

Dear Referee,

Thank you in advance for agreeing to referee the following paper for the *International Journal of Environmental, Cultural, Economic and Social Sustainability*. We ask people who have been either in-person or virtual presenters at the Sustainability Conference, and who have submitted a paper for publication in the *International Journal of Environmental, Cultural, Economic and Social Sustainability*, to referee up to three other papers for each submission they have made.

This is an important role. You belong to a community of scholars, educators and practitioners who provide critical and constructive feedback on the work to their peers. Referees will be credited as Associate Editors for the volume of the *International Journal of Environmental, Cultural, Economic and Social Sustainability* in which they have contributed (although, of course, the particular papers they refereed will not be identified). Guidelines on the role of the referee can be found on the following page.

The file is in Microsoft Word format. Each file commences with this letter, followed by the referee report and then the paper itself.

To referee papers, the process is as follows:

- Download each paper from the web links provided (sent in individual emails per paper)
- Complete the referee information. This is for the publisher's use only. As the refereeing process is blind, your identity as a referee will remain confidential.
- Read the paper and complete the referee report form. If you are giving the paper a relatively high score, detailed comments are not necessary, although authors always appreciate comments and suggestions. If you give the paper a score below 75% on any criterion, however, it is important to the author that you explain the rationale for your score.
- Make annotations to the paper if you wish, using some method for clearly differentiating your text from the author's, such as block letters, different coloured text or the 'changes tracking' function in Microsoft Word.
- Upload the completed report in CGPublisher, at the same link you downloaded the paper from, before the deadline. When uploading the completed report you will be requested to include the total score and recommendation.

Please don't hesitate to contact me by email if you have any questions about the refereeing process. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Sincerely,

**Publishing Manager**

[info@commongroundpublishing.com](mailto:info@commongroundpublishing.com)

# The Role of the Referee

Please observe carefully the following guidelines on the role of the referee.

1. **Expertise:** Papers are not always sent to a referee whose field is identical to the subject matter of that paper. You don't have to be precisely qualified in a field to be a constructive referee. In fact, an excellent paper will speak beyond its narrowly defined field. If, however, a paper is so distant from your field that you do not feel qualified to judge its merits, please return it to the publishing manager for the journal, who will locate another referee.

2. **Confidentiality:** Referees receive unpublished work, which must be treated as confidential until published. They should destroy all electronic and printed copies of the draft paper and referee report once they have received confirmation that their reports have been received by the publishing manager (in case we can't open the report files you send us) Referees must not disclose to others which papers they have refereed; nor are they to share those papers with any other person.

3. **Conflict of Interest:** Referees must declare any conflict of interest or any other factor which may affect their independence—in cases for instance, where they have received a paper of a colleague or an intellectual opponent. In cases of conflict of interest, please notify the publishing manager of your inability to referee a particular paper.

4. **Intellectual Merit:** A paper must be judged on its intellectual merits alone. Personal criticism or criticism based solely on the political or social views of the referee, is not acceptable.

5. **Full Explanation:** Critical or negative judgments must be fully supported by detailed reference to evidence from the paper under review or other relevant sources.

6. **Plagiarism and Copyright:** If a referee considers that a paper may contain plagiarism or that it might breach another party's copyright, they should notify the publishing manager for the journal, providing the relevant citations to support their claim.

7. **Responsiveness:** Referees are asked to return their reports within two weeks. This assists us to provide rapid feedback to the author.

## **SUBMISSION GUIDELINES**

Papers should be approximately 2,000-5,000 words in length. They should be written as continuous expository narrative in a chapter or article style - not as lists of points or a PowerPoint presentation.

The papers are to be published in a fully refereed academic journal. This means that the style and structure of the text should be relatively formal. For instance, the paper should not be a verbatim transcript of an oral presentation, such as 'Today I want to speak to you about ...'.

Authors may use any referencing style they choose, as long as it is used consistently and to the appropriate standards. Spelling can vary according to national usage, but should be internally consistent. Papers should be thoroughly checked and proof-read before submission, both by the author and a critical editorial friend.

Papers are assessed by referees against ten criteria - or fewer if some criteria do not apply to a particular kind of paper:

1. Significance of Themes
2. Relevance of Themes
3. Clarity of Thematic Focus
4. Relationship to Literature
5. Research Design and Data
6. Data Analysis and Use of Data
7. Use of Theory
8. Critical Qualities
9. Clarity of Conclusions
10. Quality of Communication

## **DIFFERENT KINDS OF FOCUS**

Papers may have different kinds of focus which will require adjustment to the way the referee criteria are applied. For instance:

**Practice Focus:** A paper which describes innovative or exemplary practices or programs in the community, in workplaces, in education institutions and the like. This may take the form of case studies, narratives, demonstrations or technical reports. The outcomes of practice may be improved frameworks, concepts, understandings or structures, such as enhanced capacity through the development of skills, knowledge and operational effectiveness. This kind of work may involve putting theory and research into practice. *In this case, criteria 4, 5, 6 and 7 may not be relevant (in which case mark as not applicable or 'n.a.')* and you should calculate an average score across the other criteria.

**Research Focus:** A presentation or publication reporting upon original research, based on the systematic collection and analysis of data or facts. This kind of work may involve the application or testing of theory. *In this case, criterion 7 may not be relevant and an average score should be calculated across the other criteria.*

**Theory Focus:** A presentation or publication which is broad and generalising in its emphasis, reflecting upon and systematically referenced against one or more bodies of literature or systems of thought. *In this case, criteria 5 and 6 may not be relevant and an average score should be calculated across the other criteria.*

## **EDITORIAL QUALITY**

The refereeing process for publication in the Journal is a rigorous measure of the quality of content. Authors are expected to revise to the standards required of the more negative of the referee reports they receive. For instance, if one referee recommends 'resubmit with major

revisions' and another 'resubmit with minor revisions', the author is expected to resubmit with major revisions.

