

Description

An invitation to peer review a journal article depends on a researcher's area of expertise in the field. The handy checklist below provides a guide to researchers considering peer review, prior to accepting an invitation from the editor.

Before You Accept

Once you have verified the legitimacy of the journal, begin by evaluating your qualifications and background for the role of a reviewer. Often the editor has invited you due to your experience in the subject detailed. In a lengthy interdisciplinary manuscript, you can choose to review aspects more aligned with your proficiency. Inform your preference to the editor before you begin to ensure a well thought out peer review process. If a manuscript outside your field of expertise is mistakenly assigned to you, inform the editor immediately and decline to review. Next, note the deadline for the review submission and ensure your availability within that timeline for a well-reviewed submission. Finally, confirm that there are no conflicts of interest. Potential conflicts of interest include:

1. A competitive research manuscript that outlines similar work to that ongoing in your research lab.
2. The manuscript details a controversial topic that you are personally opposed to
3. If the outcome of your review would be biased due to prior acquaintance with the author(s)
4. If you have recently published or collaborated with the same authors.

Should any of the listed define your circumstance, avoid conflicts of interest by declining the invitation to review. If unsure, discuss your hesitation with the editor prior to deciding on the invitation. Maintain high levels of confidentiality to ensure the privacy of the manuscript's content. You can seek the assistance of a graduate student or post-doc in the review process, although confidentiality will remain significant. Inform the editor of the support received, and in an open peer review process ensure the assistant co-signs the report with you. Remain ethical and just, throughout the process and after, do not commercialize or plagiarize the content or ideas.

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After Acceptance – Review the Articles

A researcher may receive several different types of research articles for peer review. These broadly range from original research, case reports, reviews, perspectives, and analyses, to profiles and interviews. Specific reviews for each type of article depend on addressing a few key points, to ensure a complete peer review process. Amongst the variety of guidelines available for each type of article, a few key points of peer review follow:

Reviewing Original Research

For original research articles, begin by evaluating the clarity of each aim presented. Ensure that the authors have accurately identified and articulated their question to answer it in context. Analyze if aims, results, and data outlined in the abstract are precise and in a proper flow. Then ensure that the introduction provides sufficient background information to the reader to understand the author's research process. If the existing evidence is insufficient to support the claims made, propose further experiments for the type of data expected. Furthermore, ensure the claims are original, any previous publications cited and the novelty of current research explained, to begin with. Follow-up on the conclusion and pay attention to the accuracy of each detail in the manuscript.

Reviewing Case Reports

Case reports are on clinical studies that present an unusual disease, a new treatment, drug interaction, or a diagnosis. When reviewing case reports, ensure authors include both positive and negative results relevant to patient history, examination, and the investigation. Find out if the authors reveal the impact of the report in medicine, alongside updated reviews of similar cases in the past. Ensure authors have met the specifications of case reports, including the word count limitations and highlighting implications in clinical medicine.

Reviewing Reviews

A research review often provides an all-around examination of a particular subject of research. As a

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peer reviewer, analyze if the article meets the guidelines for publication as a mini-review or long review. Conventionally, research reviews should critically assess works cited, comment on the literature, and offer a personal opinion in the field. Also, find out if the conclusion convenes limitations, future directions, and research pursued in the field of interest. Check facts for accuracy and consistency, while ensuring maintenance of a structured research flow throughout the review manuscript.

Reviewing perspectives, analyses, profiles, and interviews

In a broad overview, perspectives should provide a personal opinion on a research topic in a clear narrative voice. Analyses should provide an in-depth perspective and analysis of a policy, major advance, or historical advent in research. Description of a notable person in a field is a profile, in context of contributions to the field at large. Transcripts of an interview conducted with a researcher, is written-up on interviews, in review for publication in a journal. Key outlines on the types of research articles are in context, the expanded version on reviewing them is available elsewhere.

Submitting the Peer Review

Upload the completed peer review online, prior to the deadline, via the journal's reviewer interface portal. A checkbox for four categories will require your assessment of the manuscript based on context, for acceptance/rejection of publication. The editors will then provide authors your peer review, along with the outcome of their manuscript in the journal of interest.

Managing Future Review Requests

Writing an honest and accurate review requires skill and expertise in the field, with formal training unavailable to begin with. Consequently, the peer review process is challenging for most early career researchers, who may have to learn by trial and error. A good review is fair and polite offering constructive criticism while being thoroughly analytical and clear for academic journal publications. Comprehensive and systematic guidelines are available on Wiley and via the Committee on Publication Ethics for beginner peer reviewers of manuscripts. These guidelines further offer support for reviewers, including options for peer review training and mentoring in science. Alternatives to the regular review process, such as transferability of peer review are available for clarification within the guidelines. Clear comprehension of the guidelines may offer a head start to complete an efficient peer review on time, in the future.

Have you received an invitation to peer review for a journal? Do you any tips that worked out successfully for you? Let us know in comments below!

Category

1. Publishing Research
2. Understanding Reviews

Date Created
2017/11/23
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