REVIEWER'S GUIDELINES

Reason for Peer Review

We appreciate the dedication and expertise you bring to the reviewing process, which is indispensable in upholding the esteemed standards of peer-reviewed journals. Peer review stands as a vital component of scholarly publishing and is fundamental to the scientific method. It serves two primary purposes:

- ✓ Acts as a filter: Verifies research thoroughly before dissemination
- ✓ Enhances research quality: Rigorous evaluation by fellow experts refines key aspects and rectifies unintentional errors

On Being Asked To Review

- ➢ Does the article you're being requested to review align with your expertise?

The editor reaching out to you might not have detailed knowledge of your specific work but may only be familiar with your work in a general sense. Only agree to review the article if you feel confident in your ability to provide a thorough assessment.

- ➢ Do you have the capacity to review the paper?

Reviewing an article can be a significant time commitment. The duration of the review process can vary widely depending on the discipline and the type of article, but typically, a thorough review may take around 5 hours. Do you anticipate having enough time before the deadline provided in the invitation to conduct a comprehensive review? If you are unable to carry out the review, please inform the editor promptly and, if feasible, suggest alternative reviewers.

- ➢ Are there any possible conflicts of interest?

While a conflict of interest may not automatically disqualify you from reviewing an article, disclosing such conflicts to the editor enables them to make an informed judgment. For instance, if you are affiliated with the same department or institution as one of the authors, have

collaborated on a previous paper with an author, or possess a professional or financial association with the article, it is essential to disclose these details when responding to the editor's invitation for review.

Conducting the Review

Reviewing must be conducted confidentially, and the article provided for review should not be shared with any third party. If you intend to seek opinions from colleagues or students regarding the article, you should inform the editor in advance. While most editors welcome additional comments, it is crucial that anyone else involved in the process also maintains confidentiality.

Contacting the author directly is not advisable.

When submitting your review, bear in mind that any recommendations you make will influence the final decision made by the editor.

Depending on the journal's guidelines, you may be asked to assess the article based on various criteria. While some journals offer detailed guidance, others do not. However, typically, you would be expected to evaluate the article in terms of the following:

Originality: Is the article sufficiently novel and compelling to warrant publication? Does it contribute to the existing body of knowledge? Does it meet the journal's standards? Is the research question significant? To gauge its originality and suitability for the journal, consider its percentile ranking. Is it among the top 25% of papers in this field? Conducting a quick literature search using tools like Scopus to check for previous reviews in the area can be helpful. If the research has been previously covered, provide references to those works to the editor.

Structure: Is the article well-organized? Are all the essential components (such as abstract, introduction, methodology, results, and conclusions) present? Evaluate each element individually:

Title: Does it clearly describe the article?

Abstract: Does the abstract provide an accurate depiction of the article's content?

If graphical abstracts and/or highlights are included, please assess the content and, if possible, propose improvements. For additional information on graphical abstracts and highlights, please consult the provided links.

Introduction: Does the introduction accurately depict the author's intended goals and clearly articulate the problem under investigation? Typically, the introduction should summarize relevant research to provide context, and elucidate how the author's findings challenge or expand upon previous work. It should outline the experiment, hypothesis(es), and the overall experimental design or methodology.

Method: Does the author effectively describe the data collection process? Is the design appropriate for addressing the research question? Is there adequate information provided for replicating the study? Does the article detail the procedures followed logically? If novel methods are employed, are they sufficiently explained? Was the sampling method appropriate? Have the equipment and materials been sufficiently described? Does the article specify the type of data recorded, and is the author precise in describing measurements?

Results: In this section, the author(s) should articulate their research findings clearly and logically. Consider whether the appropriate analyses have been conducted. Are the statistical methods correct? If you are unfamiliar with statistical analysis, please notify the editor when submitting your report. Interpretation of results should be omitted from this section.

Conclusion/Discussion: Are the assertions made in this section supported by the results, and do they appear reasonable? Have the authors indicated how the results align with expectations and previous research? Does the article corroborate or challenge existing theories? Does the conclusion elucidate how the research contributes to advancing the body of scientific knowledge?

Language: If an article is poorly written due to grammatical errors, while it may hinder comprehension of the scientific content, reviewers are not expected to correct the English. However, such issues should be brought to the attention of the editor.

In conclusion, when assessing the entire article, do the figures and tables effectively communicate information to the reader and play a significant role in conveying the narrative? Do the figures accurately represent the data, and are they consistent—for instance, are the bars in charts of uniform width, and are the axis scales logically scaled?

Previous Research:

If the article builds upon earlier research, does it appropriately reference that work? Have any crucial studies been overlooked? Are the references precise and correct?

Ethical Concerns:

> **Plagiarism:** If there are suspicions of substantial copying from another work, please inform the editor, providing detailed citations of the prior work.
>
> **Fraud:** While identifying determined fraudsters can be challenging, if there are doubts about the authenticity of the results in an article, discuss them with the editor.

Other ethical considerations: In medical research, has confidentiality been maintained? Have there been any breaches of ethical standards in the treatment of animal or human subjects? If so, these issues should also be brought to the attention of the editor.

Communicating Your Report to the Editor

After completing your assessment of the article, the next step is to compose your report. If it appears that you might miss your deadline, it is courteous to inform the editor in advance.

Some journals may require you to fill out a form, evaluating various aspects of the paper, while others may request a summary of your comments. In either case, providing a brief overview of the article at the beginning of your report is beneficial. This serves the dual purpose of refreshing the editor's memory of the report's details and reassuring both the author and editor of your understanding of the article.

The report should encompass the key elements of your review, addressing the points outlined in the previous section. Your commentary should be polite and constructive, devoid of any personal remarks or details, including your name.

Offering insight into any shortcomings is crucial. You should elucidate and justify your assessment so that both editors and authors can fully grasp the rationale behind your comments. Specify whether your remarks are based on your personal opinion or are supported by the data.

When making a recommendation regarding an article, it is prudent to consider the categories the editor is likely to use for classifying the article.

a. Accepted without revisions
b. Rejected due to low quality or being out of scope
c. Accepted pending revisions (either major or minor)

In the event of the latter, specify the necessary revisions and indicate to the editor whether you would be willing to review the revised article.