

GUIDELINES FOR REVIEWERS

Practical Guidelines for NAJFNR Reviewers 2025
The NAJFNR Editorial Office
Updated August 2025

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Preamble

The *North African Journal of Food and Nutrition Research* (NAJFNR) is an international, peer-reviewed, open access, online journal.

Hosted and sponsored by the Research laboratory (Lab-NuPABS *Laboratoire de Nutrition, Pathologie, Agrobiotechnologie & Santé*) of Djillali Liabès University of Sidi-Bel-Abbes, Algeria, the NAJFNR is dedicated to the rapid publication of cutting-edge laboratory and clinical research across all domains of human nutrition and food sciences.

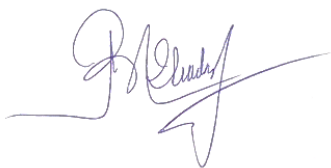
The journal welcomes submissions of original research articles, review, short communications/reports, case reports, hypothesis papers, expert opinions, and commentaries. Its primary objective is to serve as a reliable resource for researchers and practitioners, enriching their understanding of nutrition and food science, with a particular focus on advancements in developing countries, especially those in Africa.

These Guidelines for Reviewers have been developed *in accordance with COPE's Ethics Toolkit for a Successful Editorial Office (Version 3, July 2025)*.

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The aim is to provide the Reviewers with comprehensive information regarding their roles, responsibilities, and contributions to the journal's mission and operations.

Prof. Meghit Boumediene KHALED
Editor-in-Chief/Founder



Prof. Mustapha DIAF
Editor-in-Chief/Founder



Review Editors

At **NAJFNR**, peer reviewers play a critical role in upholding the quality, integrity, and scientific value of our published research. These guidelines outline the expectations and responsibilities of reviewers and provide a clear framework for an ethical, rigorous, and transparent peer review process.

1. Application Process for Review Editor

Prospective candidates interested in joining the editorial board as a Review Editor may submit a direct application letter to the Editor-in-Chief or an Associate Section-Editor. This process is typically initiated based on the candidate's demonstrated expertise in a specific domain of nutrition.

2. Selection and Training of Peer Reviewers

Reviewers are selected based on:

- Subject-matter expertise relevant to the manuscript,
- Prior peer review experience, and
- Absence of conflicts of interest.

The editorial office may offer training and guidance, especially for early-career reviewers, including best practices in ethical reviewing, confidentiality, and review writing.

Selected Reviewers should:

- Demonstrate expertise and experience in specialty areas relevant to the NAJFNR (<https://najfnr.com/home/aims-and-scope>);
- Possess substantial publication record, including peer-reviewed articles and/or scholarly books, preferably within the candidate's area of specialization.
- Display prior experience as an editor or reviewer for reputable international peer-reviewed journals.
- Demonstrate commitment to the review role, evidenced by a comprehensive understanding of its demands and responsibilities.
- Record a minimum h-index of 5 in Scopus.

3. Number of Reviewers Per Manuscript

Each manuscript is typically reviewed by a minimum of **two independent peer reviewers**, with additional reviewers invited when necessary to ensure a thorough and balanced evaluation.

4. Responsibilities of Reviewers

Responsibilities of Peer Reviewers Towards Authors

- Providing written, impartial feedback in a timely manner regarding the scholarly merit and scientific value of the submitted work, supported by documented rationale for the reviewer's assessment.
- Evaluating the clarity, conciseness, and relevance of the writing, and assessing the work's composition, scientific accuracy, originality, and relevance to the journal's readership.
- Avoiding personal comments or ad hominem criticism.
- Maintaining the confidentiality of the review process by refraining from sharing, discussing with third parties, or disclosing information contained within the reviewed manuscript.

Peer Reviewer responsibilities toward editors

- Promptly notifying the editor if unable to review a manuscript within the designated timeframe and providing suggestions for alternative reviewers.
- Disclosing any potential personal or financial conflicts of interest to the editor and recusing oneself from reviewing when a conflict is present.
- Adhering to the editor's written guidelines regarding the journal's expectations for the scope, content, and quality of the review.
- Delivering a thorough, objective, constructive, and insightful critique of the submitted work, including any supplementary materials provided by the author.
- Evaluating the scientific merit, originality, and scope of the work; suggesting avenues for improvement; and recommending acceptance or rejection using the rating scale deemed most appropriate by the editor.
- Reporting any ethical concerns, such as violations of accepted norms for the ethical treatment of animal or human subjects, or substantial similarity between the reviewed manuscript and any published work or manuscript concurrently submitted to another journal known to the reviewer.
- Refraining from direct communication with the authors.

5. Ethics for Reviewing

Reviewers must adhere to the highest ethical standards, including:

- **Confidentiality:** Manuscripts under review are confidential documents and must not be shared or discussed with anyone outside the review process.

