



South African Journal of

**Occupational Therapy**

## SAJOT Reviewer Guidelines

Thank you for agreeing to review for SAJOT. Peer review is a critical part in the process of deciding whether an article should be accepted for publication in a journal such as the SAJOT. As such we appreciate your contribution, time and expertise in helping SAJOT publish and disseminate articles that contribute to the body of knowledge of occupational therapy and its outcomes with particular reference to service delivery in Africa. It provides a platform for debate about issues relevant to occupational therapy in Africa which will also contribute to the development of the profession worldwide.

SAJOT follows the double-blind peer review process which is the preferred review process in small professions and/ or fields. In double-blind peer review, both the authors and reviewers keep their anonymity. A minimum of two peer reviewer will review an article and a reviewer does not know who the other reviewer/s are. Only the editor knows the identity of all parties involved. SAJOT welcomes the submission of research articles and letters, commentaries, perspectives, letter to the editor and opinion pieces, review articles of scholarly literature, - guidelines, - policies, - books relevant to occupational therapy. The journal does not accept pre-prints or protocols.

### **On receiving a request to review an article for SAJOT consider the following:**

- Do you have any conflicting interests in doing the review?
- Do you have knowledge, experience and insight in the subject matter / methodology?
- Will you be able to review the article within the time frame given?
- Are you able to give an objective and constructive review?

**If you accept the request to review the article**, please notify the editor by clicking on the *Accept* invitation within 7 days after receipt of the invitation.

**If you decline the request to review the article**, please notify the editor and indicate your decision on the website as soon as possible.

### **If you accept the review request please follow the steps below:**

1. On receiving the invitation to review an article, log on to the SAJOT web site using the username 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/expertise and whether you would be able to conduct the review within the timeframe stated.
3. Decide whether you want to accept or decline the request and notify the editor of your decision within 7 days after receiving the request. If you do not respond within the time limit, a reminder will be sent. If no response is received within another 7 days, the request will be cancelled and another reviewer will be appointed.
4. 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.
5. Scroll down to the heading “*Review steps*”
  - **Item one** is where you need to inform the editor of your decision. It is important that you respond to the request to review the manuscript within seven days. Should you not be able to complete the review within the specified time limit of 4 weeks, please inform the editor immediately so that another reviewer may be appointed. This will prevent undue delays in processing the article
  - **Item two** indicates that you should access the general review instructions as well as those specific to the type of article that you are reviewing e.g. Research Article, Commentary, Opinion Piece etc. These can be found at the bottom of the Review page or in the toolbar at the heading on the Home Page.
  - **Item three** gives you access to the article you will be reviewing. Click on the number that you see, and the article will be downloaded. General review practice is to leave reviewer comments and suggestions in the form of Track Changes
  - **Item four.** Once you have reviewed the article you should complete the review form by clicking on the ‘Review Form’ icon to access the form.
  - **Item five** is where you upload the article once you have completed 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. Please change the name on your track changes to ‘*REVIEWER*’ or ‘*REV*’ to conceal your identity and ensure a blinded review.
  - **Item six.** Once items 1 through 5 have been completed, please choose an option from the drop-down box and click on the tab “Submit review to editor”. This is a very important step in the review process

## **On accepting the review of an article for SAJOT it important to comply with good practice guidelines of scholarly peer review:**

1. Declare potential conflicting interests to the Editor if and as soon as you become aware of such. *The reviewer must declare any potential or real conflict of interest before the review is submitted and must be free of known bias in relation to the subject matter*<sup>1</sup>.
2. Complete the review as soon as possible and within the allocated time (usually 4 weeks but reasonable request for extension of the due date could be considered by the Editor)
3. Respect the confidentiality of the double-blind peer review process. Please make sure you remain anonymous during track changes and comments. Post your comments and track changes with 'Rev' or 'Reviewer'.
4. Do not share the manuscript with colleagues unless this has been discussed with and authorised by the Editor.
5. Do not use information obtained during the peer-review process for your own or any other advantage.
6. Be objective and constructive in your review. Derogatively remarks or comments are inappropriate. Express comments and suggestions clearly with supporting arguments. Provide examples and evidence for response
7. Be alert to plagiarism and call to the editor's attention any similarity with other published work. Identify work that has not been cited by the authors. Any statement that an observation, derivation, or argument had been previously reported should be accompanied by the relevant citation.
8. Know the SAJOT Author Guidelines,  
(<https://journals.assaf.org.za/index.php/sajot/libraryFiles/downloadPublic/152>)  
and AI policy and guidelines  
(<https://journals.assaf.org.za/index.php/sajot/policies>)  
and be alert to non-compliance of such in the article.

## **The use of LLMs (Large Language Models) or AI (Artificial Intelligence) for peer review purposes**

The use of LLM and AI as tools for / during peer review is a noted practice. It is important that reviewers familiarise themselves with the SAJOT's policy on the use of LLM and AI to during the review process. You can read the policy by clicking [here](#).

## **Guidelines when conducting a review**

Familiarise yourself with reporting guidelines relevant to the article you are about to review. E.g. Equator network <https://www.equator-network.org/> or PRISMA2020

<https://www.prisma-statement.org/prisma-2020> and use these to inform your review and suggestions.

