

Unedited draft

## University Grants Commission

### Guidelines for the Minimum Standards and Classification of Peer-Reviewed Journals Published in Nepal, 2018

Recognizing the fact that academic publications play an important role in disseminating knowledge and ensuring quality of academic research and also having observed the fact that academic journals published in Nepal vary in publication standards and quality, the University Grants Commission has formulated a set of criteria as the minimum standards and bases for the classification of peer-reviewed journals published in Nepal for the purpose of standardization and evaluation of academic publication of researchers, teachers, and students in Nepalese universities. Journals are expected to take this as a general guideline and develop their own specific guidelines as per the aim and scope of the journal.

#### Section 1: Definitions

- a) **Advisor:** means a person with responsibility to provide advice to the publisher and editors of a journal.
- b) **Author:** (also a contributor) means the researcher and the author of an article submitted to a journal.
- c) **Best practices:** means a set of desirable practices expected to impart the highest standard to the job.
- d) **CiteScore:** means Scopus database and citation-based journal ranking made available by Elsevier B.V.
- e) **Code of Conduct:** means a set of mandatory practices for carrying out the job ethically and responsibly.
- f) **Conflict of interest:** means a situation in which one's judgment may be potentially influenced towards a bias due to any potential interest that exists.
- g) **Digital Object Identifier (DOI):** means a unique ID for the document made available by International DOI Foundation (IDF) upon request.
- h) **Discipline:** means a particular area of study characterized by a set of related subjects, research methodology, and methods.
- i) **Dispute Resolution Flowchart:** means a set of pre-defined steps specified by a journal to resolve a particular dispute.
- j) **Editor:** means a person with editorial responsibilities including carrying out peer-review of articles by competent reviewers, editing, publishing and maintaining the standard of the journal.
- k) **Funding:** means research grant or any financial support received for a research work or by a researcher.

- l) **Gift Authorship:** means an unethical act of including in authorship of an article a person who has not made any or adequate contribution to the research which the article is based on.
- m) **Index Copernicus Value (ICV):** means journal ranking made available by Index Copernicus International.
- n) **Index** means the service provided by independent journal indexing and abstracting agencies by storing bibliographic information of journal articles in a certain database.
- o) **Indexed-journal:** means a journal indexed by any journal indexing and abstracting agency.
- p) **Institution:** means an establishment such as a higher education institution and research institution.
- q) **Journal Impact Factor (JIF):** means a citation frequency based metric of a journal reported in Journal Citation Report of Clarivate Analytics (originally belonging to the Institute for Scientific Information).
- r) **Journal Policies:** mean a set of policies adopted by a journal to define all processes and issues in relation to its functions.
- s) **Journal Publishing Practices and Standards (JPPS) rating:** means journal rating made available by Journal Publishing Practices and Standards (JPPS) rating service provided by African Journals Online (AJOL) and International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP).
- t) **Journal:** means a periodical publication in which academic research relating to a particular academic discipline is published.
- u) **Non-peer reviewed journal:** means a journal that does not employ a peer-review process for evaluating a manuscript submitted for publication.
- v) **Open Researcher and Contributor ID (ORCID):** means a unique digital ID with Uniform Resource Locator for researcher provided by ORCID Inc.
- w) **Peer-review:** means an evaluation of a manuscript of a scholarly work by experts from the same field in order to ensure that the work meets the necessary standards before acceptance by a journal for publication.
- x) **Peer-reviewed journal:** means a journal that employs a peer-review process for evaluating a manuscript submitted for publication.
- y) **Predatory:** means fraudulent or misleading to innocent people.
- z) **Professional society:** means a formally established organization of scholars belonging to a particular discipline or area of study.
- aa) **Ranked-journal:** means any journal with a rank value such as Journal Impact Factor (JIF), SCImago Journal Ranking (SJR), CiteScore and Index Copernicus Value (ICV).
- bb) **Ranking:** means citation frequency based ranking of journals by reputed international agencies.
- cc) **Rating:** means a feature-based rating of a journal by international agencies.
- dd) **Research ethics:** means a set of ethical principles prescribed by government agencies or professional societies for the researcher to follow when conducting research.
- ee) **Research Misconduct:** means activity regarded as research misconduct such as fabrication, falsification, plagiarism and harmful activities.
- ff) **SCImago Journal Ranking (SJR):** means journal ranking system made available by SCImago Lab.

