Guidelines for Reviewers

The Global Clinical Engineering (GCE) Journal peer review is rigorous, constructive, and a transparent process. Read on for a guide for our reviewers on what to expect as participants in our peer review process.

What is GCE's peer review model?

GCE operates a double-blind model during the review process. This means the reviewers do not know who the authors are in order to offer a fair assessment within the context of their practice and to ensure they avoid any potential competing interests in accepting a review invitation. GCE also believes that it extends reviewers with the expectation that they will be more constructive with their peer review process and able to avoid potential bias during the peer review process.

What to expect from our collaborative peer review

Our peer review platform is collaborative: it unites authors, reviewers, and the editor's handling of the review process through a direct online dialog, enabling quick iterations and facilitating consensus. The Editor-in-Chief summarizes the Editors and Reviewers recommendations and share it, as appropriate, with the authors helping them to improve their manuscript.

Independent review process

Editors select potential Reviewers and invite them to participate in the review process by sending them a copy of the abstract without the author's data. Once a reviewer accepts the invitation to review, they are sent an email with a link to the online review forum and the full manuscript to be reviewed without the author's information. In the review forum, they can access and review the manuscript and supporting documents. During this review phase the reviewers assess the paper independently from each other and the authors.

The review is completed by answering a review questionnaire provided in the review forum. When submitting their review report, a reviewer will also submit their notes and recommendation to the editor. Once all Reviewers have submitted their review report, the handling editor is responsible for summarize the reviews received and recommend action regarding the manuscript's acceptance, revision required (major or Minor), or denial. The Editor-in-Chief review the editor recommendations and forward the author the review results for further action as, and if, needed.

Interactive review phase

Authors are notified of the beginning of the review process and of the review outcome, enabling authors to understand the review process, its outcomes, and the review decision. Authors are encouraged to respond to the review outcomes and to reviewers' comments shared with them and to improve the manuscript as needed. Reviewers are notified when the author has replied in full, and/or resubmitted their manuscript in line with reviewer comments. If needed, the Editor-in-Chief can request clarifications or further revisions. Reviewers' who participated in the review process can access and make additional comments intended for the editor only..

If the reviewer feels the authors have made the required changes and the paper is suitable for publication, they may endorse it. Alternatively, if it is felt that the authors have not or cannot bring the paper up to standard, reviewers can recommend that it be rejected.

How to peer review

Reviewers are the crucial facilitator between the received manuscript and the handling editor. From a position of expertise, reviewers guide and enable fellow colleagues to get their work out into the world, in the best condition it can be. To support our reviewers, we have put together some tips and lists of things to consider when getting ready to review, and in writing a fair and constructive review.

The Responsibilities of the Peer Reviewer

Peer reviewer is responsible:

- For critically reading and evaluating assigned manuscript in their specialty field, and then providing respectful, constructive, and honest feedback to the editor and authors about their submission. It is appropriate for the Peer Reviewer to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the article, ways to improve the strength and quality of the work and evaluate the relevance and originality of the manuscript.
- To maintain blind review confidentiality in terms of retaining the manuscripts after the process is commenced.
- To evaluate the manuscript in a constructive way providing a legible insight to author without any controversy.
- To maintain impartiality, in other words, reviewer decision should solely depend on scientific merit, relevance to the subject, and the scope of the journal rather on financial, racial, ethnic origin etc. of the authors.

The reviewer should also be responsible to complete the review within the relevant time and should take all necessary steps to fulfill the limitations of the Journal.

Before accepting the invitation

When an Editor or Reviewer receive an invitation to review, it is important to consider the following points before accepting.

Is the manuscript within my expertise?

Think about whether the manuscript is suitably within your area of expertise. If not, please decline the invitation, and consider helping us by suggesting alternative relevant experts. Does the article's subject you are being asked to review match your expertise? If you receive a manuscript that covers a topic that does not sufficiently match your area of expertise, please notify the editor as soon as possible. Please feel free to recommend an alternate reviewer.

Content Quality and Originality

Is the article sufficiently novel and interesting to warrant publication? Does it add to the canon of knowledge? Does the article adhere to the journal's standards? Does the research question an important one? In order to determine its originality and appropriateness for the journal, it might be helpful to think of the research in terms of what quality percentile it is in? Is it in the top 25% of papers in this field? You might wish to do a quick literature search using tools such as Scopus to see if there are any reviews of the area. If the research has been covered previously, pass on references of those works to the editor.

