFRI), which enjoys a good reputation in health science education circles. Though the editorial board is not representative of all health professions, they represent local institutions. There are two international advisors who have good scholarly reputations internationally and are familiar with the African context.

#### Questionnaire

*(Editorial process-related criteria)*

Established in 2009 the AJHPE is published quarterly (four issues per year) and is available online: [www.ajhpe.org.za](http://www.ajhpe.org.za). The visit and download record are article-dependant but the visit range is between 125 and 4429 and the average views are 1 274 while the download range is between 38 and 2740 with an average of 544 downloads. Based on Google Analytics data, the reach is quite broad across continents and in as many as 48 countries worldwide. Users from 15 African countries access the journal (12%). Based on the report for 2017, the highest-ranking users are 42% from South Africa, 11% from the Unites States, 7% from the United Kingdom, and between 1 and 6% from Australia, Canada, India, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, and the Philippines.

Issues are pre-scheduled to appear on given dates and do appear regularly on these dates. No significant interruptions have halted publication. During the three-year review period, 97 full articles, two letters, two review articles, and one book review were published. The following additional features were also published over the same period: 12 short reports (1500 words); three 'commentary'; two 'forum' pieces; and 16 supplementary full articles. A total of 151 full articles, three letters, and four review articles were received. The other articles received were as follows: short reports 21; 'commentary' eight; 'forum' 11; supplementary full articles 47.

The manuscripts rejected without peer review were as follows: 71 full articles; four letters; three review articles. The total number of articles rejected after peer review were 41 full articles and one review article. The proportion of peer-reviewed papers that had at least one author with a non-South African address was approximately 25%.

Two peer reviewers are usually approached for each submitted manuscript. They are selected based on their interest and expertise in the content area. A 'double-blind' peer review process is used to conduct peer review. Reviewers are provided with a guideline form which they follow in conducting their review. Editors review feedback from reviewers, and in turn request that authors provide letters outlining how they have responded to the reviewers' comments and motivate for instances where they have not revised as per reviewer feedback. Reviewers do receive follow-up information. All decisions and feedback to authors are accessible to reviewers by viewing the submission history and details. Reviewer activity is recorded by the editorial submission system (Editorial Manager). In 2017, a total of 98 reviewers were used and of these, eight per cent had non-South African addresses. The reports are accessibly retained in the journal's records. On average, the period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication online is approximately six months.

The editor, who was not appointed competitively, has been at the helm of the journal since 2009. The term of appointment has not been stipulated. The associate editors handle peer review and also advise on editorial policies and practices. Members have been in office for periods ranging between two and nine years. The international advisors have been in office since the establishment of the journal. Their appointments were not competitive. The period is two years with a renewable appointment. Members are both local and international. The board provides topical expertise.

The journal's policies are available on the website and the guidelines are aligned with ASSAf's *Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing, Editing and Peer Review*: <http://www.ajhpe.org.za/index.php/ajhpe/about>. There is a conflict-of-interest policy that requires both authors and reviewers to declare all sources of support for their research, any personal or financial relationships (including honoraria, speaking fees, gifts received, etc.) with relevant individuals or organisations connected to the topic of the paper, and any association with a product or subject that may constitute a real, perceived or potential conflict of interest. The journal has a policy for publishing errata: <http://www.ajhpe.org.za/index.php/ajhpe/about/submissions#authorGuidelines>.

All investigations will be conducted in accordance with guidelines provided by COPE.

The value-adding features published in the journal include commentaries, critical topical reviews, analytical book reviews and correspondence on published articles. The percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material is 95%.



## Content

*(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in South Africa, enrichment features)*

**Consensus review:** The articles are well-edited and cover the range and level of research appropriate for a journal of national and African purposes. The quality of the articles accepted is good. The articles reflect a range of research designs, covering both quantitative and qualitative research approaches. The *AJHPE* is interdisciplinary, and a wide range of health professions is covered. A good number of articles, short research reports and short communications are published per annum. This is especially evident in the increase of the number of issues per annum (from two in 2015 and 2016 to four issues per year).

