

Guidelines (Identification, Evaluation and Approval of Peer-Reviewed Journals), 2026

1. Short Title, Application and Commencement

- (1) These Guidelines shall be called the **"Guidelines for Identification, Evaluation and Approval of Peer-Reviewed Journals, 2026."**
- (2) These Guidelines shall apply to **all faculty members, research scholars, research staff, and all Constituent Institute and Departments**, of the University.
- (3) These Guidelines shall come into **force with effect from the date of their approval by the Research Council.**

2. Preamble

The University is committed to promoting high-quality research and encouraging publication in credible peer-reviewed journals that uphold academic integrity, publication ethics, and scholarly excellence. To establish a transparent, objective, and uniform mechanism for identifying quality peer-reviewed journals, these Guidelines have been formulated in accordance with the principles and Suggestive Parameters for Choosing Peer-Reviewed Journals issued by the University Grants Commission (UGC).

Following the discontinuation of the UGC-CARE List of Journals, the UGC has adopted a principle-based approach for the identification of quality peer-reviewed journals and has encouraged Higher Educational Institutions to establish appropriate institutional mechanisms for journal evaluation and selection. In alignment with this approach, the University has developed an institutional evaluation framework by adapting the UGC's suggestive parameters into Core Criteria and Desirable Criteria to facilitate a consistent, transparent, and evidence-based evaluation of peer-reviewed journals.

These Guidelines establish the framework for the identification, evaluation, recommendation, approval, periodic review, and maintenance of peer-reviewed journals for research publications by faculty members, researchers, and research scholars of the University. The implementation of these Guidelines shall be coordinated by the Research Office, and the final approval of journals shall be granted by the Research Council.

3. Objectives

The objectives of these Guidelines are to:

- (a) Establish a transparent, objective, and standardized framework for the identification, evaluation, and approval of peer-reviewed journals;
- (b) Promote publication in credible, ethical, and high-quality peer-reviewed journals that contribute to the advancement of knowledge and research excellence;
- (c) Provide uniform evaluation criteria for assessing the quality, transparency, editorial standards, publication ethics, and scholarly impact of journals;
- (d) Promote responsible research publication by discouraging publication in predatory, deceptive, or unethical journals that do not adhere to accepted standards of scholarly publishing.
- (e)



Define the roles and responsibilities of the concerned authorities in the journal evaluation and approval process; and

- (f) Maintain an institutional repository of approved peer-reviewed journals through periodic review and quality assurance.

4. Scope and Applicability

- (1) These Guidelines shall apply to the identification, evaluation, recommendation, approval, periodic review, and maintenance of peer-reviewed journals recognized by the University for research publications.
- (2) These Guidelines shall be applicable to all faculty members, research scholars, postdoctoral fellows, research staff, and students of the University where publication in a peer-reviewed journal is required or recommended as part of academic, research, or statutory requirements.
- (3) These Guidelines shall apply to all Constituent Institutes and Departments of the University involved in research and scholarly publication.
- (4) The evaluation and approval of peer-reviewed journals under these Guidelines shall be undertaken by the Research Office, with final approval by the Research Council, in accordance with the provisions contained herein.
- (5) These Guidelines shall be applicable to all disciplines and interdisciplinary areas of research unless otherwise specified by the Research Council.

5. Definitions

For the purpose of these Guidelines, unless the context otherwise requires:

- (1) **Approved Journal** means a peer-reviewed journal that has been evaluated in accordance with these Guidelines and approved by the Research Council for publication by faculty members, researchers, and research scholars of the University.
- (2) **Desirable Criteria** means the supplementary evaluation parameters adopted by the University to assess the transparency, accessibility, visibility, and scholarly impact of a peer-reviewed journal.
- (3) **Core Criteria** means the high weightage evaluation parameters adopted by the University to assess the quality, credibility, editorial standards, publication ethics, and peer-review practices of a peer-reviewed journal.
- (4) **Recognized Indexing Database** means a nationally or internationally recognized bibliographic, abstracting, or indexing database that evaluates and indexes scholarly journals based on established standards of quality, editorial practices, publication ethics, and academic impact. Such databases may include, but are not limited to, Scopus, Web of Science, Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), PubMed, ERIC, or any other indexing database recognized by the Research Council for the purpose of these Guidelines
- (5) **Peer-Reviewed Journal** means a scholarly journal that publishes research articles after evaluation by independent subject experts through a formal peer-review process to ensure academic quality, originality, validity, and research integrity.
- (6) **Predatory Journal** means a journal that does not follow accepted standards of scholarly publishing and publication ethics, including the absence of a genuine peer-review process, misleading editorial practices, or deceptive publishing practices.



