

GUIDELINES FOR REVIEWERS

The peer reviewer is responsible for critically reading and evaluating a manuscript in their specialty field, and then providing respectful, constructive, and honest feedback to authors about their submission. It is appropriate for the Peer Reviewer to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the article, ways to improve the strength and quality of the work, and evaluate the relevance and originality of the manuscript.

Before Reviewing

Please consider the following:

- Does the article you are being asked to review match your expertise?
If you receive a manuscript that covers a topic that does not sufficiently match your area of expertise, please notify the editor as soon as possible. Please feel free to recommend alternate reviewer.
- Do you have time to review the paper?
Finished reviews of an article should be completed within two weeks. If you do not think you can complete the review within this time frame, please let the editor know and if possible, suggest an alternate reviewer. If you have agreed to review a paper but will no longer be able to finish the work before the deadline, please contact the editor as soon as possible.
- Are there any potential conflicts of interests?
While conflicts of interest will not disqualify you from reviewing the manuscript, it is important to disclose all conflicts of interest to the editors before reviewing. If you have any questions about potential conflicts of interests, please do not hesitate to contact the receiving editorial office.

The Review

When reviewing the article, please keep the following in mind:

- ***Content Quality and Originality,***
Is the article sufficiently novel and interesting to warrant publication? Does it add to the canon of knowledge? Does the article adhere to the journal's standards? Is the research question an important one? In order to determine its originality and appropriateness for the journal, it might be helpful to think of the research in terms of what percentile it is in? Is it in the top 25% of papers in this field? You might wish to do a quick literature search using tools such as Scopus to see if there are any reviews of the area. If the research has been covered previously, pass on references of those works to the editor.
- ***Organization and Clarity***
- Title: Does it clearly describe the article?
- Abstract: Does it reflect the content of the article?
- Introduction: Does it describe what the author hoped to achieve accurately, and clearly state the problem being investigated? Normally, the introduction should summarize relevant

research to provide context, and explain what other authors' findings, if any, are being challenged or extended. It should describe the experiment, the hypothesis(es) and the general experimental design or method.

- **Method:** Does the author accurately explain how the data was collected? Is the design suitable for answering the question posed? Is there sufficient information present for you to replicate the research? Does the article identify the procedures followed? Are these ordered in a meaningful way? If the methods are new, are they explained in detail? Was the sampling appropriate? Have the equipment and materials been adequately described? Does the article make it clear what type of data was recorded; has the author been precise in describing measurements?
- **Results:** This is where the author/s should explain in words what he/she discovered in the research. It should be clearly laid out and in a logical sequence. You will need to consider if the appropriate analysis has been conducted. Are the statistics correct? If you are not comfortable with statistics, please advise the editor when you submit your report. Interpretation of results should not be included in this section.
- **Conclusion/Discussion:** Are the claims in this section supported by the results, do they seem reasonable? Have the authors indicated how the results relate to expectations and to earlier research? Does the article support or contradict previous theories? Does the conclusion explain how the research has moved the body of scientific knowledge forward?
- **Tables, Figures, Images:** Are they appropriate? Do they properly show the data? Are they easy to interpret and understand?
- **Scope** - Is the article in line with the aims and scope of the journal?

Final Comments

- All submissions are confidential and please do not discuss any aspect of the submissions with a third party.
- If you would like to discuss the article with a colleague, please ask the editor first.
- Please do not contact the author directly.
- **Ethical Issues:**
 - **Plagiarism:** If you suspect that an article is a substantial copy of another work, please let the editor know, citing the previous work in as much detail as possible
 - **Fraud:** It is very difficult to detect the determined fraudster, but if you suspect the results in an article to be untrue, discuss it with the editor
 - **Other ethical concerns:** For medical research, has confidentiality been maintained? Has there been a violation of the accepted norms in the ethical treatment of animal or human subjects? If so, then these should also be identified to the editor.

Next Steps

Please complete the "Reviewer's Comments" form by the due date to the receiving editorial office. Your recommendation regarding an article will be strongly considered when the editors make the final decision, and your thorough, honest feedback will be much appreciated.

When writing comments, please indicate the section of comments intended for only the editors and the section of comments that can be returned to the author(s). Please never hesitate to contact the receiving editorial office with any questions or concerns you may have.

How to Structure Your Report

If there is a formal report format, remember to follow it. This will often comprise a range of questions followed by comment sections. Try to answer all the questions. They are there because the editor felt that they are important. If you're following an informal report format you could structure your report in three sections: summary, major issues, minor issues.

Summary

- Give positive feedback first. Authors are more likely to read your review if you do so. But don't overdo it if you will be recommending rejection
- Briefly summarize what the paper is about and what the findings are
- Try to put the findings of the paper into the context of the existing literature and current knowledge
- Indicate the significance of the work and if it is novel or mainly confirmatory
- Indicate the work's strengths, its quality and completeness
- State any major flaws or weaknesses and note any special considerations. For example, if previously held theories are being overlooked

Major Issues

- Are there any major flaws? State what they are and what the severity of their impact is on the paper
- Has similar work already been published without the authors acknowledging this?
- Are the authors presenting findings that challenge current thinking? Is the evidence they present strong enough to prove their case? Have they cited all the relevant work that would contradict their thinking and addressed it appropriately?
- If major revisions are required, try to indicate clearly what they are
- Are there any major presentational problems? Are figures & tables, language and manuscript structure all clear enough for you to accurately assess the work?
- Are there any ethical issues? If you are unsure it may be better to disclose these in the confidential comments section

Minor Issues

- Are there places where meaning is ambiguous? How can this be corrected?
- Are the correct references cited? If not, which should be cited instead/also? Are citations excessive, limited, or biased?
- Are there any factual, numerical or unit errors? If so, what are they?
- Are all tables and figures appropriate, sufficient, and correctly labeled? If not, say which are not