

Panel meeting (3) 20.11.2025

Present: Peter Johansson (chair), Oscar Henriksson, Anu Kankainen, Polina Kuzhir (from 9.33), Tapio Niemi, Janne Pakarinen, Kimmo Tuominen, Ilya Usoskin

Absent: Mathias Groth, Jyrki Piilo, Matthieu Roussey

Secretariat: Leena Wahlfors and Anna-Kaarina Linna

1. Opening

The Chair opened the meeting at 9.05.

2. Announcements

There were no announcements.

3. The Panel Composition

It was noted that the field of Biological and Soft Matter Physics may need to be complemented later, and the discussion can be revisited if necessary.

4. Announcement of engagements

Panelists must always disclose any potential conflicts of interest, especially when the panel is discussing a publication channel with which the panelist has had – or continues to have – close ties in the form of publication, editorial work, financial interest, or other influence. These ties include, at a minimum, the panelist having, within the last five years:

- published in the channel in question more than once,
- served as an editor or member of the editorial board of the channel,
- owned shares in the publishing company or a comparable organization, or
- held another position that could cause financial or interest conflicts.

Disclosure does not automatically prevent participation in decision-making, but the panel must take the ties into account in the evaluation process. ([Handbook 2025 - 2028.](#))

Please find the list at the end of the document (Appendix 1).

It was noted that it is logical that panelists publish in the same channels that they also evaluate, and that it is not a problem as such. The purpose of the statement is to increase transparency. The Secretariat will bring the item to the steering group meeting of 27.11.2025, and proposes the wording “if the panelist has published in the channel concerned more than once” to be changed to: “if the channel has exceptional significance for the panelist’s publication activity (the panels determine, based on the premises of their discipline, in which cases a panelist reports their publication activity)”.

5. The Development of JUFO Classification

The development of the Publication Forum classification is part of the Forum's long-term operational and development plan. As part of this work, the Publication Forum Steering Group decided at its meeting on 8 September 2025 that:

A. Structure of the Classification

- In the Publication Forum (JUFO) classification, the designation "Level 0" will be discontinued. Instead, the category "other identified publication channels" will be used for scholarly publication channels that are not classified at Levels 1, 2, or 3, and that are not designated as professional or popular publication channels.
- From the beginning of 2026, evaluation panels will no longer assign publication channels to Level 3. Information on Level 3 will be removed from the JUFO portal at the beginning of 2027, when the updated classification is published.

Implementation:

- Update the website and the Panel Member's Handbook by the end of 2025.
- Apply the necessary changes to the panel-specific Excel templates used in the evaluation update at the beginning of 2026.
- Apply the necessary changes to the publication channel database and JUFO portal by the end of 2026.

B. Classification Criteria

Changes to level 1 criteria:

- Criterion 2 (Transparency):
Current wording: "The publication channel's website provides a transparent description of the editorial board and the peer review process. (A book publisher may meet Level 1 criteria even if the editorial board and peer review process are not described on the website.)" -> Revised wording: "The publication channel's website provides a transparent description of the editorial board and the peer review process. This applies also to book publishers."
- Criterion 7 (Relevance) will be divided into two separate criteria:
 - 7. Relevance: The publication channel is central from the perspective of its discipline's international or Finnish research community.
 - 8. Thoroughness: The primary objective of the publication channel is to promote and ensure scholarly quality, and its editorial and peer review practices are careful and reliable. A [checklist](#) of practices identified as problematic may be used as a support tool in the assessment.

Changes to Level 2 criteria:

- A new (fourth) criterion will be added: The publication channel enables immediate open access (either via the service itself or through self-archiving).

- From the specific criteria for Finnish- and Swedish-language publication channels, the criterion “Research questions are strongly contextualised within Finnish society or Finnish- and Swedish-language culture” will be removed.

Implementation: Update the website and the Panel Member’s Handbook by the end of 2025.

C. Quotas and Calculation of Publication Volume

Quotas for publication series and book publishers will no longer take Level 3 into account. Consequently:

- The combined publication volume of series classified at Level 2 may amount to no more than 25% of the total publication volume of all series within the panel (Levels 1–2 combined).
- The list of book publishers is shared across all panels. Selections for Level 2 are made jointly by the panel chairs. Approximately 100 publishers across all fields may be classified at Level 2. Quotas are thus determined by the number of publishers, not by their publication output.