There is a good focus on regional issues, and particularly on interprofessional issues. Although somewhat dominated by the medical profession, the number of articles regarding other health professions is good. Most of the South African authors are from universities across the country without the dominance of any particular university. In addition, African authors from Southern Africa, East Africa and West Africa are well-represented, especially in the latter issues of the journal. The quality and importance of the work published reflects the good reputation and standing of the journal amongst various health professionals in South Africa, in particular, and Africa, to an ever increasing level. This is especially relevant given the fact that numerous international journals also publish articles dealing with educational matters in health professions training programmes. There are good editorials in each issue, however the book review section is under-used.

## Essential technical features

*(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)*

**Consensus review:** Well-structured and informative abstracts in English are provided for all articles. There were no actual publications of *errata*. The journal prescribes a widely accepted referencing style. The journal has good and consistent presentation, design, layout, style and copy-editing interventions. There are very few images, but tables and diagrams are used ethically, and the journal has a strict policy on the use of copyright-protected images.

## Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

**Consensus review:** The journal is especially suitable to stimulate the educational development of graduate students, as well as the professional development of health professions educators. The content of the articles focuses predominantly on applied educational praxis and/or health professions education contexts (local and regional).

The journal publishes high quality articles that are comparable to articles in international journals in terms of the presentation, and content is relevant mainly for the African researchers. An African journal for African researchers needs to be encouraged and supported.

## Business aspects

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

The Health and Medical and Publishing Group (HMPG) owns and publishes the journal. There is no regular print run because the journal is online. Production and distribution are handled in-house. There are no advertisements in the journal. The *AJHPE* is financially sponsored by the Foundation for Professional Development (FPD).

The journal is an open access journal and does not require subscription to view and read. Presently, there are no article-processing charges. An online management system (Editorial Manager) is used to manage the editorial workflow. There have been offers to purchase from multi-national publishers, but the details were not provided.

Copyright remains in the author's name and the work is licensed under a CC Attribution, Non-commercial Works License. Authors are required to complete and sign an agreement that outlines author and publisher rights and terms of publication. Material submitted for publication in the *AJHPE* is accepted provided it has not been published or submitted for publication elsewhere.

The *AJHPE* is indexed in African Index Medicus, AJOL, DOAJ, EBSCOhost, Google Scholar, IBSS and on Sabinet. The impact factor at the time of the review was 0.35. Altmetric indicators are available on the publishing platform. 'Front details' and English abstracts for all articles are mandatory. The journal has not been independently peer reviewed before.

## Suggested improvements

**Consensus review:** The focus of the articles is important to local and regional health professions education and this should be maintained.

The international board could be expanded to include more international members, including from Africa who understand the discipline and the African context. The journal should also consider its representativity on its board to include international members with expertise in health professions education.

The journal could introduce a section for other scholarly features such as regular book reviews and commentary papers.

Since the content is not yet comparable with leading international journals, the journal should consider inviting more authors from outside South Africa (especially from the continent) to bring in a more regional focus.

There should be representation of all medical fields. More submissions from educationalists in laboratory and basic sciences should be encouraged.

Inviting reviewers from African countries outside of South Africa would be appropriate. The journal is commended for including reviewers' comments when corresponding with authors.

## 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 to increase its visibility.**
- iii. **The journal should consider the suggested recommendations in this review to further improve the journal.**

## 4.5.2 African Journal of Research in Mathematics, Science and Technology Education (AJRMSTE)

### Focus and scope

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

The *African Journal of Research in Mathematics, Science and Technology Education* (AJRMSTE) disseminates as widely as possible high quality research articles on Curriculum Studies; Teacher Education; Education for Development; Mathematics Education; Science Education; Design & Technology Education and Computer Science Education. The journal is the communication platform for the South African based professional research organisation, the Southern African Association of Research in Mathematics, Science and Technology Education (SAARMSTE). Articles that promote the understanding of curricular policy and diverse socio-cultural issues and those which stimulate epistemological and methodological debates are welcome. The journal welcomes articles that will contribute to the overall development of science, mathematics, technology and environmental education in Africa.

The primary target audiences include scholars (researchers, teacher educators, curriculum developers, education policy makers) within South Africa and elsewhere in the continent.

The journal is read by about 2926 institutions via sales agreements with the publishers Taylor & Francis (2018). In addition, a few institutions have subscribed independently.

