

The IJCO™ Peer Review Process

In 2008, we inaugurated a new section of *IJCO The International Journal of Coaching in Organizations™*. It is a sign of the continuing maturation of not only this journal, but also the field of professional coaching (and even more specifically, the field of organizational coaching). This section of the journal contains articles that were successfully submitted for peer review. While during the first six year of *IJCO™*, all articles were solicited by the co-editors of each issue, writers can now independently submit article manuscripts to go through a peer review process.

The Role of Peer Reviewers

Peer review has become the backbone of scholarship and research in many disciplines and professional fields. Like the majority of other professional publications, *IJCO™* has begun the practice of anonymous or blind review of submitted articles by several members of an *IJCO™* peer review panel. We modeled our process after the one used by the American Psychological Association (APA). Writers and reviewers are unaware of each other's identities through a process that is designed to make the process more impartial.

IJCO™ reviewers are experts in their fields and members of the *IJCO™* editorial board. At the present time, the size of the panel is too small to reveal the names (thereby protecting the anonymity of reviewers for any one article). However, as *IJCO™* receives more articles for peer review, the panel will be expanded in size and the full listing of panelists will be possible. The panels will be making significant contributions to the profession of organizational coaching by committing their time and knowledge to this peer review.

Article writers can expect their manuscripts to be reviewed fairly, in a skilled, conscientious manner. Reviewers are held to demanding standards: They must (a) present a clear decision regarding publication; (b) support the recommendation with a detailed, comprehensive analysis of the quality and coherence of the potential article's conceptual basis, methods, results, and interpretations; and (c) offer specific, constructive suggestions to authors. Manuscripts are confidential material, not to be discussed or used for personal purposes without permission from the writer(s), as arranged through the editors of *IJCO™*.

The Peer Review Process

Initial Screening and Distribution

Once a submission is received by the *IJCO™* Office Manager (OfficeManager@ijco.info) it is assigned a manuscript number and the Office Manger advises the writer by email of the number and date of receipt. The review process may be lengthy, but generally writer(s) are informed of their paper's status within 60 days. The Office Manager then sends the manuscript to the Chair of the Peer Review Panel (currently John B. Lazar, MA, MCC) who gives the manuscript a preliminary appraisal for content, substance, and appropriateness to the journal. If the manuscript is clearly inappropriate, the Chair so informs the writer. If there is doubt, occasionally a single review will be arranged in addition to the Chair's initial reading. The goal is to provide the person(s) submitting the manuscript with prompt feedback. Assuming that a manuscript is considered appropriate to the journal and potentially acceptable, the usual procedure is to choose two reviewers for each paper. Manuscripts and reviewers are matched by the Chair according to content.



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Manuscript Actions

After receipt of peer reviews, the Chair of the *IJCO*™ Peer Review Panel scrutinizes the manuscript and the reviews. In making a final decision, the Chair weighs four possibilities, arranged below in order from outright rejection to acceptance "as is."

- ***Rejection outright.*** The flaws that lead to this decision generally center on substantive issues. Substantive concerns include lack of theoretical grounding, confusing or unclear conceptualization or rationale, unspecified relationships between variables, and insignificant contribution to the literature.
- ***Rejection with encouragement to revise and resubmit.*** In some cases, a manuscript may contain one or more major problems, but the reviewers and the Chair may see potential for the paper. The study as presented may not warrant acceptance as is, but may warrant consideration after major revision (e.g., rewriting the conceptual structure or reworking the data). The Chair will give the writer an invitation to revise and resubmit for another round of reviews (usually with the same reviewers). An editor cannot promise acceptance in this case, but if he or she saw no hope for a manuscript it would have been rejected outright.
- ***Acceptance conditional.*** Most manuscripts, if accepted, require revision in substantive, methodological, or mechanical matters. The new version is usually sent for further review by one or both of the original readers. Acceptance is not automatic, and a second or third revision may be required.
- ***Acceptance outright.*** In a very few cases, a manuscript may be accepted for publication on first reading, with only minor revisions required.

When accepted for publication, articles will appear within three issues of the date of publication. Although the standards for publication in *IJCO*™ are relatively stringent, we urge those submitting a manuscript not to be discouraged. The Chair and peer review panel members are all committed to assisting those submitting manuscripts so that they can make a valuable contribution to *IJCO*™ and to the field of organizational coaching.

Conclusion

As potential writers of *IJCO*™ articles embark on the paths of research, manuscript preparation, and submission, they should prepare themselves for some very hard work and task commitment. Indeed, writing can be tedious, perhaps perfunctory at times, but in our experience the writing process can also be intellectually stimulating and personally satisfying. Making theoretical breakthroughs, presenting concepts with significant practical implications, contributing to the growth and maturation of the field of organizational coaching and being cited by one's colleagues are quite rewarding. We wish all prospective writers success in this professional endeavor.



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