

# GUIDE TO REVIEWING AN ARTICLE FOR SAJOT

## BASIC PRINCIPLES TO WHICH REVIEWERS OF ARTICLES SHOULD ADHERE

The following summary of guidelines for conducting a review is provided for reviewers of articles. It is **strongly** recommended that reviewers read the complete information given in the “Ethical Guidelines for peer review” provided by the Committee on Publications Ethics (COPE)<sup>1</sup> and in the Ten Simple Rules for Reviewers published by Bourne PE, Korngreen<sup>2</sup>.

**“Respect the confidentiality** of peer review and do not reveal any details of the manuscript or its review during or after the peer review process beyond those that are released by the Journal”<sup>1</sup>. Many of us have received reviews where it is fairly obvious who reviewed the work. It is hard to maintain anonymity in small scientific communities, and you should reread your review to be sure (*that*) it does not endanger the anonymity. Do not share the manuscript with colleagues unless the Editor has given the green light<sup>2</sup>.

**“Do not use information obtained during the peer-review process** for your own or any other Person’s or organisation’s advantage, or to disadvantage or discredit others”<sup>1</sup>. You must contact the editor before communicating with anybody else regarding the paper under review. This means that you may not use this article as a reference until it has been published.

“You should **declare all potential conflicting interests**, seeking advice from the journal if you are unsure whether something constitutes a relevant interest”<sup>1</sup>. “...The cloak of anonymity is not intended to cover scientific misconduct. Do not take on the review if there is the slightest possibility of conflict of interest. Conflicts arise when, for example, the paper is poor and will likely be rejected, yet there might be good ideas that you could apply in your own research, or, someone is working dangerously close to your own next paper. “With conflict, there is often a gray area; if you are in any doubt whatsoever, consult with the Editors who have asked you to review”<sup>2</sup>.

**“Do Not Accept a Review Assignment** unless you can accomplish the task in the requested time frame—Learn to Say No”<sup>2</sup>. “Late reviews are not fair to the authors, nor are they fair to journal staff. Think about this next time you have a paper under review and the reviewers are unresponsive. You do not like delays when it is your paper, neither do the authors of the paper you are reviewing. Moreover, a significant part of the cost of publishing is associated with chasing reviewers for overdue reviews. No one benefits from this process”<sup>2</sup>. The time given to review the article is 1 month. This also applies to notifying the editor timeously whether you are able to do the review. You are given 1 week to decide.

**Write Reviews You Would Be Satisfied with as an Author** “Terse, ill-informed reviews reflect badly on the good name of SAJOT. Support your criticisms or praise with concrete reasons that are well laid out and logical”<sup>2</sup>.

**“Be objective and constructive in (your) review**, refraining from being hostile or inflammatory and from making libellous or derogatory personal comments”<sup>1</sup>. A poorly written review is as bad as a poorly written paper. Try to be sure the editors and the authors can understand the points you are making. A point-by-point critique is valuable since it is easy to read and to respond to. For each point, indicate how critical it is to your accepting the paper. Give the Editors a clear answer as to your recommendation for publi-

cation”. Reviewers must select an option (i.e. Accept submission, Revisions required, Re-submit for review, Re submit elsewhere, Decline submission) on the SAJOT web site to enable the review process to be completed. Should you choose the option “Revisions required”, the article will not be returned to you for review when it is resubmitted with the corrections.

It is recommended that reviewers also make use of the “track changes” for commenting on different aspects of the article.

Please see instructions for ensuring a blind review under the Instructions to Authors.

## References

1. Hames I (on behalf of COPE). COPE Council March 2013, v.1. [http://publicationethics.org/files/Peer%20review%20guidelines\\_0.pdf](http://publicationethics.org/files/Peer%20review%20guidelines_0.pdf).
2. Bourne PE, Korngreen A. Ten Simple Rules for Reviewers. *PLoS Comput Biol* 2(9): e110. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pcbi.0020110>.
3. In addition it recommended that reviewers complete the course offered by Publons Academy. This free course is very useful for reviewers wishing to improve their skill as a reviewer. The course can be found at <http://publons.com/community/academy>.