Implementation: Update the website and the Panel Member’s Handbook by the end of 2025.

D. Aspects to be Considered in Evaluation

In the Panel Member’s Handbook, Chapter 3.6 *Aspects to be considered in evaluation* will be updated as follows when there are equally influential and respected publication channels in the same field under consideration for level 2:

3.6.6 Publication channels of scholarly societies (formerly “Closed society publication channels”):

- The title will be changed to “*Publication channels of scholarly societies*”.
- If there are equally influential and respected publication channels under consideration for Level 2, preference will be given to those published by scholarly societies. Publication channels that require society membership in order to publish (closed society journals) cannot be accepted at Level 2.

Implementation: Update the website and the Panel Member’s Handbook by the end of 2025.

Discussion:

The secretariat explained the ground for the Change of level 0: The new designation is considered to be more neutral way to communicate in different contexts about identified publication channels that have not been approved to level 1. Level 0 channels are generally associated with the perception that they are of poor quality in one way or another, or have characteristics of

predatory journals. In fact, the Level 0 is very heterogeneous. It includes channels that are properly peer-reviewed but local, new, or located at the interface between scientific and general audience publishing. Originally, JUFO classification did not have level 0 but this name was introduced by the Ministry in the Universities Act in 2014.

It was noted that there has long been a debate for and against maintaining level 3. The following reasons were given by the Steering Group for abandoning the Level 3 and merging it with the Level 2:

