Better Peer Review

Editor Symposium, 4 October 2019
Michael Willis
Senior Manager, Content Review
Better Peer Review

Poll: what is your number one ‘pain point’ as an editor?

- Shortage of available reviewers
- Shortage of high quality reviewers
- Poor language of submissions
- High workload
- Other

https://api.cvent.com/polling/v1/api/polls/spp1t3uy
Let's go on a journey...

Why care about better peer review? → What does ‘quality’ mean anyway? → What has Wiley been up to? → What does this mean for me as an editor?
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Premises/disclaimers

• We assume peer review is the best way of validating research
• There are many other topics we could look at
• Today we may not cover:
  o Incentives
  o Recognition
  o Rewards
  o Peer review models
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Why should we care about ‘better peer review’?

• We want to help authors to make their research articles the best they can be
• We want to improve the robustness and credibility of ‘scientific knowledge’
• Good peer reviewers make better authors
‘Science enjoys a relatively high level of public trust. To sustain this valued commodity, in our increasingly polarized age, scientists and the custodians of science would do well to signal to other researchers and to the public and policy makers the ways in which they are safeguarding science’s norms and improving the practices that protect its integrity as a way of knowing.’
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How can we measure peer review quality?

Individual peer reviews

• Reviewer rating system within EEO
• Reviewer competencies (cf Moher et al., *BMC Medicine* 15, 167 (2017))

Note:

• Most of the work originates in biomedicine
• They are heavily influenced by peer review model
• They are specific to reviews and not to process
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How can we measure peer review quality?

Entire process of peer review, including:

• Submission checks
• Editorial decision
• Independent peer review

Note:

• These are not unique to discipline
• They are less sensitive to peer review model
• They focus on all the actors in peer review process
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The story so far...

1. Literature review
2. Survey
3. Preprint
4. Journal article
5. Self-assessment
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What does better peer review look like? Underlying principles and recommendations for better practice

Heidi Allen, Alexandra Cury, Thomas Gaston, Chris Graf, Hannah Wakley, Michael Willis

First published: 10 January 2019 | https://doi.org/10.1002/leap.1222

Abstract

We conducted a literature review of best practice in peer review. Following this research, we identified five principles for better peer review: Content Integrity, Content Ethics, Fairness, Usefulness, and Timeliness. For each of these principles, we have developed a set of recommendations to improve peer review standards. In this article, we describe the role of peer review and how our five principles support that goal. This article is...
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Better Peer Review Self-Assessment (v2.0)

Read me first!

Welcome. This is our Wiley Better Peer Review Self-Assessment. You can use it to reflect on your work with peer reviewers, to reflect on your editorial policies, and to reflect on your work with authors. Your answers will help you identify areas where your practice is great, and areas where you may want to make improvements.

For each pair of questions we’ll ask you to rate your practice, first. Then we’ll ask you for an all-important narrative description of why you gave yourself that score, which is your opportunity for reflection.

We’ve noted an “essential area” for each question. This refers to the essential areas for better peer review – namely integrity, ethics, fairness, usefulness, and timeliness – defined in our open access article published in the peer-reviewed journal Learned Publishing [https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/leap.1222].

When you get to the end, we’ll ask you for some feedback, and you’ll get to view your own results immediately.

Last, you should soon also be able to get your journal a badge. Our plan is to take your self-assessment, and

http://www.wiley.com/go/betterpeerreview
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What does better peer review look like? Findings from 132 journals completing a self-assessment exercise

https://doi.org/10.22541/au.156839988.89111245
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https://secure.wiley.com/better-peer-review
Self-Assessment conclusions

‘The Self-Assessment encourages journals to **reflect on and change** their peer review processes and offers **practical guidance** on how to do this. They benefit from greater awareness of technical solutions that exist to help them in this. The Self-Assessment also highlights how **journals can be inconsistent** in the way that their processes operate, with one policy in place for authors and a different or no policy in place for reviewers/editors. Rather than be content with the **status quo**, journals should **strive to improve processes** in the light of changing community expectations and technological advances.’
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Five ‘essential areas’

• **Integrity**: peer review establishes that the work is reliable and potentially reproducible.
• **Ethics**: peer review establishes that the work was conducted ethically.
• **Fairness**: peer review is objective and impartial.
• **Usefulness**: peer review is constructive and helpful.
• **Timeliness**: peer review provides timely feedback for authors.
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Poll: If you could only choose one, which of these do you think is the most important feature of the peer review process?

- Integrity
- Ethics
- Fairness
- Usefulness
- Timeliness

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What does this mean for editors?

**EDITORIAL POLICY**

**INTEGRITY**

- Do you enable readers to raise concerns, and do you act on those concerns when they are raised?

- Do you have a policy on sharing research data?

Editorial criteria for consistent decision making should be discussed regularly. New editors should be given appropriate guidance and/or mentoring on their decision making with additional support from the Editor-in-Chief where necessary. The accept/reject rates of editors could be monitored and discussed regularly to ensure consistency of editorial decisions.
What does this mean for editors?

**INTEGRITY**

- Do you check images for inappropriate manipulation?

**ETHICS**

- Peer review confidentiality should be emphasised in the new editor training and the peer review confidentiality policy guidelines should be provided when editors handle manuscript submissions.
- Do you have a preprint policy?
- Do you check for overlapping text and potential plagiarism?
- Do you have a plan for how to act when you identify a potential research integrity and publishing ethics issue?
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What does this mean for editors?

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<td>FAIRNESS</td>
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Potential conflicts of interest of Editors should be collected and revised on an annual basis. These should be provided on the journal website.

Do your policies describe what to do when an editor has a conflict of interest?
What does this mean for editors?

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<table>
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Do you use automated or artificial intelligence tools to enhance speed and/or quality, and do you describe these on your website?

Do you share a goal for timeliness, and advice and support to achieve timeliness, across all members of your journal team?

Regular reporting and review of workflows and metrics are helpful. Monthly team meetings and broader annual meetings can help to make immediate and long-term workflow improvements.
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Summary

• The entire process of peer review can/should be assessed for quality.
• Peer review quality refers to the contributions of all ‘actors’ in the peer review process: editors, reviewers, editorial office.
• The Self-Assessment tool can help all ‘actors’ reflect on and make improvements to their journal’s process.
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What could you do next?

• Look at our Self-Assessment guide: http://secure.wiley.com/better-peer-review.

• Complete the Self-Assessment for your journal: please speak with your Journal Publishing Manager.

• Get involved in some peer review research: please speak with me.
Thank you for listening and contributing today.

Contact:
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