GUIDELINES FOR JOURNAL PEER REVIEWERS

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1. Introduction

All papers submitted to ICE Publishing journals are anonymously commented upon by other members of the civil engineering profession (peer review) – a process which maintains the high technical quality of the journal. Thank you for agreeing to contribute to this process by acting as a peer reviewer. The comments that you will give are essential to the success of the journals and your input is highly valued. However, we also need to provide a rapid response to authors, so we ask that you return your review within two weeks of accepting to review (this may vary by Journal, but the return your review date will be included in the acceptance to review letter). If you are having any problems, please let the Journals Editor know.

2. The ICE Publishing peer review process

Papers submitted to ICE Publishing journals are briefly assessed by the Journals’ Editor in Chief and, if deemed suitable, will be sent out to an Associate Editor for their approval before inviting two reviewers for formal review. On receipt of these reviews, the Associate Editor (member of the Journal Panel/Board) will make an overall decision, taking into consideration the advice of the reviewers, whether to accept, reject or request revision. The reviewer report is therefore highly influential and as such, the most constructive reports are those that provide arguments for and against publication, with guidance on how to improve the paper. By agreeing to review, it is also expected that you will review any revised versions of the article, if requested.

When you agree to review an article, you will receive an email from the Journals Editor containing a link to the paper in our Journal tracking system ReView, which is where you will need to submit your review.

Please note that the article PDF should be treated as a confidential document and remains the intellectual property of the author until it is published. Furthermore, if, on reading the abstract or full article, you come across a conflict of interests and cannot complete your review impartially, please make your Journals Editor aware as soon as possible.

Before you return your decision:

- please read the journal’s aims and scope (click here for a full list).
- if you suspect plagiarism from any source, please alert your Journals Editor who has access to and may employ CrossCheck or iThenticate, antiplagiarism tools, to verify this.
3. **Essential steps to submitting your review online**

a. Log into the ReView journal tracking system, using the link provided in the original email sent to you. If you have reviewed for us before please just enter your email and follow the ‘forgot password’ link to reset your password. Here you will be able to edit your existing profile or add details such as key words to your profile.

b. Once logged in, you will be presented with instructions and an online checklist of standard questions to complete.

c. Two text boxes are available to add more detailed comments: one for confidential ‘Comments to author’ and another, ‘Confidential comments to the editor’. You may find it most convenient to prepare these in a text editor such as Microsoft Word beforehand and then copy and paste them into the relevant text box.

d. You may also upload an edited pdf or word document of suggested corrections to the paper. Please ensure this is anonymised.

e. Please select and submit the appropriate overall recommendation for the paper (see ‘Overall Recommendations for Associate Editors and Reviewers’).

If you get stuck, please download a user-guide for the website. If your questions are not answered, please contact the Journals Editor who will be able to help with your queries.

4. **Overall recommendation**

Please use the following descriptions to help with your decision.

**Accept:** Choose this option if the paper you have received has met the criteria of the journal and is suitable for publication without any further changes.

**Revise then accept:** Please choose this option if the paper has met the criteria of the journal and acceptable for publication but could benefit from optional minor changes, for example a change of technical term.

**Minor revision:** If you consider the paper is potentially suitable for publication but needs minor yet important changes to content and/or requires restructuring of the existing content. These should be listed in the ‘comments to the author’ text box. Anything that you are unsure of, please enter in to the ‘confidential comments to editor’ text box. Associate Editors may come back to you if the comments are not clear.

**Major revision:** Choose this if the paper is potentially publishable but requires major changes and/or additions to content. This will be sent for a second round of review. Given the increased workload and time involved, and the reduced chance of receiving a satisfactory revision, please only consider this option if you feel the journal will really benefit from the revised paper.

As for an ‘Invitation to revise and resubmit’ decision you should provide appropriate edited, comprehensive, coherent, non-conflicting comments, which will add value to the authors’ resubmission, should they choose to. The revised paper will be re-reviewed.

**Publish elsewhere (Transfer):** Select this option if the paper does not meet the scope of the journal submitted to but is potentially suitable for publication in another ICE Publishing or
non-ICE Publishing title. Please name the suggested journal title and justify this decision for the benefit of the author in the ‘comments to the author’ box.

Reject: Choose this if you consider the paper is unsuitable for publication. Please explain this choice in full.

5. The ideal review should:

- Be fair, constructive and non-biased.
- Look for evidence that the paper is original and contributes something new to the field.
- Consider whether the paper fits the aims and scope of the journal it has been submitted to.
- All claims are convincing and evidenced.
- Check that the paper flows and has a good structure, with a good scene-setting introduction, well-illustrated and factually based core information, and a set of logical and practically useful conclusions.
- Ensure the paper references previous work in the same field, particularly those already published in ICE Publishing journals, as well as all relevant codes and regulations.
- Check that the paper has a concise yet comprehensive title and abstract, which will engage someone browsing literature.
- Please check that all figures are necessary (add value to the paper), approximately 1 figure per 500 words.
‘Comments to the author’ box

The comments box is the most important part of the reviewer’s form for the author. Each of your comments should be numbered and make a clear recommendation for improvement. An example is given below.