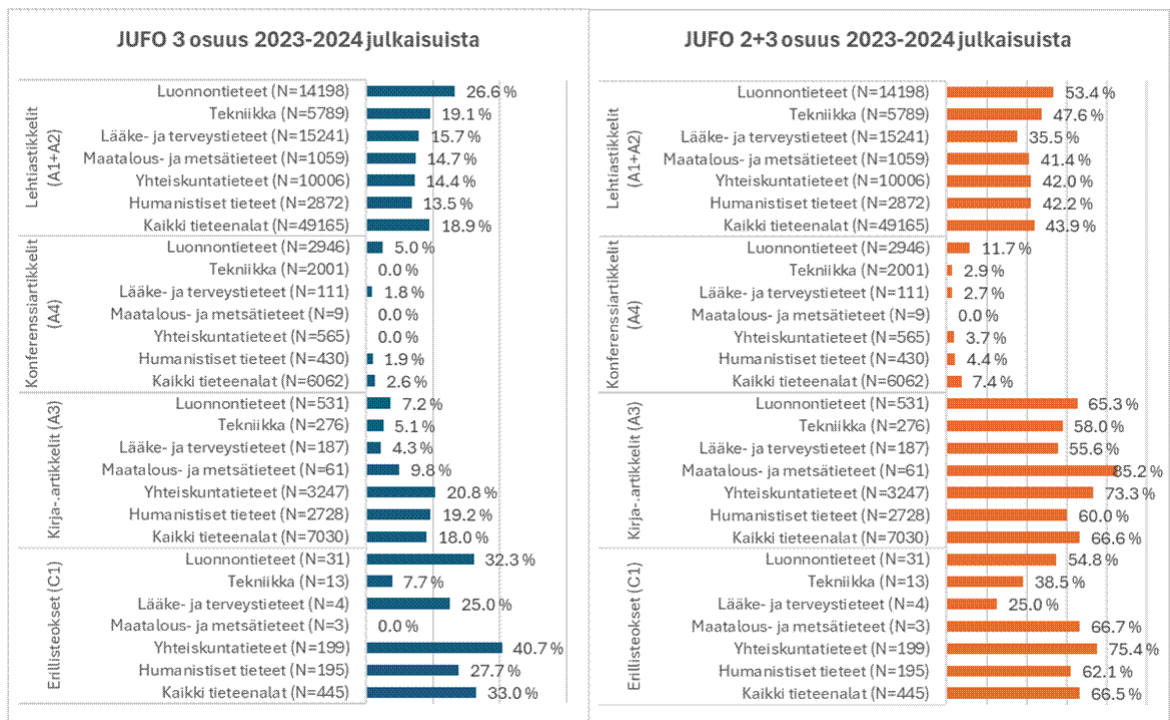
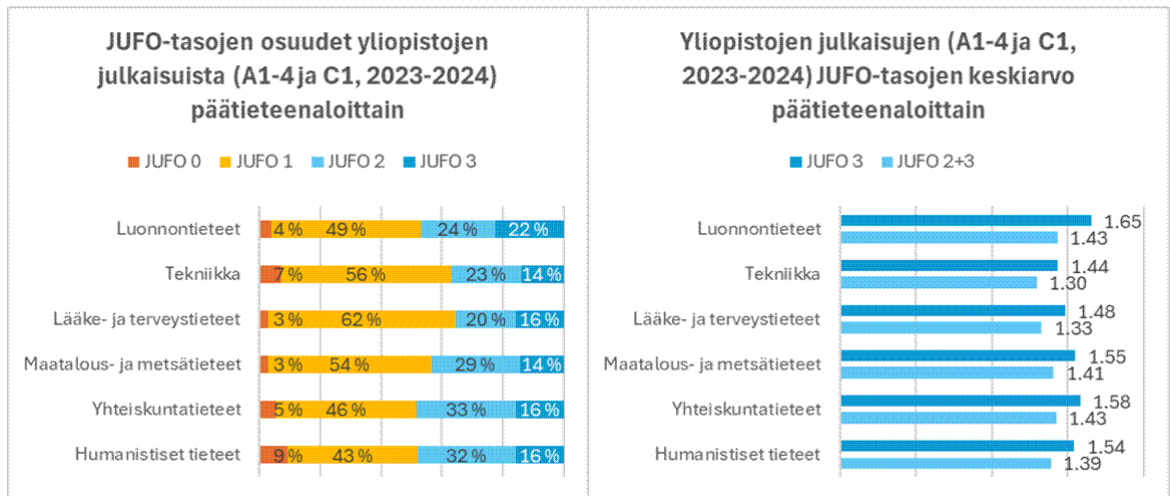
- Originally, JUFO classification had only levels 1 and 2. Level 3 was introduced in 2011 because level quotas were based on number journal titles, wherefore in some fields it was felt that level 2 was too broad and further differentiation was needed in form of level 3. Since 2014, level quotas have been calculated based on publication volume, which made levels 2 and 3 more exclusive and difficult to balance with journal quality and size across various subfields. This means that in many panels level 3 involves unhappy compromises.
- From the perspective of panelists and stakeholders, the distinction between levels 2 and 3 is the least important and credible according to surveys of panelists and stakeholders.
- Level 3 treats main field more unequally than combined level 2 and 3.
- Level 3 plays an important role when JUFO classification is misused for assessing individuals, which is not appropriate. In that sense it has been well-founded to reduce the hierarchy of the structure to reduce anxiety related to producing level 3 publications.
- Abandoning level 3 will reduce the work of the panels in the four-yearly update assessment, so more effort can be put on assessment on levels 1 and 2.

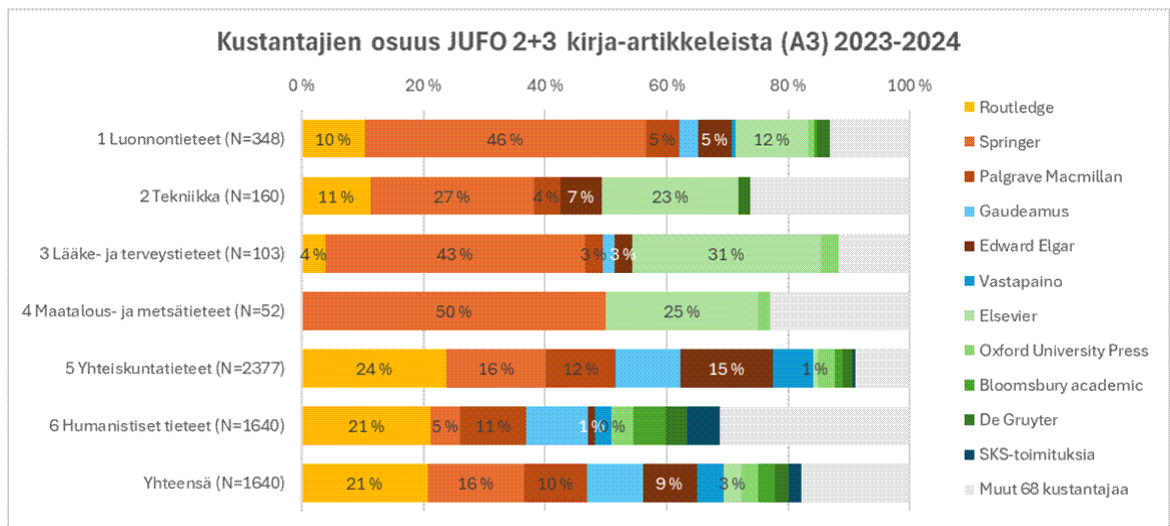
It was also mentioned that the removal of level 3 will not effect the current universities' funding model for 2025-2028. Funding for the year 2028 will be calculated in June 2027 based on the combined results of the previous three publication years (2024–2026).

