

GUIDELINES FOR REVIEWERS

The following is a guide for Reviewers of the LJMU ASPIRE Journal.

This guide outlines the role and responsibilities of the Reviewer, provides an overview of the reviewing process, as well as a checklist for Reviewers to use.

1. Reviewers for the LJMU ASPIRE Journal

The journal's review team will consist of registered post-graduate researchers (PGRs) at Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU). Reviewers can join the Journal from any department, ranging from their first year to their final year. Whilst experience and training reviewing publications are not requirements to be considered for the role, it would be significantly beneficial. Alternatively, there is the opportunity to gain internal training in the reviewing process through LJMU or through [self-paced online courses](#).

2. What does the role of a reviewer involve?

As a reviewer, your role is to help ensure that a submission is accurate and up to the journal's standard by providing feedback on the structure and quality of a submitted manuscript. You will be selected from a pool of peer reviewers based on your faculty, areas of interest and the expertise you have listed, which enables you to judge the submission. Reviewers can register their interest by completing a registration form found in the Journals website.

3. Review process:

After being sent a manuscript for review, the reviewer has 5 days to accept the review. After accepting, the reviewer has 2-4 weeks to provide the editor with the feedback. The reviewing process is double blind, meaning that the authors' and reviewers' identities will not be shared. Only the editor in charge of managing the manuscript will know who both parties are and will treat this information with confidentiality.

The editor received the feedback, who upon reading the comments provide the feedback to the author via the Journal Platform. Depending on the feedback from the reviewer and the changes needed, the author(s) will have 1-4 weeks to respond and act on this feedback. Author(s) may challenge reviewers' feedback through written responses, which might require a discussion between the reviewer and editor (this will be determined per manuscript). If the editor is happy with the changes made by the author, the manuscript can be accepted and proceed to final formatting and editing for the Journal.

4. Checklists

Before you review, please check:

- ☐ Do you understand the type of peer review used by this journal?
- ☐ Do you know how to submit your review?
- ☐ Do you have any conflicts of interest? If yes, please let the editor know.
- ☐ Can you complete the review in time? If you struggle to meet the deadline, please let the editor know.
- ☐ Have you provided an email that will stay active for the time you are volunteering to be a reviewer?

When reviewing, please:

- Remember to anonymise your review, because the journal operates a double-blind peer review process.
- Consider each manuscript unbiased.
- Keep the review process confidential; reviewers must not share correspondence or information about the manuscript with anyone outside the peer review process without the explicit permission of the editor.
- Do not enter manuscript files, images or information in databases or tools (like AI tools) that do not guarantee confidentiality or are accessible to the public or use information for their own purposes.
- Provide fair, comprehensive, constructive and appropriate feedback to authors, and offer additional clarification if requested by the editor. Be as specific as possible and explain your rationale. For instance, instead of highlighting text and commenting 'This argument can be stronger', it would be better to suggest how the author(s) can make the argument stronger and why this is necessary.
- Generate the feedback on your own, unless there is explicit permission from the editor to involve another person.
- Avoid making statements that can be interpreted as questioning someone's reputation. Comments should focus on the content of the manuscript only.
- Make the editor aware if there is significant similarity between the manuscript under consideration and any published paper or submitted manuscripts.
- The manuscripts being reviewed are most likely the first academic papers being submitted by authors. Remember that just as this might be a learning opportunity for you, it will most likely be the same for them. Use this opportunity to give unbiased and constructive feedback that will not only improve the manuscript but also the author as an academic writer.

Reviewers are expected to provide feedback on:

- Structure and flow: Do ideas flow nicely within and across sentences/paragraphs? Is the order of the arguments logical? Are there any gaps or places where the authors go on tangents? Is it hard or easy to read?
- Grammar: You are not expected to highlight any grammatical error as the editor will do this; however, if a grammatical decision impact the flow or understanding, flag this.
- Subject area: Does the submission follow the standards of the subject area? Are there gaps in the literature or arguments that weaken the points made? Remember the submissions come from students who are the. If you are uncertain whether a statement is the authors' opinion or information from another source, but no citation is given, flag it. References should follow Harvard Style.
- Write an overall comment, referring to: Structure and Presentation, Literature/Theory, Critical Evaluation/ Discussion and an overall summary

Before submitting your review, please check:

- ☐ Have you anonymised your review?
- ☐ Have you supplied specific in-text comments?
- ☐ Is your feedback constructive, fair and motivating?
- ☐ Have you written an overall comment?

5. Document Control

Version	Date	Author	Reviewer	Approver	Change description	Status
0.1	01/05/2025	Sarah Klingberg	-	-	Initial draft created	-
0.2	08/05/2025	Sarah Klingberg	Cherene de Bruyn		Added Document Control section, suggested edits & comments	Under Review
1.0	09/05/2025	Sarah Klingberg	-	Samatha Barker Cherene de Bruyn	Submitted with OJS setup	Approved