Peer Review Excellence
Training and Certification
IOP

INVESTING
IN FUTURE
REVIEWERS

Peer Review Excellence: Training Summary

How do I become a peer reviewer?

- **Set up your ScholarOne account:**
  Click here to access our journal homepage. From there, select a journal, and click "submit an article". This will take you to ScholarOne, where you can create an account. If you need help with ScholarOne, click here.

- **Research interests:**
  Keep your research interests updated on ScholarOne.

  Use these tips to maximise your chances of being selected:
  - **Avoid abbreviations**
  - **Use as many keywords as possible** - try and use as broad a range of terms as possible, including any synonyms or closely related fields
  - **Each term separated by a comma** - with no unnecessary commentary

- **ORCID:**
  Create an ORCID ID and link it to your ScholarOne account. Click here for instructions on how to do this.

Should I accept an invitation to review?

Ask yourself the following questions:

- **Am I an expert?**
  Do you know the field well enough to be able to assess the scientific rigour, novelty, quality and importance of the research? You don't need to be an expert at all aspects of the paper, but be honest about your expertise and if there are aspects of the article that you feel you cannot assess, let the Editor know in the "comments to the Editor" section of the report form.

- **Do I have a conflict of interest?**
  Reject the invitation if you are:
  - In direct competition with the authors
  - A co-worker or collaborator or have a personal relationship with one of the authors
  - Affiliated with the same institution as one of the authors
  - In a position to exploit the authors' work (commercially or otherwise)
  - In a position which prevents you from giving an objective opinion of the work

- **Can I meet the deadline?**
  You can ask for more time if you need to, but give the journal a realistic timeframe for preparing your report. Do you have time to review the revised version of the paper too?

- **Can I be objective?**
  Are you aware of your own biases? Can you remove subjective preferences and focus on the science, providing a constructive and fair report? If not, you should reject the invitation.

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Make sure you do the following:

1. Respond to an invitation as soon as possible
2. Be honest about your availability
3. Suggest alternative reviewers if you can't review

Writing your report

1. Scope
Does the article make significant, original and correct contributions to one or more topics within the scope of the journal?

2. Originality
Is the work novel, e.g. does it fill a gap in the literature by describing a new method, or by answering an important unresolved question or reporting significant new results? Does it solve a current problem?

3. Scientific rigour
Is this article scientifically rigorous, accurate and correct? Is the method sound and clearly explained? Is sufficient information provided for it to be replicated?

4. Significance
What impact do you think this article will have on the field? How timely is this article?

5. Writing
Is the article well written and the work clearly communicated? Reviewers are not expected to correct spelling, grammar or use-of-English mistakes. However, if the paper is written so poorly that you cannot clearly understand what the authors mean, or there are so many errors that reading the paper becomes very difficult, then that should be reported back to the journal.

6. Length
Can the article be shortened without detriment to the content? Are the text and any mathematics brief but still clear? If you recommend shortening, please suggest what could be omitted.

7. Figures and tables
Are diagrams and tables clear and essential, and captions informative?

8. Title
Does the title clearly and concisely convey the topic of the article? Can you suggest a better title?

9. Abstract
Does the abstract contain the essential information about the article? Is it complete by itself and suitable for direct inclusion in an abstracting service?

10. Conclusion

Does the conclusion summarise what has been learned and why it is interesting and useful? Is it supported by the results? Does it satisfy the purpose of the manuscript as stated in the introduction?

11. References

Has the author referred to the most recent and most appropriate work? If not, please provide examples of those references. Do the references include all the necessary information? Do the references show a bias towards the author's own work?

12. Recommendation

If you think the work could be published after revision, which areas require improvement to bring the article up to the required quality standards? If you think the work should be rejected, why have you made this recommendation?

Tips

- **Number your points**
- **Use page number or line numbers**
  This will help identify the part of the article you're talking about.
- **Proof-read your review:**
  Make sure it is clearly communicated, polite, professional and constructive. The golden rule of reviewing is to write the kind of report you would like to receive.
- **Check any supplementary material**

Ethics for reviewers: types of misconduct

- **Plagiarism and self-plagiarism:**
  The substantial replication without attribution of significant elements of another document published by other authors, or the same authors in the case of self-plagiarism.
- **Incremental/salami publication:**
  When a paper presents only an incremental advance on what the same authors have published before.
- **Duplicate/redundant publication:**
  The repeated publication of data or ideas, often with at least one author in common.
- **Parallel submission:**
  When an author submits the same, or essentially the same, article to two or more journals at the same time.
- **Data Fabrication:**
  The fabrication, falsification, or misrepresentation of data or results.
- **Image Manipulation:**
  A form of data fabrication where images are altered or manipulated to change or misrepresent information.
- **Confidentiality:**
  By accepting an invite to review, you are agreeing to maintain confidentiality. Information and ideas obtained while acting as a reviewer must be kept confidential and not used for competitive advantage.

Click here for more information on ethics for reviewers

If you have any questions, please contact **peerreview@ioppublishing.org**

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