General Information

IAFOR relies on a large number of international scholars from around the world to contribute to a shared vision of promoting and engaging in international, intercultural, and interdisciplinary dialogue. Our academic events would not be what they were without a commitment to ensuring that international norms of peer review are observed for our presentation abstracts. With thousands of abstracts submitted each year for presentation at our conferences, IAFOR relies on the cooperation of scholars – we value your help, and thank you for your time and effort.

How are reviewers selected?

IAFOR only selects reviewers who have the appropriate qualifications to be able to judge the work of their peers. Most reviewers are therefore established academics who hold PhDs, or other terminal degrees in their fields.

IAFOR selects as reviewers:

1) Authors who have already submitted abstracts through the online system, and been successfully accepted.

As all authors have had their abstract similarly reviewed by at least two and sometimes three reviewers, in the spirit of reciprocity, we ask that the author of a successful abstract be similarly prepared to review up to three abstracts.

2) Academics or scholars who have otherwise agreed to referee, or volunteered their services through contacting the organization.

The IAFOR peer review process:

IAFOR operates a system of international double blind peer review. A completed abstract is seen by at least two reviewers following initial screening.

When abstracts are submitted, they are immediately reviewed in-house to see if they conform to the accepted norms of academic abstracts. At this stage incomplete or time-wasting submissions are not forwarded to reviewers.

All abstracts which have passed this initial screening are then assigned to two reviewers through the online system. Each reviewer is asked to read the abstract and grade it on a scale of 0–5 through the system, with the six categories as follows:

5 – Excellent
4 – Good
3 – Average
2 – Poor or Borderline Acceptability
1 – Very Poor
Reviewer Abstract Categorization Guide

5 – Excellent
The abstract is clear, concise, and excellently written. The content is deemed to be relevant, thought provoking, and timely. The abstract is considered worthy of presentation.

4 – Good
The abstract is clear, concise, and well written. The content is deemed to be relevant, thought provoking, and timely. The abstract is considered worthy of presentation.

3 – Average
The abstract is well written but there may be problems in clarity and presentation. The content is deemed to be relevant and timely, although may be less thought provoking than in proposals considered “Excellent” or “Good”. The abstract is considered worthy of presentation.

2 – Poor or Borderline Acceptability
The abstract may be reasonably written but there may be problems in clarity and presentation and/or questions as to the pertinence and originality of the abstract. There may also be problems of comprehension if the submitter is not a native English speaker. The abstract may be considered worthy of presentation if certain revisions are made. The reviewer may suggest revisions are made before it is considered worthy of presentation.

1 - Very Poor
The abstract may be considered to contain unoriginal work, or be irrelevant to the conference in question. Language and comprehension difficulties may render the text difficult to follow, and the reviewer does not consider the abstract worthy of presentation, nor does the reviewer believe that a simple reworking would allow it to be.

Acceptance/Rejection Process
The grade points of the two reviews are combined. In order for abstracts to be accepted, they must gain a score of 6 or above in the graded system following the results of two reviews (from a maximum of 10 points), or a score of 7 and above if sent to a third reviewer (from a maximum of 10 points), as follows:

Automatic Acceptance
If both reviewers consider the abstract any combination of “Average”, “Good”, or “Excellent” (Combined points total of 6-10 of a possible 10), then the abstract is successfully accepted for presentation.

Automatic Rejection
If both reviewers consider the abstract “Very Poor” or “Reject”, (Combined points total of 2 or less of a possible 10), then the abstract is rejected.

Third Reviewer’s Opinion sought
If the abstract is considered “Poor/Borderline Acceptable” by both reviewers, then the abstract is forwarded to a third reviewer.

If the third reviewer considers it “Average” or above, then the abstract is accepted.
If the third reviewer finds the abstract “Poor/Borderline Acceptable” or below, then the abstract is rejected.
If there is a marked discrepancy resulting in one reviewer giving a passing grade, and another a failing grade, then the opinion of a third reviewer is sought (when one reviewer considers the abstract “Excellent/Good/Average”, and the other considers it “Poor/Borderline Acceptable” or below). In this case, if the third reviewer considers it “Excellent/Good/Average”, then it shall be accepted. If the third reviewer considers it “Poor/Borderline Acceptable” or below then it is rejected.