## STEPS IN THE REVIEW PROCESS

1. On receiving the invitation to review an article log on to the SAJOT web site using the user name and password that were allocated to you when you were invited to become a reviewer. This will be the same one used for submitting an article to SAJOT.
2. The abstract of the article will be attached to the email. Peruse this abstract to determine whether the article falls within your area of interest and whether you would be prepared to conduct the review.
3. Click on the “active” button against the subheading reviewer. This will bring up the title of the article. Click on this title to get access to the article. This will bring up the review page with all the information about the article.
4. Scroll down to the heading “**Review steps**”.
  - **Item one** is the place where you need to inform the editor of your decision whether you are prepared to review or not. It is important that you respond to the request to review within **one week**. Should you not accept the invitation the sooner you inform the editor the sooner another reviewer can be appointed should you decide not to do the review.
  - **Item 2** indicates that you should access the general review instructions as well as those specific to the type of article that you are reviewing i.e. Scientific, Scientific letter, Opinion Piece etc. These can be found at the bottom of the Review page or in the tool bar at the heading on the Home Page.
  - **Item 3** gives you access to the article. Click on the number that you see and the article will be downloaded.
  - **Item 4**. Once you have reviewed the article you should complete the review form by clicking on the postage stamp to access the form.
  - **Item 5** is where you can upload the article once you have completed the comments that have been made via track changes. You can also upload a separate document containing comments if you wish to. In the process of making comments directly onto the article, it is important that you look at the requirements for a “blind review” and ensure that you have met these requirements.
  - **Item 6**. **Once all the above has been completed please be sure that you choose an option from the drop down box and the click on the tab “Submit review to editor”.** **This is a very important step in the review process as**

... continued on page 73

**the editor will not be informed that the review has been completed if this step is not left out.**

5. It is extremely important that **you compete the review within the allotted time** i.e. 1 month.

## GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING A REVIEW OF A SCIENTIFIC ARTICLE

1. **Title** – this is concise and descriptive of the topic on which the research has been conducted.
2. **The abstract** is a true reflection of the content of the paper and provides a summary of the full research process including aim, the research method used and the research population, the outcome and the conclusions.
3. **The introduction** should provide information about the topic and its relevance to Occupational Therapy
4. **A review of the relevant literature** covering previous opinions on the topic is provided with arguments for and against the literature findings. Please check the reference numbers as you read the article.
5. The section on **research methods** should include: the aim of the study, the research design used, the population and manner of selecting the population sample, the research tools used, the method of data collection, the methods used to analyse the data including details of the statistical methods and details of the ethical clearance and the consent obtained.
6. The **results** should be clear and must relate to the aims of the research and research methods.
7. The **discussion** should summarise the main findings and explore the reasons for these. New knowledge must be highlighted and the limitations of the study given.
8. **The conclusion** must be brief, drawing the article to a close by relating the results to the aim of the research.
9. The position of **the tables and figures** should be indicated in the text.

## GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING A REVIEW OF AN OPINION PIECE

Please consult the Author Guidelines for writing an Opinion Piece.

1. **Title** – this is concise and descriptive of the topic on which an Opinion is being expressed.
2. **The abstract** is concise and is descriptive of the point under discussion, the pros and cons given for the selection of the opinion and the conclusion reached.
3. **The introduction** should provide information about the topic and its relevance to occupational therapy.
4. **A review of the relevant literature** covering previous opinions on the topic is provided with arguments for and against the literature findings.
5. **The author's opinion** is presented and backed up by the literature and by personal experience. In addition the author points out where previous opinions have been faulty and why they have proved to be so.
6. There is a **conclusion** which supports the author's opinion.

## GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING A REVIEW OF A COMMENTARY

Please consult the author Guidelines for writing a Commentary. Commentaries are similar to Opinion Pieces but differ in the way they are presented. The opinion piece **MUST** provide the author's opinion on the topic whereas the Commentary is exactly that, it comments on a subject. It include the authors experience as part of the discussion but does not give the authors opinion on the relative merit or otherwise. It is purely descriptive.

1. **Title** – this is concise and descriptive of the topic on which an Opinion is being expressed.
2. **The abstract** is concise and is descriptive of the point under discussion, the pros and cons given for the selection of the opinion and the conclusion reached.
3. **The introduction** should provide information about the topic and its relevance to Occupational Therapy
4. **A review of the relevant literature** describing the subject matter being presented.
5. **The author's** personal experience in the field is used to help describe the subject. In addition the author points out where previous opinions have been faulty and why they have proved to be so.
6. There is a **conclusion** which makes a statement about the relative merits of the subject under discussion.