

Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles

What does “peer-reviewed” mean?

A “peer-reviewed” or “refereed” journal is one in which articles are reviewed by other scholars before being accepted for publication. The reviewers may suggest improvements that must be made before the article can be published. This form of quality control is essential to the scholarly process. Most, but not all, scholarly journals are peer-reviewed.

How do I find peer-reviewed journal articles?

Many databases allow you to limit your search to only peer-reviewed publications or only scholarly journal articles.

- *JMU Libraries’ Quick Search*: After running a search, use the “Refine your results” menu on the left to select “Scholarly (Peer Reviewed) Journals”. You can also choose this option from the Advanced Search menu. Click the magnifying glass icon to access Advanced Search.
- *EBSCO databases, such Academic Search Complete*: Limit to “Scholarly (Peer Reviewed) Articles” on the main search screen.
- *ProQuest databases, such as Environmental Sciences and Pollution Management*: Limit to “Peer Reviewed” on the main search screen.
- *Scopus*: Limit the document type to “Article” on the main search screen, or run a search and then use the Refine Results menu at the top of the screen to add the category “Document Type” and then limit to “Article”.

Caution: These methods are not always accurate. Scholarly journals often publish letters, news stories, or opinion pieces that are not subject to the same peer-review process as research articles.

I have an article, but I am not sure if it is peer-reviewed. How can I tell?

- Examine the article and make sure it is not a letter, news story, book review, or opinion piece. These kinds of articles are not peer-reviewed.
- Go to Ulrich’s Periodicals Directory at <http://www.ulrichsweb.com> and search for the journal. If the journal is refereed (peer-reviewed) there will be a small icon of a black and white striped shirt (referee’s uniform) next to the title on the list of search results. Click the title to read more about the journal. This screen should say “**Refereed:** Yes”.
- Google the journal title to find its website. Look for instructions to authors about submitting articles and the journal’s review process.

