



**higher education
& training**

Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Media statement by the Director-General, Mr Gwebinkudla Qonde, on the removal (de-accreditation) of the Mediterranean Journal of Social Science from the IBSS list

17 November 2014

Following recent complaints and media reports about one of our accredited journals, namely the Mediterranean Journal of Social Science, the Department of Higher Education and Training engaged with ProQuest, the custodians of the International Bibliography of Social Sciences (IBSS). Our engagement resulted in ProQuest reviewing this journal and subsequently deciding to remove the Mediterranean Journal of Social Science, and other journals published by the Mediterranean Center of Social and Education Research, from all their databases. ProQuest has also undertaken to conduct further analysis and reviews of publishers on the Beall list which are included in their databases to try to identify others with similar problems.

The Department's "policy and procedures for measurement of research outputs of public higher education institutions (2003)" clearly defines the criteria for journals to be eligible for subsidy. It is, therefore, the responsibility of every institution and researcher to adhere to this policy as well as principles of research integrity when submitting their claims.

Among the criteria that journals must meet to be eligible for inclusion in the list of approved journals, is a rigorous peer-review process to ascertain the quality of the publication. The Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences has breached this criterion and as a result, the Department will no longer allocate subsidy towards articles published in this journal and any other journals removed from the list as a

result of the investigation. The department will engage with individual universities on any 2013 publications published in the Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences submitted for subsidy purposes. Articles published in the journals that have been identified and taken off the IBSSList as a result of this enquiry will not be considered for subsidy going forward.

We would like to urge authors to avoid publishing their work in journals that do not comply with good, scholarly publishing practices, such as journals that do not have a rigorous peer review system in place, and to report such journals and/or publishers to the DHET. If and when the Department identifies any journal that does not meet the criteria as outlined in the policy, no research output subsidy claims will be entertained for publications in that particular journal, regardless of whether or not it is on a list generally accredited by the Department.

The Department is committed to incentivising good research and to ensuring that research productivity is rewarded. However vanity or predatory publishing will not be recognised, and it is expected that all institutions uphold high standards with respect to the research outputs.

Media Enquiries

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