### Editing functions

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

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**Consensus review:** The editorial team and the members of the editorial board have high national and international disciplinary reputations and are representative of the discipline foci of the journal: Mathematics, Science and Technology Education. Four of the 18 board members are from other countries on the African continent.

### Questionnaire

*(Editorial process-related criteria)*

The journal was first published in 1996 as the *Journal of the Southern African Association for Research in Mathematics and Science Education*. From 2001 it was published as the *African Journal of Research in Mathematics, Science and Technology Education* (AJRMSTE).

Three issues are published as one volume annually. It is accessible online via the Taylor & Francis platform: <http://www.tandfonline.com/rmse>. The journal had 7,587 full-text downloads in 2017. Based on these statistics, readers from 68 countries downloaded articles. In 2017, about 37% of downloads were from African countries, about 15% from European countries, and about 15% from the United States of America. The majority of individual subscribers are SAARMSTE members: there are currently about 290 SAARMSTE members.

Issues are pre-scheduled to appear on given dates throughout the year. There have been no significant interruptions to publication since the journal was established. Over the three-year review period, 83 peer-reviewed full-text articles were published. Other papers included two acknowledgements. Approximately 440 manuscripts were received over the three-year period. On average about 40% of articles annually are rejected without peer review and 40% are rejected after review. The journal has an average rejection rate of 80% (85% in 2017). Approximately 30% of papers published annually have one of the authors affiliated to an institution outside South Africa (36% in 2017). On average four reviewers are approached. Selection of reviewers is based on two critical criteria: discipline expertise and methodological expertise. A double-blind system of peer review is used. There is rigorous implementation of valid reviewer critique and article improvement. Usually, peer reviewers receive follow-up information. Reliability of reviewers and quality of their feedback is annotated in a reviewers' spreadsheet. A total of 105 reviewers were used in 2015, and 101 in 2016. Approximately 48% of these reviewers are affiliated to institutions outside South Africa. Peer review reports are accessibly retained in the journal's record-keeping system. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication in print is 11 months and online is seven months.

[Note: In 2018, full-text downloads went up to 12 574. Forty percent (40%) of these countries were on the African continent. The average rejection rate for 2018 was 81%.]

The previous editor-in-chief completed two terms of editorship (end of 2018) and a new editor-in-chief began their first term in January 2019. The membership of SAARMSTE appoints the editor at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) from amongst its members. This appointment goes through the democratic process of candidate proposal and voting. The period of appointment is for four years with the option to renew.

[Note: A new editor-in-chief took over from 2019.]

The editorial board manages peer review and also provides advice on editorial policies. The period of appointment is not set, and the current members have been in service for a period of between four and seven years. None of the editorial members serve as associate editors. However, they are from time to time asked to serve as reviewers. Associate editors are nominated by the editor and their nomination is ratified by the executive committee. There is no editorial advisory board. Board members are selected on the basis of proven usefulness. Out of the 18 board members, six are from within South Africa. The board has expertise representation from amongst mathematics education, science education and technology education research.

The editorial guidelines of the journal are available online: <http://www.tandfonline.com/action/authorSubmission?journalCode=rmse20&page=instructions>. Taylor & Francis (Routledge) is a member of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE). All of the Taylor & Francis (Routledge) journals, including AJRMSTE abide by the COPE guidelines on publication ethics. The 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: <https://authorservices.taylorandfrancis.com/corrections-to-published-articles/>

There are no value-adding features published in the journal and 100% of the content represents peer-reviewed original material.

## Content

*(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in South Africa, enrichment features)*

**Consensus review:** A good number of high quality articles are published in the journal. The articles have a strong focus on contextual relevance to international and African mathematics, science and technology education.

The articles represent an adequate sample of the best work done in the country.

The journal focuses on research articles and recently included a topical research review feature however, editorials, book reviews and scholarly correspondence are lacking.

## Essential technical features

*(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)*

**Consensus review:** There are clear editorial guidelines. All articles are in English and introduced by well-structured abstracts.

One *erratum* was observed, and no major errors were detected in the volumes under review. This reflects a thorough screening/editing process prior to publication and good copy-editing interventions. Good citation practices are reflected.

