

Peer Review Policy for Urban India Journal

NIUA is publishing Urban India journal since 1981. The Institute has taken conscious decision to make Urban India as refereed journal. Peer review in all its forms plays an important role in ensuring the integrity of the scholarly record. The process depends to a large extent on trust and requires everyone involved in the review process to be responsible and ethical.

These peer review guidelines are adapted from the 'COPE Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers' which set out the basic principles and standards to which all peer reviewers should adhere during the peer-review process.

Model of Peer Review

The peer review model of the *Urban India journal* is double blind, facilitated by NIUA; editor/managing editor mediate all interactions between reviewers and authors. The peer reviews are not published and they are owned jointly by reviewers and the journal.

Basic Principles to which Peer Reviewers should adhere are as follows:

Professional responsibility: Authors who have benefited from the peer review process should consider becoming peer reviewers as a part of their professional responsibilities. When approached to review, the reviewers should agree only if they have the necessary expertise to review the manuscript.

Competing interests: Reviewers should declare all competing/conflicting interests, if any. If they are unsure about a potential competing or conflicting interest they should raise it to the editor. Competing interests may be personal, financial, intellectual, professional, political or religious in nature. If reviewers are employed at the same institution as any of the authors or have been mentors, mentees, close collaborators or joint grant holders in the last 3 years, they should decline to review.

Timeliness: Reviewers are expected to respond to an invitation to peer review within a reasonable time-frame. If they cannot undertake the review, they should communicate the same to the editor/managing editor.

The reviewer should agree to review only if they are able to return a review within the proposed or mutually agreed time-frame. The reviewer should inform the journal, if their circumstances change and they cannot meet the originally agreed deadline or they require an extension. If they cannot review, it is helpful to make suggestions for alternative reviewers. If possible, they should try to accommodate requests from journal to review revisions or resubmissions of manuscripts which they have reviewed previously. Similarly, they should contact the journal if anything relevant comes to light after reviewers have submitted their review that might affect their original feedback and recommendations.

Initial steps: The reviewers should read the manuscript, supplementary data files and ancillary material thoroughly. They should get back to the managing editor if anything is not clear or there are some missing or incomplete items. They should not contact the authors directly.

Confidentiality: Reviewers should respect the confidentiality of the peer review process and refrain from using information obtained during the peer review process for their own or another's advantage, or to disadvantage or discredit others. They should not involve anyone else in the review of a manuscript, without first obtaining permission from the editor.

Bias and competing interests: It is important for the reviewers to remain unbiased in terms of nationality, religious/political beliefs, gender or other characteristics of the authors. If they discover a competing interest that might prevent reviewers from providing a fair and unbiased review, they should notify the editor and seek advice. If reviewers suspect the identity of the author(s) they should notify the journal if this knowledge raises any potential competing or conflict of interest.

Suspicion of ethics violations: If reviewers come across any irregularities with respect to research and publication ethics they should inform the editor. For example, reviewers may have concerns that misconduct occurred during either the research or the writing and submission of the manuscript, or reviewers may notice substantial similarity between the manuscript and a concurrent submission to another journal or a published article. In the case of these or any other ethical concerns, contact the editor directly.

Transferability of peer review: If a manuscript is rejected for publication in *Urban India journal*, and is submitted to another journal, and reviewer is asked to review that same manuscript, the reviewer should be prepared to review the manuscript afresh as it may have changed between the two submissions and the journal's criteria for evaluation and acceptance may be different.

Preparing a Report and giving Feedback: Reviewers should use the form send along with the manuscript to prepare their report. Reviewers should be objective and constructive in their review. The reviewers may provide separately confidential comments to the editor as well as comments to the authors. The journal also asks for a recommendation to accept/revise/reject; any recommendation should be congruent with the comments provided in the review. If reviewers have not reviewed the whole manuscript, they should indicate which aspects of the manuscript they have assessed.

Language and style: Reviewers should not attempt to rewrite the manuscript in their own preferred style if it is basically sound and clear; suggestions for changes that improve clarity are, however important. In addition, reviewers should be sensitive about language issues that are due to the authors writing in a language that is not their first or most proficient language, and phrase the feedback appropriately and with due respect.

Suggestions for further work: If the work is not clear because of missing analyses, the reviewer should comment and explain what additional analyses would clarify and strengthen the work submitted. It is not the job of the reviewer to extend the work beyond its current scope.

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