## **Section 2: General Prerequisites**

2.1 Publisher's eligibility - Following organizations are the eligible publisher of the academic peer-reviewed journal:

- (a) Academic institution
- (b) Research institution
- (c) Professional council/society
- (d) Governmental organization
- (e) Non-governmental organization
- (f) Private organization

2.2 Publisher's responsibilities - Responsibilities of the publisher include the following:

- (a) defining the relationship between the publisher and editor in a contract,
- (b) setting up a clear organizational mechanism for financial support to the journal,
- (c) providing full logistic support to the journal,
- (d) fostering editorial independence,
- (e) assisting the parties responsible for the investigation of suspected research and publication misconduct,
- (f) publishing the content of the journal on a timely basis, and,
- (g) bearing legal responsibility for the journal.

2.3 Infrastructure - Following facilities and structures are prerequisite infrastructures for a peer-reviewed journal:

- (a) an organization as the publisher,
- (b) journal with International Standard Serial Number (ISSN, eISSN or both),
- (c) physical contact address of the Journal,
- (d) Journal Editorial Board,
- (e) Journal Advisory Board, and
- (f) Editorial policies including the following:
  - i. Focus and Scope of the Journal
  - ii. Instructions for Authors (content and format of article, authorship etc.)
  - iii. Peer Review Process
  - iv. Instructions for Reviewers
  - v. Publication Ethics
  - vi. Policy on Correction and Retraction
  - vii. Dispute Resolution Flowchart
- (g) Record keeping system
- (h) Website

## **Section 3: Minimum Requirements for Editorial and Advisory Boards**

3.1 The editorial board consists of an Editor-in-Chief and at least five other editors.

3.2 All editors must have a track record of standard research publications.

- 3.3 There should be national and institutional diversity in the Editorial Board. Diversity should be maintained in the following manner:
- a) A single institution (campus/school/central department) cannot have more than 50% of all editors
  - b) Editors must be from at least three institutions (such as campus/school/central department) or two universities.
  - c) Except for Nepal-limited or Nepal-centric disciplines, all other disciplines must have international diversity in editorial board with at least one-third of the editors from countries other than Nepal.
  - d) For Nepal-limited or Nepal-centric disciplines like culture or languages of Nepal and Nepali literature, at least bi-national diversity is preferred but is not mandatory.
- 3.4 Advisory board, if formed, must consist of academics from the relevant disciplines and the head of the publishing institution.

#### **Section 4: Code of Conduct and Best Practices for Editors and Reviewers**

- 4.1 Journal must have a Code of Conduct for Editors and Reviewers. The code should include a set of mandatory practices and a set of best practices. The mandatory practices constitute the minimum standards and the best practices constitute the highest standard desired to be achieved.
- 4.2 Code of Conduct for Editors – The following set of practices is regarded as the core code of conduct for editors:
- a. Editors are accountable for everything published in their journals regarding academic responsibility and quality, including authors' compliance with integrity and ethics.
  - b. Editors must adhere to journal policies and publication ethics.
  - c. Editors must ensure that contributors follow the publication ethics.
  - d. Editors must ensure that all published reports and reviews of research have been reviewed by suitably qualified reviewers (including statistical review wherever applicable).
  - e. Editors must maintain a roster of qualified reviewers or have a mechanism to search for the most suitable reviewer for a particular submission.
  - f. Editors must provide the reviewer guidance on reviewing, code of conduct for reviewers and best practices, which, among other things, include the disclosure of potential competing interests.
  - g. Editors must respect requests from authors that an individual should not review their submission if these are well-reasoned and practicable.
  - h. Editors' decisions to accept or reject a paper for publication should be based on the duly conducted peer-review report on paper's importance, originality, and clarity, and the study's validity and its relevance to the remit of the journal.
  - i. Editors should have a system in place to ensure that peer reviewers' identities are protected unless they use an open review system, which is declared to authors and reviewers in advance.
  - j. In cases of disputes regarding misconduct, competing interests, and authorship, editors should follow the Dispute Resolution Flowchart to resolve the issue.

- k. Editors should publish relevant competing interests for all contributors and publish corrections if competing interests are revealed after publication.
- l. Editors should regularly review the policies of the journal and make them public through the journal.