Do I have the time?

We strive to keep our peer review process efficient and as such reviewers are requested to complete their reports within four weeks after they accept the invitation. You should let the editorial office know if you are not able to provide a review but may be able to participate at another time. Do you have time to review the paper? If you do not think you can complete the review within this time frame, please let the editor know and if possible, suggest an alternate reviewer. If you have agreed to review a paper but will no longer be able to finish the work before the deadline, please contact the editor-in-chief as soon as possible.

Is there any potential conflict of interests?

While conflicts of interest may not necessarily disqualify you from reviewing the manuscript, it is important to disclose all conflicts of interest to the editors before reviewing. If you have any questions about potential conflicts of interests, please do not hesitate to contact the editor-in-chief.

Respond to the invitation

We ask Reviewers to respond to the review invitation as soon as they can. You are of course free to decline to review if you feel that you lack the time or expertise, and we always appreciate recommendations for alternative reviewers.

If a Reviewer realizes that 4 weeks will be insufficient to complete their review, or if there will be a delay to the deadline after the invitation has been accepted, they can contact the editorial office. We will be happy to assist.

During peer review

Before an abstract of the manuscript is sent for peer review, the Editor-in-Chief research the manuscript's subject for meeting the GCE scope and publication focus.

The aims of our reviewers should always be to:

- focus on the quality of engineering and science objectively.
- collaborate towards improvement and think constructively.
- help the author and editor understand what is needed with clear comments.

Below are our tips for ensuring a quality report is produced.

What to do

Respect the scope

Keep the focus on what the manuscript is aiming to do, even if your expertise extends in a related direction. You should avoid recommending authors vastly expand the scope of the manuscript (e.g., "you only dealt with x, you need to deal with y"), or taking them outside their manuscript's intended scope.

Focus on engineering, science, and technology

Be objective – GCE does not disclose author identification or affiliation to reviewers, and reviewers are not asked to assess the author, only the manuscript. Also, it is not necessary to flag small copy-editing errors: our production team will ensure those are fixed during typesetting. Our processes ensure you should focus solely on the documented work itself.

Provide constructive feedback

Comments should seek to recommend reasonable improvements, in a polite and impersonal tone. Show professional courtesy by thinking about what you would want to receive on a paper of your own. And if it is good, say so – and say why!

Consider field specifics

Are there elements of the manuscript specific to the field you work in? If so, apply your expertise to give feedback on these. It will be helpful to all involved in the manuscript review process.

What not to do

Don't be vague or too brief

Authors find precise and detailed feedback extremely helpful, and this tends to result in a timely and smoother review process. Whereas a brief report will often lead to additional questions from authors. Make sure recommendations and decisions are explained clearly. You should make good use of the detailed questionnaire provided in the review platform to provide a clear assessment.

Don't leave out key points in your initial report

The review report should be thorough and provide all the necessary feedback upfront. While it is possible that further future revisions to the paper will bring up new questions, be sure to include your key points in your initial report. Ensure you conclude your report with a clear recommendation for the handling editor. You are the expert, and your guidance is highly valued.

Don't drop out of the peer review

To ensure an efficient process for all involved, please try to submit your responses on time. If you need to request an extension or to withdraw from the review process you can do this directly at any time, by contacting the editorial office for support. Try to place yourself in the authors' shoes, as they anxiously await feedback on their submission.

Keep in touch

Encountering any issues during review or have any concerns with the manuscript? Need assistance using our review platform? Need to request an extension to submit your review? For these or any other inquiries or updates, do not hesitate to contact your journal's Manager's office.

Organization and Clarity

- ***Title***: Does it clearly describe the article?
- ***Abstract***: Does it reflect the content of the article?
- ***Introduction***: Does it describe what the author hoped to achieve accurately, and clearly state the problem being investigated? Normally, the introduction should summarize relevant research to provide context, and explain what other authors' findings, if any, are being challenged or extended. It should describe the experiment, the hypothesis(es) and the general experimental design or method.
- ***Method***: Does the author accurately explain how the data was collected? Is the design suitable for answering the question posed? Is there sufficient information present for you to replicate the research? Does the article identify the procedures followed? Are

these ordered in a meaningful way? If the methods are new, are they explained in detail? Was the sampling appropriate? Have the equipment and materials been adequately described? Does the article make it clear what type of data was recorded; has the author been precise in describing measurements?

