



Predatory Journals

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to address the issue of publication in predatory journals.

Persons Affected

This policy applies to all faculty.

Definitions

Predatory journal: A predatory journal is a publication that reflects the prioritization of publisher self-interest and profit over meaningful peer-reviews, process transparency, and overall scholarship integrity. Multiple lists exist identifying potential predatory journals and publishers, though inclusion or omission from these lists is not alone sufficient evidence to make a conclusion of predatory practices, as there are journals determined legitimate in one list and predatory in another, and there may exist predatory journals not yet identified as such by the profession. The lists may, however, serve as a starting point for investigation. Journals with articles with extensive typos or low-quality figures may be suspect along with those who falsely claim to be indexed on databases like Web of Science or PubMed. The definition of a predatory journal is discipline specific and may be further and more specifically defined in unit criteria for tenure, promotion and annual evaluation.

Policy

Since predatory journal publications can negatively impact both the institution's and a faculty member's financial and reputational assets, predatory journal publications are strongly discouraged.

As such, faculty members are expected to take reasonable steps to ensure that they understand the predatory or non-predatory nature of their targeted journals. Prior to journal submission, faculty members should have assessed the likelihood that a targeted journal may be predatory at that time. This process would likely include discussions with peer practitioners in the field (potentially, including academic unit heads) about journal targets, as well as an evaluation of the journal using processes encouraged by major research institutions.

The standard for what represents substantive academic scholarship at the institution are maintained within academic units themselves (a principle embedded within the institution's faculty-related policies relative to tenure and promotion, annual evaluation, and continuing employment). As many of those unit-derived standards stress the need for peer-reviewed publications, faculty members should pay close attention to a targeted journal's peer-review policies and practices. If at any point (including after submission) a faculty member suspects that the scope, nature, duration, and/or process of peer review for a given submission may not reasonably compare to standards within the discipline, the faculty member should consult with peers and/or the faculty member's academic unit head to determine whether or not the article



should be pulled from submission prior to potential re-submission to a more legitimate, peer-reviewed journal.

Since the peer-review standard affects multiple academic affairs policies and procedures, faculty members should expect to be able to defend a claim that a published article was peer reviewed. For papers ultimately submitted and accepted for publication by university faculty and that are represented by faculty members as peer-reviewed, the author(s) will be responsible for providing evidence, upon request by the unit head during annual reviews or by a tenure and promotion committee member or members during consideration of a tenure and promotion application, that the journal did not appear to be a predatory journal at the time of submission. Submissions and completed publications within journals determined to be predatory at the time of submission should not count as a peer-reviewed publication.

Procedures

- A. Each faculty member should undertake a process of attempting to determine prior to submission whether or not a targeted journal appears to be predatory.
- B. Each faculty member is responsible for keeping evidence that the journal a paper is submitted to is not considered predatory at the time of the original submission (which may include, but are not necessarily limited to, detailed referee reports that refer specifically to the article in question or by the presence of the journal within lists of journals deemed to be trusted by other members within their discipline). Academic units reliant on peer-reviewed publications for tenure, promotion and annual evaluation are responsible for developing discipline-specific criteria for determining whether a journal is likely to be predatory (which may involve the inclusion or exclusion of journals on lists deemed as trusted, including pre-existing academic lists and/or those developed within the unit itself).
- C. If a faculty member wishes to appeal a decision pursuant to this policy, SFA HOP 02.310 Faculty Disagreements will govern that process.
- D. Academic affairs (including library, Office of Research and Graduate Studies, Center for Teaching and Learning, etc.) has the responsibility to provide and maintain educational materials and training to help faculty identify and avoid publishing in predatory journals.

Related Statutes or Regulations, Rules, Policies, or Standards

SFA HOP 02-304 Academic Promotion of Full-Time Faculty
SFA HOP 02-310 Faculty Disagreements
SFA HOP 02-316 Performance Evaluation of Faculty
SFA HOP 02-320 Tenure and Continued Employment

Responsible Executive

Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Forms



None

Revision History

August 8, 2024 (original)

Educational Policy