**4.3 Code of Conduct for Reviewers – The following set of practices is regarded as the code of conduct for reviewers:**

- a. All researchers should consider peer-reviewing of manuscripts as a professional responsibility.
- b. When approached to review, the reviewer must agree to review only if he/she has the necessary expertise to assess the manuscript and can be unbiased in his/her assessment. Expertise includes a track record of research publication and knowledge about the current state of research in the area of review.
- c. The reviewer must be familiar with the issues related to research ethics, best practices in research, research misconduct and the latest tools and technology to detect plagiarism.
- d. The reviewer must disclose any competing interests. Competing interest is particularly relevant in the open review process. However, it might also be relevant in a blind review if the reviewer can identify the author(s) of the article. Competing interests may be personal, financial, intellectual, professional, or political in nature.
- e. Reviewers must do the review professionally following the guidance for reviewer provided by the journal. If a reviewer feels that he/she does not have enough expertise, he/she should decline to review and inform the editor.
- f. Recommendation for the acceptance of the manuscript must be based on the originality of the article and its potentiality to contribute to the existing knowledge in the area of study.
- g. Reviewers must make sincere effort to complete the task within the time-frame agreed upon.
- h. Reviewers must act responsibly maintaining the confidentiality of the review process, documents, research subjects and authors if known.

**Section 5: General Guideline for Title and Design**

**5.1 Name of the journal should reflect the following:**

- Country (highly encouraged)
- Publishing organization (optional)
- Discipline, subject area/category (mandatory)
- Focus and scope (optional)

**5.2 The use of redundant, showy and predatory adjective such as "International," "Global," "Advanced" in the name must be avoided. Journals that already have such adjectives in their titles are encouraged to drop them by renaming the title appropriately. Non-specific and non-standard naming of the journal is discouraged. Journal should be named using controlled**

vocabulary and citable subject headings of relevant disciplines [for example, Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) and Medical Subject Headings (MeSH)].

5.3 The front cover of the journal must have the following information

- Name of the journal
- A by-line to indicate that the journal is a peer-reviewed journal. (A non-peer reviewed journal should clearly indicate by appropriate by-line that it is a non-peer reviewed journal.)
- A concise statement about the discipline and focus of the journal
- Information regarding the publication frequency and the current issue
- Publisher

5.4 The inner pages of the journal must have the following additional information

- Editorial board
- Advisory board
- Indexing, if any
- Instructions for Authors or URL, if the journal also has a webpage containing detailed information.

5.5 The spine of the journal must bear the name and publication batch of the journal

5.6 Digital version of the journal must be same as the printed version

5.7 Website of the journal must have all the information (Articles 5.1-5.6)

5.8 There should be no predatory information, offer and practice regarding the journal and publication process. Journal Impact Factor and ranking/rating other than Journal Impact Factor (JIF) provided by Clarivate Analytics, SCImago Journal Ranking (SJR) provided by SCImago Lab, CiteScore provided by Elsevier B.V., Index Copernicus Value (ICV) provided by Index Copernicus International, and Journal Publishing Practices and Standards (JPPS) rating may be considered as a predatory information. Any pricing offer to facilitate publication timing is regarded as a predatory offer.

## **Section 6: General Guidelines for the format and content of the article**

6.1 Common Guidelines

- a. Journals are encouraged to follow the norms and conventions commonly followed by highly cited journals in related disciplines.
- b. Journals are particularly encouraged to follow the recommendations of international professional associations/committee formed for recommending norms and reporting standards for journals in specific disciplines.
- c. Journals with a policy to publish core research articles (original research articles and research communications) are preferred. News, book reviews and items not related to original research are not preferred for the content of the journal.
- d. Journals are strongly encouraged to get registered at International DOI Foundation (IDF) in order to obtain Digital Object Identifier (DOI) for each article they publish.

