

When Is A Review More Than A Recommendation?

A Practical Framework for Quality in Peer Review

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Innovations in how editorial teams set standards, demonstrate quality, and measure the reception of published research

THE PROBLEM

- ❖ Peer review is a foundational component of scholarly publishing; however, the criteria for evaluating the quality of review reports are not clearly defined.
- ❖ Reviewer performance is monitored through several indicators, such as turnaround time, the rate of invitation acceptance and completion.
- ❖ These metrics do not indicate whether the review supports editorial decisions or provides constructive feedback to authors.
- ❖ This discrepancy between visible indicators and the actual value of reviews creates challenges in editorial practices.

VISIBLE VS. VALUABLE

Commonly tracked

Turnaround time
Acceptance rate
Volume of reviews

What matters more

Specificity
Clarity
Usefulness
Constructiveness

WHO THIS HELPS

Editors

Guide reviewer expectations, support fair and consistent decisions

Mentors

A structured basis for quality-focused mentoring

Reviewers

Self-assess and move beyond vague commenting

THE FIVE QUALITY INDICATORS



TRANSFERABILITY AND NEXT STEPS

Transferability

- ✓ Designed for adaptation across disciplines, journal types, and training contexts
- ✓ Suitable for reviewer training programs and mentoring initiatives
- ✓ Applicable in graduate-level research methods and academic writing courses
- ✓ Requires no institutional infrastructure to adopt

Next Steps

- Piloting the framework with editorial teams and reviewer mentors
- Gathering feedback from novice reviewers in training contexts
- Refining indicator descriptions based on cross-disciplinary use
- Integration into journal submission and reviewer guidance systems

VAGUE VS. USEFUL COMMENTS

"The literature review is weak."



"The literature review would be stronger if it engaged more clearly with recent studies on the topic and explained how the present study differs from that work."

"The sample size is too small."



"The sample size of 12 participants may limit the generalisability of the findings. The authors should discuss this as a limitation or explain how transferability is addressed."

"The data collection tool requires further justification."



"The paper does not report how the instrument was validated. Evidence of content validity or pilot testing would strengthen confidence in the findings."

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❖ A good peer review is not only timely. It is specific, evidence-based, constructive, respectful, and useful for editorial judgment.