



Better Peer Review Self-Assessment Tool

Wiley - one of the world's largest publishers and a trusted leader in research and learning

Embracing honesty and accountability to improve scholarly peer review processes

Having looked at best practices in peer review, Wiley saw that the practical meaning and significance of peer review can vary greatly from journal to journal. They recognised that a lack of clear definition underlines a greater problem apparent to many working on academic journals - a lack of defined standards for peer review.

Wiley used their findings to develop a 'Better Peer Review' self-assessment tool, collating requirements and expectations from key stakeholders, that enables journals to assess their performance within the peer review process.

Why is it important for journals to improve their peer review process?

Peer review is an important step in the publication of **scholarly research**, as it is the principal way in which journal articles are quality checked and modified to ensure that **the literature** is trustworthy and reliable. To remain meaningful in the light of changing community expectations and technological advances, journals strive to improve their processes, or risk being left behind.

A 'Better Peer Review' self-assessment tool

The self-assessment tool aims to provide journals with clear guidance on how to better their processes across five essential practice areas (integrity, ethics, fairness, usefulness and timeliness)¹, agreed by stakeholders as the hallmarks of a good peer review. This involvement of stakeholders in co-developing the tool has introduced greater transparency to the process, and optimised the effectiveness of peer review outputs.

The resulting common understanding of what a 'good peer review' looks like allows journals to **improve** their processes, and ultimately their journal content by increasing transparency and improving communications across journal teams and stakeholders.

Benefits

The 'Better Peer Review' research and self-assessment tool highlights the importance and impact of peer reviews across journals. Within a few months of launching, Wiley started to see significant uptake, with 115 self-assessments being completed by journal teams publishing across a wide range of research disciplines. Users rated the experience 3.61 stars out of 4 for usefulness and began sharing positive feedback.

"This was a really useful exercise to conduct on my journal. It was apparent that much of what we expect from our authors and reviewers is implicit. We should provide clearer guidance and direction to authors and reviewers to ensure a better, more consistent, and more transparent peer review process for everyone." - Leah Webster, Wiley

By opening up their processes for feedback from their key stakeholders, Wiley introduced transparency and honesty, and have seen significant improvements to the quality and usefulness of their outputs by listening and responding to that feedback.

¹ *Wiley Better Peer Review Assessment: 5 Essential Standards [online] Available at: <https://www.wiley.com/en-us/network/publishing/research-publishing/peer-review/wiley-better-peer-review-assessment-five-essential-standards> (accessed February 2025)*