- (7) **Research Council** means the University body responsible for granting final approval of peer-reviewed journals under these Guidelines.
- (8) **Research Office** means the administrative unit of the University responsible for scrutinizing journal proposals, evaluating compliance with these Guidelines, maintaining records of approved journals, and placing recommendations before the Research Council.

6. Journal Evaluation Framework

(1) Institutional Evaluation Framework

The University has adopted an objective, transparent, and evidence-based framework for the identification and evaluation of peer-reviewed journals in accordance with the principles and parameters prescribed by the University Grants Commission (UGC) for the identification of quality peer-reviewed journals.

The UGC has prescribed 35 evaluation parameters encompassing various aspects of journal quality, editorial standards, peer-review practices, publication ethics, transparency, discoverability, accessibility, and scholarly impact. For the purpose of institutional evaluation, the University has identified 26 measurable parameters from the UGC framework to facilitate a practical, consistent, and objective assessment of journals across all academic disciplines.

These 26 parameters have been classified into Core Criteria and Desirable Criteria, which collectively form the University's Journal Evaluation Framework.

(2) Classification of Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria shall be classified as follows:

Category	Number of Parameters
Core Criteria	16
Desirable Criteria	10
Total	26

The Core Criteria represent the minimum quality requirements that every journal shall satisfy to be considered for approval. The Desirable Criteria assess additional indicators relating to transparency, accessibility, publishing practices, visibility, and scholarly impact that further strengthen the credibility of a journal.

(3) Core Criteria

The following 16 parameters shall constitute the Core Criteria for journal evaluation:

Sr. No.	Criteria
1	ISSN Number
2	Regular publication schedule and continuity
3	Publisher details and contact information
4	Transparent peer-review policy
5	Professional journal website
6	Editorial board details
7	Editorial board subject expertise
8	Clearly defined aims, objectives, and scope
9	Defined subject areas
10	Academic contribution of published articles
11	Conformity of published articles with the journal scope
12	Ethical guidelines for authors
13	Plagiarism prevention mechanism



14	Conflict of interest policy
15	Indexation in reputed databases (recognized national or international indexing databases.)
16	Availability and accessibility of published articles

(4) **Desirable Criteria**

The following 10 parameters shall constitute the Desirable Criteria for journal evaluation:

Sr. No.	Criteria
1	Open Access or Subscription policy
2	Archival policy
3	Repository integration
4	Transparency of Article Processing Charges (APC)
5	Publishing timeline
6	Acceptance rate information
7	Bibliographic information and citation practices
8	Citation record
9	Impact indicators such as Impact Factor, CiteScore, SNIP, SJR, or other recognized journal metrics, wherever applicable
10	Citation rate and self-citation analysis

(5) **Minimum Qualifying Requirements**

For a journal to be eligible for recommendation by the Research Office, it shall satisfy the following minimum evaluation requirements:

Evaluation Criteria	Minimum Requirement
Core Criteria	At least 12 out of 16 parameters
Desirable Criteria	At least 06 out of 10 parameters
Overall Compliance	At least 21 out of 26 parameters

A journal shall be recommended for approval only if it satisfies all three of the above requirements. Failure to achieve the prescribed minimum Core Criteria, Desirable Criteria, or the overall evaluation threshold shall render the journal ineligible for recommendation under these Guidelines.

(6) **Information for Evaluation**

The evaluation of a peer-reviewed journal shall be based on information obtained from authentic and verifiable sources, including the official journal website, publisher's website, published issues, editorial board information, publication policies, indexing databases, and other relevant records. Where necessary, the Research Office may seek additional information or supporting documents to verify compliance with the evaluation criteria prescribed under these Guidelines.