There is good presentation, design, layout, style, and images are used in an ethical manner. There is a consistency across articles and volumes.

## Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

**Consensus review:** The journal fills an important niche in Africa, and it serves to encourage and develop publication capacity of young and new researchers in the disciplines.

The journal compares very well with other international journals. The inclusion of renowned international researchers on the editorial board and as authors, with much experience in the Mathematics, Science and Technology Education field, ensures the required quality.

## Business aspects

*(Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)*

The SAARMSTE owns the journal and it is published by Taylor & Francis. The regular print run is nearly 1,000 copies annually. Production and distribution are handled in-house. The journal does not carry advertising. All costs are met by SAARMSTE through membership fees. Subscriber details are business sensitive, but information about the journal's circulation has been provided.

Article-processing fees are not charged unless authors choose to publish open access. Management of editorial workflow is done via an online management system. The journal is part of a commercial e-publication service and it is free for SAARMSTE members, but access is password protected. SAARMSTE retains ownership of the journal and it has not received offers to purchase.

It is a condition of publication that authors assign copyright or license the publication rights in their articles, including abstracts, to SAARMSTE. There is a Standard copyright licence to publish and a CC



licence if open access.

AJRMSTE is abstracted and indexed in the Clarivate Analytics' ESCI; Educational Research Abstracts Database (ERA); Google Scholar; Norwegian Register for Scientific Journals, Series and Publishers and Scopus. CiteScores for 2017 and 2018 are 0.33 and 0.55. Altmetric indicators have been determined for the journal.

There are mandatory 'front details' for papers and English abstracts introduce each article. This is the journal's first independent peer review.

### Suggested improvements

**Consensus review:** A succession plan for the editor-in-chief should be developed.

The journal should expand its editorial board membership and the appointment of editorial board members should be a transparent process. The high rejection rate and high workload for board members necessitates an increase in the number of board members. There needs to be broader African representation on the editorial board especially since this is an African journal.

Special issues for collaborative research projects should be considered.

The journal should consider the inclusion of other value-adding features such as critical editorials, topical reviews and book reviews.

The journal can be commended for its developmental slant by encouraging emerging scientists in relevant fields.

### 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 the relationship with its publishers change and it becomes open access.
- iii. The editorial team and board can be commended for producing a good quality journal and for its developmental slant by encouraging emerging scientists in relevant fields.

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## 4.5.3 Southern African Journal of Environmental Education (SAJEE)

### Focus and scope

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

The *Southern African Journal of Environmental Education* (SAJEE) is published by the Environmental Education Association of Southern Africa (EEASA) and focuses on environmental education (EE) as a sub-field of educational research which incorporates education for sustainable development (ESD) as well as environmental ethics and action in relation to education. The SAJEE is however, also interdisciplinary in that it is of interest to some areas of scholarship in the environmental sciences, and development studies and related skills development studies.

It includes a variety of research genres; reviews and keynote papers; comparative studies; retrospective analyses of activities or trends; commentaries on policy issues; and critical reviews of environmental education, ethics and action in a particular country or context.

The SAJEE provides a platform for environmental scientists, media and communication studies who have an interest in the environmentally oriented educative aspects of their research and practice and allows South(ern) African scholars to develop their research within a trans-boundary, regional, social-ecological context and community. This enriches post-colonial scholarship within the southern African region. The SAJEE is the only regionally-focused EE journal on the African continent.

The journal actively seeks out international dialogue in order to provide perspective on and for EE/ ESD in southern Africa. It also incorporates an author support programme to encourage new authors in the field to establish themselves as scholarly writers.

The known readership is approximately 90% southern African.

## Editing functions

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

**Consensus review:** The editor-in-chief is well-known in the field. The members of the editorial board have high disciplinary reputations judging by the citations in accredited journals and books in the past years. The editorial board members have national and international recognition and are mostly from outside the country (Australia, Canada, Europe and United Kingdom; other African countries: Botswana, Uganda, Lesotho, Zambia, Zimbabwe). There are two national members who are reputable scholars in the field.

