

TO: Australian Research Council, with respect to the ERA

RE: Ranking of journals in criminology, interdisciplinary journals, and journals in other fields related to criminology

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Background

1. From September to November 2007, at the request of DEST, peak bodies such as ANZSOC engaged in a major activity to rank journals. As described more fully in the ANZSOC report on Bibliometrics (Brown and Daly 2007, amended 15 May 2008; available at www.anzsoc.org), DEST sent ANZSOC 143 journals to rank, to which ANZSOC added five more. The list of 148 journals was circulated to eminent criminologists representing various areas and methods in the field (the Expert Panel). During this process, four more journals were added, for a total of 152. Ultimately, 112 journals were ranked, with an additional 12 proposed to move to another disciplinary cluster.¹ The residual of 28 was unknown by members of the Expert Panel and could not be ranked.
2. The rankings were then circulated to all the heads of criminology departments and research centres in Australia for review. For both the Expert Panel and wider consultation, the circulated spreadsheets contained data on rankings, which had been provided to us by DEST: the journal impact factor scores from Thompson's ISI and from the ANU's Research Evaluation and Policy Project (REPP); and a set of journal rankings by the University of Queensland. To this we added a recently completed ranking of journals by the University of Maryland's Department of Criminology. (Maryland is recognized as the top school in criminology in the United States.) It should be emphasised that ANZSOC's ranking process was guided by these various sources of impact, citation, and ranking scheme evidence.
3. A report of the process and the ranking outcomes was posted on the ANZSOC website in November 2007. It was reported widely to ANZSOC members. Although there may well be some disagreement in deciding bands for some journals, the members have accepted these rankings.
4. In our ranking classification, we were given clear guidelines by DEST for the distribution of A*, A, B, and C journals:

A* the top 5%

A the next 15%

¹ As noted in fn. 3 below, ANZSOC duplicated a journal; thus, the final number of journals ranked was 111.

- B the next 20%
- C the remaining 50%

Such distributions are stringent, but they assisted us in determining the precise number of journals that could be in each band.

ARC's proposed criminology journal rankings and ANZSOC's response

5. Attached is a spreadsheet, which compares the ARC and ANZSOC rankings (hereafter, termed the 'comparison spreadsheet'). It is colour coded:

- blue: same rank; ANZSOC agrees with the ARC's decision
- yellow: ANZSOC queries ARC's decision or rank and proposes action
- green: ANZSOC reviews ARC's decision of 'not criminology' and proposes action
- no colour: line duplicates another entry

6. As shown on the comparison spreadsheet, the ARC-proposed list of journals and rankings for criminology seems, in part, to honour ANZSOC's work to date; but it also contains inaccuracies and is incomplete.

No justification has been given by the ARC for why some journals have been dropped, others added, and others defined as 'not criminology'. The general concern by ANZSOC members I have consulted is that we have already produced an expert document on journal rankings, with broad consultation, and that the ARC should honour the views of ANZSOC researchers. Otherwise, its ranking system will not be perceived as legitimate. At the same time, ANZSOC recognises the need for disciplinary refinement, and we have responded to that.

7. The ARC ranked 81 journals² (one journal was ranked twice in error, and we have corrected this in the ARC rankings)³. The ARC rankings have dropped 34 journals, which had been ranked by ANZSOC. Ten of these were moved to another discipline. The following compares the ARC and ANZSOC distributions (note that some ARC-ranked journals are associated with another discipline; see item 13 below):

	ARC (N=81)		ANZSOC (N=111)	
	N		N	
A*	10%	(8)	5%	(6)
A	17	(14)	13	(14)
B	31	(25)	22	(24)
C/C1	42	(34)	32	(36)
C2			28	(31)

² This number excludes the ten journals designed by ARC as 'not criminology'.

³ The journal *Criminal Justice*, ranked by the ARC as A, changed its name to *Criminology and Criminal Justice* (also ranked A) in 2005. This duplication error was also originally made in the ANZSOC November 2007 list, but corrected in May 2008. *Criminology and Criminal Justice* is thus listed as A. However, there is a second journal called *Criminal Justice*, published by the American Bar Association. This journal is not ranked by the ARC, but it is by ANZSOC as C2.

Note: When we initially submitted the journal rankings to DEST, we indicated that the C1 band included B journals, but because there were too many journals in B category, we identified two levels of C journals. The distributions (above) suggest that the ARC distributions are less stringent than those proposed by DEST last year. We turn to this point in item 15 below. We retain the C1 and C2 distinctions here for consistency.

Specific actions and recommendations

8. In the last week, I have consulted with colleagues in criminology, whose work also spans law, socio-legal studies, psychology, and sociology. We have had to work quickly, with the view of posting a response on the ANZSOC website to assist our members across Australia. Specific actions and recommendations are given in items 9 to 13.

9. The 24 journals initially designated by ANZSOC as C2, but dropped by the ARC, should be added to the ARC's list as C journals. There is no justification given by the ARC for why these journals were dropped. They should be on the criminology list (although as indicated below, some may be linked to another discipline or belong to another discipline).

