

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)¹ and in the Ten Simple Rules for Reviewers published by Bourne and Korngreen².

"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"¹. 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 light².

"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"¹. 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"¹. "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"².

"Do Not Accept a Review Assignment unless you can accomplish the task in the requested time frame - Learn to Say No"². "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"². The time given to review the article is one month. This also applies to notifying the editor timeously whether you are able to do the review. You are given one 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"².

"Be objective and constructive in (your) review, refraining from being hostile or inflammatory and from making libellous or derogatory personal comments"¹. 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 publication". Reviewers must select an option (i.e. Accept submission, Revisions required, Re-submit for review, Re submit elsewhere, Decline submission. See comments) 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 Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers. COPE Council March 2013, v.1 http://publicationethics.org/files/Peer%20review%20guidelines_0.pdf
2. Bourne, P.E., Korngreen, A. Ten simple Rules for Reviewers. *LPOs Comput Biol 2*, (9):e110. doi:10.1371/journal.pcbi.0030110, 2006.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING A REVIEW OF A SCIENTIFIC ARTICLE/SCIENTIFIC LETTER

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. **Introduction and Literature Review**
The introduction should provide a brief rationale for the study and an outline of the aims or questions. While the literature review should provide a critical appraisal of the current relevant literature identifying the limitations of the work already conducted on the subject and a rationale for the study. A background to the work and the need for the current study should be provided.
4. **Method**
This should contain the following: Aims, study method and data collection procedures, population and sampling procedure, methods of analysis of data, information on validity, reliability, trustworthiness and credibility.
Details of the ethical clearance and informed consent must be provided.
5. **Results**
The results must be presented in a way that makes them accessible to the readers and are clearly linked to the aims and methods of the research.
6. **Discussion and implications of the research**
The implications for occupational therapists and or other health professionals/groups/ contexts must be outlined and the contribution that the study makes to the current state of knowledge of the profession/s stated. Limitations must also be discussed.
7. **Conclusion**
There should be a clear summary of the main points of the paper, drawing the article to a close and containing no new information.

Scientific Letters contain the same information but are much shorter filling a maximum of 2 to 3 pages of the Journal.

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.

..... continued on page 49

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. The commentary includes 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.

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 was 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 on the web site. 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 1** is the place where you need to inform the editor of your decision. **It is important that you respond to the request to review within one week.** Should you not accept then invitation the sooner you inform then editor the sooner another reviewer can be appointed.
 - **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 in the tool bar at the heading on the Home Page or alternatively the pdf can be accessed on the Home Page (see content of current Journal).
 - **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 upload the article once you have completed the comments that have been made via track changes.

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