The Panel requested statistics showing how level 3 treats main field comparing to combined level 2 and 3. JUFO classification in light of publication statistics (see the three figures below):

- The differences between fields in the average JUFO level of university publications are greater in level 3, so the removal of level 3 is also justified by the more balanced treatment of scientific fields.
- 44% of journal articles and 67% of book articles are classified in levels 2 and 3 combined, so the classification favors book articles to some extent.

- Of all level 2 and 3 book articles, Routledge publishes 21%, Springer 16%, Palgrave MacMillan 10%, Edward Elgar 9%, and Elsevier 3%.





It was clarified that in the new level 2, panels may not include so many series that their combined number of publications (publication volume) would exceed 25 % of the total (number) volume of publications of all level 1 and 2 series in the panel's list. This level quota restriction ensures that level 2 represents only the top of the field, and that not too large a share of publications can be placed on level 2 compared to other panels.

The new (fourth) criterion in level 2 "The publication channel allows immediate open access" was discussed. The criterion was not seen problematic from the panel's point of view.

6. Preparation for the Spring 2026 evaluation round

In the evaluation round of 2026, the panels can classify leading publication channels in different fields into level 2. This level is reassessed every four years.

The scientific community as well as panels themselves, are invited to submit proposals for classification to support the evaluation work of the panels: downgrades and upgrades to level 2. Proposals should be submitted via the JUFO portal by end of February 2026.

In May 5, the panels will prepare a new preliminary level classification proposal, which will be finalized during the fall.

The required data materials for the panels are produced before the panel evaluations, including panel-specific Excel sheets that contain the channels to be evaluated, publication volume data, and statistics by scientific discipline classification.

More information at the latest after Panel Chair Meeting of 27.11.2025

The matter was record for information.

7. Evaluation of grey area publication channels in the Publication Forum

Within the Publication Forum, there has long been discussion about so-called grey zone journals, which are not outright predatory journals, but which seek to maximise publication output with the least possible investment in editorial work and quality assurance. This business model is designed to maximise financial returns from article processing charges (APCs).

The Secretariat has continued work on clarifying assessment of grey zone channels by developing the [Checklist](#) to support the documentation and coherent consideration of problematic practices.

In line with a decision of the Steering Group, **panels are asked to give their views on whether there is a need to establish an Ethics Expert Group of the Publication Forum to promote coherent identification and treatment of grey zone and predatory journals across panels.** The group would be composed primarily of panel members, but external domestic and international experts could also be invited if needed.

The task of the Expert Group, in collaboration with the JUFO Secretariat and the panels, would be to:

- Develop the checklist of problematic publishing practices and the documentation of such practices,
- Clarify how problematic practices should be considered in the assessment of channels and in the justifications for decisions, and
- Compile and provide information on problematic practices in publication channels for the panels, the Steering Group, and the research community.

The Expert Group would not evaluate individual publication channels assigned to the panels, but the panels could, if necessary, consult the group on individual cases. The responsibility for classification decisions would remain with the panels.

The JUFO Secretariat would coordinate and facilitate the group's work by providing background information and by relaying observations and experiences received from the research community, for example through the address saalistajat@julkaisuforum.fi.

Discussion:

The panel did not support the establishment of an ethical expert group. Based on also the other panels' feedback, the Secretariat do not propose the Ethics Expert Group to be established. Instead, the Secretariat's proposition for the Jufo

Steering Group is that it will continue developing the grey-zone checklist, in collaboration with panels, the steering group, and international partners.

