

What is a peer-reviewed article, how can I tell and why should I care?

Many scholarly journals, whether they are print or online publications, send articles to one or more experts for review before accepting them for publication. This is called the “peer-review” or “referee” process.

The purpose of peer-review is to ensure that the methodology of published research is sound and prevent the promotion of unsubstantiated beliefs. Peer-reviewed journals are scholarly, but not all scholarly journals are peer-reviewed.

To determine whether or not a journal is peer-reviewed, use Ulrichsweb, an online global directory to which Chambers Library subscribes. It is listed on the Databases page of the library’s website as Ulrich’s Periodicals Directory.

A search for the New England Journal of Medicine, for example, reveals through the icon legend that the journal is indeed refereed (or peer-reviewed). Clicking the title will open the full record for more detail and further information.

Peer-reviewed journals also publish editorials, letters to the editor, and book reviews which are not rigorously reviewed. It is important to use actual peer-reviewed articles for academic work!

If you have questions, contact the Reference Librarians at Chambers Library.