BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES INSTRUMENTATION

Guidelines for Reviewers

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What is the role of a reviewer?

A reviewer helps the editors of Biomedical Sciences Instrumentation to evaluate the work of authors. It requires similar competencies as the producers of the work (peers). The peer-review process functions as a form of self-regulation by qualified members of a profession within the relevant field.

Reviewing a paper requires the investment of time and a certain skill set. To assist in your decision for peer-reviewing articles submitted to Biomedical Sciences Instrumentation, information has been provided below outlining the peer-review process

Peer reviewers are expected to adhere to the current standards of fairness, integrity, impartiality, confidentiality and respect outlined in the Committee on Publication Ethics' Guidelines for Peer Reviewers.

What does a reviewer do?

A reviewer evaluates an assigned paper based on the requirements and criteria specified by Biomedical Sciences Instrumentation with respect to the quality, completeness and accuracy of the work presented. The review format is different based on the type of paper in question, but in general it provides feedback on the paper, suggesting improvements and making a recommendation to the editor about whether to accept, reject or request changes to the article. The reviewer plays a significant role in determining the outcome of the peer-review process.

In general, a reviewer:

- Follows the rigorous standards of the scientific process.
- Helps maintain the integrity of the journal by identifying research of poor scientific quality.
- Can help prevent ethical breaches by identifying plagiarism, research fraud and other problems given their familiarity with the subject area
- Fulfills its obligation to the community and service to the scientific field.

Conflict of interest

All reviewers are asked to disclose any conflicts of interest upon accepting an assignment. In particular, the reviewers must disclose if:

1. Any of the authors are a spouse or significant other, a member of the same family or a close personal friend.
2. Are currently collaborating or have collaborated on a research project or a publication with any of the authors within the past 2 years (as an advisor or student within the past 5 years).
3. Are affiliated with the same institution as any of the authors.
4. Have a business or professional partnership with any author.
5. Have financial interests or business relations with any organization involved in this research or competing interests in the content of the manuscript.

Confidentiality

Reviewers are required to keep confidential all details of the editorial and peer review process on submitted manuscripts. The peer review process is confidential and conducted anonymously; identities of reviewers are not released.

What does a review entail?

Reviewing is a time-intensive and time-sensitive process. Depending on the type of manuscript, there is a very strict deadline schedule that must be followed to guarantee a timely review process and, if determined, publication.

The peer-review process of Biomedical Sciences Instrumentation usually involves two reviewers per manuscript. If there is no agreement among them, an additional reviewer is usually involved to help the editor make a decision. Reviewers have:

- **1 week** to accept or decline to review a paper.
- Once the reviewers have accepted to review, they have **2 weeks** to complete it.

Email reminders are sent out one or two days after the deadlines to solicit a reply from the reviewer.

Review guidelines

To ensure the review process is consistent across different reviewers, Biomedical Sciences Instrumentation uses the following rubric:

