

& related MONOGRAPHIC SPECIAL ISSUE

Reviewers play a fundamental role in the process of science and in scholarly publishing. Selection of reviewers for a particular manuscript is based on many factors, including expertise, reputation, specific recommendations of authors and academic editors, and the knowledge of a reviewer's past performance. The review process is strictly confidential and should be treated as such by reviewers.

ETHICAL OBLIGATIONS OF REVIEWERS OF MANUSCRIPT

First introduced by the Royal Society in 1665 by the Editor of the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, peer reviewing is today a touchstone of the modern scientific method.

The first evidence of professional peer reviewing process can be found in the medical manual *Ethics of the Physician* written by the medieval Arabic physician Ishaq bin Ali al-Rahwi (854–931) who proposed that a council of physicians should review of the notes of physicians on the conditions of patients to decide whether the required standards of medical care were met.

The reviewing of manuscript is an essential step in the publication process. Therefore in the operation of the scientific method, every reviewer has an obligation to do a fair share of reviewing.

The reviewing process is performed on a voluntary basis without any economical reward. Reviewers should take into consideration that they provide the same service to the scientific community they benefit from each time they submit a paper for publication.

A chosen reviewer who feels not qualified to judge the data reported in a manuscript should promptly inform the editor.

A reviewer of a manuscript should judge objectively the quality of the manuscript, of its experimental and theoretical parts, of its conclusions and its general exposition, with due regard to the maintenance of high scientific and literary standards. A reviewer should respect the intellectual independence of the authors.

A reviewer should avoid conflicts of interest when the manuscript under review is closely related to the reviewer's work. If in doubt, the reviewer should inform the editor of the conflict of interest or bias.

A reviewer should not evaluate a manuscript authored or co-authored by a person with whom the reviewer has a personal or professional connection if the relationship would bias judgment of the manuscript.

A reviewer must treat a manuscript sent for review as a confidential document. It should neither be shown to nor discussed with others except, in special cases, to persons from whom specific advice may be sought; in that event, the identities of those consulted has to be disclosed to the editor.

Reviewers should explain and support their judgements adequately so that editors and authors may understand the basis of their comments.

A reviewer should be aware of the failure of authors to cite relevant work made by other scientists.

A reviewer should call to the editor's attention in the case of any substantial similarity between the manuscript under consideration and any published paper or any manuscript submitted concurrently to another journal.

A reviewer should act promptly, submitting a report in a timely manner. Should a reviewer receive a manuscript at a time when circumstances preclude prompt attention to it, he should notify the editor of probable delays and propose a revised review date.

Reviewers should not use or disclose unpublished information, arguments or interpretations contained in a manuscript under consideration, except with the consent of the author.