- e. Journals must specify citation style and format and include the information in Instruction to Authors. Journals are encouraged to adopt the style and format prescribed by professional organizations of specific disciplines. For example, Publication Manual of the American Psychology Association (APA), The Modern Language Association (MLA) Handbook, The Chicago Manual of Style, Scientific Style and Format of Council of Science Editors (CSE) etc. Journals may also develop their own standard for style and format.
- f. The first page of the article must display at least the following information:
  - i. Journal title, publication year, volume, issue (if any), page range or article number, and Digital Object Identifier (DOI) of the article
  - ii. Category of the article
  - iii. Authors, affiliations, corresponding author, abstract and keywords
  - iv. Open Researcher and Contributor ID (ORCID) (if any)
  - v. Date of submission and acceptance of the article
- g. The following information must be disclosed and displayed at an appropriate part of the article
  - i. Disclosure of each author's contribution (in multi-author articles)
  - ii. Funding (a statement is mandatory even for partially funded or unfunded research)
  - iii. Potential competing interests
  - iv. Ethical approval (if any)
- h. Journals are expected to include the following rules/suggestions in the Instruction for Authors for determining the order of author in a multi-authored article
  - i. In an article authored by a supervised student/fellow, the student/fellow is the first author and the principal supervisor is the last author.
  - ii. In all other articles, the order of all authors except the last one is according to the contribution made by the individual author as deemed collectively by all authors. The last author is reserved for the principal investigator or the team leader which is also recommended to be the corresponding author.
  - iii. Individuals who have helped during the research and manuscript preparation are acknowledged in the Acknowledgement section of the article. Gift authorship is regarded as a misconduct belonging to the category of fabrication.
- i. Journal may choose to have a policy to include a brief resume of each author on the article

## 6.2 Discipline Specific Recommendations

- a. Journal belonging to medical sciences may include in its content original research article, case study, report from clinical trial and opinion/letter. Such journals are strongly encouraged to follow the "Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing, and Publication of Scholarly Work in Medical Journals" of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE).

- b. Journal belonging to the disciplines other than medical sciences may include in its content original research article and review article. In a given issue, review articles must not exceed one-fourth of the total articles.
- c. For the organizational format of the article, journals belonging to disciplines other than the Arts and Humanities are suggested to adopt IMRaD (Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion) format for original research articles. Shorter communication may use a condensed version of it. Journal belonging to Arts and Humanities may follow the convention followed by any highly cited journal in the same field regarding the content, style and the organizational format of the article. However, it is strongly recommended to encourage the authors to use scientific methods in research and a reporting style that promotes objectivity and clarity above all. The journal must not publish purely descriptive accounts of data collection or uncritical reports.

#### 6.3 Frequency of publication:

- a. A journal must publish at least two issues in a year.
- b. A single-disciplinary journal must have at least 10 articles in each issue.
- c. A multi-disciplinary journal must have at least 20 articles in each issue and 40 articles in a year.

#### 6.4 Language:

- a. The choice of language for a journal should be based on academic reasoning. Maximum access to global scientific world and facilitation for unrestricted literature review and citation are primary academic reasoning for the choice of the language.
- b. In order to fulfill the aforementioned condition, journals in a language other than English are encouraged to require article abstract in English as well and other bibliographic information in the Roman script.
- c. Aforementioned condition is applied to multilingual journals as well.

### **Section 7: Standard Related Recommendations**

7.1 Journal with a higher frequency of publication is preferred.

7.2 Limitation on article contributions from the members of the journal publishing institution:

- a. For all organizations except a university and commercial organization, the recommended article contribution from the members of the journal publishing organization should not exceed 25% of the total articles published in each issue of the journal. The rest of the articles should be from authors not belonging to the journal publishing organization.
- b. In case the publisher is a university, the ratio of the article contributions from that university must not exceed 50%. For a very large university like Tribhuvan University, the limit should not exceed 75%.
- c. Members of the organization is defined as the following:



- i. For a professional society – all registered members of the society.
  - ii. For an Institute/Faculty or Central Department of a university, School, Campus – all faculty members and students belonging to the respective institution.
  - iii. For any organization belonging to Institute/Faculty or Central Department of a university, School, Campus – all faculty members and students belonging to the respective institution.
  - d. In case the publisher is a commercial organization, the journal must not accept article contributions from its employees.
  - e. In case the publisher is a research funding agency, its journal must not accept article contributions which have received funding from the agency.
- 7.3 Restriction on article contributions from editors and advisors - Editors and advisors are not allowed to submit article contributions to their own journals.
- 7.4 Quality of article – Acceptance of an article must be based on the originality and significant contribution to the existing body of knowledge in the respective area of study.
- 7.5 Selection of Peer reviewer:
- a. Journal editor should either create and maintain a sufficiently large roster of potential reviewers with a track record of research in specific areas or have a policy and mechanism for finding adequately qualified reviewers from the national and international pool.
  - b. Selection of a reviewer must be based on the track record of research and relevant specialization. An internal database with curriculum vitae or resume or searchable keywords for research area/theme of researchers might come handy for this purpose.
  - c. All records of the review process and related communication must be preserved confidentially for at least 10 years or any period specified by any law regarding the preservation and retention of documents.
  - d. Double-blind peer-review is preferred. However, other methods of peer-review which are in practice may also be applied, granted that is a stated policy of the journal.

