PEER REVIEW AND MANUSCRIPT MANAGEMENT IN SCIENTIFIC JOURNALS

Guidelines for Good Practice

Irene Hames





Contents

Foreword by Robert Campbell and Sally Morris	ix
Preface	Х
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
What should peer review do?	2
What does peer review assume?	4
What is this book trying to achieve?	4
Chapter 2: The peer-review process – how to get going	9
The basic process	9
The people involved in running the peer-review process	10
Office organization	11
Choice of system and procedures	14
Record keeping	16
Systems available	20
Chapter 3: Manuscript submission and initial checks on	
completeness and suitability	25
Submission guidance to authors	26
Journal scope and editorial policy	26
Manuscript presentation	28
Manuscript submission	31
Checking and logging of submitted manuscripts	32
Transfer to editor	34
Initial assessment of suitability and rejection without external review	36
Manuscripts with language problems	38
Chapter 4: The full review process	41
Identifying and selecting appropriate reviewers	43
Reviewer information	44
How to go about identifying and selecting reviewers	48
Finding reviewers	53
To invite or not?	53
Inviting reviewers	54
Responses to invitations to review	56

vi Contents

Getting the manuscript and associated material to the reviewers	60
Information reviewers will require	61
Associated material needed by reviewers	63
Monitoring review progress	66
Reminding and chasing reviewers	67
Problems during review	70
Reviewers not returning reviews	71
Receiving and checking of returned reviews	73
Checking of reviews	74
The ethics of amending reviewer reports for authors	77
The 'ideal' report	78
Back-to-back manuscripts	82
Dealing with enquiries on manuscript status	84
Chapter 5: The decision-making process for reviewed manuscripts	87
The organizational structure for decision making	87
The decision-making process	89
Divided opinions from reviewers	91
The decisions that can be made	94
Checks to be made before communicating decisions to authors	99
Communicating the decision to the authors	102
Rebuttals and appeals from authors	103
Dealing with revisions	104
Dealing with resubmissions	107
Problems with resubmissions	109
Acceptance	110
Decision making to consistent standards and the problem of	
availability of space	112
Special considerations in decision making: dual-use research	
and the possible misuse of information	114
Chapter 6: Moving to online submission and review	119
How do you choose an online system?	120
How to prepare to move to online working	122
Evaluation of current workflow and responsibilities	123
Specification design for the journal	125
Questions and text options on the site	125
Preparation of editorial correspondence for the online site	126
Health and safety issues	127
Training and support	128
Data transfer	130
The launch and transition period	130
What to expect after going live online	130
Impact on submission numbers	132
•	132
Impact on the quality of submissions	132

Impact on geographical origin of submissions	132
Impact on reviewing and administration times	133
Problems that may be encountered and how to deal with them	133
Online systems are never closed	133
Users will grumble	133
Users needing extra support	133
Editors not using the online system properly	134
The need to work 'offline' occasionally	134
Users not using the online system to communicate or not mounting	
all relevant information	134
Responses from reviewers	135
Reviews submitted for the wrong manuscript or comments in the	
wrong place, and editors submitting the wrong documents or	
working on the wrong manuscript screen	135
Other editors or people not associated with a manuscript needing	
to see material	135
Submissions from the editor-in-chief	136
Reviewers requesting hard copy and/or refusing to work online	136
Users adding other people's email addresses to their	
own accounts	137
A final note	137
Chanter 7. Deciment	100
Chapter 7: Reviewers – a precious resource	139
Thanks and feedback to reviewers	139
Reviewer training	140
Ways to recompense reviewers	142
How to develop and maintain reviewer loyalty	143
Recognition of peer review as an accredited	
professional activity	144
Chapter 8: The obligations and responsibilities of the people	
involved in peer review	147
Authors – their obligations and responsibilities	148
To act honestly	148
To choose the most appropriate journal	149
To make sure manuscripts are well presented, contain nothing	
inappropriate and are submitted correctly	149
To deal appropriately with all authorship issues	151
Editors – their obligations and responsibilities	158
General responsibilities	158
Responsibilities to authors	159
Responsibilities to reviewers	160
Responsibilities to readers	161
Reviewers – their obligations and responsibilities	162
Editorial office staff – their obligations and responsibilities	164

Conflicts of interest – what they are and how to deal with them	164
What are conflicts of interest?	164
How should conflicts of interest be handled?	167
Moral dilemmas	169
Political or human rights issues	169
Authors accused of criminal offences	170
Refusals by publishers to publish articles	170
Inability to complete review of a manuscript	170
Chapter 9: Misconduct in scientific research and publishing –	
what it is and how to deal with it	173
What types of misconduct can occur?	174
Author misconduct	174
Reviewer misconduct	182
Editor misconduct	183
How should cases of alleged or suspected misconduct be handled?	184
Where can you turn for help?	187
The publisher	188
Professional bodies	188
Scholarly publishing organizations	188
The Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)	188
The Office of Research Integrity (ORI)	189
International Committees for Scientific Misconduct	189
Funding agencies	190
What sanctions can be imposed as a penalty for misconduct?	190
Authors found guilty of misconduct	190
Reviewers found guilty of misconduct	192
Editors found guilty of misconduct	192
Correcting the literature	192
Notification of an error	193
Expression of concern	194
Retraction of an article	194
Removal of an article	196
Replacement of an article	196
Dubious or fraudulent data remaining in the literature	197
The future	197
Appendices	201
Appendix I The Golden Rules and the Peer-Review Good Practice Checklist Appendix II Examples of checklists, forms, guidance for reviewers and	201
editorial letters	213
Appendix III Useful websites	269
Appendix IV Alternative models of peer review	275
Index	283