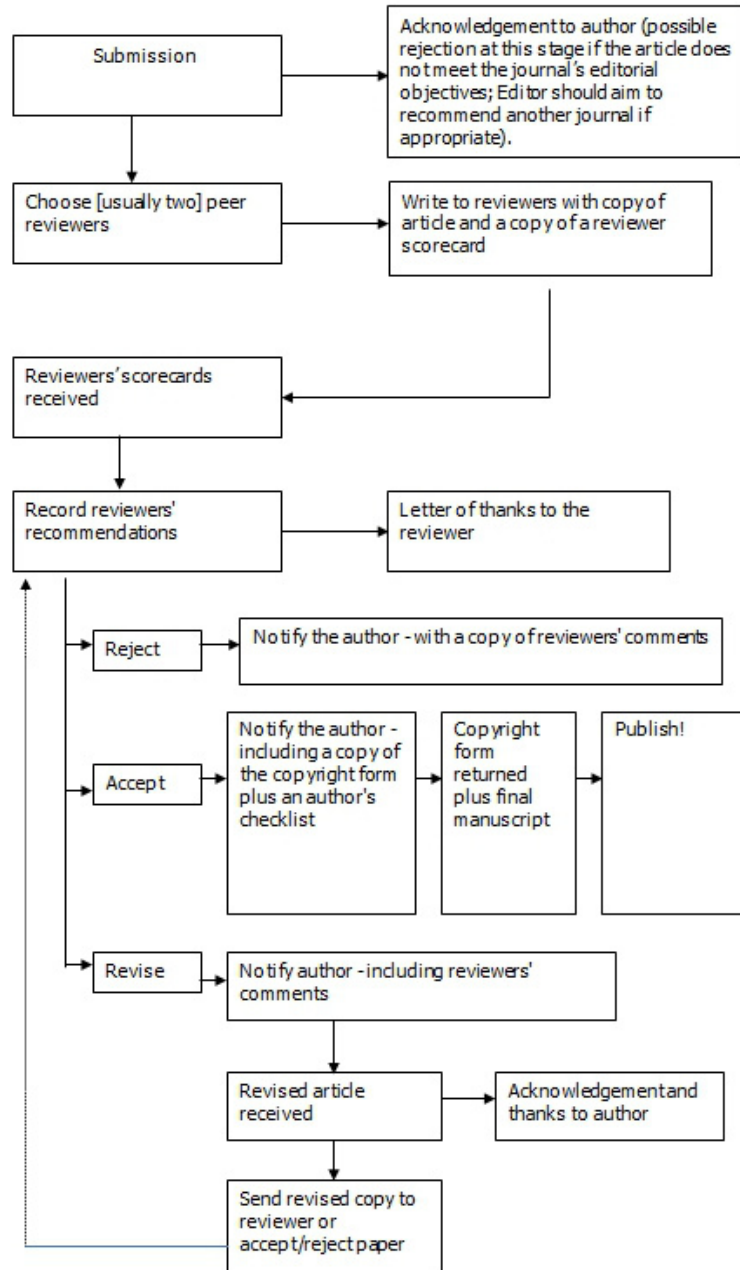


For Reviewers

The peer review process

Peer review flowchart

This flowchart shows the process of peer review from start to finish.



Peer review models

Single-blind review

The names of the reviewers are hidden from the author. However, the name of the author is made known to the reviewers.

Advantages

The anonymity afforded to reviewers by this model allows them to speak honestly and impartially and to recommend decisions without

having their critiques attributed. Also, knowledge of an author's identity can help reviewers place an article in the context of the author's earlier work.

Disadvantages

Anonymity may make reviewers more inclined or likely to be unnecessarily critical or harsh when commenting on the author's work.

Double-blind review

Neither the authors' nor the reviewers' identities are disclosed to the other.

Advantages

Outside of triple blind this is the surest way to ensure that the process is completely objective, that focus remains on the content of the article and the possibility of reviewer bias is eliminated. Reviewer bias may be favourable or unfavourable and could be based on the author's previous work or country of origin, for example.

Disadvantages

In some fields it can be difficult to completely disguise the author's identity. Aspects of style, subject matter and the referencing of previous work are all clues that a reviewer may pick up on, especially in smaller or niche areas of research.

Triple-blind peer review

The identities of the author(s), reviewer(s) and editor(s) are not known to one another. This may be where the paper is anonymously uploaded to a journal website by the author(s) and the editor handles the submission without knowledge of who the author is. The author is identified only by a number. Communication happens through the website.

Advantages

Eliminates any potential bias

Disadvantages

Complex administration. As with double blind, author identity may be inferred from specialist subjects and references to previous work.

Open peer review

Both author and reviewer are made known to one another. The review may take place either pre or post publication.

Advantages

The transparency permitted by this model of review is a hugely advantageous factor, according to its advocates. The impression of increased accountability is thought to improve the substance and quality of reviews in terms of both tone and content, as reviewers are more conscious of offering substantive justification for their recommendations. The post publication format publicly recognizes the important work of the reviewers.

Disadvantages

Critics argue that such openness makes the process unavoidably susceptible to bias, subjectivity or obfuscation. Moreover, some reviewers may fear that they will suffer the consequences of negative reviews, either professionally or personally. More practically, the degree of support for open peer review models varies substantially by discipline.

Further resources

The Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) has published a series of guidelines and flowcharts relating to the peer review process. [More information.](#)