Notification of Acceptance or Rejection
Authors are usually informed of acceptance or rejection within two weeks of having submitted their proposal for review. Successful authors will receive an email notifying them of the results as well as an official letter of acceptance as a pdf.

Reviewer Guide and FAQ

How have I been assigned this abstract/these abstracts?
We believe you to be qualified to judge the abstracts based on the information you have provided to us, as either the author of a successful abstract in an IAFOR conference, or as a volunteer who has provided us with these details.

How do I review the abstract?

1) Log into the review system using your email address and the password you chose when you registered. If there is an abstract available to review it will appear on your log-in menu. Select it to start. Once the review form is open, the system allows you 45 minutes to complete the review.
   Please take the time to read the proposal slowly, and maybe several times. Ideally it should be all the things that you want in an abstract: clarity, concision, interest, relevance, rigor, precision, etc., in which case you would have no question about recommending it for presentation with the highest score. However, not all abstracts fit into that category, and you may award a lower score, with some comments and recommendations.

2) After reading the abstract, please grade it using the reviewer guidelines, and leave any comments or advice. You may be as honest as you like, but please be respectful.

3) Push the submit button and you are finished.

How long do I have to review an abstract?
Once you have selected an abstract to review you will have 45 minutes to complete it.

I don’t feel that I am the appropriate person to judge the abstract
We try and assign abstracts based on areas of expertise. If you do not feel you are an appropriate reviewer for the abstract click on the “return to menu” link to select a different abstract.

I feel a conflict of interest has arisen. What do I do?
We supply you with some details of the submitter, so that you can inform us if you do not feel comfortable judging the abstract. For example, if the submitter is known to you personally please click on the “return to menu” link to select a different abstract.

Do I have to leave comments on the abstracts?
Yes. A minimum of 30 characters is required. The primary job of the reviewer is to give a simple appraisal of the work in terms of a pass or fail. It is not required, but the reviewer can give constructive criticism (up to 250 words).

Will my comments be passed onto the author(s)?
Usually not. In the case where the abstract is rejected then we do not enter into correspondence as to why, as this can provoke lengthy and unhelpful correspondence. In some cases, authors may need to have their scores and comments in order to secure funding from their institutions, in which case comments may be passed on. The reviewer will always remain anonymous however, and personal details will never be passed on.

Can I contact the author directly?
No. Please do not enter into direct correspondence with the author of a submitted abstract under any circumstances. This avoids all potential for possible conflict.
Criteria to be Considered for Scoring

The following attributes of abstracts may act as a guide for reviewers, and these should be taken into account as the reviewer decides. In some cases problems in the presentation of the argument, or the language used (in the case of a non-native speaker) may be outweighed by the importance of the topic. Similarly some problems with research design and analysis may lead to a rejection of an abstract that is fairly pedestrian, whereas in some cases the argument or hypothesis is of significant interest, so as to outweigh the weaknesses. In some cases, however, the design may be so inadequate that despite the importance of the topic the abstract is unacceptable.

Originality of Proposal: Originality is sometimes difficult to gauge in just 250 words, but it is possible to appraise whether novel concepts or approaches were used, or if the abstract challenged existing paradigms, or developed new methodologies. If the abstract presents an extension or a replication of previous work, is the new study better than previous ones? Does it therefore adds genuinely new information to present knowledge, or provides clear information that was in doubt due to small sample sizes or other design issues?

Importance of Proposal: Does the abstract address an important problem? How was scientific knowledge advanced? What will be the effect of the results on the concepts or methods that drive the field? Are the results and conclusions strong enough to influence how clinicians/teachers/researchers “act”; understand the basic mechanisms of health/disease; or provide health services or trainee education, conduct future research, or impact public policy?

Quality of Research Design and Data Analysis: Is the study design clearly described? Are sampling procedures adequately described, including inclusion and exclusion criteria? Is there potential selection bias in the sampling procedure and is there enough information for the reviewer to be able to evaluate this problem? Are possible confounding factors discussed and/or controlled for? Are issues of reliability and validity of the measures addressed? Are the statistical analyses appropriate for the study design? Are the statistical analyses the best that could have been used? Is there an adequate discussion of the statistical power of the study?

Conclusions: Are conclusions clearly stated? How well are the conclusions justified by the data? Are conclusions correct but overstated for the strength of the study?

Quality of presentation: Is the abstract clearly written and understandable?

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