The Human Question

REVIEWER GUIDE

CONFIDENTIAL ASSESSMENT AND REPORT FORM

The Human Question

A Journal of Humanistic Inquiry

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PURPOSE

Peer review helps the editor assess whether a contribution is sound, original, clear and useful to the journal's readers. A report should explain its reasoning with enough detail for authors to respond. The editor makes the final decision. Reviews are confidential, normally double-anonymous, and should be returned by the date agreed in the invitation. Contact editor@thehumanquestionjournal.com if expertise, independence or timing is a concern.

CONTACT: editor@thehumanquestionjournal.com

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

1. BEFORE ACCEPTING

Accept only if you have the necessary expertise and time. Declare any relationship, financial interest, recent collaboration, supervision, institutional connection or dispute that may affect independence. If you recognise an author, tell the editor. Do not assume that knowing a name automatically creates a conflict, or that anonymity removes a real conflict. Decline where impartiality cannot reasonably be maintained.

Do not delegate the review, involve a student or colleague, contact the author or share manuscript material without the editor's prior agreement and any required confidentiality arrangements. Do not upload the paper, reports or identities to an external artificial-intelligence system. Keep unpublished ideas confidential and do not use them for personal advantage.

2. WHAT TO ASSESS

Identify the paper's contribution and its humanistic significance. Assess whether the argument follows, the method suits the question, sources support the claims and contrary evidence is treated fairly. Check key quotations and references within your expertise, giving precise locations for problems. Distinguish a fundamental flaw from a remediable omission and a matter of preference. A reviewer need not agree with the conclusion to judge the scholarship favourably.

Consider disciplinary context, clarity for a wider readership, research ethics, permissions, declarations and limits. Recommend additional references only when needed to support or test the argument. Avoid personal criticism and demands for the author to adopt your own project. Report suspected plagiarism, fabricated evidence or confidentiality problems privately to the editor with evidence; do not conduct an accusatory exchange with the author.

3. WRITE A USEFUL REPORT

Begin with a short account of the contribution and overall assessment. Organise essential changes by issue, referring to pages, paragraphs or notes. Explain why each change matters and what would address it. Put optional suggestions separately. The confidential recommendation to the editor may be accept, minor revision, major revision or reject; explain the basis. Do not promise acceptance to the author.

The report form on the next page may be copied into an email or editable document. Remove instructions before sending. Retain or securely dispose of review files in accordance with the editor's instructions; do not publish the review without consent.

CONFIDENTIAL REVIEWER REPORT FORM

Record	Complete privately
Manuscript reference / title	[Insert]
Reviewer name and affiliation	[For the editor only]
Relevant expertise	[Brief description]
Conflicts or recognised authorship	[Describe, or state none; seek advice before proceeding if necessary]
Date and agreed deadline	[Insert]

REPORT FOR THE AUTHOR

CONTRIBUTION AND OVERALL ASSESSMENT

[What does this paper add, and why does it matter?]

_____

_____

ESSENTIAL REVISIONS

[Identify each substantive issue, its location, why it matters and a feasible response.]

_____

_____

EVIDENCE AND METHOD

[Assess sources, reasoning, methods, counterarguments and limits.]

_____

_____

PRESENTATION AND OPTIONAL SUGGESTIONS

[Offer proportionate improvements in structure, clarity, tables or references.]

_____

_____

FOR THE EDITOR ONLY

Recommendation: [accept / minor revision / major revision / reject]. Explain the reasons and any need for further specialist review. Flag sensitive integrity or conflict concerns here, with evidence. Comments that materially affect the decision should ordinarily be conveyed to the author in an appropriate form so that the author can respond.

Reviewer declaration: I have disclosed relevant interests, maintained confidentiality, and based this report on my own accountable assessment. I have not uploaded confidential review material to an external artificial-intelligence service or involved another person without authority.

Reference: COPE, Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers
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