Furthermore, some papers may have excellent content, but may be poorly expressed in English - in the case, for instance, of authors whose first language is not English. When we receive a negative response from a referee to Criterion 10, 'Quality of Communication', we may request a complete rewrite regardless of the overall score. This could be arranged by the author themselves, preferably using an experienced editor. Alternatively, Common Ground offers an editorial service.

## REFEREE REPORT

### OVERALL RATING

Score each item out of on a range from zero to 10. For detailed criteria for evaluating each item, see the COMMENTS section which commences on the next page. If your comments add up to a score of 75% or above and you have no further comments, it is sufficient to complete this page alone.

EVALUATION CRITERIA	SCORE
1. Significance of Themes	
2. Relevance of Themes	
3. Clarity of Thematic Focus	
4. Relationship to Literature	
5. Research Design and Data	
6. Data Analysis and Use of Data	
7. Use of Theory	
8. Critical Qualities	
9. Clarity of Conclusions	
10. Quality of Communication	
<b>TOTAL SCORE %</b> If some categories are not applicable in evaluating this particular paper, mark n.a. (not applicable) and calculate score as % average score across relevant items.	

### RECOMMENDATION

On the basis of the above evaluation, my recommendation is as follows (mark with 'X'):

- ACCEPT  
 ACCEPT WITH MINOR REVISIONS  
 RESUBMIT WITH MAJOR REVISIONS  
 REJECT

As a guide, the following are indicative score ranges:

- Accept (without qualification): 75-100%
- Accept with minor revisions: 60-75%
- Resubmit after major revisions: 40-60%
- Reject: Below 40%

## REFEREE'S COMMENTS

If you have any detailed comments to make beyond the score on the previous page, please write them below.

*Guidelines for comment:* The scoring table on the previous page has been designed for quick comment. You don't need to comment in this section unless:

- you have given a low score in any of the evaluation criteria; or
- you believe you need to justify having given the paper a high score on any of the evaluation criteria; or
- you have indicated that a response to any of the evaluation criteria would be 'not applicable' because the paper legitimately does not set out to be proficient in that particular area (for instance, pure theory or philosophical argumentation which does not use conventional 'data'); or
- you have specific advice or comments you would like to provide the author(s) in relation to any of the evaluation criteria.

**If any of the above applies, and particularly if you have recommended rejection or revision, then please elaborate:**

### 1. Significance of Themes

- Is this a topic that needs addressing? Is the area investigated by the paper: timely? important? in need of addressing because it has been neglected? intrinsically interesting? filling a gap in current knowledge? (The paper does not have to be all of these things to be significant; it is sufficient to measure it against one of these forms of significance.)
- By addressing these themes, does this paper make a useful contribution? Is it itself significant?

REFEREE COMMENTS:

### 2. Relevance of Themes

- Are these themes relevant to this publication? If not, is there a more appropriate place for publication?

REFEREE COMMENTS:

### 3. Clarity of Thematic Focus

- Are the author's themes clearly stated?
- Does the paper follow through by addressing these themes, consistently and cogently?

REFEREE COMMENTS:

#### **4. Relationship to Literature**

- Does the paper demonstrate an adequate understanding of the current literature in the field?
- Does it connect with the literature in a way which might be useful to the development of our understanding in the area it addresses?

REFEREE COMMENTS:

#### **5. Research Design and Data**

- Has the research, or equivalent intellectual work upon which the paper is based, been well designed?
- Does the paper demonstrate adequate use of evidence, informational input or other intellectual raw materials in support of its case?

REFEREE COMMENTS:

#### **6. Data Analysis and Use of Data**

- Has the interpretative potential of the data been adequately realised?
- Has the data been used effectively to advance the themes that the paper sets out to address?

REFEREE COMMENTS:

#### **7. Use of Theory**

- Does the paper use theory in meaningful way?
- Does it develop or employ theoretical concepts in such a way as to make plausible generalisations?

REFEREE COMMENTS:

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### 8. Critical Qualities

- Does the paper demonstrate a critical self-awareness of the author's own perspectives and interests?
- Does it show awareness of the possibility of alternative or competing perspectives: such as other cultural, social, political, theoretical or intellectual perspectives?
- Does it show an awareness of the practical implications of the ideas it is advancing?

REFEREE COMMENTS:

### 9. Clarity of Conclusions

- Are the conclusions of the paper clearly stated?
- Cohesiveness of paper: do the conclusions adequately tie together the other elements of the paper (such as theory, data and critical perspectives)?

REFEREE COMMENTS:

### 10. Quality of Communication

- Does the paper clearly express its case, measured against the technical language of the field and the reading capacities of an academic, tertiary student and professional readership?
- What is the standard of the writing, including spelling and grammar? If you will be recommending publication with revisions, please make specific suggestions or list errors.

**IMPORTANT, PLEASE INDICATE:**

[ ] From an editorial point of view, this paper is of a publishable standard as is.

[ ] This paper requires minor proofing by an colleague or critical friend of the author.

[ ] This paper requires thorough reworking by a professional editor. (For instance, where the author's first language is not English.)

REFEREE COMMENTS:

Comments and critical suggestions on the content and structure of this referee format are most welcome. Please email [info@commongroundpublishing.com](mailto:info@commongroundpublishing.com).



## PAPER FOR REFEREEING

Following is the paper for refereeing. If you, as referee, wish to annotate the text, please indicate with an 'X' as follows:

I have not annotated the text.

I have annotated the text. The method of annotation I have used is: .....

*Please indicate here the way in which you have annotated the text, for instance, BLOCK LETTERS, or red text, or by using the 'changes tracking' function in Microsoft Word.*