Finding Influential journals:

Journal Citation Reports (powered by Web of Science)

Journal Citation Reports uses citation data from Web of Science to help users compare academic journals. You can use it to look up citation data on individual journals, or view lists of journals in a particular subject area ranked according to various different metrics. This can help you to identify the highly-cited journals in your subject area.

When comparing journals, it is always best to use a variety of methods and we recommend that Journal Citation Reports be used in conjunction with other journal ranking tools and alongside qualitative judgements.

Search for Web of Science on the University webpages or via StarPlus. Once on the Library’s Web of Science page (www.sheffield.ac.uk/library/cdfiles/wos), click Connect to Web of Science

Once in Web of Science, click the Journal Citation Reports link at the top of the page.

If you see this screen, wait or click continue until Journal Citation Reports loads
This should bring you to the JCR homepage:

You can use JCR to look up citation data on individual journals, or compare all the journals in a particular subject category.

**Search for an individual journal title**

**Enter a journal name** in the search box (eg: American Historical Review)

If the journal is included in JCR, the title should appear under the search box as you type. Click on the journal title you are interested in.

If there’s more than one journal with a similar name, you may have to select the journal you want from a list:

You should now see a range of information on the Impact Factor for this journal for the most recent year. The Journal Impact Factor is a journal-level metric which gives the mean citations per paper over a 2 year period

**Journal Impact Factor Trend:** shows how the Impact Factor for this journal has changed over the past 5 years

**Journal Impact Factor Calculation:** shows how the journal factor has been calculated for this journal.

**Citation Distribution:** gives a breakdown of the number of times articles in the journal have been cited for the given year. Also gives the median number of citations for articles and reviews in the journal.

**Journal Impact Factor contributing items:** shows the most highly cited articles contributing to the current Journal Impact Factor for this journal. Click on any to read them. You can also see the articles which have cited them by clicking on the ‘Citations in 20...’ tab.
**Key Indicators:** This section gives a range of other metrics which further explore how the journal has been cited:

- **Immediacy Index:** similar to the Journal Impact Factor but only looks at citations from most recent year. Can help indicate how quickly papers in a journal are cited.
- **Cited Half-life:** indicates how many years back you go to reach the point where half the citations are included. The higher the figure, the longer the time period during which research is actively cited in a discipline.
- **Eigenfactor Score:** gives an indication of the relative importance of a journal within its citation network.
- **Article Influence score:** determines the average influence of a journal’s articles over the first five years after publication. The mean Article Influence Score for each article is 1.00. A score greater than 1.00 indicates that each article in the journal has above-average influence.

The impact factor of a journal doesn’t mean much on its own – you need to see how it compares to other journals in the field. To see how this journal compares with others in its subject category, click on ‘All years’:

This displays a variety of metrics for this journal for previous years. Scroll down the page and click on the **Rank** option. In this example, the journal was ranked 1st by impact factor out of the 89 journals in its subject category for 2017.
See a list of the top journals in a subject area

Journal Citation Reports can also provide a list of the most highly-cited journals in a particular academic field.

Scroll to the top of the page and click on Home to return to the main page.

Click on the Journals by Rank tab if it’s not already selected.

This should display a list of all the journals indexed in Journal Citation Reports, ranked in terms of their impact factor. You can filter this list by several options.

You can filter the journal list by subject area. From the Select Categories menu, select the category that most closely matches your interests.

Note that you can pick more than one by holding down the Control CTRL key on your keyboard and selecting others. However, we don’t recommend comparing different categories in JCR, as very few of the metrics available take into account differences in citation behaviour between disciplines, and so it doesn’t allow for a fair comparison.

The Select JCR Year box will show the most recent edition of Journal Citation Reports (they are published every year, giving data for the previous year).

The Select Edition option allows you to select which version of the Journal Citation Reports you want to use:

- SCIE – covers science, medicine and engineering
- SSCI – covers the social sciences and some humanities

As many research areas are increasingly interdisciplinary, you may wish to leave both editions ticked to obtain the broadest results possible.

Once you are happy with your filters, click Submit (at the bottom of the page).

You should now see a list of every journal in the subject area you selected, ranked according to Journal Impact Factor.
You can re-order the list according to different metrics. Try clicking on the Eigenfactor Score to see which journal is ranked highest by Eigenfactor. You may see that the order of the list changes quite significantly – this is because different metrics measure different aspects of citation impact.

Register for an account to explore the other metrics available

By default only the Total Cites, Journal Impact Factor and Eigenfactor scores are shown. There are many other metrics available in Journal Citation Reports, but these are only available if you register for an account with Web of Science. Registering is free for University of Sheffield members – you’ll be asked to give some personal details and create a password.

Once registered, you can see more metrics by clicking on the Customise Indicators link, selecting which metrics you wish to use, and clicking Save.