1. Page 8, lines 1-3: This material is repetitive of material at the top of page 4 and should be deleted.
2. It is not clear why xxxx was used. Could the model have not been asked to estimate this? This needs to be explained.
3. Page 1, Abstract, line 6: Turn the sentence on its head (‘The implementation of the xxxxx ...’).
4. Page 1, Abstract, line 8: It is not clear what the difference between xxxx and xxxx might be. This needs clarifying at this stage.
5. Page 1, Introduction, para 1, line 4: explain what ‘xxxxx of xxxxx’ means
6. Page 2, para 2, line 2: The quote from the Act talks of ‘xxxx and xxxx’, but the sentence below the quote states that ‘xxxxx is applied to all xxxx’. The sentence needs to be re-written to make it clearer what the difference is between xxxx and xxxx.
7. Page 2: You use both ‘xxxxx’ and ‘xxxxx’ throughout. Stick with one of these words for clarity.
8. Page 3, line 2: ‘xxxx’ need to be explained at this point.
10. Table 1: This table is overly large and cumbersome, so just put in the years when there was a change.
11. Figure 3. The ‘xxxxx’ and ‘xxxxx’ are referred to in the text so need to be marked on the figure.
12. Figure 6. This map needs a scale and a north point.

‘Confidential comments to the editor’ box

The confidential comments box is where you should provide your overall view of the paper for the benefit of the assessor. An example is given below.

This is an interesting paper which models the variability in xxxx of xxxxx in xxxx and xxxx with xxxx and xxxx as explanatory variables. However, I have a difficulty with the essential basis of the paper which seems to be that a xxxx scheme is being introduced as part of a methodology for managing xxxx. This is clearly stated at the beginning, and the conclusions revolve entirely around the supposition that the implementation and management of such a system will help ‘control’ xxxx. It is not at all clear as to the reason for the need for this control. If the problem is xxxx, there are many better solutions than a complex xxxx scheme, I would have thought.
STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO RETURNING A REVIEW

1. You will receive an invitation email to review a paper from our ReView site for an ICE Journal. It will include a synopsis of the article at the base of the mail so you may see whether you wish to accept. If you would like to review the full article, please log onto ##SITE_URL## or you can click the link in the email. If this is your first-time logging into review you may need to use the forgot password function to receive an activation link and to create a password for your account.

   If you do not wish to review this article for ICE, please click here ##DIRECT_REJECT##. We will then know to approach another contact. If you have any recommendations then please let us know.

2. You can also view your reviewer assignments by logging in as a reviewer here: ReView. You will be asked to sign in, as this is a new system you will not be able to use the same password you used for Editorial Manager.

3. Any invitations to assignments will be listed in your Reviewer Dashboard under the ‘Invitations awaiting response’ tile (where you can agree or decline to review). ‘Articles to Review’ (articles you have agreed to review and need action), ‘Reviews submitted’ (your review history:
4. If you have accepted the invitation to review please click on ‘Articles to review’ which will take you to the papers awaiting your review. To open the paper details go to ‘View article’ which will open up the paper details (see screen shot below).

5. To view the paper in full please click on the pdf review icon situated at the righthand side of the screen. This will show you the most recent version of the paper. The PDF can then be printed or saved to your computer.

6. When you are ready to complete the Review form please scroll down where you will find detailed instructions and Questionnaire including a drop down menu of the ‘Recommendation’ options.

Please use the following descriptions to help with your decision:

**Accept:** Choose this option if the paper you have received has met the criteria of the journal and is suitable for publication without any further changes.
Revise then Accept: Please choose this option if the paper has met the criteria of the journal and it will be published, but could benefit from optional minor changes, for example a change of technical term. Or perhaps say figure improvements.

Minor revision (back to Associate Editor): If you consider the paper is potentially suitable for publication but needs minor yet important changes to content and/or requires restructuring of the existing content. These should be listed in the ‘comments to the author’ text box. Anything that you are unsure of, please enter in to the ‘confidential comments to editor’ text box.

Associate Editors may come back to you if the comments are not clear.

Major revision (back to Associate Editor to select reviewers): Choose this if the paper is potentially publishable but requires major changes and/or additions to content. This will be sent for a second round of review. Given the increased workload and time involved, and the reduced chance of receiving a satisfactory revision, please only consider this option if you feel the journal will really benefit from the revised paper.

As for a ‘Major revision’, decision you should provide appropriate edited, comprehensive, coherent, non-conflicting comments, which will add value to the authors’ resubmission, should they choose to. The revised paper will be re-reviewed.

Publish elsewhere (Transfer): Select this option if the paper does not meet the scope of the journal submitted to but is potentially suitable for publication in another ICE Publishing or non-ICE Publishing title. Please name the suggested journal title and justify this decision for the benefit of the author in the ‘comments to the author’ box.

Reject: Choose this if you consider the paper is unsuitable for publication. Please explain this choice in full.

On the same page you will find a box for ‘Comments to Author’ and below that a box for ‘Confidential comments to Editor’. There is also an option to upload an annotated/marked paper (‘Upload Reviewer Attachments’) if you have any other comments you would like to pass on to the Author.
7. At the bottom of the screen, you will find the save and proceed button, please click this to save the review. You can then click submit when you are ready to submit your review and recommendation.