

**editage**

# **How to build your identity as a peer reviewer**



# Table of contents

**01** Peer review: Opportunities and obstacles

**02** Build your profile as a peer reviewer to get recognition

**03** A handy checklist to wrap up

# Introduction

Peer review undergirds the accuracy, credibility, and robustness of scientific literature and ensures integrity in research. While peer review is voluntary, it is considered a duty or service to the academic community for the advancement of science. It is also a way to “give back” to science for having one’s own work reviewed.

However, peer review is not just a burdensome obligation of being a part of the academic community. A peer reviewer stands to gain a lot too.



# 01

## Peer review: Opportunities and obstacles

Peer review can be seen as a way to train yourself to read papers more effectively. As a reviewer, you cannot just skim over parts you like. You need to delve into details, scrutinize the references, figure legends, and even table footnotes. In really getting to the bottom of the research, you can appreciate the approaches used by others or get inspired about your own work. In fact, reviewing some good manuscripts can help you pick up tips on improving your own writing and paper.

That being said, peer review also comes with its own set of challenges. First, researchers typically do not undergo formal training for becoming peer reviewers; such skills are simply expected of them. As a result, the exact roles and tasks are not clearly delineated, leading to some overlap with editorial tasks or crucial aspects being missed by both the reviewer and editor.

Second, peer review is a time-guzzling pursuit. Researchers are already pressed for time, handling research and administrative tasks, and peer review can feel like an added strain. Moreover, peer reviewing a single manuscript might even involve several cycles.

A lot of researchers grumble about the lack of recognition for their effort and time in conducting peer review. Reviewers' intellectual input is a value addition, which must be rewarded in some way. Monetizing the system has been suggested, but many believe that monetary incentives could [affect the objectivity of peer review and increase the cost of publishing](#). What researchers want is recognition.

# 02

## Build your profile as a peer reviewer to get recognition

We often hear how peer reviewing is a thankless job. This is chiefly because reviewers are anonymous. But there is an increasing trend toward open peer review and rewarding peer reviewers for their time and expertise. Here are some ways researchers can leverage peer review to their benefit.

# Get an ORCID iD

[ORCID](#) stands for Open Researcher and Contributor ID. An ORCID identifier is a unique and permanent researcher ID in the form of a 16-digit numeric string. It helps keep your academic profile (affiliations, publications, etc.) updated. ORCID handles any type of scholarly output, including peer review! Once you have your ORCID linked to your work, every time you complete a review, you can post the citation to your ORCID record. In this way, you can keep track of your overall scholarly contributions.

# Join platforms that recognize and reward peer review

[Publons](#) is a platform for pre- and post-publication peer review. Publons aggregates peer reviews (both anonymous and open) written for various journals. It registers peer reviewer activity as a measurable research output, ensuring that you get credit every time you complete a peer review. By linking your ORCID iD to your Publons account, your review history gets added to your ORCID profile.

[Peerage of Science](#) is yet another platform to record and reward high-quality peer reviewing effort. In this system, reviewers choose what they want to review, and users, including the authors themselves, can recommend a reviewer for a manuscript. Further, you [get qualitative and quantitative indices](#) for your reviews, which can be added to your profiles and CV to showcase your standing as a peer reviewer.

# Increase your visibility in your field

To maximize your chances of being invited to peer review for a journal, you need to make yourself and your work easy to find.

## Update your CV

Your CV should clearly state that you have reviewed for a number of journals. This informs a potential employer or journal editor of your involvement in the academic community of your field.

## Update your online profiles

An online presence is a good way of pulling in potential employers rather than the other way around. Besides job opportunities, this is a good way to get invited for peer review. Editors looking for expertise in a certain area will be able to find you more easily. A personal website with details of your expertise and links to your own publications can also mention your peer review history. If you don't have a website, keep online professional and personal profiles up to date with information about your work and links to your papers. Your ORCID iD and links to your Publons profile should be visible.

## Network, network, network!

Maximize your professional network by connecting with peers, approaching journal editors at conferences, or joining a professional society. Introduce yourself to editors via email and let them know that you are keen to perform a peer review.



# Keep learning and get better at it

Good reviewers might go on to become editors, and in this way, their standing in the academic community improves. This is a great reason to stay on the path of continual learning and regularly look for ways to brush up your skills as a reviewer.

## Mentorship

If you are just embarking on your scholarly journey, request your senior colleagues or even your PI to involve you in peer review. Once you learn how the peer review process works, they could recommend you to a journal editor to provide a peer review report independently. Familiarization with the peer review process early in your career will help you become adept at providing constructive criticism.