### **1. Topic and content of the article**

Does this manuscript fall within the scope of the journal, and address a problem that is of interest, important and relevant to SAJOT and its readers?

Does the article have an original knowledge claim? and is this supported by good quality data that produced the evidence to support this claim?

Is the work original? (If not, please give references)

### **2. Title of the article**

Does the title reflect the contents of the article? The title needs to indicate what the article is about. Good practice is to consider reporting, method used, general geographic positioning.

### **3. Abstract**

To what extent does the abstract reflect aspects of the study: background, objectives, methods, results and conclusions? The Abstract, must contain a succinct structured summary of the study with headings: Introduction / Background, Method, Results/ Findings, Conclusion

### **4. Implications for practice**

Under a separate heading the implications for practice of the article should be clearly and concisely stated in a short paragraph or using bullet points. This should not be a repetition of the conclusion.

### **5. Keywords**

Preferably different to those that are in the title as this widens the search capabilities of the article. SciELO SA criteria 2024 <https://www.scielo.org.za/> requests that authors be encouraged to include the relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the article in the keywords

### **6. Introduction / Background**

Is the study rationale adequately described? It positions an article to show it is: Relevant, Recent and Reputable An interview includes a review of relevant literature and concludes with the aim / objective of the article. Are the study objectives clearly stated and defined?

### **7. Methodology**

Method must have sufficient detail to replicate the study and contain the headings such as: Study approach and design, Population and sampling, Data collection (inclusive of

methods/tools/approach and process), Ethical Considerations (as applied in study), Rigour (trustworthiness or validity and reliability as applied in study).

Reviewers can consider the questions:

- To what extent is the study design appropriate and adequate for the objectives?
- Is the population described in detail? Is the sample size appropriate and adequately justified? Is the sample and criteria for selection/exclusion clearly described? Is the sampling technique appropriate and adequately described?
- Was an appropriate data collection tool/method used and described in detail? How well are the methods and instruments of data collection described?
- For quantitative studies: Are issues of validity and internal and external reliability addressed?
- For qualitative studies: Are issues of confirmability, generalisability, transferability, and credibility addressed? Are quotes labelled with at least 2 anonymised identifiers?
- Analysis and results:

Are the data analysis processes and software used described and cited correctly?

Are the methods of data analysis appropriate?

Are the results clearly organised, credible and do they answer the research question?

Is statistical significance well documented (e.g. as confidence intervals or P-value)?

Are the findings presented logically and do figures, graphs, tables clearly describe the appropriate findings?

- How well are techniques to minimize bias/errors documented?
- Ethical Consideration:

Have the ethical issues been described adequately? Has the relevant ethical approval been granted – the name and of ethics bodies will be blinded but the statement needs to be there. If ethics was not necessary, e.g. for a review of literature, this needs to be stated.

## **8. Discussion**

The discussion should summarise the key findings and explore the reasons for these. New knowledge must be highlighted, and the limitations of the study given. The implications for occupational therapists and or other health professionals/ contexts must be outlined and the contribution that the study makes to the current body of knowledge stated. Limitations must also be discussed. Reviewers can consider the following for this section:

- How well are the key findings stated?
- Is the Interpretation of results, correct?
- Are results compared to existing literature and differences or similarities with other studies discussed and reasons for these given?
- Are the implications of these findings clearly explained?

- Is the interpretation warranted by and sufficiently derived from and focused on the data and results?

## 9. Conclusion

This should be brief and contain a *take home message*. Do the results justify the conclusion(s)? What are the implications of research for practice, policy and future research? Strengths and limitations of the study

## 10. References:

Reviewers can consider the following questions:

Are the references appropriate, relevant and recent?

Are there any obvious, important references that should have been included and have not been?

Are articles cited correctly

## 11. Writing of the article

SAJOT authors and readers are mostly not English first language speakers (only 10% of South Africans claim English as a first language <https://southafrica-info.com/> ). Keeping this in mind reviewers should consider the following questions:

Is the article written in a clear and easy to understand way?

Are the points presented in a logical and ordered manner

## REFERENCES and helpful RESOURCES

1. Academy of Science of South Africa Assa. *Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing, Editing and Peer Review*, <https://www.assaf.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/NSEF-Code-of-Best-Practice-March-2018.pdf> (2018).

There are numerous resources, webinars and courses that reviewers can consult and consider to improve their peer review abilities. Below are a few suggestions.

- Hames I (on behalf of COPE). COPE Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewer COPE Council March 2013, v.1  
[http://publicationethics.org/files/Peer%20review%20guidelines\\_0.pdf](http://publicationethics.org/files/Peer%20review%20guidelines_0.pdf)
- Bourne, P.E., Korngreen, A. Ten simple Rules for Reviewers. LPoS Comput Biol 2, (9):e110. doi:10.1371/journal.pcbi.0030110, 2006.  
<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pcbi.0020110>
- Publons Academy no-cost peer review course. The course can be found at <http://publons.com/community/academy>.