

7. General Guidelines for Reviewers

7.1. Invitation to Review

Manuscripts submitted to the **American Arab Journal for Business, Economics, and Finance (AAJBEF)** are reviewed by at least two experts, who can be volunteer reviewers, members of the Reviewer Board or reviewers suggested by the academic editor during the preliminary check. Reviewers are asked to evaluate the quality of the manuscript and to provide a recommendation to the external editor on whether a manuscript should be accepted, requires revisions, or should be rejected.

We ask invited reviewers to:

- accept or decline any invitations as soon as possible (based on the manuscript title and abstract);
- suggest alternative reviewers if an invitation must be declined;
- request a deadline extension as soon as possible in case more time is required to provide a comprehensive report.

7.2. Potential Conflicts of Interest

We ask reviewers to declare any potential conflicts of interest and email the journal Editorial Office if they are unsure if something constitutes a potential conflict of interest. Possible conflicts of interest include (but are not limited to):

- Reviewer works in the same institute as one of the authors;
- Reviewer is a co-author, collaborator, joint grant holder, or has any other academic link, with any of the authors within the past three years;
- Reviewer has a close personal relationship, rivalry or antipathy to any of the authors;
- Reviewer may in any way gain or lose financially from publication of the paper;
- Reviewer has any other non-financial conflicts of interest (political, personal, religious, ideological, academic, intellectual, commercial or any other) with any of the authors.

Reviewers should disclose any conflicts of interest that may be perceived as bias for or against the paper or authors.

Please kindly note that if reviewers are asked to assess a manuscript they previously reviewed for another journal, this is not considered to be a conflict of interest. In this case, reviewers should feel free to let the Editorial Office know if the manuscript has been improved or not compared to the previous version.

7.3. Declaration of Confidentiality

AAJBEF journals operate single- or double-blind peer review. Until the article is published, reviewers should keep the content of the manuscript, including the Abstract, confidential. Reviewers should also be careful not to reveal their identity to the authors, either in their comments or in metadata for reports submitted in Microsoft Word or PDF format. Reviewers must inform the Editorial Office if they would like a colleague to complete the review on their behalf (reviewers should always meet the criteria reported in **Section 2**).

AAJBEF journals offer the possibility for authors to publish review reports together with their paper (Open Review) and for reviewers to sign their open review reports once “Open Review” is selected by the authors. However, this will only be done at publication with the reviewer’s permission. In all other cases, review reports are considered confidential and will only be disclosed with the explicit permission of the reviewer.

7.4. Review Reports

We have listed some general instructions regarding the review report for your consideration below.

To begin with, please consider the following guidelines:

- Read the whole article as well as the supplementary material, if there is any, paying close attention to the figures, tables, data, and methods.
- Your report should critically analyze the article as a whole but also specific sections and the key concepts presented in the article.
- Please ensure your comments are detailed so that the authors may correctly understand and address the points you raise.
- Reviewers must not recommend citation of work by themselves, close colleagues, another author, or the journal when it is not clearly necessary to improve the quality of the manuscript under review.
- Reviewers must not recommend excessive citation of their work (self-citations), another author's work (honorary citations) or articles from the journal where the manuscript was submitted as a means of increasing the citations of the reviewer/authors/journal. You can provide references as needed, but they must clearly improve the quality of the manuscript under review.
- Please maintain a neutral tone and focus on providing constructive criticism that will help the authors improve their work. Derogatory comments will not be tolerated.
- Reviewers must not use AI or AI-assisted tools (such as ChatGPT) to review submissions or to generate peer review reports. Reviewers are solely responsible for the content of their reports and the use of AI technologies for this purpose constitutes a breach of peer review confidentiality.

Note that AAJBEF journal follows several standards and guidelines, including those from the ICMJE (medical journals), CONSORT (trial reporting), TOP (data transparency and openness), PRISMA (systematic reviews and meta-analyses) and ARRIVE (reporting of in vivo experiments). See the **Publishing Standards and Guidelines** page or contact the Editorial Office for more details. Reviewers that are familiar with the guidelines should report any concerns they have about their implementation.

For further guidance on writing a critical review, please refer to the following documents:

1. *COPE Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers*. Committee on Publication Ethics.
2. Hames, I. *Peer Review and Manuscript Management in Scientific Journals: Guidelines for Good Practice*. Wiley-Blackwell: Oxford, UK, 2007.
3. *Writing a journal article review*. Australian National University: Canberra, Australia, 2010.
4. Golash-Boza, T. *How to write a peer review for an academic journal: Six steps from start to finish*.

Review reports should contain the following:

- **A brief summary** (one short paragraph) outlining the aim of the paper, its main contributions and strengths.
- **General concept comments**
Article: highlighting areas of weakness, the testability of the hypothesis, methodological inaccuracies, missing controls, etc.
Review: commenting on the completeness of the review topic covered, the relevance of the review topic, the gap in knowledge identified, the appropriateness of references, etc.
 These comments are focused on the scientific content of the manuscript and should be specific enough for the authors to be able to respond.
- **Specific comments** referring to line numbers, tables or figures that point out inaccuracies within the text or sentences that are unclear. These comments should also focus on the scientific content and not on spelling, formatting or English language problems, as these can be addressed at a later stage by our internal staff.

General questions to help guide your review report for research articles:

- Is the manuscript clear, relevant for the field and presented in a well-structured manner?
- Are the cited references mostly recent publications (within the last 5 years) and relevant? Does it include an excessive number of self-citations?
- Is the manuscript scientifically sound and is the experimental design appropriate to test the hypothesis?