## **Section 8: Keeping Up-To-Date**

Journals are required to being au courant with the latest recommendations and practices adopted by the scientific/professional community regarding scholarly publication. The following references include but not limited to the current guidance for peer-reviewed journals:

- a. Committee on Publication Ethics. (2018, January 15). *Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing*. Retrieved from <https://publicationethics.org/resources/guidelines-new/principles-transparency-and-best-practice-scholarly-publishing>

- b. Committee on Publication Ethics. (2016, January 15). *A Short Guide to Ethical Editing for New Editors*. Retrieved from [https://publicationethics.org/files/A\\_Short\\_Guide\\_to\\_Ethical\\_Editing.pdf](https://publicationethics.org/files/A_Short_Guide_to_Ethical_Editing.pdf)
- c. Committee on Publication Ethics. (2017, September). *COPE Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers*. Retrieved from [https://publicationethics.org/files/Ethical\\_Guidelines\\_For\\_Peer\\_Reviewers\\_2.pdf](https://publicationethics.org/files/Ethical_Guidelines_For_Peer_Reviewers_2.pdf)
- d. Committee on Publication Ethics. (2015, November). *What To Do If – Complete set of flowchart*. Retrieved from [https://publicationethics.org/files/Full%20set%20of%20English%20flowcharts\\_9Nov2016.pdf](https://publicationethics.org/files/Full%20set%20of%20English%20flowcharts_9Nov2016.pdf)
- e. John Wiley & Sons. (2014). *Best Practice Guidelines on Publishing Ethics - A Publisher's Perspective, Second Edition*. Retrieved from [https://authorservices.wiley.com/asset/Ethics\\_Guidelines\\_7.06.17.pdf](https://authorservices.wiley.com/asset/Ethics_Guidelines_7.06.17.pdf)
- f. Rockwell, S. (n.d.). *Ethics of Peer Review: A Guide for Manuscript Reviewers*. Retrieved from <https://ori.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/prethics.pdf>
- g. International Committee of Medical Journal Editors. (2017, December). *Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing, and Publication of Scholarly Work in Medical Journals*. Retrieved from <http://www.icmje.org/icmje-recommendations.pdf>
- h. Council of Science Editors. (2018). *CSE's White Paper on Promoting Integrity in Scientific Journal Publications*. Retrieved from [https://www.councilscienceeditors.org/wp-content/uploads/CSE-White-Paper\\_2018-update-050618.pdf](https://www.councilscienceeditors.org/wp-content/uploads/CSE-White-Paper_2018-update-050618.pdf)
- i. US National Library of Medicine. (n.d.). *Controlled Vocabulary, Medical Subject Headings (MeSH)*. Retrieved from <https://www.nlm.nih.gov/mesh/>

## Section 9: Classification of Journal

- 9.1 Classification scheme and benchmarks are subject to review and revision by the University Grants Commission as and when deemed necessary by the commission.
- 9.2 Classification is based on the factors like international ranking and fulfillment of the standards set in this guideline.
- 9.3 The following scheme and indicators are adopted for the classification of journals published in Nepal:

<b>SN</b>	<b>Class</b>	<b>Feature</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
1	Class A	Internationally ranked based on citation	Journals with any of the following ranking: (a) <i>Journal Impact Factor (JIF)</i> provided by Clarivate Analytics (b) <i>SCImago Journal Ranking (SJR)</i> provided by SCImago Lab (c) <i>CiteScore</i> provided by Elsevier B.V. (d) <i>Index Copernicus Value (ICV)</i> provided by Index Copernicus International	
2	Class B	Internationally rated based on journal features	<i>Journal Publishing Practices and Standards(JPPS)</i> rating	
3	Class C	Fully compliant with the UGC standard		Subject to evaluation by the UGC
4	Class D	Partially compliant with the UGC standard	Peer-review system non-existing or poorly administered	Subject to evaluation by the UGC

## Guidelines to Reviewer [Sample only]

[Note to journals: The Sample Guidelines is meant to be introductory and general reminder regarding major components and their samples when drafting journal's specific 'Guidelines to Reviewer'. Journals are expected to design specific 'Guidelines to Reviewer' based on the aim and scope of the journal and the type of manuscript accepted by the journal.]