If you are a PI or a senior researcher, create an environment that incubates responsible and ethical future peer reviewers. Mentor young researchers and encourage them to seek out peer reviewing opportunities as mentioned above. However, it is worth mentioning here that you must be transparent and inform the editor that your student is also contributing to the peer review. This will also bring your younger team members to the notice of journal editors, who might consider them as potential reviewers in the future.



## Did you know?

- School students can be introduced to the process too! Journals like the [Canadian Science Fair Journal](#) and [Frontiers for Young Minds](#) (FYM) connect with school students for mentorship and collaborative peer review. In fact, peer reviewers at FYM are children aged 8-15 years old!
- Early exposure to these processes can improve writing and reviewing skills, nurturing better future scientists.
- These experiences can smoothen the transition from school to university and ultimately to one's own research team!

## Training modules and materials

Those new to the peer review process can avail of [online resources](#) and information provided on journal websites, as well as workshops and bootcamps focusing on improving peer review. For instance, *How to Become a Peer Reviewer? Basic and Advanced Training*, a structured program available through [Researcher.Life](#), is a great way to polish your skills. With hands-on peer reviewer experience and expert guidance approved by top journals, this program is perfect for even experienced peer reviewers to refresh their skills from time to time.

## Peer review of peer review

Peerage of Science offers a unique learning opportunity for early career researchers, that is, having their peer reviews evaluated! The evaluation is based on [certain parameters](#), and researchers can provide written feedback about the reviews. Participation in such a system helps build peer reviewer reputation.



# Participate in open peer reviews

Nontraditional peer review is being seen as a major way to make inroads into rewarding peer reviewers. Open peer review makes reviews discoverable and citable. It even facilitates the tracking of the impact of your peer reviews on your field. Relevant citations and altmetrics can highlight how specific reviews made a difference to a paper and hence to the field. As open peer review is still not prevalent at present, here are a few tips to keep in mind:

- Choose to review for journals that already offer open peer review. Some journal selection tools can help identify which journals follow this model.
- Use open peer review platforms like Publons.
- Make your reviews and references discoverable. For permanent access and easy tracking of your reviews, ensure that you have a DOI associated with your review.

DOIs can be added to your CV and online profiles like ORCID. Adding these DOIs also helps altmetrics aggregators pick up viewership statistics and mentions of your reviews. Altmetrics provide a true picture of a researcher's influence and impact, beyond traditional publication-centric citation metrics.

# Actively seek out recognition by publishers



Many journal publishers are increasingly trying to recognize the efforts of reviewers. They may do one or all of the following:

- include you in a journal's list of potential peer reviewers
- offer complimentary access to the journal or package of journals for a specific time period
- provide a letter or certificate of contribution or recognition from the journal editor

Authors should make the most of these offerings. If these points are not explicitly mentioned on the journal's website, make sure you ask about them.

# 03

## A handy checklist to wrap up

Inputs provided by peer reviewers often enhance a manuscript manifold before it gets published. Peer review is a bidirectional process and does not take place in a vacuum. All the players benefit from the process, with reviewers now also being acknowledged for their efforts. This recognition comes in various forms, which can be translated into research impact beyond the impact of one's own publications.

## 6 Steps to strengthen your identity as a peer reviewer

If you're looking to build your profile and reputation as a peer reviewer in your field, make sure you have ticked these items off your to-do list.

- Link all your research activities (including peer review) to your unique researcher profile (e.g., ORCID and Publons)
- Build your presence on platforms that recognize and reward peer review
- Showcase your reviewing efforts online and offline
- Keep learning on the job
- Participate in nontraditional modes of peer review
- Ask for reviewer recognition by publishers



## Peer reviewers are also authors. So as an author, how can you deliver a peer-review ready manuscript?

As an author, you may easily overlook some avoidable errors in your work that could tarnish your standing as an expert peer reviewer. So what can you do to ensure your paper is technically, grammatically, and structurally sound? Editage, with its team of senior language and subject matter experts, offers authors English editing, academic translation, and publication support services to help them achieve their publication goals.

### Accelerate your publication journey with Editage

- Guidance on how to optimize your paper from top experts in your field
- End-to-end support to help you get published in your chosen journals
- Personalized benefits with guaranteed quality and on-time delivery

Trusted and endorsed by industry experts for 19+ years, Editage has enhanced over 2 million papers and supported more than 500,000 authors on their publication journey. Now it's your turn. **Choose from Editage's publication-focused services and map your way to success today!**





# editage

A division of Cactus Communications, Editage was established in April 2002 with an aim to bridge the gap between authors and peer-reviewed journals and accelerate global scientific research communication. Editage is trusted and endorsed by top publishers, journals, and societies across the world, including Elsevier, Wolters Kluwer, Taylor & Francis, PLOS, Hindawi, COPE, BMJ, and OSA.

