

1. REVIEW POLICIES

Peer reviewers are experts chosen by editors to provide written assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of written research, with the aim of improving the reporting of research and identifying the most appropriate and highest quality material for the journal. Regular reviewers selected for the journal should be required to meet minimum standards (as determined and promulgated by each journal) regarding their background in original research, publication of articles, formal training, and previous critical appraisal of manuscripts. Peer reviewers should be experts in the scientific topic addressed in the articles they review, and should be selected for their objectivity and scientific knowledge.

Reviews will be expected to be professional, honest, courteous, prompt, and constructive. The desired major elements of a high-quality review should be as follows:

- The reviewer should have identified and commented on major strengths and weaknesses of study design and methodology
- The reviewer should comment accurately and constructively upon the quality of the author's interpretation of the data, including acknowledgment of its limitations
- The reviewer should comment on major strengths and weaknesses of the manuscript as a written communication, independent of the design, methodology, results, and interpretation of the study
- The reviewer should comment on any ethical concerns raised by the study, or any possible evidence of low standards of scientific conduct
- The reviewer should provide the author with useful suggestions for improvement of the manuscript.
- The reviewer's comments to the author should be constructive and professional
- The review should provide the editor the proper context and perspective to make a decision on acceptance (and/or revision) of the manuscript

The submitted manuscript is a privileged communication; reviewers must treat it as confidential. It should not be retained or copied. Also, reviewers must not share the manuscript with any colleagues without the explicit permission of the editor. Reviewers and editors must not make any personal or professional use of the data, arguments, or interpretations (other than those directly involved in its peer review) prior to publication unless they have the authors' specific permission or are writing an editorial or commentary to accompany the article.

If reviewers suspect misconduct, they should notify the editor in confidence, and should not share their concerns with other parties unless officially notified by the journal that they may do so.

2. HOW TO USE THE SYSTEM

2.1 How to accept/decline the review requests and consult reviewer guidelines

When you are assigned as a Reviewer, you receive a 'REVIEW REQUEST' email message with the link to the submission: you don't need to enter your Username and Password, because simply clicking on the same link you can access the review page. In the e-mail you receive, you will also see the deadline to accept/decline our request and the deadline for completing the review.

Should you be overcommitted and have to decline our request, please inform us that you need to be replaced. In that case, a suggestion for other suitable and reliable reviewers with sufficient experience in the field is much appreciated.

To accept/decline the review request, follow the instructions below:

- click on the URL provided in the 'Review request' message
- from the webpage you are redirected to, you can see several review steps: **Step 1** requires you to accept or refuse the assignment. The system allows you to read the title and the abstract of the paper and reminds you of the deadlines to be respected (Fig 1)
- after reading and accepting our 'privacy' and 'conflict of interest' policies, at the bottom of the webpage you will find two buttons to accept or decline our request for review (Fig 2). Only if you accept, are you allowed to see and download the whole paper.
- once you have agreed to perform the review, in **Step 2**, you will have the opportunity to consult the detailed guidelines for reviewers (Fig 3). Click on the button "CONTINUE TO STEP 3" (bottom page) to access the paper (Fig 3).

Fig 1

The screenshot displays a web interface for a review request. At the top, a navigation bar shows four steps: 1. Request (highlighted with a red circle), 2. Guidelines, 3. Download & Review, and 4. Completion. Below this is the 'Request for Review' section, which includes the 'Article Title' (Human Papillomavirus Infection, an Assessment of Awareness, Knowledge, Attitude among University of Johannesburg Students) and the 'Abstract' (highlighted with a red circle). The abstract text provides background, methods, results, and conclusions. At the bottom, the 'Review Schedule' section shows two dates: '2019-03-13' (Editor's Request) and '2019-04-03' (Review Due Date), both highlighted with red circles.

Fig 2

Competing Interests
This publisher has a policy for disclosure of potential competing interests from its reviewers. Please take a moment to review this policy.
[Competing Interests](#)

Yes, I agree to have my data collected and stored according to the [privacy statement](#).

Accept Review, Continue to Step #2 Decline Review Request

OR

Fig 3

1. Request 2. Guidelines 3. Download & Review 4. Completion

Reviewer Guidelines
Our journal follows the [CSE's White Paper on Promoting Integrity in Scientific Journal Publications](#) about peer-review. Please carefully read and understand your role acting as Reviewer

CSE's White Paper on Promoting Integrity in Scientific Journal Publications

Reviewer Roles and Responsibilities

Peer review is the principal mechanism by which the quality of research is judged. Most funding decisions in science and the academic advancement of scientists are based on peer-reviewed publications. Because the number of scientific articles published each year continues to grow, the quality of the peer-review process and the quality of the editorial board are cited as primary influences on a journal's reputation, impact factor, and standing in the field. Scientific journals publishing peer-reviewed articles depend heavily on the scientific referees or reviewers who typically volunteer their time and expertise. In most circumstances, at least 2 reviewers are asked to evaluate a manuscript: some journals request 3 reviews. Some journals also solicit an independent statistical review. In cases of controversy or disagreement regarding the merits of ...

... about whether the popular model of partially masked peer review is optimal, and some journals and editors propose a fully open system in which all participants know the others' identities. There are barriers for and against each model, but most journal editors consider anonymity of the reviewer a norm that they are not willing to change. The best criticism of the partially masked peer review process is that, even if all precautions are taken, the process remains highly subjective and relies on reviewers who may take advantage of ideas they find in yet-unpublished manuscripts; show bias in favor of or against a research institution, or an idea; be insufficiently qualified to provide an authoritative review; or abuse their position because they do not feel accountable. The open peer-review concept (in which all parties' identities are fully disclosed) offers its own dilemmas, however. Knowledge of reviewers' names could make them objects of animosity or vengeful behavior, and consequently reviewers could become less critical and especially when judging their colleagues' work. This can also occur with the partially masked system, particularly within small specialties where researchers can easily guess who reviewed the manuscript.

Continue to Step #3 Go Back

2.2 How to download the paper and upload your comments

In **Step 3**, you will be able to download the submission file (and other materials that may have been uploaded) (Fig 4a).

When you have finished your review, you will be required to upload your comments. The system distinguishes between comments for the author and comments that only the editor(s) can read. Also, you can have the chance (optional) to upload a file to be shared with the authors (in this case, be sure to remove your name or other indications that would make your identity known) (Fig 4b).

As the final step, you will be required to select your recommended editorial decision:

- Accept Submission*
- Decline Submission*
- Revisions Required* (= minor revisions),
- Resubmit for Review* (= major revisions)
- Resubmit Elsewhere*

Click on the button "SUBMIT REVIEW" to complete your task (Fig 4c).

Fig 4a

Review: Human Papillomavirus Infection, an Assessment of Awareness, Knowledge, Attitude among University of Johannesburg Students.

1. Request 2. Guidelines **3. Download & Review** 4. Completion

Review Files **click on the file(s) to download it / them**

 4822-1	Author, I.T Ncube 216089741Article 2.docx	Article Text
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Fig 4b

Review
Enter (or paste) your review of this submission into the form below.

your comments

For author and editor

your comments

For editor only

Upload
Upload files you would like the editor and/or author to consult, including revised versions of the original review file(s).

Reviewer Files **use this to upload files** **Upload File**

No Files

Fig 4c

Recommendation **Select your recommendation**

Select a recommendation and submit the review to complete the process. You must enter a review or upload a file before selecting a recommendation.

Revisions Required

Submit Review Go Back

* Denotes required field