Journal Citation Report Suppression Policy

June 2019

Contents

Web of Science Core Collection: curation process

Guided by the legacy of Dr Eugene Garfield, inventor of the world's first citation index, we adapt to respond to technological advances and changes in the publishing landscape.

Our robust evaluation and curation make the *Web of Science Core Collection* the world's most trusted publisher-independent global citation database.

Our curation process is unique:

- Our editorial decisions are conducted by expert in-house editors.

- They have no affiliations to publishing houses or research institutes, removing any potential bias or conflict of interest.

- Each editor is focused on specific subject categories gaining a deep, nuanced knowledge of the journals in their field.

This level of curation cannot be replicated by purely algorithmic approaches of delegating aspects of editorial decision-making to the research community.

Web of Science Group

# Web of Science Core Collection: evaluation criteria

Curated with care by an expert team of in-house *Web of Science* editors

We use a single set of 28 criteria to evaluate journals

- 24 *quality criteria*, designed to select for editorial rigour and best practice at the journal level.
- Four *impact criteria*, designed to select the most influential journals in their respective fields using citation activity as a primary indicator of impact.

- Journals that meet the quality criteria enter the Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI) in the *Web of Science Core Collection.*

- Journals that meet the additional impact criteria enter Science Citation Index Expanded (SCIE), Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI) or Arts & Humanities Citation Index (AHCI) depending on their subject area.
  - Journals in SCIE or SSCI are eligible to receive a Journal Impact Factor and all other indicators in the *Journal Citation Reports*.

Web of Science Core Collection: journal selection process

A trusted, high-quality collection of journals, books and conference proceedings
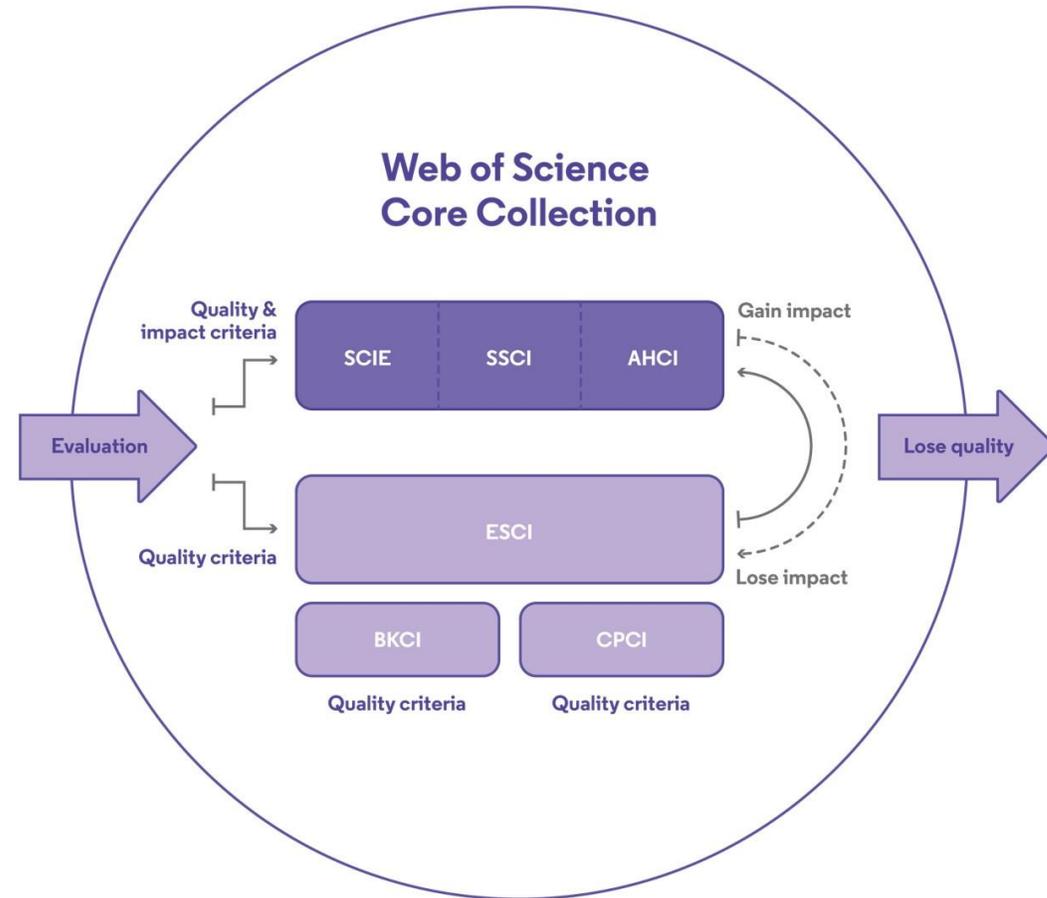
- These are dynamic collections subject to continuous curation to ensure journals are in the appropriate collection.

- ESCI journals that gain impact move to SCIE, SSCI or AHCI.

- SCIE, SSCI and AHCI journals that decrease in impact move to ESCI.

Any journal that fails to meet all 24 quality criteria will be removed from the *Web of Science Core Collection*.

Suppression principles

Distortion of citations is harmful to the scholarly record.

- It leads to distortion of the way we make connections between different pieces of research and the process of credit in science and discovery.

- Journal self-citation and citation stacking have the potential to distort the Journal Impact Factor (JIF).

- The JIF provides an important indicator of a journal's contribution to scholarly communication and must not be either inadvertently influenced or purposefully gamed.

What do we do when we identify citation distortion?

- Titles are suppressed from *Journal Citation Reports* based on analysis of the last year of citation data.

- We notify the publisher prior to launch of the *Journal Citation Reports*.

- The Web of Science Group does not assume motive on behalf of any party. We investigate the citation data.

- Suppressed journals continue to be indexed in *Web of Science* but are re-evaluated for inclusion in the *Journal Citation Reports* annually.

- Journals suppressed from *Journal Citation Reports* may be re-evaluated for continued coverage in *Web of Science*.

How do we identify journal self-citation distortion?

We look at the following data:
- Total citations (TC)
- Journal Impact Factor (JIF)
- Rank in category
- % of journal self-citations in JIF numerator
- Proportional increase in the JIF with/without journal self-citations
- Effect of journal self-citations on rank in category by JIF

- Suppressed journals represent extreme outliers in citation behavior.

- Science Edition (SCIE) and Social Sciences Edition (SSCI) are analyzed separately to account for discipline norms.

- Journals in bottom 10% ranking by TC and/or by JIF are not suppressed as they already rank low in their category.

Example of Journal Self-Citation

Cited Journal Graph 2018
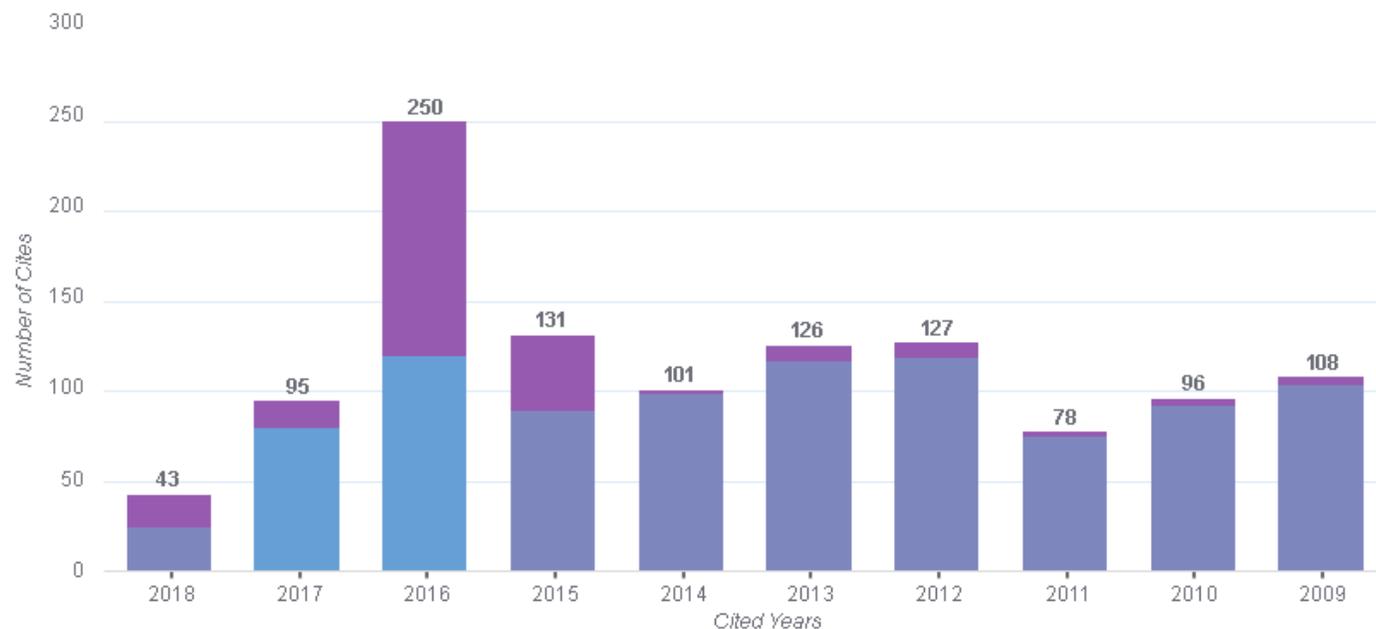
CITED JOURNAL GRAPH

The Cited Journal Graph shows the distribution (by cited year) of citations published in journals during the JCR year to items published in the Journal during the last 10 years.

The white/grey division indicates the cited half-life (if < 10.0). Half of the citations are to items that were published more recently than the cited half-life.

The two light-blue columns indicate citations used to calculate the Impact Factor (always the 2nd and 3rd columns).

- Non-self-citations: citations from the journal to articles in other journals.
- Journal self - citations: citations from articles in the journal to articles in the same journal.

How do we identify citation stacking distortion?

We look at the following data:

- Donor as % of Recipient's Total Citations
- Donor as % of Recipient's Journal Impact Factor numerator citations
- Concentration of citations exchanged into Journal Impact Factor numerator
- Identification of individual item(s) in Donor Journal with near-exclusive reference to Recipient journal(s)

- Donor and Recipient journals are suppressed for one year and re-evaluated with the next year's data.

- New journals, where citations are naturally concentrated to recent years, are not suppressed.

Example of Citation Stacking

Cited Journal Data 2018

	Citing Journal	All Yrs	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
	ALL Journals	1,982	43	557	686	217	124
1	DONOR 1	525	3	88	298	95	17
2	DONOR 2	336	5	186	118	21	2
	ALL OTHERS (682)	225	9	30	21	28	33
3	JOURNAL SELF	198	13	83	78	8	6
4	DONOR 3	161	3	77	79	2	0
5	DONOR 4	19	0	4	3	1	6
6	DONOR 5	18	0	2	3	3	1

Web of Science Group