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GUIDELINES FOR PEER REVIEWERS

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Editorial Note: This document should be issued to every reviewer at the time a manuscript is sent for review, together with the Peer Review Report Template and the (anonymised) manuscript.

Introduction

The Al-Ameen Journal of Interdisciplinary Research (AJIR) adopts a rigorous double-blind Peer Review Process in accordance with its established Peer Review Policy. These guidelines outline the professional responsibilities, ethical obligations, and procedural expectations of peer reviewers throughout the review process.

These Guidelines are supplemented by the detailed guidelines issued by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) for Peer Reviewers available at https://publicationethics.org/files/Ethical_Guidelines_For_Peer_Reviewers_2.pdf, which serve as an authoritative reference for Best practices in scholarly Peer Review. All Reviewers are strongly encouraged to familiarise themselves with and adhere to these Internationally Recognised Standards.

A. When Approached for a Review

1. Respond Promptly: Acknowledge the Review invitation within a reasonable timeframe, preferably within seven (7) days, indicating whether you are able to undertake the Review.

2. Assess Suitability: Conduct a preliminary assessment of the manuscript and accept the Review assignment only if the subject matter falls within your area of expertise and you can provide an objective, informed, and an impartial evaluation.

After accepting the Review invitation, undertake an initial reading of the manuscript to gain a general understanding of its objectives, research questions, methodology, and principal findings. A subsequent, more detailed reading should critically evaluate the accuracy, methodological soundness, originality, clarity, and overall quality of the manuscript.

B. During the Review

1. If you are unable to undertake the Review due to insufficient subject expertise but are aware of a suitably qualified scholar, promptly notify the Editor and, where appropriate, recommend the individual by providing their Professional contact details.
2. Upon accepting the invitation, commit to completing the review and submitting the Peer Review Report within the mutually agreed timeframe, ordinarily three to four (3–4) weeks.
3. Disclose any actual, potential, or perceived Conflict of Interest involving the author(s)—whose identity may occasionally be inferred despite anonymisation—or the subject matter of the manuscript that could compromise your impartiality. Inform the Editor immediately and proceed only in accordance with the Editor's decision.
4. Peer Reviewing for AJIR is a voluntary, honorary service. No financial remuneration is provided. Reviewers will receive a complimentary digital copy of the journal issue containing the reviewed article and, upon request, a certificate recognising their contribution and period of service as a Peer Reviewer.
5. Appointment to the Roster of Peer Reviewers is initially valid for three (3) years and may be renewed on the basis of satisfactory performance and continued service, in accordance with the Journal's Peer Reviewer Invitation Policy.
6. If, during the Review process, you determine that any aspect of the manuscript falls outside your expertise or if a conflict of interest arises, notify the Editor without delay and act in accordance with the Editor's guidance.

During the Review, carefully assess each major component of the manuscript, including:

Abstract and Introduction: Determine whether the research problem, objectives, and scope of the study are clearly defined.

Methodology: Assess whether the research methods are appropriate, adequately described, and capable of being replicated.

Results: Verify that the findings are presented accurately, logically, and are supported by appropriate tables, figures, or other illustrations.

Discussion and Conclusion: Ensure that the interpretations and conclusions are supported by the results and do not extend beyond the evidence presented.

7. Do not involve any other individual in the Review process without obtaining the Editor's prior approval. Where collaborative review is authorised, kindly disclose the collaborator's name and contribution in the Peer Review Report.
8. Maintain the strict confidentiality of the manuscript and all review-related information at all times. Do not retain, disclose, or use any unpublished material or privileged information for personal, professional, or commercial benefit. Reviewers should not upload, copy, or process unpublished manuscript content using generative artificial intelligence tools or any external platforms without the prior written authorisation of the Editor.
9. Immediately report to the Editor any suspected ethical misconduct, including plagiarism, data fabrication, data falsification, or any other significant ethical concern, irrespective of whether it falls within the formal Evaluation criteria. Reviewers should promptly notify the Editor of any concerns relating to plagiarism, duplicate publication, unethical research practices, data manipulation, image alteration, or any other matter that may compromise the integrity of the scholarly record.
10. 12. Complete and submit the Peer Review Report within the agreed Review Period. If an extension becomes necessary, kindly inform the Editor at the earliest opportunity.

C. Preparing the Peer Review Report

The Peer Review Report should be prepared in a clear, logical, and structured manner to assist both the Editor and the author(s). Reviewers are encouraged to organise their comments using the following format:

Summary of the Manuscript: Briefly summarise the purpose, methodology, and principal findings to demonstrate an accurate understanding of the study.

Overall Assessment and Recommendation: Provide an overall evaluation of the manuscript's scholarly contribution and indicate the recommended Editorial Decision.

Major Comments: Present substantive concerns affecting the validity, originality, methodology, interpretation, or significance of the study.

Minor Comments: Identify issues relating to presentation, language, formatting, references, grammar, or typographical errors that may improve the clarity and quality of the manuscript.

1. Prepare the Review using the Peer Review Report Template supplied by the Editor. Address each Evaluation criterion comprehensively, drawing upon your subject-matter expertise to provide an objective, balanced, evidence-based assessment of the manuscript's scholarly quality, originality, and suitability for publication.

2. Ensure that all Review comments are objective, professional, respectful, and constructive. Avoid derogatory, inflammatory, or unsubstantiated remarks, and provide feedback that is clear, specific, and conducive to improving the manuscript.
3. Clearly identify the manuscript's strengths and areas requiring improvement. Wherever practicable, substantiate your observations with precise references to relevant sections, page numbers, tables, figures, or specific passages within the manuscript.
4. The Peer Review Report Template comprises of three distinct sections:

Section A: Comments for the Author, which constitute the primary assessment and will be shared with the author(s).

Section B: Confidential Comments to the Editor, intended exclusively for editorial consideration and not disclosed to the author(s).

Section C: The Reviewer's Final Recommendation, indicating one of the following decisions: Accept with Minor Revisions, Major Revisions Required and Resubmission, or Reject.

When providing the final Recommendation, Reviewers should base their decision solely on the scientific merit, originality, methodological quality, ethical compliance, and relevance of the manuscript to the journal's scope. Recommendations should remain impartial and be fully supported by the comments provided within the review report.

5. Under no circumstances shall any information that could directly or indirectly reveal the identity of the Reviewer be disclosed to the author(s) at any stage of the Peer Review or Publication process.

D. After the Review

1. The Reviewer's identity shall remain strictly confidential following publication of the article. Reviewers must not disclose their identity to the author(s), either directly or indirectly, unless expressly authorised by the Editor.
2. Reviewers are required to maintain the confidentiality of the manuscript, the review process, and all associated information even after the completion of the review and publication of the article.
3. If, following completion of the review or subsequent publication, any significant information concerning the manuscript comes to the Reviewer's attention—such as evidence of plagiarism, research misconduct, data fabrication, or other ethical concerns—it should be reported promptly and confidentially to the Editor.
4. Reviewers are expected to cooperate with the Editor by responding to any subsequent queries or requests for clarification relating to the manuscript they have Reviewed.

5. Reviewers are strongly encouraged to familiarise themselves with and adhere to the comprehensive ethical guidance and Best-practice Recommendations issued by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), as referenced in these Guidelines.