		3 - Excellent	2 – Average	1 - Minimal	0 - Unsatisfactory
Content	**Treatment**	Content contains highly original/new treatment of, or perspective on, the topic.	Content contains some original/new treatment of, or perspective on, the topic.	Content contains moderate original/new treatment of, or perspective on, the topic.	Content contains minimal original/new treatment of, or perspective on, the topic.
	Methodology	Data collection and analysis methods are novel and sophisticated and appropriate for the research question or purpose of the paper, and are consistent with the perspective (quantitative, qualitative, mixed, or more specific).	Data collection and analysis methods are advanced and appropriate for the research question or purpose of the paper, and are consistent with the perspective (quantitative, qualitative, mixed, or more specific).	Data collection and analysis methods are basic, but still appropriate for the research question or purpose of the paper, and are consistent with the perspective (quantitative, qualitative, mixed, or more specific).	Data collection and analysis methods are not appropriate for the research question or purpose of the paper, and/or are not consistent with the perspective (quantitative, qualitative, mixed, or more specific).
	Scholarship	Content reviews and builds on appropriate prior work to a significant extent.	Content reviews and builds on appropriate prior work to a moderate extent.	Content reviews and builds on appropriate prior work to a limited extent.	Content does not review and build on appropriate prior work.
	Relevance	The paper makes a highly significant contribution to the field of biomedical engineering.	The paper makes a significant contribution to the field of biomedical engineering.	The paper makes a moderate contribution to the field of biomedical engineering.	The paper makes a minimal contribution to the field of biomedical engineering.
Focus	**Abstract**	Abstract and/or introduction clearly develops and states the goals of the paper.	Abstract and/or introduction reasonably develops and states the goals of the paper.	Abstract and/or introduction does not fully develop and/or state the goals of the paper.	Abstract and/or introduction does not develop and/or state the goals of the paper.
	Order	The order in which ideas are presented is explicitly and consistently clear, logical and effective.	The order in which ideas are presented is reasonably clear, logical and effective, but could be improved.	The order in which ideas are presented is occasionally confusing.	There is little apparent structure to the flow of ideas, causing confusion.
	Conclusion	The conclusions are very well formulated and are strongly supported by the data.	The conclusions are well formulated and are supported by the data.	The conclusions are moderately effective and are only partially supported by the data.	The conclusions are minimally effective and do not appear to be supported by the data.
Language and Grammar	**Style**	The paper is clear, concise, and consistent. It is easily understandable and a pleasure to read.	The paper is understandable, but there are occasional inconsistencies or structures/explanations that could be improved.	Multiple sections of the paper are difficult to read/understand (could be better structured or more clearly explained).	The paper is difficult to read/understand due to sentence/paragraph structure, word choices, lack of explanations, etc.
	Mechanics	The writing is near perfect with almost no grammar or spelling errors.	Minor grammar or spelling errors are present, but are not too distracting. Content is clear.	Some grammar or spelling errors are significant and detract from the meaning. Piece requires closer editing.	Pervasive grammar or spelling errors distort meaning and make reading difficult.
	Formatting	RMBS formatting guidelines are correctly followed.	There are minor formatting errors present in the paper	There are major formatting errors present in the paper.	RMBS formatting guidelines are not being followed.

The above guidelines are translated into a fillable form the reviewer has to complete as part of Step 3 of the review process.

In addition, a reviewer is asked to provide a numerical score (0-10 – Total score) for the paper, based solely on its own evaluation of the work contained in the manuscript.

With the exception of the Total score, all the answers of the form are shared with the authors.

Review process

For additional information visit https://docs.pkp.sfu.ca/learning-ojs/en/reviewing.

Accept to review

As a reviewer, you will learn of the review request via email (if you do not see the email in your inbox, please check your spam/junk/advertising/promotion folder) or by log in to check your dashboard.

From the **My Assigned list**, find the title and ***Review link***. Selecting the ***Review link*** will take you to the first review step in the submission record:

- The **Request for Review** provides some text inviting you to act as a reviewer.
- The **Article Title** provides the title of the article.
- The **Abstract** provides the abstract text.
- The **Review Schedule** provides you with the key dates for the review.

Click ***View All Submission Details link*** to open a window with additional information, including all of the non-author metadata (note that none of these fields are editable, and are only provided to help you conduct a thorough review).

Decline or **Accept** the review. If you decline, you will be dropped from the process. If you accept, you will move to review Step 2, where you would be able to read any reviewer guidelines provided by the journal.

Review the guidelines

By now you should be familiar with the guidelines used by Biomedical Sciences Instrumentation. If you are not sure about what you need to do, make sure you review them.

Click ***Continue to Step 3*** to proceed.

Perform the review and upload it

You can download a copy of the review files and enter your review comments. The first window is for comments to the editor and the author; the second window is just for the editor.

Once you have read the paper, completed the review form and added your comments, scroll down the page to optionally upload a marked up copy of the review file (remember to strip any personal identification from the file before uploading it).

Next, you must make your recommendation using the drop-down menu. Your choices include:

- **Accept for publication**: it is ready to go to Copyediting as is.
- **Accept with Minor Revisions**: it requires minor changes that can be reviewed and accepted by the editor.
- **Accept with Major Revisions**: it requires major changes and another round of peer review.
- **Resubmit Elsewhere**: it doesn't seem like a good fit for the focus and scope of this journal.
- **Decline Submission**: it has too many weaknesses to ever be accepted.
- **See Comments**: if none of the above recommendations make sense, you can leave a comment for the editor detailing your concerns.

Click ***Submit Review*** to complete your task. You will be asked to confirm. Click ***OK***. You will be taken to the final confirmation screen thanking you for your work.