



Letter to Editor

Peer Review: Opportunity and Challenges

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Dear Editor,

Peer reviewers play a pivotal role in academic publication and editors rely on their expertise to make a timely decisions on manuscript publication in their journals.^[1] Due to the introduction of a large number of journals and a huge number of article submissions, the requirement of peer reviewers has risen high. Hence, young researchers should take incremental steps toward engaging in the peer review of scientific papers. However, it is crucial for these budding reviewers to comprehend both the opportunities and challenges inherent in peer review, providing them with an informed perspective [Table 1].^[2,3]

Once young researchers decide to embark on the journey of peer review, they often ponder the practical aspect-how to conduct a peer review. For the basic and initial learning, researchers may consider enrolling in online, self-paced courses. Table 2 illustrates three exemplary courses offered by renowned providers.^[4] These courses are not only free but also award a certificate upon completion, serving as a valuable foundation in the fundamentals of peer review.

Table 1: Opportunity and challenges a peer reviewer may experience.

Opportunity	Challenges
Professional development: Enhances the reviewer's expertise and knowledge in the field	Time constraints: Reviewing can be time-consuming, especially for volunteers with busy schedules
Networking opportunities: Connects reviewers with editors and other experts and researchers in the field	Uncompensated work: Reviewing is done on a voluntary basis, without financial compensation
Contribution to field: Allows reviewers to contribute to the advancement of scientific knowledge	Diversity of expertise: Reviewers may be asked to evaluate papers with portion that is outside their specific area of expertise and this can pose a challenge
Stay updated: Keeps reviewers informed about the latest research trends and methodologies	Subjectivity challenges: Reviewing requires objectivity, but personal biases can still impact assessments
Recognition: Reviewers gain recognition for their expertise, contributing to their professional reputation	Overburdened reviewers: Some reviewers may be asked to review a high volume of papers
Access to cutting-edge research: Reviewers get early access to ground breaking research findings	Lack of recognition*: Reviewers may not always receive adequate recognition for their contributions

*To overcome lack of recognition, follow the methods explained in Figure 1

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Table 2: Free and self-paced courses on peer review.

Course title	Provider	Brief	Web link
An introduction to peer review	Web of Science Academy	Approximate time - 30 min; Three modules; Text and short videos	https://webofscienceacademy.clarivate.com/learn/course/external/view/elearning/119/an-introduction-to-peer-review
Focus on Peer Review	Nature master class	Approximate time - 3.5 h; Four modules; Text and short videos	https://masterclasses.nature.com/focus-on-peer-review-online-course/16605550
Certified Peer Review Course	Researcher Academy by Elsevier	Approximate time - 4 h 10 min; 12 modules; Videos	https://researcheracademy.elsevier.com/navigating-peer-review/certified-peer-reviewer-course

A subsequent question arises: How does one receive review requests? Researchers can register as peer reviewers with different journals, opt for the reviewer role when submitting articles, or express their interest in peer reviewing to known journal editors or colleagues. In many instances, journal editors identify suitable reviewers by perusing recent literature. Therefore, if one is the corresponding author of a recently published article, review requests may arrive through email.

Before the advent of Publons (now integrated into the Web of Science (WOS) Researcher Profile managed by Clarivate), researchers relied on journal-issued certificates and acknowledgments in journal issues as the sole means of receiving credit for peer review. Publons revolutionized this by providing a platform to credit reviewers through verified review records, all consolidated in a single profile. Researchers can access their entire review history in this profile, download it as a curriculum vitae for recognition purposes, or share a public profile showcasing their comprehensive review records. Researchers have the option to create a free account on WOS and forward the “thank you” email to WOS (reviews@webofscience.com) for inclusion of the review record in their profile. WOS undertakes a verification process for the email content and subsequently incorporates it into the researcher’s profile after a certain time delay. Notably, several journals now offer the convenience of automatically adding the review record to WOS during the submission of the review report. This streamlined approach

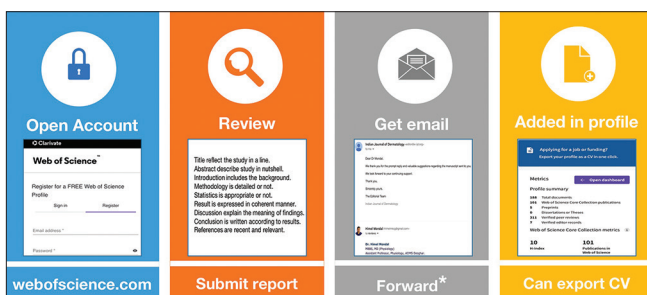


Figure 1: Brief steps to get verified credit for peer review on Web of Science Researcher profile. (*Forward the “thank you” email to reviews@webofscience.com; CV: curriculum vitae).

enhances the visibility and accessibility of researchers’ review contributions, fostering a more efficient and comprehensive documentation process. The process of using WOS for getting the review record is depicted in Figure 1.

For those enthusiastic about undertaking peer reviews, it is essential to bear in mind some common rules [Figure 2] applicable to the majority of journals. Many journals now prioritize scientific rigor in methodology and reproducibility over novelty.^[5] Therefore, it is advisable to always consult the guidelines set by the journal before commencing a paper review as guidelines may vary journal to journal (*).



Figure 2: Some common practices for a peer review. *Guidelines on review and reports may vary according to journals

Wishing all the young reviewers a fulfilling reviewing experience!

Ethical approval

The Institutional Review Board approval is not required.

Declaration of patient consent

Patient’s consent is not required as there are no patients in this study.

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Conflicts of interest

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Use of artificial intelligence (AI)-assisted technology for manuscript preparation

The authors confirm that there was no use of artificial intelligence (AI)-assisted technology for assisting in the writing or editing of the manuscript and no images were manipulated using AI.

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