7. Journal Evaluation Methodology

Every journal proposed for approval shall be initially evaluated by the respective HoD/Dean/Supervisor and subsequently reviewed by the Research Office as per the Journal Evaluation Framework prescribed in these Guidelines. The evaluation process shall be objective, transparent, consistent, and based on information obtained from authentic and verifiable sources.



(1) **Evaluation Method**

Each evaluation parameter prescribed under these Guidelines shall be assessed individually to determine whether the journal satisfies the specified requirement. The evaluation shall be based on a binary scoring system as follows:

Evaluation Status	Score
Criterion Satisfied	1
Criterion Not Satisfied	0

The score obtained under the Core Criteria, Desirable Criteria, and the Overall Evaluation shall be computed separately for determining the eligibility of the journal

(2) **Evaluation Checklist**

The Research Office shall evaluate journal submitted by HoD/Dean/Supervisor using the prescribed Journal Evaluation Checklist. The checklist shall serve as the standard evaluation instrument to ensure consistency, objectivity, and uniformity in the assessment process.

(3) **Evaluation Report**

Upon completion of the evaluation, the Research Office shall prepare a Journal Evaluation Report as per **Annexure-II** containing:

1. particulars of the journal;
2. assessment against each evaluation criterion;
3. score obtained under the Core and Desirable Criteria;
4. overall evaluation score;
5. observations, if any; and
6. recommendation for consideration by the Research Council

(4) **Validity of Journal Evaluation Report**

The Journal Evaluation Report prepared by the Research Office shall remain valid until the next periodic review of the approved journal under these Guidelines or until the approval status of the journal is revised, suspended, or withdrawn by the Research Council, whichever is earlier.

Where significant changes occur in the journal's editorial policies, publication practices, indexing status, ownership, or any other evaluation parameter before the next periodic review, the Research Office may undertake a fresh evaluation and submit a revised Journal Evaluation Report to the Research Council for consideration.

(5) **Conflict of Interest**

Any person involved in the evaluation, scrutiny, recommendation, or approval of a peer-reviewed journal under these Guidelines shall disclose any actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest relating to the journal under consideration.

conflict of interest may arise where the concerned person:

- a. is a member of the editorial board or advisory board of the journal;
- b. is associated with the publisher or sponsoring organization of the journal;
- c. has a direct financial, professional, or personal interest that may influence the evaluation process; or
- d. has any other relationship that may reasonably be perceived as affecting impartiality.

A person having such conflict of interest shall recuse themselves from the evaluation, scrutiny, recommendation, or decision-making process relating to that journal. The Research Council may nominate an alternate evaluator or take such other measures as it considers appropriate to ensure a fair, objective, and unbiased evaluation.



8. Journal Approval Process

(1) Submission of Proposal

A proposal for the evaluation and approval of a peer-reviewed journal may be initiated by a faculty member, researcher, or research scholar of the University in the prescribed format, along with the required supporting information and documents.

(2) Recommendation of initially evaluated journal by the Head of Department/Dean

The proposal shall be submitted through the respective Head of Department or Dean or Supervisor, who shall examine the relevance of the journal to the discipline concerned and, upon satisfaction of initial evaluation, recommend the proposal for evaluation by the Research Office.

(3) Scrutiny by the Research Office

Upon receipt of the proposal, the Research Office shall:

- a. verify the completeness of the proposal and supporting documents;
- b. evaluate the journal in accordance with the Journal Evaluation Framework and the methodology prescribed under these Guidelines;
- c. prepare the Journal Evaluation Report indicating compliance with the Core Criteria, Desirable Criteria, and the overall evaluation score; and
- d. submit the evaluation report along with its recommendations to the Research Council for consideration.

(4) Consideration by the Research Council

The Research Council shall examine the proposal, the Journal Evaluation Report, and the recommendations of the Research Office before arriving at a decision. The Research Council may:

- **approve** the journal for inclusion in the University's list of approved peer-reviewed journals;
- **reject** the proposal by recording the reasons thereof;
- **defer** the consideration of the proposal pending submission of additional information, clarification, or supporting documents;
- **refer the proposal back** to the Research Office for re-evaluation, further scrutiny, or reconsideration, with such observations or directions as it may deem appropriate; or
- **take any other appropriate decision** consistent with the provisions of these Guidelines.

The decision of the Research Council shall be final.