- **Conflict of Interest:** Reviewers are asked to declare any potential conflicts of interest to the journal's editorial office before agreeing to review a manuscript. A conflict of interest exists when a reviewer has personal, professional, or financial relationships that could influence their judgment, regardless of whether that influence actually occurs. If you are unsure whether a conflict exists, it is best to declare it.

The following enumeration outlines a non-exhaustive spectrum of potential conflicts of interest that may arise during the scholarly review process:

- **Financial Conflicts:** The existence of a direct financial stake in the research outcomes, including but not limited to the receipt of research funding, personal fees, or equity from a corporate entity with a vested interest in the manuscript's subject matter, or the holding of relevant patents or intellectual property.
- **Institutional Conflicts:** A current shared institutional affiliation between the reviewer and an author, such as membership within the same academic department, faculty, or research institute, which may imply a bias towards collegiality or institutional prestige.
- **Personal Conflicts:** The presence of a close personal relationship—including kinship, friendship, or a romantic partnership—with an author, which has the potential to compromise objective judgment.
- **Intellectual Stances:** The reviewer has previously articulated strong, public opinions (whether supportive or critical concerning the research in question, for instance, through prior publications, pre-print commentaries, or other public forums, which may preclude impartial assessment.
- **Recent Collaborative History:** A history of direct research collaboration with an author within a recent timeframe (typically defined as the preceding three to five years, including co-authorship on publications or membership in the same research group or large-scale consortium.
- **Ongoing Professional Relationships (Temporal Conflicts :** A current hierarchical or direct professional association with an author, such as a supervisor-supervisee relationship (e.g., PhD advisor/advisee, or an active collaboration on a concurrent research project.
- **Co-Reviewing:** If a reviewer wishes to involve a co-reviewer (e.g., a junior researcher or trainee), prior approval must be obtained from the editor, and the co-reviewer's identity must be disclosed.

6. Conducting the Review

Reviews should:

- Be submitted via our journal system portal (OJS) by logging to <https://najfnr.com/home/login> within the standard review timeframe (usually 3 to 4 weeks unless otherwise agreed),
- Fill out the “*Review Form*” editable pdf form, submitted with the invitation,
- Address the strengths and weaknesses of the manuscript,
- Provide specific, constructive feedback for authors,
- Use respectful and professional language, and
- Clearly justify recommendations for acceptance, revision, or rejection.

7. Reporting Research Misconduct

If a reviewer suspects any form of research or publication misconduct (e.g., plagiarism, data fabrication, unethical study design, they must **immediately inform the editorial office**, providing as much detail as possible. The journal follows COPE-recommended procedures for handling such concerns.

8. Review Reports and Ownership

Review reports are:

- The intellectual property of the journal,
- Used solely for editorial decision-making, and
- Not to be shared, published, or reused without permission.

Review comments may be shared with other editors, editorial board members, or reviewers of the same manuscript. Reviewer identities remain anonymous unless open peer review is in place.

9. Editorial Decisions

Final decisions regarding acceptance, revision, or rejection are made by the **Editor-in-Chief** or assigned **Handling Editor**, taking into account reviewer feedback, editorial judgment, and journal priorities. In cases of conflicting reviews, the editor may seek a third opinion or further clarification.

10. Review of Revised Manuscripts and Appeals

Reviewers may be invited to re-evaluate revised versions of manuscripts to ensure that prior concerns have been correctly addressed. Authors may appeal editorial decisions; in such cases, reviewers may be consulted again, or additional expert input may be sought.

Editors should establish a formal policy to address appeals and facilitate the resolution of such matters:

- Assess whether the decision was clearly articulated to the author and whether it may have been predicated on erroneous or dubious information.
- Reconsider rejected manuscripts when authors provide substantiated arguments demonstrating potential errors in the initial decision.
- Encourage the resubmission of manuscripts that exhibit potential for acceptance but were rejected due to the necessity of substantial revisions. Provide authors with explicit guidance on the requisite modifications to render the manuscript acceptable.

11. Citation Manipulation

Citation manipulation encompasses any practice that coerces authors to cite materials primarily for the purpose of artificially inflating citation metrics. The global scientific community unequivocally condemns such practices.

Instances where authors cite materials with the express intent of augmenting their personal citation counts are deemed unacceptable by the NAJFNR.

The following manifestations of citation manipulation should be reported:

- Editorial requests for authors to incorporate citations from the editor's own journal, or instances where a disproportionate number of articles from the editor's journal are cited.
- Authors citing an excessive number of their own publications.
- Reviewers suggesting the inclusion of their own publications.
- Collaborative citation rings wherein groups of colleagues frequently cite each other's work.

12. Ethical Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI in Peer Review)

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI in peer review aims to enhance efficiency, reduce delays, and support editors, reviewers, and authors. However, its use requires careful ethical consideration to ensure accountability, transparency, and fairness in decision-making. AI tools may assist in data analysis, manuscript screening, or even preliminary evaluations, but they must never replace human judgment. Reviewers should critically assess AI-generated recommendations, ensuring final decisions align with scholarly rigor and ethical standards.

