



# Peer review

Process and template

Reviewer Guidelines

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## 1. About the *Australian Diabetes Educator*

The Australian Diabetes Educators Association (ADEA) is a national organisation for health professionals committed to the provision and excellence of quality diabetes education, care and management.

The *Australian Diabetes Educator* (ADE) is a quarterly publication for ADEA members with the intention to increase knowledge and promote best practice in diabetes education and care and better management of people with diabetes. To achieve these goals the *ADE* publishes a range of article types including original peer reviewed research and scholarly work that contributes to the development and understanding of all aspects of diabetes education, care and management.

Topics covered are of interest to ADE readers, including diabetes educators, physicians, researchers and other health professionals working in the area or interested in diabetes. The publication does not publish descriptions of study design without data, papers on in vitro studies or studies involving animals.

## 2. About peer review

The Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research describes peer review as the impartial and independent assessment of research by others working in the same or related field <sup>1</sup>. In the context of ADE, peer review involves the assessment and evaluation of scientific or technical merit of research with knowledge and expertise equivalent to that of the individuals whose research is being reviewed. This is to ensure that research that is published, is of the highest quality standard and evidence based.

Peer review is completed by a nominated reviewer prior to finalising drafts of the ADE. ADE editors will contact reviewers with the original de-identified research for evaluation.

ADE editors use a peer review approach to ensure the quality of research that is published. Other purposes of the peer review process are to:

- Provide ADE editors with an expert opinion regarding the quality of the original research;
- Ensure that the objectives of the publication are met;
- Supply authors with explicit feedback on how to improve their papers so that they will be acceptable for publication in the quarterly ADE, including;
  - Assessing originality and quality of the research; and
  - Suggesting improvements to the presentation and content.

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2007): Accessed <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/r39>

### **3. Requirements of peer reviewers**

Members of the peer review team are expected to have the following qualifications:

- Current or recent involvement in research and other experiences relevant to diabetes education practice, and
- Understanding of the process of peer review. See Peer review process below for more details.

Peer reviewers should also:

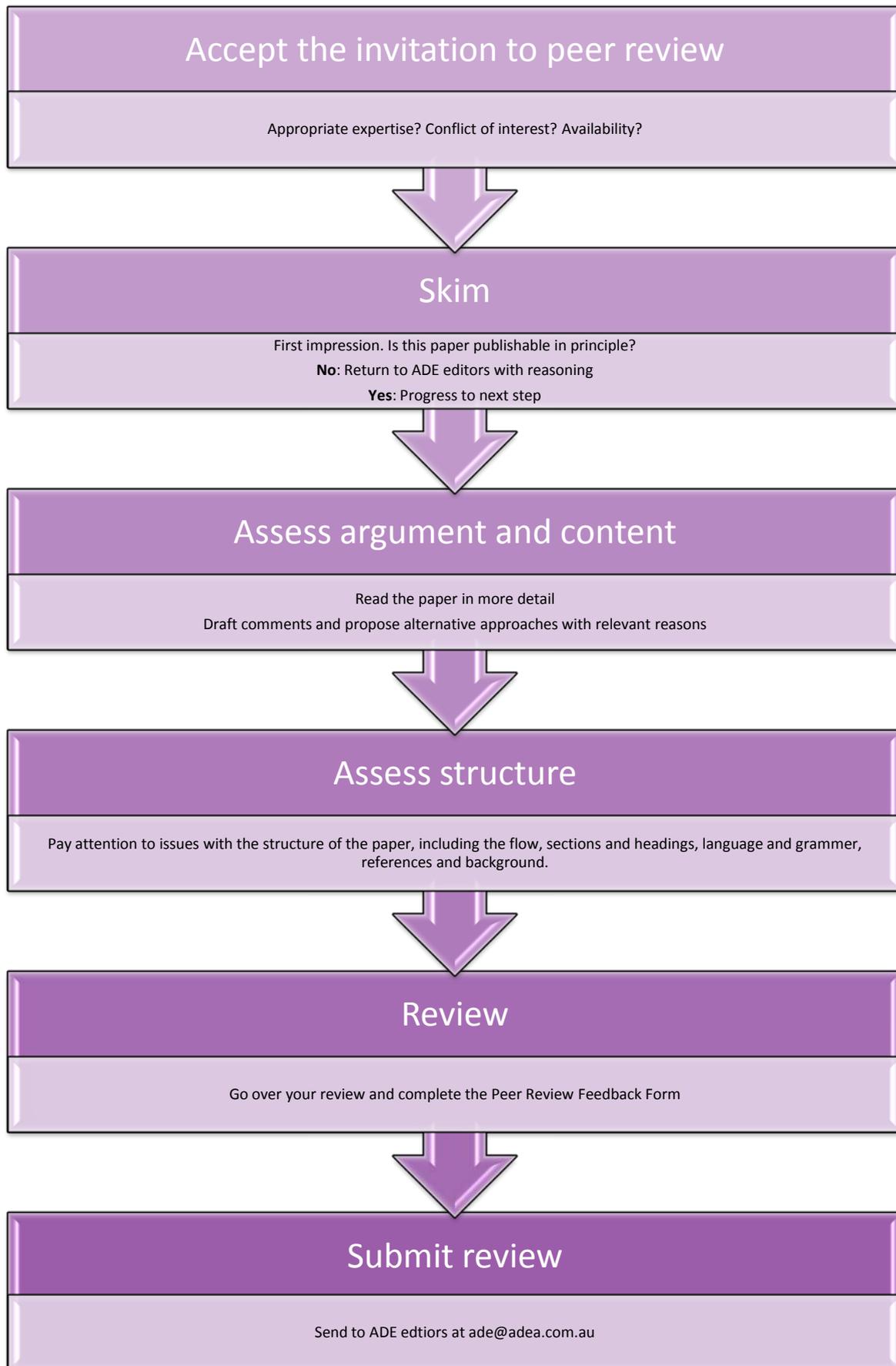
- Remain focused on the research work and be objective in evaluating the papers,
- Work towards a strict deadline (refer to section 5: Timeframe),
- Maintain confidentiality of the process and content, and
- Be able to meet deadlines once agreed.