10. Ten journals were designated by the ARC as 'not criminology'. ANZSOC's responses are shown on the comparison spreadsheet and listed here.

The following terms are relevant in items 10 and 13: 'interdisciplinary' refers to journals, where criminology is featured, but is perhaps 25 to 30% of the members of the editorial board and content; 'truly interdisciplinary' refers to journals where the editorial board and content reflect work that is 50% in two clusters; and 'must be criminology' refers to journals where the editorial board and content is 75 to 100% criminology. 'Okay' for another field means that it should be in that field.

<i>Journals</i>	<i>Classification (ranking)</i>
Criminal Law Forum	law (C) okay
Criminal Law Review	law (C) okay
Journal of National Security Law & Policy	law (B) okay
Criminal Justice Ethics	law / ethics (C) change: should be truly interdisciplinary criminology/law/ethics/
Journal of Law Medicine and Ethics	ethics (A) change: should be law, or law/ethics
Journal of Criminal Justice Education	curriculum & pedagogy (C) change: must be criminology; or could be truly interdisciplinary criminology/education
Journal of Correctional Education	specialist studies in education (C) change: truly interdisciplinary criminology/education
Journal of Drug Issues	public health (C) okay

Journal of Family Violence

psychology (B) **change:**
interdisciplinary criminology/
psychology

Australian Journal of Social Issues

policy & administration (B) **okay**

11. The ARC raised the ranking of 5 journals. No explanation is given for this shift, and in some instances, the rank change is puzzling. In all cases, the journals were associated with criminology and another field. See below, under item 13, for which disciplinary home is most appropriate and what the ranks should be. Where the journal is shared with criminology as 'interdisciplinary' or it should be in another discipline, ANZSOC defers to that discipline's rank. (Where there may be differences between disciplines, the higher rank should be used.)

12. The ARC introduced 4 new journals not previously on ANZSOC's list, all ranked C:

Criminal Justice Policy Review (C)

Criminal Justice Review (C)

Journal of Ethnicity in Criminal Justice (C)

Singapore Police Journal (C)

These journals were not judged by the Expert Panel or those in the wider consultation. ANZSOC will accept them only as C2 journals, and only if all of ANZSOC's C2 journals are retained in the ranking list.

13. The ARC listed 18 journals under both criminology and another disciplinary area. ANZSOC proposes the following action (note that this is not indicated on the spreadsheet).

Journal	ARC rank	ARC category in addition to criminology	Action proposed by ANZSOC
Canadian Journal of Law and Society	C	Law	okay, interdisciplinary: law and criminology
Crime and Delinquency	A	Law	change: must be criminology
Criminal Justice and Behavior	A	Law	change: truly interdisciplinary: criminology and psychology, <i>not law</i>
Federal Probation	C	Law	change: must be criminology
Homicide Studies	B	Law	change: must be criminology
International Criminal Justice Review	C	Law	change: must be criminology
International Journal of Law and Psychiatry	C	Law	law okay
Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology	A	Law	okay, truly interdisciplinary: criminology and law
Journal of Law and Society	A	Law	okay, interdisciplinary: law and criminology
Justice Quarterly	A	Law	change: must be criminology

Law and Contemporary Problems	A*	Law	okay, interdisciplinary, but ranked incorrectly; should be B
Police Quarterly	B	Law	change: must be criminology
Aggression and Violent Behavior	B	Psychology	psychology okay
International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology	C	Psychology	okay, truly interdisciplinary: criminology and psychology
Journal of Interpersonal Violence	B	Psychology	truly interdisciplinary: criminology and psychology
Probation Journal	C	Social Work	okay, truly interdisciplinary: criminology and social work
Terrorism and Political Violence	B	Political Science	okay, interdisciplinary: political science and criminology
Violence Against Women	A*	Other Studies in Human Society	okay, truly interdisciplinary: criminology, women's studies, and sociology, but ranked incorrectly; should be B

Concluding comments

14. Concerns raised by ANZSOC members are as follows:

(1) Will there be dialogue and exchange between the ARC and ANZSOC on these journal rankings? This is important even if criminology is not part of an ERA review for some years, since the ranking system will become significant in promotion decisions and in internal and external grant decisions on track record. We welcome exchange because without it, the proposed ARC rankings will be of doubtful legitimacy.

(2) What were the internal criteria that the ARC used in determining its ranking decisions? There is no indication of what information was used to source the rankings, why so many journals were dropped from the RQF task, and what the distribution cut-off bands were.

15. The designated distribution for each ranking band is crucial to a ranking system. This was announced by DEST for the RQF, but not by the ARC for the ERA. ANZSOC will want to review its journal ranking again, once such distributions are clarified. Our current ranking is based on highly stringent cut-offs set by the RQF.

16. This memo is being made available to all ANZSOC members on our website, as a source of information and advice to members. However, time constraints have not permitted broad consultation by ANZSOC on the ARC's rankings. Thus, individual members may propose different ideas through their institutions to the ARC.

Reference

Brown, Mark and Kathleen Daly (2007, amended May 2008) 'Report on Criminology Bibliometrics Development'. Australian & New Zealand Society of Criminology. Available at <www.anzsoc.org>