Counselling Psychology Review: Information about the review process

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Counselling Psychology Review is a peer-reviewed research publication. This information has been put together to give individuals interested in submitting to the publication a transparent insight into what they can expect when doing so.

Initially each paper submitted will be subject to two phases of review. The Editor will examine the general format (e.g. word count and referencing style), quality and relevance of the paper prior to it being reviewed by at least two individuals who have some familiarity with the subject matter (either the subject matter or methodology adopted). Once these reviews have been completed, the Editor will provide a brief report summarising the findings and outlining the final decision on the paper. This process should take no more than three months, although as time committed to the publication is voluntary we do ask individuals to be patient and invite corresponding authors to request an update if they have not heard in this time.

Following the review period authors will be contacted with one of four responses ranging from ‘Accept with no revisions’ to ‘Reject with no opportunity for resubmission’ – the full scale can be found in the guidance documents for reviewers which are also provided here. If the paper has been accepted then the timescales for publication will be provided where possible. In the instance that revisions are requested (which is on most occasions), individuals are asked to undertake these within a three-month period. The Editor will review the updated work in the first instance and may resend it to one of the original reviewers for further comments. A decision will be made as soon as possible, however, for the purposes of clarity this will be within three months of the resubmission.

In the sections which follow, the guidance that is provided to all individuals undertaking peer reviews for Counselling Psychology Review is provided. This is separated into two major sections to reflect the differing types of paper the publication will accept. The first outlines the guidance for those reviewing original research papers, systematic reviews and case studies. The second outlines the guidance for theoretical and methodological papers.

Original Research Paper, Systematic Review and Case Study guidance

Guidance for Reviewers

Counselling Psychology Review publishes high quality research and is distributed to all members of the Division of Counselling Psychology. The abstracts are also indexed through PsycINFO. The review process is therefore vitally important for maintaining the quality of the publications and any input is greatly appreciated.

A major emphasis on the reviewing process is that it proves a formative process for all those submitting work. With this in mind, the following framework has been devised and we would hope that you will consider using it in any reviews that you undertake for the publication. If you have any questions or comments regarding the framework then feel free to contact the Editor and they will be openly received.
Overview
In addition to a brief general commentary please consider:
● Does the subject matter fit with the scope of the publication?
● Will it be of sufficient interest to the readership?

Finally please rate the paper as either:

Accept with no revisions
(For example, the paper is excellent, clearly relevant to the readership and has no minor omissions.)

Accept with minor revisions
(For example, there are very specific omissions that need attention. This might include the omission of some important detail or the need to rework a paragraph.)

Accept with major revisions
(For example, the paper is clearly relevant to the publication and shows promise. It does, however, need a more substantial reworking to a specific section or sections.)

Reject but allow resubmission
(For example, the paper is relevant and shows promise. It is, however, not of a sufficient standard to include at the present time.)

Reject with no opportunity for resubmission
(For example, the paper is not appropriate for the publication or not of a sufficient quality. It is hoped that this will not be necessary to outline at the review stage as all papers will be screened for relevance and overall quality prior to review. However, if one slips through the net then it would be necessary to identify this.)

Following the overview it would be incredibly useful to provide a commentary about the quality of the different sections of the work. Where areas of development are felt to be needed the reviewers are asked to summarise their thoughts about how the work can be improved and to underline this – please note that where substantial change is needed this may not always be necessary. Commonly these may be as follows (although it is acknowledged that certain approaches to research will differ in how they are appropriately presented):

Abstract
● Does the abstract appropriately summarise the work in 250 words?
● Is the abstract formatted clearly? And, does it identify: (1) the background or aim to the project; (2) the methodology or methods adopted; (3) the results or findings of the work; and (4) a discussion or conclusion? – possibly reflecting the implications for practice.

Keywords
● Are these relevant to the paper? The paper should include no more than six keywords.

Background and literature
Comments might revolve around:
● The relevance of what is provided – is it appropriately informed? Or are there obvious omissions?
● Is the search strategy described?
● Is it presented in a logical way?

Rational for the project
Comments might revolve around:
● Is this clear?
● Are there specific hypotheses or research questions explicitly outlined?

Methodology
Comments might revolve around:
● Is the methodology/are the methods appropriate for the work presented?
● Does the author provide relevant information about: (1) the choice of methodology; (2) the individuals involved in the work; (3) the methods utilised; (4) the procedure followed; (5) the strategy of data analysis; and (6) the ethical considerations of the work?
Results/Findings
Comments might revolve around:
- Are these presented in a clear and coherent fashion?
- Do they appear to have foundation? Is more information needed (e.g., does a dataset need to be presented for review)?

Discussion
Comments might revolve around:
- Does the discussion relate appropriately to the results/findings?
- Does the discussion relate back to the original literature?
- Do the discussion points appear pertinent to counselling psychologists?

Relevance to counselling psychology
Comments might revolve around:
- Any recommendations that are made.
- Any future studies that are suggested.
- Any specific commentary about the relevance to counselling psychology.

General comments
Comments might revolve around:
- The overall structure.
- The writing style.

Theoretical Paper and Methodological Paper guidance

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**Abstract**
- Does the abstract appropriately summarise the work in 250 words?
- Is the abstract is formatted clearly? And, does it identify: (1) the content and focus of the paper; and (2) any conclusions drawn within the paper – possibly reflecting the implications for practice?

**Keywords**
- Are these relevant to the paper? The paper should include no more than six keywords.

**Background and context**
Comments might revolve around:
- Is the rationale for the focus of the paper clear?
- Is the focus of the paper appropriate and informed?

**Argument posed**
Comments might revolve around:
- Are the arguments posed relevant to counselling psychologists?
- Does the paper make appropriate use of existing literature? Is it well informed? Is it up-to-date? Does it make use of credible research findings or theoretical accounts?
- Is the paper appropriately critical? And does it provide a transparent account of the author’s stance on the topic?

**Relevance to counselling psychology**
Comments might revolve around:
- Any recommendations that are made.
- Any future studies that are suggested.
- Any specific commentary about the relevance to counselling psychology.

**Ethical considerations**
Comments might revolve around:
- Does the paper make use of empirical data such as transcripts or case studies? If so, has appropriate ethical approval been provided?

**General comments**
Comments might revolve around:
- The overall structure – is the work well conceived?
- The writing style.