

RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS OF PEER REVIEWERS

Responsibilities

- Reviewers are obliged to treat the author and the manuscript with respect. When reviewers have a *bias* against the researchers or the research, they must recuse themselves. When they have a *conflict of interest* with the research or its sponsors, they must make it known to the editors or recuse themselves.
- Reviewers should provide an honest and constructive assessment of the value of the manuscript. An appropriate assessment includes an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the study; suggestions on how to make the manuscript more complete, relevant, and readable; and specific questions for the authors to address to make any revision of the manuscript acceptable and useful to the intended audience. Whenever possible, complete citations should be provided for important work that has been omitted.
- Reviewers must maintain confidentiality about the manuscripts they review. Using the data from such manuscripts before they are published is inappropriate. Sharing the data with colleagues is equally inappropriate, as is reproducing the manuscript for any purpose. If reviewers wish to use information from a manuscript that has been accepted for publication, they should ask the Editor to contact the author(s) for permission.
- Reviewers must not use the peer-review process as a means to further their own research aims, specifically by requiring authors to respond to questions that are interesting to the reviewers but that the study was not designed to answer or by suggesting that the editor reject work that contradicts or is in conflict with their own. Reviewers must also not use the peer-review process or recommend acceptance simply to further the careers of their students or colleagues.
- Reviewers who receive invitations to review manuscripts with which they have a clear conflict of interest should decline the invitation and reveal the specific conflict of interest. Conflicts of interest can be defined as sets of conditions (such as academic competition or particular philosophic values and beliefs) that could result in a biased or unfair evaluation of the manuscript. The Editor may deliberately choose a reviewer with a known stance on a particular issue in order to obtain a balanced review of the manuscript. Reviewers who have any questions in this regard should consult with the Editor.
- Reviewers who have reviewed a manuscript before for another journal should inform the Editor before they complete the review. The Editor can then decide whether a re-review is appropriate.
- Unless appropriate, reviewers should resist the temptation to use their reviews as an opportunity to suggest that their own published work be referenced.
- Reviewers who receive a request to review a manuscript and cannot do so within the specified time period should decline the request
- Board members are expected to complete 6 to 8 reviews annually and to do so in a timely manner. Those who consistently decline to complete reviews or who do not complete them on time will be asked to leave the Board.

- Reviewers who agree to review a manuscript must complete their reviews within the specified time period. If it becomes impossible to complete the review on time, reviewers should so inform the editorial office and ask for guidance about whether to decline to review the manuscript or to take an additional specified period of time.
- All reviews of board members and occasional reviewers are scored on both timeliness and quality. High quality and timely reviews are essential to Journal's goal of publishing high quality work in a timely manner. Reviewers who complete high quality reviews in a timely manner are providing an essential service to the field and to the *Journal*, and they are likely to be asked to review again.

Rights

- Reviewers can expect to be informed of the Editor's decision regarding manuscripts they reviewed for the *Journal*.
- Reviewers can expect to receive the comments of the other reviewers for their edification.
- Reviewers can expect to be thanked for the time they take to review manuscripts. A list of the members of the Editorial Board will be published in each issue of the *Journal*. *Ad hoc* reviewers will be identified in a list of occasional reviewers published in the last issue of the publication year.

This document is adapted from a Council on Scientific Editors Editorial Policy Statement appearing in *Science*, Vol 25 (6).

These rights and responsibilities were approved on August 12, 2004 and they will be reviewed annually (as needed) for accuracy and for integrity.