After completing the peer review process, the reviewers will be able to claim 3 Credentialling Points within the ADEA Credentialling Program in category 2 “Professional and Community Involvement”. For non-ADEA members, please check with your professional body with regards to points for your continuing professional development process. A certificate of recognition will be issued for this purpose.

### **4. The peer review process**

To make the peer review process more efficient and productive, a six step peer review model is provided in Figure 1, with more detail provided in the following pages. Reviewers are encouraged to use this as a guideline when reviewing research papers for the ADE.

Figure 1 - A six step peer review model



## 4.1. Accept the invitation to peer review

Reviewers should take into consideration the following:

1. Do you have the expertise and experience to allow you to provide meaningful comments on key points of the research paper?
2. Can you provide a fair and unbiased review of the research work without any conflict of interest?
3. Do you have time to review the paper within the specified timeframe?

Please contact ADE editors immediately if you have issues with any of the above. Otherwise you can confirm your commitment to start the peer review process.

## 4.2. Skim

Reviewers are required to skim the entire paper and evaluate whether or not the research should be published in principle. Reviewers are expected to give their first impression on the paper and advise ADE editors if the research does not meet the objectives of the ADE publication, hence not progressing to a full review. See *About the Australian Diabetes Educator* for brief information about the publication.

Reviewers should consider the following questions:

Audiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Will readers of the ADE be interested in reading the paper? See <i>About the Australian Diabetes Educator</i> for backgrounds of ADE readers.</li></ul>
Topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What are the research questions of the paper and how significant are they in the diabetes education practice?</li><li>• Does the paper address an important problem or a critical barrier to progress in diabetes education practice?</li><li>• If the aims of the paper are achieved, how will ADEA members' scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice be improved?</li></ul>
Impacts and innovations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How will successful completion of the aims change the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services, or preventative interventions in diabetes education practice?</li><li>• Does the paper seek to shift current research or diabetes education practice by using new concepts, approaches or methodologies?</li></ul>
Other considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is this research paper outstanding in diabetes education practice? If yes, what makes it outstanding?</li><li>• Are there any special ethical concerns arising from the paper?</li></ul>

### 4.3. Assess argument and content

After skimming through the paper to identify main ideas, reviewers are expected to read it in more detail from start to finish, paying attention to the following as applicable:

