

# An Editorial Welcome to The Student Journal of Natural Sciences, 2019

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Welcome to The Student Journal of Natural Sciences (or SJNS), a journal created to provide students with a platform to not only publish their work, but also gain valuable experience in the editorial and peer review process.

Each year thousands of University students conduct research as part of their studies. This research is becoming an increasingly integral part of many undergraduate degree routes within Natural Science disciplines. Accreditation bodies often insist on student led research projects within degree programmes and many employers have also expressed the importance of a research project. Research also forms the cornerstone of most postgraduate studies. This research is vital not only for the development of a student with regards to their discipline understanding and proficiency but also from an early career perspective. The dissemination of student research is a hugely important and satisfying process that is often overlooked or not taken advantage of by students and their respective staff supervisors. Undergraduate research (and a good deal of postgraduate research, too) is looked at, evaluated, and returned to the folder from whence it came. It's probably on a shelf in a cupboard somewhere... Admittedly, not all research can, or even should be published, but there is a sizable amount of excellent student-led research conducted each year that could be! Much of that

research (due to the natural constraints applied to it - timing, funding, access to equipment or labs) can often be categorised as "narrow" or "preliminary", but we would argue that a lot of this work underpins much of the research done at universities, and the students deserve for this work to be seen and its true impact realised. So what can be done to provide students with the opportunity to publish...?

SJNS is an electronic (online only), peer reviewed journal aimed to provide students (undergraduate and postgraduate) from across the spectrum of the Natural Sciences with a platform for publishing their research. SJNS has been developed (by early career staff and students cooperatively) to support and develop scientific enquiry, critical thinking, creative activity and scholarship within both undergraduate and postgraduate students. It also aims to support staff (and the teaching and learning environments in general) by encouraging research-led teaching and acting as an avenue for the encouragement, promotion and generation of student led research activities. Submissions of original articles, literature reviews, case studies, editorials, letters to the editor and book reviews are all welcomed. Collaborations between students and staff are welcomed, however a student must be the corresponding author. The call for submissions is now OPEN - please see our Authors Guidance for further information.

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We publish on a rolling basis and therefore work is published once accepted, rather than having any deadlines for calls or authors waiting for issues to be released.

The benefits of publishing student works are becoming increasingly recognised. Peer review, the feedback received during the submission process, can improve writing, editing, research and critical thinking skills. Peer review (in various guises) is an often unavoidable process in most professions, publishing in a student journal gives experiences of this which is tangible and transferable. A published end product to a research project also shows a level of commitment to your work, professionalism and the ability to write-up a project into a journal format.

On the other side of peer review, are the reviewers themselves. There are very few opportunities for early career researchers to gain experience in the peer review or editorial process, which are vital to the scientific community and provide useful career development opportunities. The second “mission” of SJNS is to act as a friendly and supportive community where early career staff and students can experience the review process as a reviewer or editor. To that end we would like to announce an open call for reviewers, there are no restrictions as to who (undergraduates, postgraduates, academic staff, professional staff etc.), other than you must be affiliated to a university or be able to show credentials as a subject expert by other means (i.e. specialised job role, qualifications held etc.). Peer review guidance will be available through the SJNS for anybody conducting peer review. Our team of editors include individuals at various stages of their careers from across the Natural Sciences. Due to the nature of the positions many of our editors hold (i.e. fixed term contracts/studentships) we anticipate that the constituent membership of our editorial group will change through time, so please do get in touch, the

call for editors and reviewers is always open!

This editorial is adjunct to the much more important, and impressive, very first manuscript to be published by SJNS. These opening additions to the profile of SJNS beautifully highlights the sort of topic which we set out to showcase. **Dewar (2019)** provides a qualitative analysis of people's perceptions of patents on medical innovations. The article explores the links between education, information and media coverage of medicines and the patent system and how these factors might influence an individual's perceptions of the product or innovation. In contrast to that article, **Hussain *et al.* (2019)** outlines a new method for detecting and recording the presence of calcareous walled microfossils from thin-sections of rock. This article introduces this method as a cheap and accessible alternative to the current “standard” methodology used. These articles are a fantastic advert for the breadth of topics covered by students within the Natural Sciences and the impact that student work can achieve.

Through disseminating the idea of SJNS, from initial conception, up to this point of the first publications, we have been met with nothing but positive feedback. Do consider us as a platform for your work (or that of your students work!) and do not hesitate to contact us with any questions you may have; we are here to help develop student works from the outset!

The Student Journal of Natural Sciences is published as a franchise of The Journal of Academic Development and Education (JADE). Each accepted submission is assigned a DOI (to assist in digital tracking and dissemination) and submissions are published under Creative Commons. There are no fees to submit to, publish in, or access SJNS. We are committed to processing submissions through the peer review process as swiftly as possible.

## References

Dewar, T. (2019). Money Versus Medicine: Public Perceptions of Patenting Medical Innovations. *The Student Journal of Natural Sciences*. DOI:

Hussain, R., Rogers, S. L. and Blackburn, J. A. (2019). Reflected Light Microscopy as an Efficient and Cost Effective Method for the Detection of Calcareous Micro-Fossils, an Example from the Much Wenlock Limestone Formation, Shropshire, UK. *The Student Journal of Natural Sciences*. DOI: