

# Reviewer Policy for *GCEJ*

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# 1. Peer Review in Editorial Procedure

*GCEJ* views peer review as a crucial aspect of the publishing process, ensuring the utmost quality standards for every publication. All submissions to *GCEJ* undergo rigorous and meticulous peer review conducted by the editorial staff and field experts. We are committed to a transparent, fair, and rigorous peer review process in accordance with the [standards recommended by the Committee on Publication Ethics \(COPE\)](#). This policy outlines our journal's procedures, reviewer engagement, decision-making process, and disclosure practices.

After receiving the submission, the journal's **Editorial Office** will perform a Pre-screening of the manuscript. The Pre-screening process identifies general potential challenges related to linguistics, formatting, quality of engineering equations, tables, and photographs. In addition, the **Editor-in-Chief** will be notified that the Editorial Pre-check can be performed to evaluate the overall quality, novelty, and research scope. The **Editor-in-Chief** has the authority to proceed with the decision to **advance with peer review**, **reject a manuscript**, or **ask for revisions prior to peer review**. If the manuscript is sent for review, the **Editorial Office** will organize the double-blind peer review procedure, which is performed by qualified reviewers in the field, and for each manuscript, at least two review reports will be collected. Authors will be requested to make thorough revisions addressing the review reports and carefully reply to the submitted reviewers' comments. When necessary, the revised version will be sent back to reviewers or editors for a second-round review before being sent to the **Editor-in-Chief** for a final decision. In some conditions, Editorial Board Members and Guest Editors will also provide their comments and decisions, which will be considered by the **Editor-in-Chief** to evaluate the overall quality of manuscripts. For manuscripts to be accepted for publication, necessary steps, including copyediting, typesetting, proofreading, etc. will be commenced, to ensure the final quality of publication. You may refer to additional information via the [Editorial Process](#).

## 2. Reviewers' Requirements and Responsibilities

The reviewer plays a critical role in the review process and carries significant responsibility in safeguarding the integrity of the scholarly record. Every reviewer is expected to evaluate manuscripts in a timely, transparent, and ethical manner, following the COPE guidelines [https://publicationethics.org/files/cope-ethical-guidelines-peer-reviewers-v2\\_0.pdf](https://publicationethics.org/files/cope-ethical-guidelines-peer-reviewers-v2_0.pdf).

Reviewers of *GCEJ* should meet the following criteria:

- Have no conflicts of interest with any of the authors;
- Should not come from the same institution as any of the authors;
- Should not have co-authored publication with the authors in the last two years;
- Are experts who hold at minimum a Bachelor of Engineering or Science degree, Preferably Master level or Doctorate level degrees., or equivalent degrees, closely related to Clinical Engineering discipline; or
- Have significant relevant practice experience in Clinical Engineering and have a proven publication record in databases.

Reviewers who are willing to review a manuscript for *GCEJ* are expected to:

- Have the expertise and ability to objectively evaluate the overall quality of assigned manuscripts;
- Provide qualified review reports and remain responsive throughout the peer review process;
- Maintain confidentiality of the submission content;
- Maintain standards of professionalism and review ethics.

### 3. Reviewers' Benefits

Reviewing is often an overlooked and unrewarded task, despite its crucial importance. However, considering the typical field of Clinical Engineering, we are striving to recognize and appreciate the efforts of all reviewers.

Reviewers of *GCEJ* have the right to enjoy the following benefits:

- The reviewers who provided more than 3 qualified reports, can receive recognition in the form of an **Official Certificate of Review**;
- The reviewers are eligible to apply for the **GCEJ Reviewer Board**;
- Each Reviewer Board Member can enjoy the sponsorship of up to a 50% discount for every manuscript submitted to *GCEJ* in the following year;
- Have a chance to win the Excellent Reviewer Prize (Annual Reviewer Award), along with interviews or column reports;
- Establish relationships with reputable researchers, and participate in the Clinical Engineering network worldwide;
- Build a reputation with editors and *GCEJ*, with the potential to serve as editors in the future;
- Receive feedback about reviews submitted and thus learn how to improve future reviews;
- Get in touch with first-hand development and cutting-edge topics in the field of Clinical Engineering;
- Get familiarity with the editorial process, gain experience, and be better prepared for future publication and career development;
- Reciprocate professional courtesy, as authors and reviewers are often interchangeable roles—as reviewers, researchers return the same consideration they receive as authors.

### 4. Reviewer Board

The Reviewer Board consists of experienced engineers, researchers, and scholars, whose expertise closely focuses on the Clinical Engineering discipline and whose main responsibility is to regularly and actively support *GCEJ* by providing high-quality, rigorous, and transparent review reports for submitted manuscripts. The service term can be renewed or terminated, based on the evaluation of the reviewer's performance. Reviewer Board Membership involves similar responsibilities and benefits as regular reviewers, with the addition of:

- Can review regularly every month and provide qualified reports;

- Enforce the rigorous standards of the scientific process by taking part in the peer review;
- Uphold the integrity of the scientific record by identifying invalid research, and help to maintain the quality of the academic and applied literature;
- Fulfill a sense of obligation to the community and their own area of practice or research;
- Can help prevent ethical breaches by identifying potential plagiarism, research misconduct, and other problems through their familiarity with the field of Clinical Engineering.

## 5. General Guidelines for Reviewers

### 5.1 Invitation to Review

Manuscripts submitted to *GCEJ* are reviewed by at least two reviewers, who can be external volunteer reviewers, Reviewer Board Members, reviewers suggested by authors (without conflicts of interest), or Editorial Board Members. Reviewers are asked to evaluate the manuscript's quality and support recommendations to the external editor whether a manuscript should be accepted, revised, or rejected.

According to the policy, reviewers should ask to:

- Accept, request revision, or decline the review request at the earliest convenience (based on the Title, Abstract, and Keywords of the manuscript);
- Suggest alternative reviewers if they cannot take on the review task;
- If additional time is required to provide a comprehensive reporter, request an extension to the deadline and inform the **Editorial Office** of their request.

### 5.2 Potential Conflicts of Interest

Reviewers are required to disclose any potential conflicts of interest and should contact the **Editorial Office** if they are uncertain about whether a situation qualifies as a potential conflict of interest. Potential conflicts of interest include (but are not limited to):

- Reviewer comes from the same institution as one of the authors;
- Reviewer is a co-author, collaborator, joint grant holder, or has any other academic relationships, with any of the authors within the past two years;
- Reviewer has a close personal relationship, rivalry, or antipathy to any of the authors;
- Reviewer has a financial interest in the publication of the manuscript;
- Reviewer has any other non-financial conflicts of interest (political, personal, religious, ideological, academic, intellectual, commercial, etc.) with any of the authors.

Reviewers should disclose any conflicts of interest that may be perceived as bias for or against the manuscript or authors.

Reviewers are not considered to have a conflict of interest if they are requested to evaluate a manuscript that they have previously reviewed for another journal. In such instances, reviewers are encouraged to inform the **Editorial Office** whether the manuscript has shown improvements compared to its previous version.

*GCEJ* recommends reviewers to read the relevant policies in the [Ethical Guidelines For Peer Reviewers](#) by the **Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)**.

### 5.3 Declaration of Confidentiality

In *GCEJ*, manuscripts are conducted with strict double-blind peer review<sup>1</sup>. Reviewers are required to maintain the confidentiality of the manuscript's content, including the Abstract, until it is officially published. Reviewers should also be careful not to reveal their identity to the authors, either in their comments or in metadata for reports submitted in Microsoft Word or PDF format.

### 5.4 Review Reports

The review report must be properly written in English. To help reviewers finish qualified review reports, a template is provided to guide reviewers, with additional general instructions listed below:

- Start from the title and keywords of the manuscript, discussing whether the content fits the scope of the journal;
- Read the whole manuscript, paying close attention to the methods used, and figures, tables, data, and references. If there are any supplementary materials, please also evaluate them;
- The report should pay attention to the overall structure, and also to the section's logic, narrating style, and support for the key concepts presented;
- Please provide detailed comments so that the authors can correctly understand and improve the quality to the optimal extent;
- Only when it's necessary to improve the quality, can reviewers recommend references published by themselves or colleagues. The recommended number of such references shouldn't exceed 20% of the total presented numbers;
- Maintain a neutral tone, encouragement, and focus on providing constructive comments that will help the authors improve their manuscript's quality. Derogatory comments will not be tolerated;
- Reviewers should review the manuscript without utilizing AI or AI-assisted tools (such as ChatGPT) during the peer review. Reviewers bear full responsibility for the content of their reports. Any use of AI or AI-assisted tools to aid in any aspect of report creation violates the confidentiality of peer review and introduces extra risks related to copyright, security, and confidentiality. We suggest reviewers further carefully read the [STM Ethical and Practical Guidelines for the Use of Generative AI in the Publication Process](#);
- Please note that the **Editorial Office** reserves the right to evaluate the quality and appropriateness of review reports. Should the review report fail to meet our quality benchmarks, the reviewer might be requested to amend the report, or alternatively, the report may be deducted or disregarded altogether.

If reviewers discover any instances of scientific misconduct, fraud, plagiarism, or other unethical conduct associated with the manuscript, they are required to promptly inform the **Editorial Office**

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<sup>1</sup> Special types of manuscripts, i.e. Editorial (Editor's Corner) and Book Reviews don't need to be peer reviewed.

of these concerns.

For further guidance and information on conducting a qualified peer review, we suggest the authors refer to the following references:

1. [COPE Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers](#). Committee on Publication Ethics.
2. [How to review a paper](#). Science, AAAS.
3. [How to Structure a Review Report](#). Wiley.
4. [Step by step guide to reviewing a manuscript](#). Wiley Author Services. Wiley.
5. [Writing a reviewer report](#). Springer.
6. [How to conduct a review](#). Elsevier.
7. [How to Write a Review Report](#). EASE, European Association of Science Editors.

To better help authors improve the overall quality, a qualified review report should contain the following points:

- **A Brief Summary:** We suggest reviewers use a short paragraph summarizing the objective of the paper, its main contributions, and strengths.
- **General Comments:**
  - For Research Articles:** reviewers should highlight flaws in research design, weaknesses of research, testability of the hypothesis, defect, and inaccuracy in methodology and methods, missing controls, wrong data, the appropriateness and timeliness of references, etc.
  - For Reviews:** reviewers should comment on the relevance and comprehensiveness of the review topic covered, the knowledge gap identified, the appropriateness of references, and the evidence provided.

The comments should focus on the academic and applied points of the manuscript and should be specific and clear for authors to revise and respond to.

- **Specific Comments:**

Reviewers should point out inaccuracies within the sentences or text using the line numbers. If tables, figures, equations, and references are unclear or inappropriate, reviewers should point out the exact number or position of them. Reviewers can evaluate the language usage (typos, grammatical errors, logical structures) and suggest authors revise the English content, but should focus more on the scientific and academic quality. All the language and formatting problems will be addressed once the manuscript is accepted for publication by professional copyeditors and layout editors.

To help reviewers prepare their review reports, the following questions can be taken into consideration:

**For Research Articles:**

- Is the manuscript clearly written, relevant to the field, and structured in a coherent manner?
- Are the references citing mostly recent publications (within the last **FIVE** years) and pertinent? Is there an excessive use of self-citations?
- Is the scientific foundation of the manuscript strong, and does the experimental design effectively test the hypothesis?
- Can the results of the manuscript be reproduced based on the information provided in the

methods section?

- Do the figures, tables, images, and schemes used in the manuscript serve their purpose effectively? Do they accurately represent the data, are they easy to interpret, and do they enhance understanding? Is the data interpretation consistent and appropriate throughout the manuscript, including details on statistical analysis or data sources?
- Do the conclusions align with the evidence and arguments presented in the manuscript?
- Please also evaluate the ethics and data availability statements to ensure they meet adequate standards.