- ***Results***: This is where the author/s should explain in words what he/she discovered in the research. It should be clearly laid out and in a logical sequence. You will need to consider whether the appropriate analysis has been conducted. Are the statistics used, correct? If you are not comfortable with statistics, please advise the editor when you submit your report. Interpretation of results should not be included in this section.
- ***Conclusion/Discussion***: Are the claims in this section supported by the results, do they seem reasonable? Have the authors indicated how the results relate to expectations and to earlier research? Does the article support or contradict previous theories? Does the conclusion explain how the research has moved the body of scientific knowledge forward?
- ***Tables, Figures, Images***: Are they appropriate? Do they properly show the data? Are they easy to interpret and understand?
- ***References***: Are they correctly noted? Are they timely? Do they include other related work?

Scope

Is the article in line with the aims and scope of the Journal?

Final Comments

- All submissions are considered confidential, of blind review and please do not discuss any aspect of the submissions with a third party.
- If you would like to discuss the article with a colleague, please ask the editor first.
- Please do not contact the author directly.
- Ethical Issues:

  - Plagiarism: If you suspect that an article is a substantial copy of another work, please let the editor know, citing the previous work in as much detail as possible and follow the flowcharts below.

  - Fraud: It is very difficult to detect the determined fraudster, but if you suspect the results in an article to be untrue, discuss it with the editor

  - Other ethical concerns: For medical research, has confidentiality been maintained? Has there been a violation of the accepted norms in the ethical treatment of animal or human subjects? If so, then these should also be identified to the editor. Did all the consent to treatment/procedure forms for human subjects secured?

Next Steps

Please complete the "Reviewer's Comments" form by the due date. Your recommendation regarding an article will be strongly considered when the editors make the final decision, and your thorough, honest feedback will be much appreciated.

When writing comments, please indicate the section of comments intended for only the editors and the section of comments that can be returned to the author(s). Please never hesitate to contact the editors with any questions or concerns you may have.

Sample comments

Please note that these are just examples of how you might provide feedback on an author's work. Your review should, of course, always be tailored to the article in question and the specific requirements of the journal and the editor.

Positive comments sample

- *The manuscript is well-written in an engaging and lively style.*
- *The level is appropriate to our readership.*
- *The subject is very important. It is currently something of a "hot topic," and it is one to which the author(s) have made significant contributions.*
- *This manuscript ticks all the boxes we normally have in mind for an X paper, and I have no hesitation in recommending that it be accepted for publication after a few typos and other minor details have been attended to.*
- *Given the complexity involved, the author has produced a number of positive and welcome outcomes including the literature review which offers a useful overview of current research and policy and the resulting bibliography which provides a very useful resource for current practitioners.*
- *This is a well-written article that does identify and address an important gap.*

When constructive criticism is required

- *In the "Discussion" section I would have wished to see more information on …*
- *Overall, I do not think that this article contains enough robust data to evidence the statement made on page X, lines Y–Z.*
- *I would strongly advise the author(s) of this paper to rewrite their introduction, analysis, and discussion to produce a more contextualized introduction to…*

- *There is an interesting finding in this research about …. However, there is insufficient discussion of exactly what this finding means and what its implications are.*
- *This discussion could be enlarged to explain …*
- *The authors could strengthen the paper by …*
- *The paper would be significantly improved with the addition of more details about …*
- *The abstract is very lengthy and goes into detailed accounts that are best suited for the article's main discussion sections. As such, it is suggested the section is reduced in size and that only the most important elements remain.*
- *To make this paper publishable the author needs to respond to the following substantive points …*

When linguistic alterations are required

- *This paper would benefit from some closer proof reading. It includes numerous linguistic errors (e.g., agreement of verbs) that at times make it difficult to follow. I would suggest that it may be useful to engage a professional English language editor following a restructure of the paper. The Journal engages a copyeditor that reviews and corrects linguistic and grammatical errors.*
- *The paper is to benefit from making stylistic changes in the way it has been written to make a stronger, clearer, and more compelling argumentative case.*
- *There are a few sentences that require rephrasing for clarity.*

Make a recommendation

Once you've read the paper and have assessed its quality, you need to make a recommendation to the editor regarding publication. The specific decision types used by a journal will vary but the key decisions are:

- **Accept** – if the paper is suitable for publication in its current form.
- **Minor revision** – if the paper will be ready for publication after light revisions. Please list the revisions you would recommend the author makes.
- **Major revision** – if the paper would benefit from substantial changes such as expanded data analysis, widening of the literature review, or rewriting sections of the text.
- **Reject** – if the paper is not suitable for publication with this journal or if the revisions that would need to be undertaken are too fundamental for the submission to continue being considered in its current form.

