

JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES

Peer Reviewer Guidelines

Part I: Core Evaluation Criteria

Reviewers are expected to evaluate each submission against four key dimensions. Together, these criteria provide a basis for a fair and rigorous assessment.

1.1 Originality and Scholarly Contribution

Consider whether the submission makes a genuine and meaningful contribution to its field. Ask whether the central argument, empirical findings, or theoretical framing breaks new ground or substantially reframes an existing scholarly conversation.

Incremental contributions are acceptable, provided the author clearly situates the work within the existing literature and makes an explicit and credible case for its significance.

1.2 Argumentation and Logical Coherence

Evaluate whether the paper advances a clear and defensible argument, and whether that argument is consistently supported by evidence throughout. This applies equally to deductive and inductive approaches.

Pay close attention to the rigour of the reasoning, the internal consistency of the claims made, and the overall logical progression of the paper. Identify any gaps, contradictions, or unsupported assertions that may weaken the work.

1.3 Engagement with the Literature and Theoretical Grounding

Assess whether the author engages with the relevant body of scholarship in an accurate, current, and sufficient manner. The theoretical framework should be explicitly articulated rather than merely implied.

Reviewers are particularly encouraged to consider whether the paper draws appropriately on African and Southern African scholarship where the subject matter warrants it, rather than defaulting exclusively to Western theoretical traditions and sources.

1.4 Writing Quality and Structural Integrity

Assess the overall quality of the academic writing, including grammatical correctness, clarity of expression, structural organisation, and adherence to the journal's style guidelines.

Minor language issues should be noted but need not be catalogued exhaustively. Where writing problems are significant enough to impede comprehension, please highlight specific examples so that the author understands precisely what requires attention.

Part II: Professional Conduct for Reviewers

The integrity of the peer review process depends on reviewers upholding clear professional and ethical standards. The following guidelines are binding on all reviewers affiliated with this journal.

2.1 Confidentiality

All manuscripts submitted for review must be treated as confidential. Reviewers must not share the manuscript with others, reference or cite it in their own work, or discuss its contents in any public forum prior to publication.

If you feel it would be useful to consult a colleague during the review process, you must seek the editor's approval before doing so.

2.2 Conflicts of Interest

Reviewers are required to disclose any personal, professional, or financial relationship with the authors that could reasonably be seen as compromising the objectivity of their assessment. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Close research collaboration within the preceding three years
- Shared institutional affiliation with any of the authors
- Prior or advanced knowledge of the work being reviewed

When in doubt, disclose the potential conflict and allow the editor to determine whether you should proceed. In double-blind submissions, reviewers must not attempt to identify the authors.

2.3 Constructive and Respectful Feedback

All feedback must be guided by the goal of improving the scholarship under review. Comments should be specific, measured, and professionally courteous at all times. Dismissive or discourteous language is unacceptable under any circumstances.

Where rejection is recommended, the rationale must be clearly explained, identifying the fundamental issues that render the manuscript unsuitable. Reviewers who are found to be consistently disrespectful in their reports may be removed from the reviewer panel.

2.4 Timeliness

Completed reviews are expected within four weeks of accepting a review invitation. If circumstances prevent you from meeting this deadline, please inform the editor as early as possible so that alternative arrangements can be made.

Delays in the review process have real consequences, particularly for early-career researchers and authors in under-resourced settings. Prompt communication is therefore essential.

2.5 Self-Citation and Reviewer Bias

Reviewers should not recommend that authors cite their own work unless it is directly relevant to the manuscript under review. The editorial team actively monitors citation recommendations for patterns of self-referential suggestion. Any reviewer found to direct citations to their own publications may have their review invitations suspended or withdrawn.

Part III: Recommendation Decisions

At the conclusion of your review, select one of the five recommendation categories listed below. Your written report must provide sufficient justification for the decision you have reached and, where a revision is recommended, offer the author clear and actionable guidance on what is required.

Decision		What This Means
Accept submitted	as	The manuscript requires no substantive changes and is ready to proceed to production.
Minor revisions		Small corrections are needed relating to clarity, citations, or presentation. A second round of review is not required.
Major revisions		Significant further work is needed on the argument, structure, or engagement with the literature. Re-review of the revised manuscript is anticipated.
Reject resubmit	and	The central concept may have merit, but the manuscript requires fundamental reworking. A fresh submission would be appropriate once the core issues have been addressed.
Reject		The submission is not suitable for this journal due to insufficient scholarly contribution, a mismatch with the journal's scope, or concerns about academic integrity.