The Secretariat will also

- promote and facilitate the research community's ability to report problematic practices of publication channels to the email address saalistajat@julkaisufoorumi.fi
- systematise—using AI technologies—the analysis and organisation of the information received through this channel, and make use of it for developing the operations of the Publication Forum.

8. The use of AI in scientific publishing

In its meeting on May 5, 2025, the Publication Forum Steering Group decided that the secretariat will prepare a study on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in the scientific publication process. Based on this decision, a [survey](#) has been sent to panelists to assess the utilization of AI in scientific publishing, including related practices, experiences, and perspectives.

Panelists are encouraged to respond to the survey. Warm thanks to those who have already responded.

9. Other

The dead line of the last supplementary assessment for this year is 20.11.2025, but it was noted that the Panel had no Channels to be evaluated in this evaluation round.

10. Closing

The Chair closed the meeting at 10.18.

Appendix 1.

List of engagements

The panel members are asked to disclose their engagements with publication channels in which they have been an editor or a member of the editorial board in the past five years, or hold shares in the publisher or its managing company.

Panellist	Publication channel
Kimmo Tuominen	Co-editor at Annals of Physics (Elsevier), Arkhimedes
Jyrki Piilo	EPL (Europhysics Letters, published by European Physical Society) 2017-2023 Open Systems and Information Dynamics (published by

	World Scientific) 2019-
Ilya Usoskin	* Managing Editor at J. Space Weather Space Climate (EDP Sciences) since 2021; * Member of the Editorial Board at Solar Physic (Springer), since 2009
Anu Kankainen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Physical Journal A, editorial board member • Journal of Physics G: Nuclear and Particle Physics, editorial board member
Mathias Groth	Guest editor Elsevier Journal of Nuclear Materials, Nuclear Materials and Energy (until 2022)

Meeting minutes 19.3.2025

Place: House of Science and Letters, room 207 and Teams

Present: Peter Johansson (chair), Mathias Groth (from 14.30), Oscar Henriksson, Anu Kankainen, Tapio Niemi, Janne Pakarinen, Jyrki Piilo, Kimmo Tuominen, Ilya Usoskin, Matthieu Roussey (from 13.27)

Absent: Polina Kuzhir

Secretariat: Elina Pylvänäinen and Anna-Kaarina Linna

1. Opening

The panel chair opened the meeting at 13.02.

2. Introductions

3. Panel

a. Panel composition

The fields covered in this panel are listed in appendix 1. The panel went through the list and discussed if there is a need to supplement the panel composition.

Discussion:

- Biological and soft matter physics is a field that may be needed to be complemented later. The discussion can be re-visited if needed.

b. Selecting the vice-chair of the panel

A vice-chair was selected for the panel. The vice-chair stands in for the panel chair when they are absent. The vice-chair also has a right to confirm evaluations in the JUFO portal on behalf of the panel chair.

Decision:

- Anu Kankainen was selected a vice-chair of the panel.

4. Orientation to the panel work

The secretariat introduced the Publication Forum, its aims and purpose as well as the evaluation criteria.

5. Level 1 and 0 evaluations in the JUFO portal

The deadline for the first set of level 1 and 0 evaluations is 26.3.2025 for the panel members and the panel chair needs to confirm evaluations at latest on 1.4.2025. More information has been sent by email.

6. Conflicts of interest

The panel members were asked to disclose their engagements with publication channels in which they have been an editor or a member of the editorial board in the past five years.

7. Other

Doodle will be sent to the panel to set the date of the autumn meeting in October or November (remote meeting).

8. Closing

The panel chair closed the meeting at 15.17.

Appendix 1

Panel's MinEdu fields

114 Physics

- Atomic and molecular physics
- Chemical physics
- Condensed matter physics
- Particles and fields physics
- Nuclear physics
- Fluids and plasma physics, surface physics
- Optics, laser optics and quantum optics
- Acoustics

- Biological and soft matter physics

115 Space sciences and astronomy

- Space physics
- Solar, stellar and interstellar physics
- Solar system physics and planetary science
- The Milky Way, galaxies and cosmology

221 Nano-technology

- Nano-materials
- Nano-processes