

The peer review process is one of the cornerstones of academic writing, and is a way of ensuring that the information in any academic publication is verifiable and of a good quality. Once any manuscript is selected for publication the research paper is forwarded to a group of experts in the field, and they assess its quality, accuracy and, often, novelty.

Whilst most people are aware of peer review processes for scientific journals, they are also used for grant applications, conference papers and textbooks for University Press-publishers. With the amount of poor quality research available on the internet at the moment, it is vital to ensure that any sources that you use are from a peer-reviewed publication. It is also handy to understand the process, providing you with another tool to assess the quality and validity of information. This is extremely important because of the way in which research is built up, with all research relying upon the findings of previous researchers in the field. If a piece of research is later found to be inaccurate, flawed or a fraud, then the viability of all the research built upon it is brought into question.

Pragmatically, peer review refers to the work done during the screening of submitted manuscripts and funding applications. This process encourages authors to meet the accepted standards of their discipline and prevents the dissemination of irrelevant findings, unwarranted claims, unacceptable interpretations, and personal views. Publications that have not undergone peer review are likely to be regarded with suspicion by scholars and professionals.

Referees' evaluations usually include an explicit recommendation of what to do with the manuscript or proposal, often chosen from options provided by the journal. Most recommendations are along the lines of the following:

- *to unconditionally accept the manuscript or proposal;*
- *to accept it in the event that its authors improve it in certain ways;*
- *to reject it, but encourage revision and invite resubmission;*
- *to reject it outright.*

FCS journals follows a strict blind peer-review programme, wherein the reviewers are not aware of the identities of the authors of the papers which are being reviewed by them. This policy is a recent amendment to the existing set of guidelines so as to prevent any sort of favoritism. The FCS journals' reviewers are selected after thorough screening process. FCS journals have a process of inviting applications from prospective reviewers. However, the publisher also

Peer Review Overview

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individually contacts and invites competent individuals to join the esteemed board of FCS journals' reviewers.