After peer review

A note about revisions

When authors make revisions to their article in response to reviewer comments, the revised version is usually returned to the original reviewer, who is then asked to affirm whether the revisions have been carried out satisfactorily.

Recognizing reviewers

Editors and Reviewers irrespective of their recommendation, when a report is submitted, they will receive a confirmation email to acknowledge their work, including access to copy of their report. While the report itself is not to be shared in any public forum, editors/reviewers may use the confirmation email to obtain recognition for their involvement in the peer review process with their institution or other platforms. Their reports will not be lost should they recommend rejection or withdraw from the review process later on.

Global Clinical Engineering Journal

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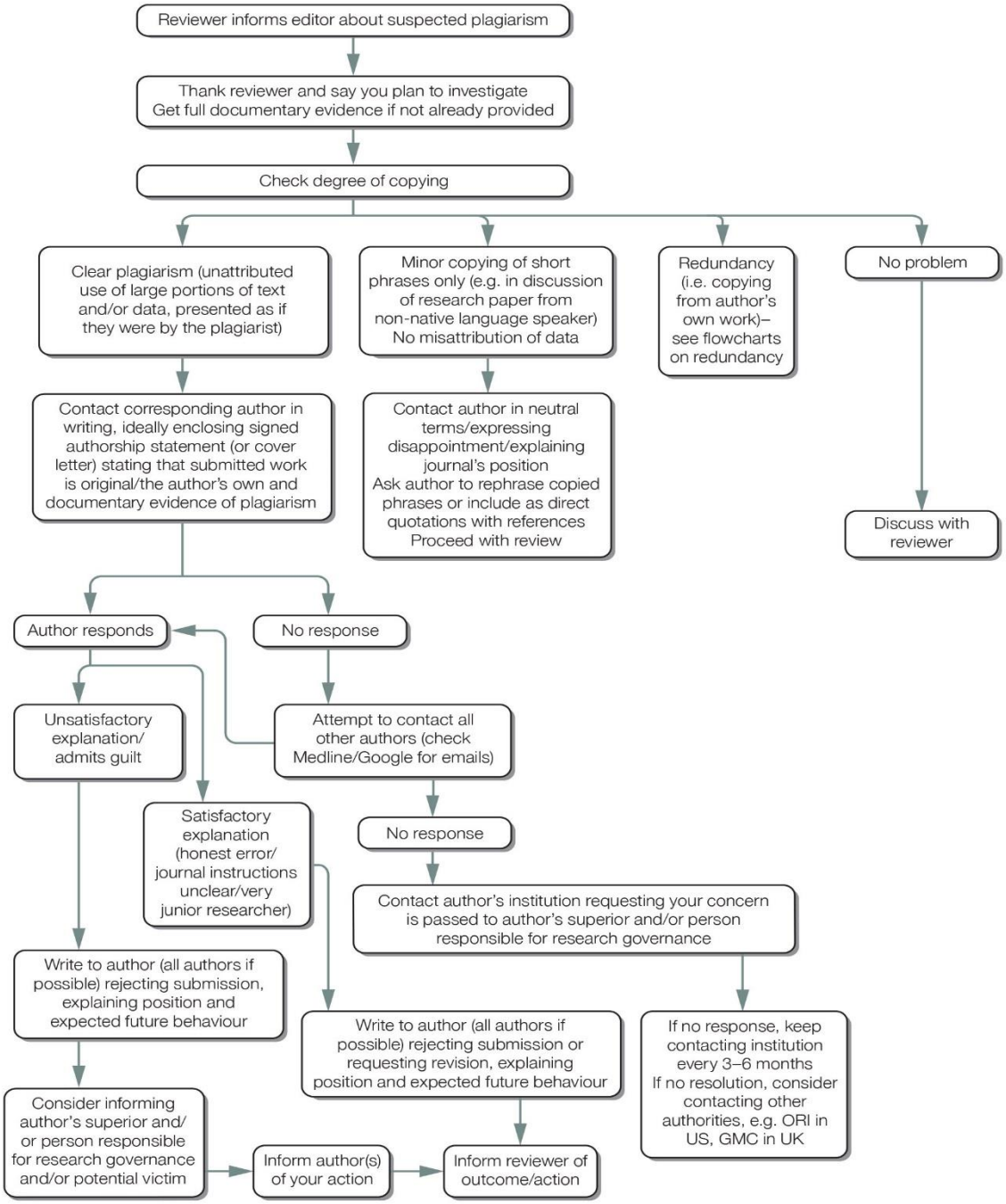
What to do if you suspect plagiarism