### 1. Invitation Letter to Reviewer

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I am [the Editor-In-Chief] / [an editor] of [Name of Journal]. [Name of Journal] is a peer reviewed journal which publishes high quality research articles in the area of [Scope and Focus] and is published [annually] / [bi-annually] / [specify the frequency] by [Name of publisher].

I am pleased to let you know that we have identified through [our database of experts] / [a recommendation of an expert] / [our search for experts] you as an expert and potential reviewer to review a manuscript received at our journal. The title and the abstract of the manuscript are enclosed herewith. The full manuscript will be provided upon your consent for reviewing it.

Could you please go through the material and let us know if it belongs to your area of expertise and if you are willing to review the full manuscript of it. We employ a [double-blind review] / [Specify the mode of review] for the purpose. We also have a code of conduct for our reviewers which can be accessed at [provide the URL link].

If you agree to review the manuscript, you will have to complete the reviewing within [3] / [4] weeks from the time you receive the manuscript. [We provide a very modest remuneration of Rs. \_\_\_\_\_ per manuscript] / [Currently, we do not provide any monetary remuneration to reviewers]. [We also provide] [However, we provide] a certificate of appreciation for reviewing manuscript[s] for [Name of Journal].

If you are unable to review the manuscript for any reason, could you please recommend to us any expert who might qualify to review it?

I hope to receive your kind response at the earliest.

Thank you.

With warmest regards,

[Signature]  
[Name of Editor]  
[Name of Journal]  
[Contact Email]  
[Website]  
[Physical address]

## **2. Letter to the Consenting Reviewer**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Thank you so much for accepting our invitation for reviewing a manuscript for [Name of Journal]. Please find enclosed the manuscript (Manuscript ID: \_\_\_\_\_). Also enclosed are the [Name of Journal] Code of Conduct for Reviewers [document/ URL Link], the Guidelines for Reviewer and a Reporting Form.

As we have mentioned earlier, [Name of Journal] employs double-blind review mode in which the identities of the authors and reviewers are not revealed to each other. If the identity of the author of the manuscript is revealed by any information given within the manuscript or by any other circumstances, please stop reviewing the manuscript and let us know it immediately. If you feel there might exist a conflict of interest of any sort, please let us know that too.

Please proceed to review when you are satisfied with the area of the manuscript and our guidelines for the reviewer. We expect the report to be completed and submitted to us within [3] / [4] weeks from now.

Thank you so much for your cooperation.

With warmest regards,

[Signature]  
[Name of Editor]  
[Name of Journal]  
[Contact Email]  
[Website]  
[Physical address]

### **3. Guidelines to Reviewer**

#### **3.1. Section A: General Guidelines**

[Suggested sections]

##### **1. Scope and Focus of Journal:**

[Name of Journal] aims to disseminate very high quality research in the area of [Name of discipline/subject] including [Names of fields]. The [Name of Journal] invites contribution from researchers in Nepal as well as from all over the world. [Add elaboration and more information as appropriate]

##### **2. Statement on the standard of contribution**

(a) For a highly ambitious journal:

[Name of Journal] accepts very high quality research articles from an excellently designed study and with findings that have potential to make a high impact on the respective field of study as measurable by citation in scholarly articles, [policy documents] and discussions in forums of concerned stakeholders. Less than perfectly designed research or one making a very modest contribution is not accepted by [Name of Journal].

(b) For a modestly ambitious journal:

[Name of Journal] accepts high quality research articles from a well-designed study and with findings that have potential to make an impact on the respective field of study measurable by citation in scholarly articles, [policy documents] and discussions in forums of concerned stakeholders. We also accept that research making at least a modest contribution if the study is excellently designed.

##### **3. Types, writing style and format for the article**

[Name of Journal] accepts following types of articles. [List the types]. We follow [Name of style] for writing style and format of the article. [Alternative] [Name of Journal] has prescribed its own writing style and format as described in the Instructions for Author available at [URL link].

##### **4. Code of conduct for the reviewer**

[Name of Journal] has a code of conduct for the reviewer for ensuring a fair and ethical review of the manuscript. Please find the Code of Conduct for Reviewer attached herewith/ The Code of Conduct for Reviewer is available at [URL link].

## **5. Checklist for reviewer**

Please read the manuscript thoroughly and seek answers to the following questions/guidance as a preparation for writing a review (Section 2)

[Adapted partly from Foreman (2015)]

### **General**

- Is the research original, novel and important to the field?
- Is the presentation clear and concise?
- Has the appropriate structure and language been used?

