Content Selection for Bookshelf

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The National Library of Medicine (NLM) decides whether the scientific and editorial character and quality of a proposed title merit its inclusion in Bookshelf. In making this decision, NLM first considers the suitability of the title for the NLM collection, based on the criteria in the Collection Development Guidelines of the National Library of Medicine. To apply to Bookshelf, a title must have a clearly stated peer-review process and demonstrate features that contribute to the objectivity, credibility, and quality of its contents.

Examples of the types of criteria that may be considered when evaluating content for Bookshelf include:

Category	Possible considerations
Policies	• Is the peer review process documented? • Does the title clearly state its editorial and ethical policies, and does it adhere to these policies? • Are commercial sponsorships clearly addressed (i.e., do not raise questions about objectivity of published content)?
Figure and table quality	• Are figures and tables well-constructed and of sufficiently high resolution (i.e., not blurry)? • Are figures and tables well-annotated and easy to read and interpret? • If figures/images have been re-used from other sources, are permissions, license details, and attribution clearly documented?
Language quality	• Is the writing clear, concise, and logical? • Does the language impede scientific meaning or cause confusion?
Formatting and organization	• Is content organized in a logical fashion and cohesive? • Are there indicators of sufficient editorial attention, as evidenced by the elimination of editorial errors (e.g., incorrectly numbered sections, mislabeled tables/figures)?
Editors and authorship	• Are full names and affiliations of the editors and authors/contributors provided? • Do editors and authors/contributors have appropriate credentials and subject matter expertise?
Scientific quality	• Is the content scientifically accurate and unbiased? • Is the content substantive? • Are statements supported appropriately by citations? • Are references appropriate in number and up-to-date? • Is the content appropriate to its intended purpose and audience?
Other	• For web content and clinical guidelines/resources, is there an appropriate review cycle for communicating and maintaining the currency of the information? • For web content, is the website well organized and easy to use/navigate?

In addition to the above, as outlined in the Collection Development Guidelines of the National Library of Medicine, reviews should generally contain substantive summaries and analysis of recent research in a field. Case reports should include thorough and detailed case presentations, as well as substantial discussions about the relevance to clinical practice and research.

For content that reports the results of original research, the research should be scientifically rigorous. NLM uses the definition of scientific rigor provided by the [NIH Office of Extramural Research](#), which defines scientific rigor as "the strict application of the scientific method to ensure robust and unbiased experimental design, methodology, analysis, interpretation and reporting of results. This includes full transparency in reporting experimental details so that others may reproduce and extend the findings." NLM also expects original research to adhere to applicable ethical standards, including the protection of human and animal subjects.

There are numerous resources available that can aid authors and editors in improving the quality of their content. As examples, some resources NLM encourages content providers and authors to reference are:

- Monographs: [OAPEN Guides for OA monographs](#)
- Clinical Practice Guidelines: [IOM Committee on Standards for Developing Trustworthy Clinical Practice Guidelines](#)
- Textbooks: [OER Authoring Resources](#)
- Systematic reviews and meta-analyses: [PRISMA](#) guidelines
- Case reports: the [CARE case report guidelines](#)
- Clinical trials: [CONSORT](#)
- Animal studies: [ARRIVE](#)

In addition, publishers should follow current best practices. NLM supports the publishing practices outlined by:

- [Directory of Open Access Books](#)
- [Open Access Publishing in European Networks (OAPEN)](#); particularly the Jisc and OAPEN: Publisher information on open access monographs (2016).
- [Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA)](#)
- [Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)](#)
- [International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE)](#)
- [Council of Scientific Editors (CSE)](#)