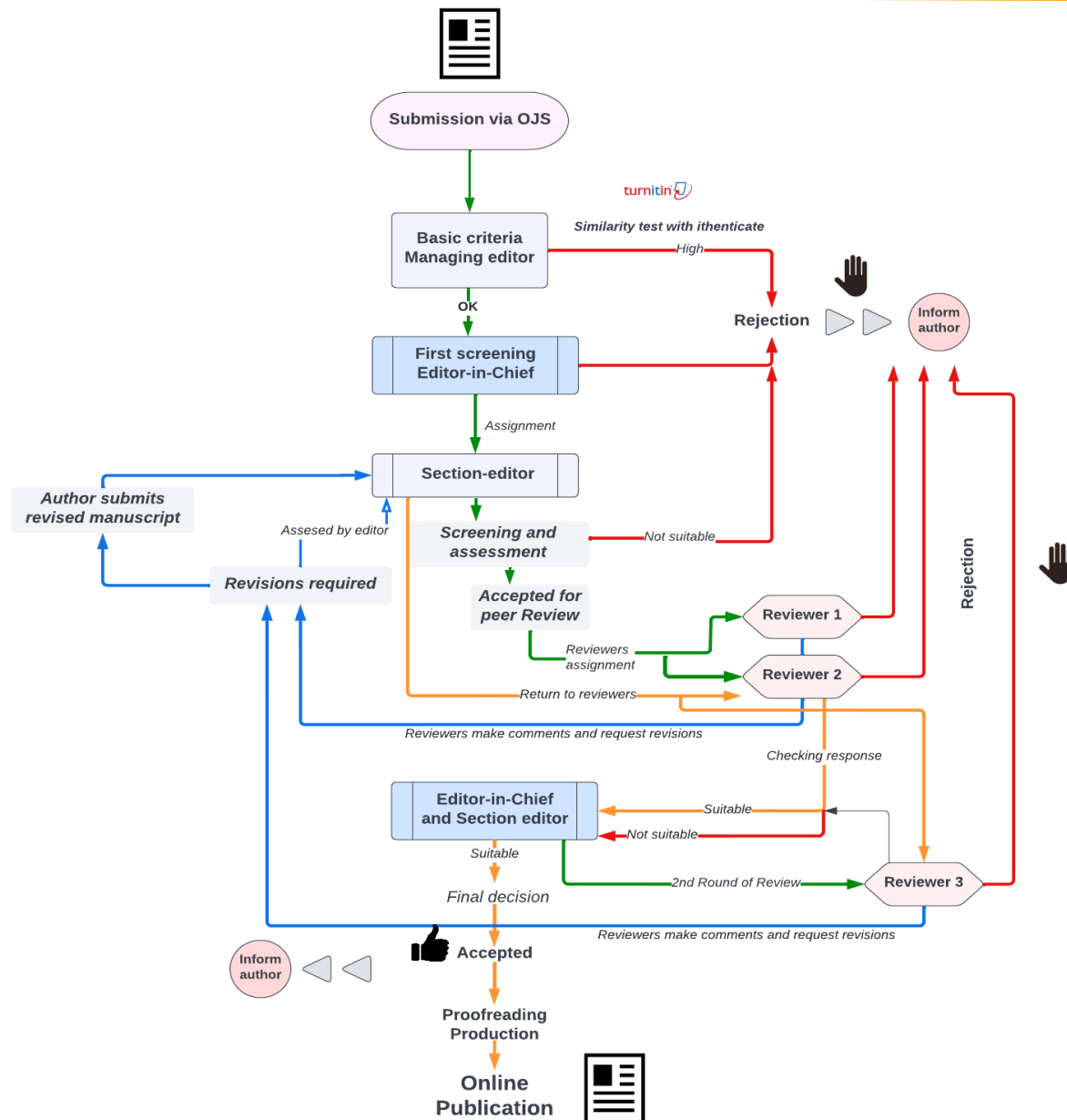
Transparency is paramount when AI is involved in the review process. Any limitations, potential biases, or uncertainties in AI tools must be clearly disclosed. Publishers and editors must ensure AI systems are rigorously tested for fairness, accuracy, and robustness, with human oversight at every stage. Reviewers play a key role in upholding integrity by verifying AI-assisted insights and maintaining independent, unbiased evaluations. By balancing AI's capabilities with ethical safeguards, we can harness its potential while preserving trust in peer review.

We express our deep recognition to all our reviewers for their commitment to academic excellence and for their critical role in advancing trustworthy and impactful science.

If you are interested in joining our reviewer community or have questions regarding these guidelines, please contact:

✉ contact@najfnr.org

Review Process



Review process of submissions to NAJFNR

Please visit the following webpages for more information:

<https://najfnr.com/home/review-process>
https://najfnr.com/home/reviewers_guidelines