



# Instructions for Referees

## 1 The Review Procedure

Manuscripts which are of potential interest to the readership of the *Beilstein Journal of Organic Chemistry* and meet Beilstein's publication criteria (high quality, originality, novelty and importance) are sent for formal review. Typically two independent referees perform an objective assessment of the manuscript and finally give their recommendation to the corresponding editor by supplying a report via the Beilstein Publishing System. The following suggestions are possible:

- Accept without revisions
- Accept with minor revisions
- Accept with major revisions
- Unable to decide
- Reject

Taking into account the referees' comments the editor makes a final decision on the acceptance or rejection of a manuscript. In cases where manuscripts turn out to be inappropriate for the journal, an editor may decide to reject a paper without being examined by any peer reviewer. Referees should give the editor enough information to reproduce their recommendation. If there is a substantial contradiction between two referee reports the editor may seek the advice of a third referee.

If a manuscript is classified as acceptable after some revision, the editor requests the author to provide a revised version of the paper and to give a point-by-point response to all referee's or editor's comments. In general the editor initiates further proceeding based on the referees' reports and the author's response to them, without seeking further opinion. In special cases concerning new or uncommon issues or when authors believe they have been misunderstood the editor may however send the revised manuscript back to the original referees or to new referees.

Authors have the right to appeal to the editor, if they regard a decision to reject the manuscript as unfair. If such a manuscript is resubmitted at a later date, an author must explain in detail in the cover letter which improvements have been performed on the manuscript and why the editor should ask for additional peer review.

## 2 Manuscript Assessment

The primary intention of the review is to afford the editor an independent expert opinion of the scientific value of the manuscript and to give the necessary information needed for making a decision. Authors should be given detailed feedback about any deficiencies, what specific work is needed to improve their manuscript including any supporting information or how they can make their manuscript more accessible to nonspecialists. A review report should provide an author enough explanation to understand the basis of a decision but any weakness of a manuscript should not be unduly emphasised. Referees comments should be objective, impersonal and constructive. In particular the following subjects should be assessed by a referee:

- General manuscript evaluation: scope of the journal, significance and breadth of interest to the organic chemistry community, assessment of novelty and originality.
- Are substantial conclusions reached and are the research objectives and results clearly stated?
- Evaluation of the quality regarding language style and clarity of the presentation. Does the paper need substantial language corrections? Are the scientific results always presented clear, concise and unambiguous? Is the overall presentation well structured?
- Is the existing literature cited adequately and has the present study been set in the correct context?
- Has similar work been taken into account? Does the current study reinforce or contradict related studies?
- Are the number and quality of references appropriate?
- Are the results discussed in a suitable and balanced way?
- Are the claims and conclusions sufficiently supported by the experimental data? If not what additional data would be necessary?
- Do the experimental procedures have sufficient details to allow reproduction?
- Is the identity and degree of purity of new compounds unequivocally established? Are characterization data of all reaction products provided?
- Is the article length commensurate compared to the content?
- Are there any interpretation flaws within the manuscript?
- Do the keywords and the title accurately reflect the content of the manuscript? Is the abstract informative and are the main results and conclusions mentioned?
- Is the nomenclature comprehensible and used consistently?
- Are there any errors in the chemical structures?
- Are there any numerical or unit errors? Are symbols used correctly?
- Are abbreviations used consistently? Are all uncommon abbreviations explained?
- Do the figures, schemes and tables contain appropriate legends or titles?
- Are all graphics well designed, appropriate, useful and legible? Are additional graphics needed?
- Is the information given in the manuscript text consistent with the information given in figures, schemes or tables?
- Is the information given in the main manuscript consistent with the information given in the supporting information (e. g. labels, structures, yields)?

Additional confidential comments to the editor may only relate to ethical or political issues but must not contain parts of the review itself.

### 3 Anonymity

The identity of referees is not disclosed to authors or other referees throughout the review process. The anonymity of referees is strictly preserved unless a referee explicitly asks to be identified. Referees should not communicate directly with an author or announce their role as referee. If a referee decides to reveal his identity this should be done via the editor.

### 4 Confidentiality

All manuscripts and supplementary data must be treated as confidential material and must not be redistributed by the referee without permission of the editor. Prior to publication the scientific content of a paper is not allowed to be disclosed or cited elsewhere. If a referee needs specific scientific advice from colleagues during evaluation of a manuscript the referee must inform them about the confidentiality of the manuscript. The names of any such colleagues must be provided to the editor.

### 5 Referee Selection

The selection of potential referees is based on many aspects, including research interests and expertise in an area closely referring to the manuscript focus, reputation, thoroughness or specific recommendation by an author or other referees. Authors may also request that a certain person should

not be consulted for the review process. We respect such desires unless the individual opinion of such a referee is vital for assessing the manuscript. If referees consider themselves unsuitable to perform the evaluation of a manuscript, suggestions of competent alternative referees would be very helpful.

## 6 Review Duration

Rapid publication is very important for the *Beilstein Journal of Organic Chemistry*. Therefore referees should submit their reports by a specified date, usually within 14 days of receipt of a manuscript. We ask referees to inform the editor immediately if they anticipate a delay so that authors can be notified or alternative referees assigned.

## 7 Competing Interests

During uploading of the review report, referees are asked to declare any financial, personal or professional conflict of interests that might interfere with their objective assessment of the manuscript. A competing interest could arise for example from financial gain from a publication, direct competition, close relationship of the manuscript under review to the referee's own work, recent or ongoing collaboration with one of the authors that would have an impact on the judgement of the manuscript or a strong antipathy with one of the authors. Should a referee anticipate that the necessary objectivity for reviewing the manuscript is seriously impaired, he or she should decline to review the paper (for more information see [Competing Interests Policy](#)).