#### **For Reviews:**

- Is the review clearly written, comprehensive, and relevant to the field? Is there a knowledge gap identified?
- Has a similar review been published recently? If so, is this current review still pertinent and engaging for the scientific community?
- Are the references cited predominantly recent publications (within the last **FIVE** years) and pertinent? Have any relevant citations been excluded? Is there an excessive use of self-citations?
- Do the statements and conclusions made align logically and are they substantiated by the references provided?
- Are the figures, tables, images, and schemes appropriate? Do they effectively represent the data? Are they clear and comprehensible?

The **Editor-in-Chief** and the **Editorial Office** will evaluate the quality of each review report received based on its engineering, scientific merit, timely review submission, and overall usefulness in enhancing the manuscript. The overall grading of the review will be recorded and used as a reference for the Reviewer Board and the Annual Reviewer Award.

If the reviewer becomes aware of any scientific misconduct or fraud, plagiarism, or any other unethical behavior related to the manuscript, they should raise these concerns with the in-house editor immediately.

## **5.5 Overall Recommendation**

Please provide an overall recommendation for the next processing stage of the manuscript as follows:

- **Accept Submission:** The overall quality of this manuscript is good, provides new information, and it can be accepted without any further changes.
- **Revisions Required:** The manuscript has minor issues to be improved or corrected, and has the potential for acceptance after revisions in accordance with the reviewer's feedback. The overall revision span is around two weeks.
- **Resubmit for Review:** The manuscript has some major issues that need to be improved and the authors must revise and resubmit for another round of review. The acceptance of the manuscript will depend on the contribution of the content to new information in the field, and the quality of revisions submitted. During the revision stage, authors are required to provide a cover letter, including a point-by-point response to each comment proposed by reviewers. If some of the reviewer's comments cannot be revised, the authors have the right to provide a rebuttal. The overall revision span is within one month.

- **Resubmit Elsewhere:** The manuscript's topic and main focus are out of the scope of *GCEJ*, and the authors should resubmit it to a suitable journal for a better chance of evaluation.
- **Decline Submission:** If the manuscript has serious flaws, is scientifically incorrect, makes no original contribution and only repeats existing research findings, or is detected to conduct unethical behaviors, etc., it might be rejected by the **Editor-in-Chief** and decline the possibility of resubmission to the journal.

## 5.6 Review of Revisions

All revised manuscripts are evaluated in a timely and consistent manner. Upon resubmission, the revised manuscript will be:

1. **Checked by the Editor-in-Chief** to determine whether the authors have adequately addressed the reviewers' and editors' comments.
2. **Returned to original reviewers** whenever the revision involves substantial scientific changes, or when requested by the reviewers during the initial round.
3. **Re-reviewed by new experts** if necessary, especially if new data, methods, or claims have been added.
4. **Assessed for overall improvements**, including the clarity of responses, scientific soundness of changes, and appropriateness of any new data or references.

Minor revisions may be accepted directly by the **Editor-in-Chief** if all concerns have been clearly addressed.

## 5.7 Appeals Related to Reviewer Reports

While rare, authors may occasionally appeal editorial decisions or raise concerns regarding specific reviewer reports. In such cases:

- The **Editorial Office** will handle appeals **confidentially and independently**, without disclosing personal details or attributing blame.
- Authors are required to provide a **clear and respectful justification**, supported by evidence (e.g., misinterpretation, factual errors).
- The appeal will be **evaluated by the Editor-in-Chief**, who may consult additional experts if needed.
- If the appeal is considered valid, a **second opinion** may be sought from another reviewer, or the manuscript may be reassessed.

Reviewers are not expected to respond to appeals directly. Any editorial decisions resulting from an appeal will be **based on objective evaluation** and **will not reflect negatively on the original reviewer's contribution**.

We appreciate reviewers' professionalism and recognize that constructive and well-reasoned reviews are a cornerstone of the peer-review process, even when opinions differ.

Appeals that lack sufficient justification or appear to challenge a decision based solely on preference or disagreement with peer review outcomes (without new evidence) may be declined without further review.

For detailed information, please also refer to Section 7.4 ***Author Appeal*** in ***Instructions for Authors***.