(5) Communication of Decision

The decision of the Research Council shall be communicated by the Research Office to the concerned applicant, Head of Department, and Dean, as applicable. The approved journal shall thereafter be included in the University's list of approved peer-reviewed journals.

(6) Maintenance of Approved Journal List

The Research Office shall maintain and periodically update the list of approved peer-reviewed journals along with the relevant evaluation records and approval details. The approved list shall be made available to the academic community through appropriate institutional means.



9. Roles and Responsibilities

(1) Faculty Member / Researcher / Research Scholar

The Faculty Member, Researcher, or Research Scholar shall:

- a. identify a suitable peer-reviewed journal relevant to the research work;
- b. submit the proposal for journal evaluation in the prescribed format along with the requisite information and supporting documents to the respective HoD/Dean;
- c. ensure the authenticity and completeness of the information furnished; and
- d. provide additional information or clarification, if asked by the Research Office or the Research Council.

(2) Head of Department / Dean / Research Supervisor

The Head of Department or Dean shall:

- a. Compilation of proposal received from Faculty/Researcher/Research Scholar;
- b. examine the relevance of the proposed journal to the concerned discipline or area of research;
- c. verify the completeness of the proposal before forwarding it for evaluation;
- d. initial evaluation of the proposed journals as per Journal Evaluation Checklist;
- e. recommend the proposal to the Research Office as per **Annexure-I** with appropriate remarks; and
- f. facilitate compliance with these Guidelines within the respective academic unit.

(3) Research Office

The Research Office shall:

- a. Scrutinize proposals received for journal evaluation;
- b. Evaluate journals in accordance with the Journal Evaluation Framework and the prescribed evaluation methodology;
- c. Prepare and maintain the Journal Evaluation Report and related records;
- d. Place eligible proposals before the Research Council for consideration;
- e. Communicate the decisions of the Research Council to the concerned stakeholders; and
- f. Maintain and periodically update the University's list of approved peer-reviewed journals.

(4) Research Council

The Research Council shall:

- a. consider the recommendations submitted by the Research Office;
- b. approve, reject, defer, or seek additional information on proposals for journal approval;
- c. ensure that the approval process is fair, objective, and consistent with these Guidelines;
- d. review the approved journal list periodically, wherever necessary; and
- e. take appropriate decisions regarding the continuation, revision, or withdrawal of journal approval.

10. Validity, Review and Withdrawal of Approval

(1) Validity of Approval

Approval granted to a peer-reviewed journal under these Guidelines shall remain valid unless withdrawn, suspended, or otherwise reviewed by the Research Council.

(2) Periodic Review



The Research Office shall periodically review all peer-reviewed journals approved by the Research Council to ensure their continued compliance with the evaluation criteria prescribed under these Guidelines. The review shall be undertaken through scheduled periodic reviews or immediate reviews initiated upon the occurrence of specified events or circumstances.

1. Scheduled Periodic Review

The Research Office shall undertake a comprehensive review of all approved peer-reviewed journals at least once every 6 months.

The scheduled review shall assess the journal's continued compliance with the Core Criteria, Desirable Criteria, and the minimum qualifying requirements prescribed under these Guidelines. The review shall include, but not be limited to, verification of:

- a. editorial standards and peer-review practices;
- b. publication ethics and editorial policies;
- c. publication continuity and regularity;
- d. indexing status in recognized databases;
- e. publisher and editorial board information;
- f. accessibility of published articles; and
- g. any other evaluation parameter considered relevant by the Research Office.

The findings of the scheduled review shall be documented and placed before the Research Council for information or further action, wherever necessary.

2. Immediate Review

Notwithstanding the scheduled periodic review, the Research Office may initiate an immediate review of an approved journal whenever there are reasonable grounds to believe that the journal no longer complies with the evaluation criteria prescribed under these Guidelines or that its academic quality, credibility, or integrity has been adversely affected.

An immediate review may be initiated on the occurrence of one or more of the following circumstances:

- a. removal or delisting from a recognized indexing database that formed the basis of its approval;
- b. significant change in the publisher, ownership, or management of the journal;
- c. Substantial changes in the editorial board, editorial policies, or peer-review process;
- d. reports or evidence of predatory, deceptive, or unethical publishing practices;
- e. confirmed cases of publication malpractice, including plagiarism, fabricated peer review, citation manipulation, paper mill activities, or other forms of research misconduct;
- f. discontinuation or prolonged irregularity in publication;
- g. hijacking, impersonation, or unauthorized duplication of the journal's website or identity; or
- h. any other circumstance that, in the opinion of the Research Office or the Research Council, may materially affect the journal's quality, credibility, or compliance with these Guidelines.