- Are the manuscript's results reproducible based on the details given in the methods section?
- Are the figures/tables/images/schemes appropriate? Do they properly show the data? Are they easy to interpret and understand? Is the data interpreted appropriately and consistently throughout the manuscript? Please include details regarding the statistical analysis or data acquired from specific databases.
- Are the conclusions consistent with the evidence and arguments presented?
- Please evaluate the ethics statements and data availability statements to ensure they are adequate.

General questions to help guide your review report for review articles:

- Is the review clear, comprehensive and of relevance to the field? Is a gap in knowledge identified?
- Was a similar review published recently and, if yes, is this current review still relevant and of interest to the scientific community?
- Are the cited references mostly recent publications (within the last 5 years) and relevant? Are any relevant citations omitted? Does it include an excessive number of self-citations?
- Are the statements and conclusions drawn coherent and supported by the listed citations?
- Are the figures/tables/images/schemes appropriate? Do they properly show the data? Are they easy to interpret and understand?

The content of your review report will be rated by an Academic Editor from a scientific point of view as well as general usefulness to the improvement of the manuscript. The overall grading results will be used as a reference for potential promotion of Reviewer Board Members, Volunteer Reviewers and regular Reviewers.

7.5. Rating the Manuscript

During the manuscript evaluation, please rate the following aspects:

- *Novelty*: Is the question original and well-defined? Do the results provide an advancement of the current knowledge?
- *Scope*: Does the work fit the journal scope*?
- *Significance*: Are the results interpreted appropriately? Are they significant? Are all conclusions justified and supported by the results? Are hypotheses carefully identified as such?
- *Quality*: Is the article written in an appropriate way? Are the data and analyses presented appropriately? Are the highest standards for presentation of the results used?
- *Scientific Soundness*: Is the study correctly designed and technically sound? Are the analyses performed with the highest technical standards? Is the data robust enough to draw conclusions? Are the methods, tools, software, and reagents described with sufficient details to allow another researcher to reproduce the results? Is the raw data available and correct (where applicable)?
- *Interest to the Readers*: Are the conclusions interesting for the readership of the journal? Will the paper attract a wide readership, or be of interest only to a limited number of people? (Please see the Aims and Scope of the journal.)
- *Overall Merit*: Is there an overall benefit to publishing this work? Does the work advance the current knowledge? Do the authors address an important long-standing question with smart experiments? Do the authors present a negative result of a valid scientific hypothesis?
- *English Level*: Is the English language appropriate and understandable?

Manuscripts submitted to AAJBEF journal should meet the highest standards of publication ethics:

- Manuscripts should only report results that have not been submitted or published before, even in part.
- Manuscripts must be original and should not reuse text from another source without appropriate citation.

- The studies reported should have been carried out in accordance with generally accepted ethical research standards.

If the reviewer becomes aware of any scientific misconduct or fraud, plagiarism or any other unethical behavior related to the manuscript, they should raise these concerns with the in-house editor immediately.

7.6. Overall Recommendation

Please provide an overall recommendation for the next processing stage of the manuscript as follows:

- *Accept in Present Form:* The paper can be accepted without any further changes.
- *Accept after Minor Revisions:* The paper can in principle be accepted after revision based on the reviewer's comments. Authors are given five days for minor revisions.
- *Reconsider after Major Revisions:* The acceptance of the manuscript would depend on the revisions. The author needs to provide a point-by-point response or provide a rebuttal if some of the reviewer's comments cannot be revised. A maximum of two rounds of major revision per manuscript is normally provided. Authors will be asked to resubmit the revised paper within ten days and the revised version will be returned to the reviewer for further comments. If the required revision time is estimated to be longer than 2 months, we will recommend that authors withdraw their manuscript before resubmitting so as to avoid unnecessary time pressure and to ensure that all manuscripts are sufficiently revised.
- *Reject:* The article has serious flaws, makes no original contribution, and the paper may be rejected with no offer of resubmission to the journal.

Note that your recommendation is visible only to journal editors, not to the authors. Decisions on revisions, acceptance, or rejections must always be well justified.

7.7. Guidelines for Reviewers for Registered Reports Papers

The review process for Registered Reports is divided into two stages. In Stage 1, reviewers assess study proposals before data is collected. In Stage 2, reviewers consider the full study, including results and interpretation.

When reviewing Stage 1 papers, note that no experimental data or results will be included. Reviewers only need to assess the method, including, for example:

1. The importance and soundness of the proposed hypotheses;
2. The suitability and feasibility of the experimental and analysis methodology;
3. Whether there are sufficient details given to replicate the proposed experimental procedures and analysis;
4. Whether there are sufficient outcome-neutral tests of the hypotheses, including positive controls and quality checks.

Manuscripts that pass Stage 1 peer review may be published immediately or after the successful completion of Stage 2 (at the authors' discretion). Editorial decisions will not be based on the importance or novelty of the results.

For Stage 2 manuscripts, reviewers will be asked to appraise:

1. Whether the data was adequate to test the proposed hypotheses by satisfying the approved outcome-neutral conditions (such as quality checks, positive controls);
2. Whether the stated hypotheses tested was the same as the approved Stage 1 submission;
3. Whether the authors adhered precisely to the registered experimental procedures or were able to sufficiently justify any changes;
4. Whether any new analyses (not mentioned at Stage 1) are methodologically sound and relevant;
5. Whether the authors' conclusions are justified given the data.

7.8. Guidelines for Reviewers for Depositing Review Activities into ORCID

AAJBEF allows reviewers to deposit their review activities into an ORCID iD if the reviewer's ORCID account is connected to their AAJBEF Submission System on website. To do this, reviewers should register the website and connect their ORCID. Once the accounts are connected, reviewers can deposit their review records manually [here](#). These records should then show on the reviewer's ORCID profile.