### **Title**

- Is it concise and informative?
- Can it be re-written in a better way?

### **Abstract**

- Is it really a summary?
- Does it include key findings?
- Is it an appropriate length?

### **Key Words**

- Are they in addition to the words in the title?
- Are they appropriate and adequate?

### **Introduction**

- Does it give enough detail about the context, goals, problems, and/or research questions?
- Does it present a sound current evidence base? Is it grounded in theory and research? Are any important findings from previous studies omitted or misrepresented?
- Is it clear, well organized and effective to create curiosity?
- Suggest changes in organization and addition/deletion of citations.

### **Methodology**

- Any scientific study must be fully reproducible for anybody who is interested and has the abilities to do so. Therefore, all materials and methods must be disclosed and made accessible to the scientific community so that the study can be redone and tested.
- Are the applied methods (including statistics) appropriate to test the hypotheses?
- Are all methods described in all necessary details?
- For qualitative research, is there any care taken to avoid/reduce researcher bias and cognitive error? What do you feel about the possibility of bias and error in the study?

### Results and Discussion

- Are the results analyzed, relevant, and probable?
- Suggest improvements in the way data is shown
- Comment on general logic and on the justification of interpretations and conclusions.
- Comment on the number of figures, tables, and schemes
- Write concisely and precisely which changes you recommend
- List separately suggested changes in style, grammar, and other small changes
- Suggest additional experiments or analyses
- Make clear the need for changes/updates.
- Ask yourself whether the manuscript should be published at all

### Conclusion

- Comment on importance, validity, and generality of conclusions
- Request toning down of unjustified claims and generalizations
- Request removal of redundancies
- Request removal of summarization. The abstract, not the conclusion, summarizes the study

### Reference, tables, and figures

- Check accuracy, number and citation appropriateness
- Comment on any footnotes
- Comment on figures, their quality, and readability
- Assess the completeness of legends, headers, and axis labels
- Check presentation consistency

## Section 3.2. Manuscript Review Report to [Name of Journal]

[Suggested design]

**1. Manuscript ID:** \_\_\_\_\_

[Name of Reviewer] / [Reviewer ID]: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Does the area of manuscript fall under the expertise of the reviewer?**

[Yes] [No]

**3. Does the area of the manuscript within the scope and focus of [Name of Journal]?**

[Yes] [No]

**4. Outline of the manuscript**



Please write a summary of the manuscript outlining key information about the research presented.

**5. Major criticism**

Please be specific and give details

**6. Minor criticism**

Please be specific and give details

**5. Recommendation to Editor**

**(a) Recommendation category** - Please select your recommendation category

- Accept the manuscript without any change in content
- Accept the manuscript with a minor revision of the content

- Accept the manuscript with major revision
- Reject the manuscript with an option for resubmission
- Reject the manuscript

**(b) Full recommendation**

Please elaborate on your recommendation.

Signature: .....  
Name/ID of Reviewer: .....

**4. Suggested Reading**

[Note to Journals: The following reference are for journals to consider when developing ‘Guidelines for Reviewer’.]

1. Hames, I. (Ed). (2007). *Peer review and manuscript management in scientific journals*. Malden, US: Blackwell Publishing.
2. Durning, S. J. & Carline, J. D. (Eds). (2015). *Review criteria for research manuscripts (2nd ed.)*. Washington, DC: Association of American Medical Colleges.
3. Starck, J. M. (2018). *Scientific peer review guidelines for informative peer review*. Wiesbaden, Germany: Springer Spektrum.
4. Christenbery, T. L. (2011). *Manuscript peer review: A guide for advanced practice nurses*. *Journal of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners*, 23, 15-22.
5. Foreman, H. (2015, August 28). *How to review manuscripts - your ultimate checklist*. Retrieved from <https://www.elsevier.com/connect/how-to-review-manuscripts-your-ultimate-checklist>

## **Further information**

Following documents can be obtained from the University Grants Commission upon request:

**1. Application Form for the UGC Support for Peer-Reviewed Journal**

(For using at the time of the call of application by the UGC)

**2. Evaluation of Peer-Reviewed Journal**

(For evaluation of the applications received at the UGC)

**3. The UGC Research Guidelines 4<sup>th</sup> edition, 2017**

(Information on all research support program and procedure of the UGC)

### **Contact:**

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