Journal Impact Factors

What is a journal impact factor?
Journal impact factors measure the importance of a particular journal in a field and take into account the number of articles published per year and the number of citations to articles published in that journal. The impact factor is a measure of the frequency with which the average article in a journal has been cited in a particular year. Impact factor is used for journals only.

How do you find a journal impact factor?
The impact factor of a particular journal can be looked up through the Journal Citation Reports (JCR) database. You can access this database from within Web of Science or separately from the Libraries' list of databases.

Journal Citation Reports
Follow the instructions below to find the Journal Citation Reports database.

From the USC Libraries' homepage: https://libraries.usc.edu/
- Sign in
- Click on Databases
- Search for Journal Citation Reports and click Go
- Click on the Journal Citation Reports link. If accessing this resource from off-campus, you will be prompted for your NetID and password.
Once in the database:

- Enter the name of the journal in the search box and click the search icon OR browse journals.
- Select the journal title from the Master search results to access the citation report.

Master Search

- On the report, you can view the current year’s impact factor under Journal Impact Factor Trend.
- If you would like to see previous impact factors, select “All years” to view a list of key indicators. The journal impact factor is located in the 3rd column.

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Current year: All years

The data in the two graphs below and in the Journal Impact Factor calculated journal in the prior two years. They detail the components of the Journal in data for the current year and all prior years for this journal.
How is the journal impact factor calculated?
Impact factor = \# of citations to all items published in that journal in the past two years (divided by) 
\# of articles and reviews published over those past two years referencing those citations 

For example, if a journal has an impact factor of 1.0, this means in the indexed year each article published was cited on average 1 time in the previous two years in that journal.

What if I cannot find the journal in the Journal Citation Reports database? 
Not every journal will have an impact factor but there are other ways to measure impact to a field. Please check out our research guides on the topic:

**Spreading the Word: Publishing Your Research & Extending Your Impact**

**Evaluating Information Sources**