

Reviewers Guidelines

Assignment of the submitted manuscript to the reviewer is facilitated through an online editorial system, by which the Editor(s) and reviewers are connected via email notifications including also the timetables and review due dates. To simplify the review process each selected reviewers receive an email with basic data about the manuscript and simple instruction about what is needed to do with the provided links. The email notifications contain a URL link to the assigned manuscript and stepwise instructions describing the actions needed for each step. The reviewers are also asked to declare any conflicts of interest before accepting the review. The manuscripts will generally be reviewed by two or three expert reviewers to have a fast and perfect decision in due time. Since the final decision is mainly made based on reviews, the reviewers need to note whether the assigned manuscript is scientifically strong enough and whether the quality of the writing is acceptable.

The selected reviewer receives a review request generated through the editorial system and is expected to either agree to provide a review, or decline, by pressing the “Will do the review” or “Unable to do the review” link in the online editorial system. The manuscript is accessible by clicking on the link in the email notification, or after accepting the review or logging in to the provided profile. When a Reviewer agrees to review the manuscript, he/she is asked to submit the review within a certain time frame, which ranges from 3 to 4 weeks.

Reviewers can directly insert their comments/corrections on the manuscript review version (PDF) and/or in Microsoft Word (.doc/.docx). To insert a comment on PDF files, please use Comments & Markup of the Adobe Acrobat/or Acrobat Reader). Comments in Microsoft Word files should be highlighted using Track Changes and associated Commenting tools in Review Menu. Reviewers are expected to focus on the scientific quality of the manuscript, its general style (See Guideline to the authors), and clear academic writing. Reviewers are not responsible for thorough linguistic editing, instead, providing a report indicating the requirement for linguistic editing is greatly appreciated. The Authors have to make all English linguistic and grammatical corrections to their manuscripts before submission. In the case of carefully written manuscripts, the efforts by the reviewers to spot very small stylistic errors and misspellings are greatly appreciated.

The report by the reviewer should be started with a very brief summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the manuscript. Then they are asked to add their constructive comments on originality, novelty, structure, citing the previous research, discussion on the new findings, quality of illustrations, etc... Journals follows a double-blind peer-review process. Please make sure to delete the name, initials, or any other signs that can reveal the identity of the reviewer in the Options section of your Word or PDF processor.

A series of standard online questionnaires is accessible to be answered by the reviewer. Further comments can be addressed to the Authors(s) and/or to the Editor-in-Chief/ Subject Editor through the online forms. Associated files (corrected/commented manuscript, reviews on a separate text file, and additional files supporting the reviews) can be submitted by clicking on the Browse button, then selecting and uploading.

The reviewer’s decision will be finalized by selecting a recommendation with five options: 1. Accept, 2. Minor revision, 3. Major revision, 4. Reject, 5. Reject but with resubmission recommend. The submitted review cannot be changed or withdrawn after submission. Once a Reviewer submits the review of a manuscript, he/she will receive an email and acknowledgements from the journal asking to forward the message to reviews@publons.com. Then it will have appeared in their Publons profile shortly (if he/she is already registered in Publons – Web of Science). The automatically reported reviews also need to be confirmed by the reviewers, subsequently. Some critical issues including the low scientific quality, contradiction with the journal’s scopes, or poorly written text are the main reason for the rejection of a manuscript.

The Reviewer may have access to the information on the manuscripts that they reviewed through their profile.

General questions for the referee to appear in the report

- 1 Does the manuscript provide sufficient novelty and original data?
- 2 Is the title of the manuscript appropriate, concise, and self-describing?
- 3 Does the abstract represent the content of the manuscript properly?
- 4 Have the hypothesis and goals of the study been explained clearly?
- 5 Do the authors acquire appropriate collecting permits, if required, from the authorities?
- 6 Have the authors covered the previous studies of the subject area?
- 7 Are Material and Methods clearly described and sufficiently explained?
- 8 Have the findings been presented properly?
- 9 Do the illustrations have high enough quality, representing the scientific details?
- 10 Are the tables and figures clear, all necessary, and well-labelled?
- 11 Does the discussion go a step beyond the current knowledge based on the results?
- 12 Do the references used properly according to the subject of the article?
- 13 Have you seen any papers with similar results?
- 14 Should some parts of the manuscript be modified, expanded, or omitted?
- 15 Is the total length of the manuscript in keeping with its content?
- 16 Have the newly generated DNA sequences been submitted to GenBank?