## Questionnaire

*(Editorial process-related criteria)*

The SAJEE is an annual journal which was established in 1984. It is an online journal: <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/sajee>. There were more than 1250 downloads of full papers and more than 500 downloads of abstracts in one month of publication (March 2017); there were consistently more than 750 full paper downloads per month throughout the year 2017. SAJEE is most intensively read in and throughout southern Africa especially in higher education institutions that offer environmental education programmes. The journal is also read in the rest of Anglophone Africa, and in North America, India, Scandinavia, Australia and the United Kingdom, all of which have strong scholarly networks with the southern Africa EE/ESD scholarly community, and in South America where there are strong intellectual similarities. At least 22 African countries access the journal.

The journal is produced by the end of each calendar year or within the first quarter of the following year. The journal experienced disruption in publication from 2000 to 2002 as the journal was moved from Rhodes University to UNISA and experienced some delays. There was also an interruption in publication in 2012 due to administrative difficulties and as a result a double-volume issue for 2012 and 2013 was released.

Twenty full articles and one book review were published over the three-year review period. Two 'Think Piece' papers were also published; these are deliberative, conceptual papers of between 3000 and 8000 words which may include some empirical data and are at times similar to review articles. Three 'Viewpoint' papers were also published over the same period; these are shorter research-based or conceptual contributions of between 2000 and 3000 words on a specific topic. A total of 56 full article manuscripts, one book review, 6 conference papers, two 'Think Piece' papers and five 'Viewpoint' papers were received. Of the full articles, ten were rejected pre-review and 19 after peer review.

The proportion of peer-reviewed papers that had at least one author with a non-South African address is 25%. Two peer reviewers are usually approached for each submitted manuscript and peer review is conducted 'blind'. Peer reviewers are selected from an online database of reviewers according to areas of expertise and the ability to review based on topic, context and methodology. The editors also look at track record of reviews e.g. extent to which reviewers are able to critically look at quality criteria. The journal ensures rigorous implementation of valid reviewer critique and article improvement. It is in the process of establishing a feedback system so that reviewers will receive feedback. A new system was put in place in early 2018 to assess reviewer performance and capture information online. In 2016, 20 reviewers were used and out of these eight reviewers had non-South African addresses. Peer review reports were accessibly retained in the journal's records. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication is approximately one year.

The editor-in-chief has served in this position with two deputy editors since 2017 (the editor had previously served from 1990 to 1999). Editors are nominated by EEASA members via a consultative process in the annual EEASA Annual General Meeting (AGM). The period of appointment is five years. The board handles peer review, advises on editorial policies and practices and provides specific topical expertise. The editorial board (consisting of national and international scholars) has been in place since 2017 when existing members were asked to review their role on the board. Members were appointed via invitation based on diversity of expertise, quality of engagement with environmental education, broad knowledge of the field, topic and methodological expertise diversity, and commitment to a developmental scholarship ethos as well as regional/international presence and experience. The period of appointment is for a six-year period, with review and/or revisions after this period and option to continue for two or three terms, depending on availability, expertise and willingness to contribute to the SAJEE in a voluntary capacity.

Editorial guidelines are published in every issue of the journal and are made available on the website. Most of the guidelines follow the ASSAf *Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review*. There is a conflict-of-interest policy and the journal publishes *errata*.

The journal produces critical editorials, especially if the journal has a thematic focus. There are occasional topical reviews or book reviews. Approximately 98% of the content in each issue represents peer-reviewed original material.

## Content

**(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in South African, enrichment features)**

**Consensus review:** The journal reflects high international and national disciplinary reputation in the field of EE/ESD. Good to high quality articles are published in the journal. Papers from a diversity of countries in southern Africa and abroad are represented in each volume, which averages twelve articles in one volume per annum.

The articles focus on current, topical issues, which lately is on sustainable development goal four – quality education. Scholarly features included are editorials, book reviews, 'Viewpoints', and 'Think Piece' papers.

## Essential technical features

**(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)**

**Consensus review:** The abstracts are well-written in English. There are clear editorial guidelines, but explicit statements on how *errata* are managed is lacking. There is no evidence of *errata* in the volumes under review. There are reasonable and consistent citations of articles. The presentation, design, layout and style are good. Articles adhere to the copy-editing interventions. Images, figures and illustrations are clearly labelled and are used in an ethical manner.

## Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

**Consensus review:** The diverse articles published serve a cross-section of academics in the field from graduate students, early career/emerging researchers, young staff and established scholars. Also, the co-publishing between junior and senior researchers and co-authoring from different countries, is further evidence of the capacity development initiative.

The journal has a local flavour, is the only journal of its kind in Africa, and it compares favourably with the international journals in the field.

## Business aspects

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

The EEASA, which is a registered Non-Profit Organisation (NPO), owns and publishes the journal. Until 2013, 400 copies per annum were printed. Production is outsourced to a publishing group and distribution is managed in-house. No advertising is carried in the journal. Between 2003 and 2013 sponsorship was obtained for hard copy printing from the SADC Regional Environmental Education Programme (via funding from Sida). Funding for special editions of the journal, and for author development programmes, is raised by EEASA in partnership with the editorial board. Income is also through membership fees which are paid as part of EEASA conference registration and amounts to approximately 300 to 400 EEASA members. Approximately 40% of subscribers are organisations as opposed to individuals. The journal does not charge page or article-processing fees. From March 2018, the management of editorial workflow has been done via an online management system (OJS). The SAJEE is an open access journal.

There have been offers to purchase from multi-national publishers but the EEASA Council declined the offer. The EEASA holds the copyright and there is a licensing agreement with authors. A CC Attribution-Non-Commercial-Share-Alike (BY-NC-SA) licensing agreement is required by AJOL.

The journal has not engaged with bibliometric systems, but this is the next frontier for the SAJEE and the AJOL platform. The journal is not indexed internationally and has no impact factor. Altmetric indicators are provided annually.

There are 'front details' for papers and English abstracts are mandatory. The journal has not been independently peer reviewed before.

[Note: Conflict-of-interest and errata: please see points 15 and 16 in the Editorial Policy, link: <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/sajee/about/editorialPolicies#custom-1>

Please also see in the Author Guidelines the statement on errata:  
<https://www.ajol.info/index.php/sajee/about/submissions#authorGuidelines>

## Suggested improvements

**Consensus review:** It was noted that the editorial team members are mainly from the Rhodes University and most of the articles are also from the same institution. The journal should consider expanding the editorial board to include more South African institutions. Although the panel does acknowledge that there are only a few South African universities offering EE which could make wider representation difficult. Also, there should be broader representation of institutions across South Africa.

The journal should broaden its reach by improving its visibility and attracting authors from more South African institutions.

The journal should publish articles that are more representative of the African continent by inviting authors, and including content, from the rest of the African continent.

The frequency of journals published per year should increase from one to two issues. This will allow an opportunity for emerging researchers from other institutions to publish and share their research as EE is an emerging field in the South African context. Collaborative research is also encouraged.

There should be clear guidelines/policies on the journal's website on how the journal manages conflict-of-interest and *errata*.

[Note: Since the review was completed, the statements on conflict-of-interest and *errata* have been included in the journal's editorial policy on the journal's website.]

## 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. Since the SAJEE is the only regionally focussed environmental education journal on the African continent, the panel recommends that the journal consider expanding its editorial board and authorship and increasing its publication frequency.
- iv. The panel believes that the journal publishes good quality research.



# Appendix A:

## Questionnaire Sent to Each Editor of Journals being Peer-Reviewed

**The questionnaire was revised in 2015 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 downloaded 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 journals 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:*

- iii. *Full articles?*
- iv. *Letters?*
- v. *Review articles?*
- vi. *Book reviews?*
- vii. *'Conference papers'?*
- viii. *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 blanked 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/Chief Editor 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 the ASSAf National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion 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-adding features such as:

- Critical Editorials?
- 'News and Views' analyses of articles being published?
- Critical topical reviews?
- Analytical book reviews?
- Correspondence on published articles?
- Others?

## 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 systems
  - 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 (i.e. Medline)?
- 3.11 What is the journal's estimated total cost per annum?
- 3.12 Has the journal had offers to purchase from multi-national 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 indexes 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 the Journal and the 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 annum?
- 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 like editorials, topical reviews, book reviews, scholarly correspondence, etc.?
- 1.8 proper (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/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.

*Report on Grouped Peer Review of Scholarly Journals in Education*



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