Checklist for Screening

1. **Confirm Peer Review Process:** Verify that the journal employs a rigorous peer review process by checking its editorial policies on the official website. Contact the journal if necessary to verify compliance.
2. **Check for Overlapping Content:** Verify that the submitted manuscript does not contain the same or substantially similar content/data published simultaneously in multiple journals or outlets, in any language, as separate manuscripts. If in doubt, run a plagiarism check using reliable tools (contact UoH library) to detect potential overlap or duplication.
3. **Identify Duplicate Publications:** Ensure the manuscript does not have significant portions that overlap with previously published articles without clear, visible references to the prior publication.
4. **Evaluate Manuscript Quality:** Check for significant errors in English grammar, spelling, and clarity that undermine the manuscript's readability and professionalism.
5. **Examine Author Name Conventions**: Scrutinise author names for unusual use of titles such as "Prof." or "Dr." within the byline, as predatory journals often include such titles to appear legitimate.
6. **Inspect Journal Branding:** Check for excessive or inconsistent use of journal logos, such as logos appearing on every page of the article, which is uncommon in reputable journals and may indicate a fake or predatory journal attempting to mimic legitimacy.
7. **Assess Reference Uniformity across Journal:** Verify that articles published in the same journal issue consistently follow the same reference format by comparing a sample of articles from the issue.
8. **Verify Publication Format Authenticity:** Compare the format (e.g., digital, print, PDF structure, and layout) of the submitted article with the original journal's official versions to detect unauthorised copies by fake/predatory publishers. Check whether they are unauthorised digital versions of print-only journals.
9. **Check Article Listing in Table of Contents:** Confirm that the claimed article is listed with correct page numbers in the original journal's issue's table of contents (or contents page).
10. **Detect Fake URLs of Original Journals:** Verify the journal's URL against official listings in reputable databases (e.g., Scopus, Web of Science) to ensure it is not a hijacked site mimicking the original journal. Check, for instance, discrepancies in domain names, SSL certificates, or redirects to unofficial sites.
11. **Review for Multiple Articles in a Single Issue:** Verify if the author has published multiple articles (on different topics) in the same journal issue, as this may indicate potential problems with editorial oversight or publication ethics.
12. **Assess Topic Alignment with Journal Aims**. Assess whether the article's topic aligns with the journal's stated aims and scope. Flag journals with overly broad or vague scopes, especially multidisciplinary journals publishing unrelated topics (e.g., engineering and art history), as this may indicate predatory practices.
13. **Verify Journal Metrics:** Check the journal's h-index and i10-index against official sources to confirm the claimed impact factor matches the official value listed in the Science Citation Index (SCI) or Web of Science database.
14. **Evaluate Editorial Board Credibility:** Review the editorial board members' profiles and the accuracy of their affiliations. Verify legitimacy by cross-checking against official institutional websites, reputed databases, and professional networks to detect fake names or unauthorised use of affiliations.

15. **Flag Publication Certificates:** Reputable journals typically do not issue certificates of publication. Treat any provided certificate as a red flag and evaluate the article's authenticity in accordance with the guidelines spelt out in this note.
16. **Contact Journal for Verification:** In case of any doubt, contact the journal's editorial office or publisher using contact information from official sources to confirm accuracy and legitimacy.