Reviewer Responsibilities and Principles of Peer Review:

Our commitment to peer review is grounded in its pivotal role in scholarly communication, serving as a linchpin of the scientific method. The peer review process not only aids editors in making informed editorial decisions but also plays a crucial role in guiding authors to refine their work. This involves thorough testing of hypotheses, scrutiny of research methodologies, and enhancement of the insights derived from the research.

Principles Guiding Our Review Process:

1. **Enhancing Relevance and Precision:** Reviewers are tasked with elevating the overall relevance and precision of both the manuscript and its research, ensuring a meticulous and insightful contribution to the academic discourse.
2. **Elevating Narrative Fluency and Clarity:** Our focus is on enriching the storytelling and readability of the article, promoting effective communication of research findings to the targeted audience in a clear and engaging manner.
3. **Fine-Tuning Key Insights and Conclusions:** Through constructive feedback, our reviewers aid authors in refining key insights and takeaways, thereby enhancing the overall quality and impact of the research.
4. **Constructive Peer Review Philosophy:** Embracing a constructive peer review approach, our goal is not mere criticism but to guide authors towards achieving research of higher quality. Our feedback is thoughtfully designed to facilitate improvement, fostering a collaborative and supportive environment.
5. **Timeliness:** Reviewers are encouraged to promptly communicate with the editor if they feel unqualified to review a manuscript or foresee challenges in providing a timely review, ensuring the efficiency and effectiveness of the review process.
6. **Confidentiality Assurance:** All manuscripts are treated as confidential documents, and reviewers must refrain from sharing or discussing them with unauthorized individuals to preserve the integrity of the peer review process.
7. **Adherence to Objectivity Standards:** Reviews are expected to be conducted objectively, avoiding personal criticism of the author. Reviewers should express their views clearly, underpinned by well-defined arguments.
8. **Source Acknowledgment:** Reviewers should identify relevant published work not cited by the authors and ensure proper citation for any prior observations, derivations, or arguments. Additionally, they are encouraged to notify the editor of significant similarities between the manuscript under consideration and other published works they are aware of.
9. **Disclosure and Conflict of Interest Management:** Reviewers are committed to ethical conduct, refraining from using unpublished materials for personal gain and maintaining the confidentiality of privileged information obtained during the peer review process. They must disclose conflicts of interest and avoid influencing the inclusion of references to their own work unless absolutely necessary.
10. **Data Transparency and Reproducibility Emphasis:** Emphasis is placed on transparent and reproducible research practices. Authors are encouraged to provide access to raw data and methodologies for independent verification.
11. **Commitment to Rigorous Research:** In ensuring unbiased research and transparent reporting, reviewers are proactive in addressing potential conflicts of interest, funding sources, or affiliations that may impact the work. They encourage submissions from diverse authors and research topics, striving for inclusivity. Instances of bias found in research are communicated to authors for rectification, with rejection being a possibility if the author is unresponsive.

Best Practices for writing a review report

Reviewers are encouraged to go through the Certified Peer Review Course from Elsevier (https://researcheracademy.elsevier.com/navigating-peer-review)

Checklists and guidelines for each section of the manuscript:

Introduction

- Is the research question clearly stated?
- Is a coherent case made for why the research question is important?
- Are the most relevant pieces of previous work cited?

Methods and Materials

- Have the methods been described clearly enough to allow others to repeat them?
- Are they the most appropriate way to answer the research question?
- If humans or animals were involved, is ethics approval reported and in your opinion is the research ethical? Is informed consent necessary and reported?

Results

- Are results reported for all experiments/analyses described in the Methods?
- Are any results reported for which methods have not been described?
- Are they presented clearly and consistently (eg, do the figures and text match up)?

Discussion

- Does the interpretation reasonably reflect the results or have the authors "gone beyond the data"?
- Are the potential limitations presented? If not, point them out.
- Do the results conflict with those of other researchers and have potential explanations been proposed?
- Has the research question been answered?
- Have the authors summed up what the findings mean in the "grand scheme of things"?

Title and abstract

- Does the title accurately reflect the research question and study type?
- Does the abstract contain the aim of the study and the most important methodological details?
- Are the findings reported in the abstract a faithful representation of those reported in the main text?
- Is anything presented in the summary that wasn't described in the main paper?
- Is the conclusion justified by the data presented?
- Are the implications for future work stated?

Other Useful Resources:

Guide to statistical errors- https://researcheracademy.elsevier.com/uploads/2017-11/Quick_guide_common_stats_errors.pdf

Checklist for reviewing papers- https://researcheracademy.elsevier.com/uploads/2017-11/Quick_guide_how_to_review.pdf