Assumptions and constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are the assumptions and research constraints reasonable?</li> </ul>
Methods and theoretical frameworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What methods and/or theoretical frameworks are used? Are they appropriate to answer the research questions?</li> <li>• Would any other additional information or exploration improve the research findings? How much better would the paper be if this extra work was done?</li> <li>• Does the paper offer enough detail of its methodology so that its experiments or analyses could be reproduced?</li> <li>• Are potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success presented?</li> <li>• If the research is in the early stages of development, will the strategy establish feasibility and will particularly risky aspects be managed?</li> <li>• When relevant, if the paper involves clinical research, are the plans for 1) protection of subjects from research risks, and 2) inclusion of minorities and members of both sexes/genders, as well as the inclusion of children, justified in terms of the scientific goals and research strategy proposed?</li> </ul>
Research findings and discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do the research findings answer the questions? If not, what other evidence is required?</li> </ul>
Conclusions and recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are the conclusions a logical ending to what has been discussed?</li> <li>• Do the conclusions contain any new information?</li> <li>• Do the conclusions add to the overall quality and impact of the research papers?</li> <li>• Are the recommendations specific and realistic?</li> </ul>
Figures, tables and graphics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are they supporting content of the research paper?</li> <li>• Do the figures and tables inform the reader, are they an important part of the story?</li> <li>• Do the figures describe the data accurately?</li> <li>• Are they consistent, e.g. bars in charts are the same width, the scales on the axis are logical.</li> </ul>
Ethical concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For medical research, has confidentiality been maintained?</li> <li>• Has there been a violation of the accepted norms in the ethical process? If so, then these should also be identified to the Editor.</li> </ul>

## 4.4. Assess structure

Reviewers are asked to read the papers one last time to find any issues with the writing, including:

Flow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is the flow organised in a logical order?</li><li>• Could the paper be shortened?</li></ul>
Section headings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Are the section headings clearly laid out? Refer to 7.1 Standard structure of a research paper on page 9 for more details.</li><li>• Are all the key elements (where relevant) present: abstract, introduction, methodology, results, conclusions?</li></ul>
Language and grammar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is the paper written clearly enough so that it is understandable to non-specialists? If not, how could it be improved?</li></ul>
References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Have the authors cited literature appropriately?</li><li>• If the article builds upon previous research does it reference that work appropriately?</li><li>• Are there any important works that have been omitted?</li></ul>
Background and literature review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Have the authors provided adequate background and literature review so that the paper is understandable to non-specialists?</li></ul>

## 4.5. Review

The steps above will help reviewers to complete the Peer review feedback form. Once completing the form, reviewers will read over comments to ensure they are concise and clear.

## 4.6. Submit review

The completed form should be sent back to the ADE editor in Word form at [ade@adea.com.au](mailto:ade@adea.com.au).

## 5. Timeline

Reviewers are expected to spend some quality time on the reviewing process. Normally ADE editors allocate no more than two weeks for completion of peer review.

## 6. Contact details

Please contact the ADE Editor for more details.

### ADE Editor

PO Box 163

Woden ACT 2606

Tel: 02 6287 4822

Fax: 02 6287 4877

Email: [ade@adea.com.au](mailto:ade@adea.com.au)

## 7. Appendix 1

### Standard structure of a research paper<sup>2</sup>

**Title:** Does it clearly describe the article?

**Abstract:** Does it reflect the content of the article?

Where graphical abstracts and/or highlights are included, please check the content and if possible make suggestions for improvements.

**Introduction:** Does it describe what the author hoped to achieve accurately, and clearly state the problem being investigated? Normally, the introduction should summarize relevant research to provide context, and explain what other authors' findings, if any, are being challenged or extended. It should describe the experiment, the hypothesis(es) and the general experimental design or method.

**Method:** Does the author accurately explain how the data was collected? Is the design suitable for answering the question posed? Is there sufficient information present for you to replicate the research? Does the article identify the procedures followed? Are these ordered in a meaningful way? If the methods are new, are they explained in detail? Was the sampling appropriate? Have the equipment and materials been adequately described? Does the article make it clear what type of data was recorded; has the author been precise in describing measurements?

**Results/Discussion:** This is where the author(s) should explain in words what he/she/they discovered in the research. It should be clearly laid out and in a logical sequence. You will need to consider if the appropriate analysis has been conducted. Are the statistics correct? If you are not comfortable with statistics, please advise the editor when you submit your report. Interpretation of results should not be included in this section. Have the authors indicated how the results relate to expectations and to earlier research? Does the article support or contradict previous theories?

**Conclusion/Recommendations:** Are the claims in this section supported by the results, do they seem reasonable? Does the conclusion explain how the research has moved the body of scientific knowledge forward?

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<sup>2</sup> Adapted from Elsevier. (2013). *Reviewer guidelines*. Retrieved from Elsevier:

<http://www.elsevier.com/reviewers/reviewer-guidelines#Conducting-the-Review>