The Human Question

EDITORIAL AND PEER-REVIEW POLICY

INDEPENDENT JUDGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABLE DECISIONS

The Human Question

A Journal of Humanistic Inquiry

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PURPOSE

Albert Tan Sin Hon is the journal's President and Editor-in-Chief, founder and publisher, based in Singapore. The editorial contact is editor@thehumanquestionjournal.com. The journal is independently operated; an author's university affiliation does not imply institutional sponsorship. Scholarly decisions rest on contribution, rigour, evidence, clarity and relevance to humanistic inquiry. Payment, friendship, seniority, nationality and agreement with an editor's views do not determine acceptance.

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President and Editor-in-Chief: Albert Tan Sin Hon

1. GOVERNANCE AND EDITORIAL INDEPENDENCE

The public website will identify appointed editors and board members with their consent, roles and affiliations. No person is represented as an editor without agreeing to serve. A handling editor must have appropriate expertise and sufficient independence from the authors. The publisher supports the process and may not overturn a scholarly decision to secure publication for a preferred author. Sponsorship, if introduced, must be disclosed and cannot purchase editorial influence.

Editors disclose financial, professional, institutional and personal interests. Close collaboration, supervision, family relationships, shared current employment, direct financial interests or active personal disputes normally require recusal. When uncertain, the editor discloses the circumstances and seeks independent handling. Editorial appointments and processes are reviewed as the journal develops.

2. WHAT IS PEER REVIEWED

Research articles and scholarly review or critical essays require two independent external reports before acceptance. Book reviews, editorials and shorter commentaries ordinarily receive editorial assessment and are labelled accordingly. If external review is used for another content type, that fact is stated. The journal does not describe an entire issue as externally peer reviewed when it contains editorially assessed material.

For externally reviewed work, the normal model is double-anonymous: author names are withheld from reviewers, and reviewer names from authors. The editor retains identity records. Anonymity cannot be assured where preprints, distinctive subject matter or prior public discussion reveal authorship. Reviewers who recognise an author must disclose this and any resulting conflict. Reports are confidential and are not published without the necessary consent.

3. AUTHORS WHO ALSO HOLD EDITORIAL ROLES

A founder, editor, board member or their close collaborator may submit work only through an independent handling arrangement. A suitably qualified editor with no relevant conflict selects reviewers, controls correspondence and makes the decision. The author-editor is excluded from reviewer selection, confidential reports addressed to the editor and decision deliberations. The journal retains a record and publishes an article-level disclosure. If independence cannot be established, acceptance cannot proceed.

4. WORKFLOW AND REVIEWER SELECTION

A desk assessment considers scope, originality, method, evidential support, ethical declarations and readiness. Clearly unsuitable or incomplete work may be declined or returned without external review. The reasons should be communicated respectfully. Reviewers are selected for subject expertise and independence, with attention to relevant disciplinary and regional perspectives. Names, affiliations and contact routes are checked rather than accepted solely on author recommendation.

Authors may suggest reviewers or identify a reasoned conflict; the editor retains discretion. An author-suggested reviewer is never treated as independent solely because the author says so. Reviewers declare conflicts, maintain confidentiality and accept only if they can provide a timely, competent assessment. They must not contact authors directly about a confidential review or seek citation of their own work without scholarly justification.

Reports should address contribution, reasoning, methods, sources, clarity, limits and human significance. The editor considers the substance of the reports, not a simple vote. Material disagreement may require a further reviewer or a reasoned editorial assessment. Necessary additional expertise must be obtained before acceptance. Decisions explain the principal reasons and distinguish essential revisions from optional suggestions.

5. TIMING, REVISION AND WITHDRAWAL

Targets are acknowledgement within seven days, desk assessment within four weeks and reviewer reports within six to eight weeks of accepting an invitation. Availability and complexity can extend these periods. Editors should inform authors about material delays. A revision invitation specifies the requested changes and a reasonable return date; extensions may be agreed by email.

Authors may withdraw before publication by written request, with all co-authors informed. The journal confirms the withdrawal and stops the review or production process. No withdrawal fee applies. A published article forms part of the scholarly record; post-publication requests are handled through the correction and retraction policy, with exceptional removal only where justified.

6. APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS

An author may appeal within 30 days of a decision by explaining a material factual error, procedural irregularity or overlooked evidence, with concise supporting details. Disagreement alone does not establish an error. Send the appeal to the editorial address with “Appeal” in the subject. The journal aims to acknowledge it within seven days and provide an outcome or progress update within 30 days.

A person uninvolved in the original decision, and without a conflict, reviews the appeal. A complaint about the founder or handling editor requires a suitably qualified external person to review it independently. The complainant is told who is handling it, subject to necessary confidentiality. If such a person cannot yet be secured, the journal explains the delay and does not present an internal self-review as independent. The written outcome states the reasons and any corrective action.

7. ACCOUNTABILITY AND SOURCES

Maintain a private audit trail of invitations, conflicts, reports, decisions and author approvals. Publish material corrections to these policies with a new version and date. The first issue remains in preparation; the journal makes no claim here to an assigned ISSN, indexing, impact factor, COPE membership or preservation-service membership.

COPE, Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers
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