The findings of the immediate review shall be submitted to the Research Council, which may take appropriate action in accordance with the provisions of these Guidelines

(3) Maintenance of Approved Journal Database

The Research Office shall maintain a centralized database of all journals approved by the Research Council as per **Annexure-III**. The database shall contain, as applicable, the journal title, ISSN, publisher, discipline, date of approval, evaluation status, review history, and any subsequent decision regarding continuation or withdrawal of approval.



The updated list of approved peer-reviewed journals as per **Annexure-IV** shall be published and maintained on the University's official website under the Research and Development Cell.

The Research Office shall ensure that the information displayed on the website is reviewed and updated following each periodic review or any decision of the Research Council affecting the approval status of a journal.

(4) Withdrawal of Approval

The Research Council may withdraw the approval of a journal upon the recommendation of the Research Office if the journal:

- a. No longer complies with the prescribed Core Criteria or minimum eligibility requirements;
- b. Is found to have adopted predatory, deceptive, or unethical publishing practices;
- c. Provides false, misleading, or inaccurate information relating to its editorial policies, indexing status, or publication practices;
- d. Ceases publication or is discontinued;
- e. Is removed from recognized indexing databases, where such indexation formed the basis of its approval; or
- f. Otherwise fails to comply with the provisions of these Guidelines.

(5) Effect of Withdrawal

Upon withdrawal of approval by the Research Council, the journal shall be removed from the University's list of approved peer-reviewed journals with effect from the date specified in the decision of the Research Council.

The withdrawal of approval shall not ordinarily affect research publications accepted or published in the journal prior to the effective date of such withdrawal unless otherwise decided by the Research Council after recording reasons in writing.

11. Miscellaneous

(1) Powers to Remove Difficulties

If any question arises regarding the interpretation or implementation of these Guidelines, or if any difficulty is encountered in giving effect to the provisions contained herein, the Research Council may issue such clarifications, directions, or procedural instructions, consistent with the objectives of these Guidelines, as may be necessary to remove such difficulty. The decision of the Research Council in this regard shall be final.

(2) Powers to Amend

The Research Council may review these Guidelines from time to time and recommend amendments, modifications, additions, or deletions, as may be considered necessary in the interest of research quality, academic standards, or to ensure compliance with the guidelines, regulations, or directives issued by the University Grants Commission (UGC) or any other competent statutory or regulatory authority.

Any amendment to these Guidelines shall come into effect from the date of its approval by the competent authority or from such other date as may be specified therein.

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To,
Research Office
Darshan University
Rajkot

Subject: Submission of Peer-Reviewed Journal List after Initial Evaluation

Respected Sir,

With reference to the subject cited above, the faculty members/researchers/research scholars of the Department have proposed peer-reviewed journals, which were compiled into a consolidated list in the discipline of _____, in accordance with the parameters suggested by the UGC for facilitating quality research publications by faculty members and research scholars of the University.

The compiled list of journals has undergone initial evaluation in accordance with the prescribed Journal Evaluation Checklist/Framework to ensure compliance with the required academic standards and quality parameters.

Accordingly, the screened and proposed list of journals is hereby submitted to the Research Office for further scrutiny, verification, and necessary approval as per University norms. The detailed list of journals is enclosed herewith as **Annexure-I**.

The Research Office is requested to kindly review the submitted list and take further necessary action in this regard.

Regards,



Annexure – I

Sr. No.	Name of Journal	ISSN No.	E-ISSN No.	Website Link of Journal
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Darshan
UNIVERSITY

Annexure – II - Evaluation Report - Department

Date: - -

Sr. No.	Name of Journal	ISSN No.	E-ISSN No.	Website Link of Journal	Core Criteria	Desirable Criteria	Total	Final Recommendation
1.								
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Sr.	Name of Journal	ISSN	Website Link of Journal	Approval Date	Review Date	Review Status
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