(a) Suspected plagiarism in a submitted manuscript



Note
The instructions to authors should include a definition of plagiarism and state the journal's policy on it

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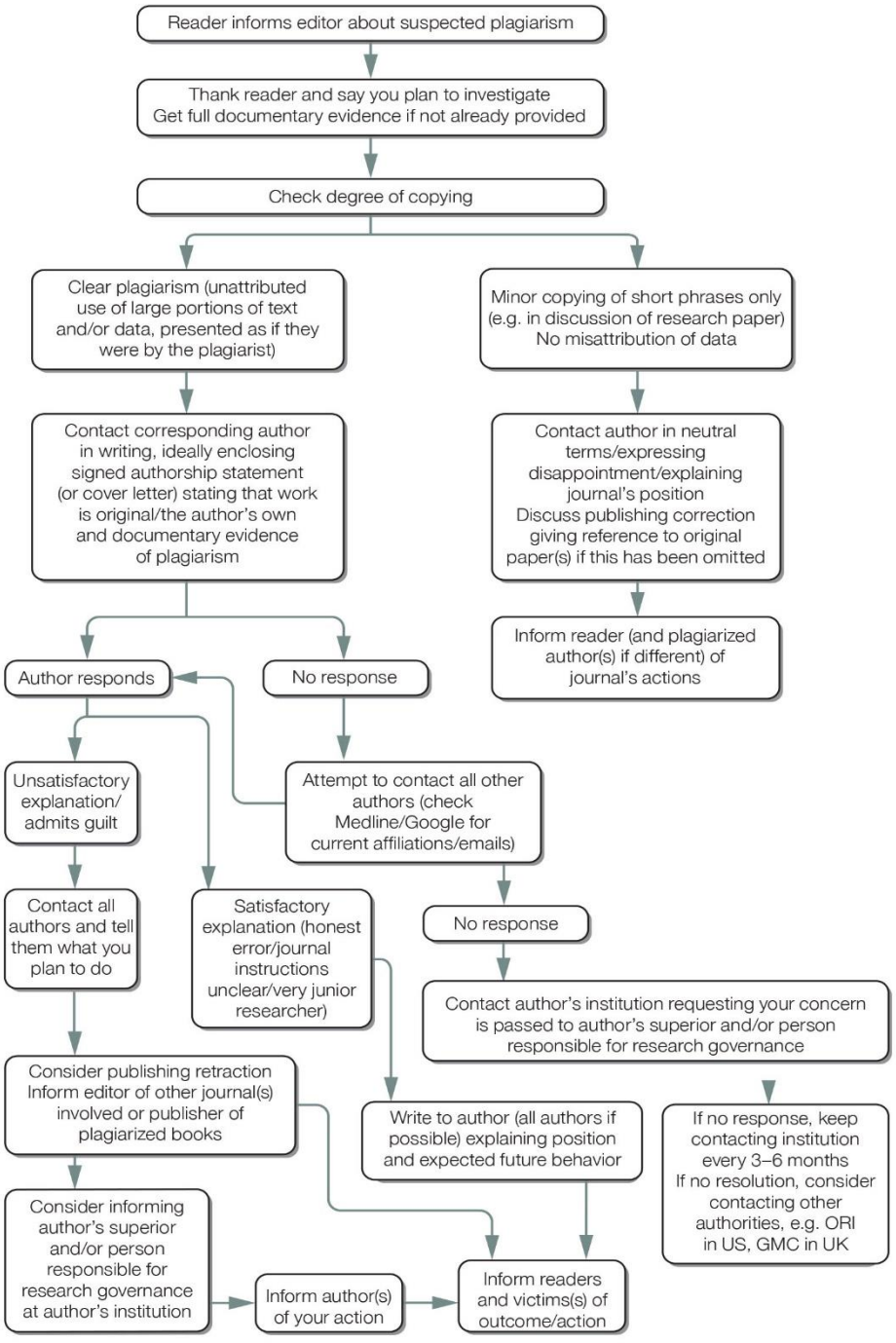
What to do if you suspect plagiarism

(b) Suspected plagiarism in a published manuscript



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