

Editorial Board Guidelines and Responsibilities

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1.0 THE SAHARAN JOURNAL INTRODUCTION

The National Institute for African Studies (NIAS) encourages everyone involved in the scholarly publishing process to take responsibility for promoting integrity in scientific publishing. The intention of this guideline is to inform the board members of their roles and responsibilities aimed at the academic content of *The Saharan* journal.

The Saharan is an interdisciplinary journal aimed at exploring the symbiotic relationship between Culture and Development in Africa and its diasporas through high-calibre academic research and creative commentary on recent matters. The journal seeks to engage outstanding authors, academics, artists and all other pertinent contributors to African thought, as well as promoting

emerging writers, with a view to supporting ‘unheard’ voices and foregrounding bold ideas. The journal is committed to fostering a nonpartisan venue for scholarly discourse which challenges established views and perceptions of the African continent whilst promoting more accurate frameworks for representation and reception.

The Editorial Board of *The Saharan* journal comprises of Editor-in-Chief and Editorial Board members. Editor-in-Chief remains the chairperson of the board, hence is allowed to take the final decision in any regard.

The formation of the Editorial Board is done by incorporating global experts with an excellent academic track record and expertise in their respective fields. The Editorial Board members must hold a Ph.D. degree in a relevant subject, must have a good publication record, and should hold some academic positions in Universities, Research Institutes or other similar organisations.

2.0 EDITORIAL BOARD SECTION

All Editorial Board members must obey the instructions provided by the Editor-in-Chief of *The Saharan* journal. Once the plagiarism check is completed every academic article of the journal will be assigned with an Editor. If the article is in the area of Editor’s research interest, it is expected that the assigned Editor will take up the assignment at the earliest time. If the Editor wants to deny the assignment due to personal reasons, the Editorial Board must be informed at the earliest convenience.

The Editor should be responsible for a fast and transparent peer review process, and if required, the assigned Editor may take support from the Editorial Board. Along with the publisher, the Editor is responsible for timely publishing the accepted articles. Furthermore, the Editors will be responsible for conveying the expectations of *The Saharan* journal to the reviewers with the review scope, quality, and timeliness for an effective, fair and constructive review for the assigned submission.

Being part of the journal, Editors are responsible to coordinate and manage the critical decisions along with the cooperation of the Editorial Board for taking part in the discussion for the improvement of the journal. Ultimately, the Editorial Board members should ensure the smooth functioning of the whole process in coordination with the Editor-in-Chief.

2.1 Editorial Role

The Editorial Board is a meaningful way for both emerging and established academics to become involved in the on-going success of the journal while playing an active part in developing African and Africa-related scholarly research and innovation. Applicants should be able to demonstrate evidence of journal publication and an interest and commitment to our editorial vision.

We encourage applications from scholars who are willing to dedicate their time and expertise to reviewing articles no more than twice a year, and who are able to commit on a voluntary basis for a period of three years.

2.2 Benefits

Being a member of the Editorial Board will allow for the professional involvement and academic input associated with journal publishing. *The Saharan* will publicly recognise continued support by crediting the members' valuable contribution in print and on our website. More importantly, being part of the Editorial Board will allow academics with a passion for Africa to make an invaluable contribution to development, research, publishing and cultural growth on the great continent.

2.3 Eligibility

We envisage that the Editorial Board will be made up of high-profile academics from a diversity of backgrounds and with wide-ranging research interests. However, we would particularly welcome scholars ranging from early career through to retired academics with a specific passion for, and expertise in, Africa. Academics from the continent and the diaspora are encouraged to apply.

2.4 Editorial Independence

Ensuring that we keep the editorial decision-making processes of our publications completely separate from our commercial interests. Safeguarding this editorial independence requires that all editorial decisions, or concerns or complaints about editorial decisions, are dealt with strictly within the editorial structures of *The Saharan* publication.

These structures typically include editors, editors-in-chief, editorial boards or review boards, and ombudsmen or analogous structures for the editorial governance of any given publication. It further requires that no one on the commercial or executive side of the business can get involved in, interfere with, or even comment on editorial decisions under any circumstances.

To deviate from the rigorous application of this principle in any individual situation would ultimately serve to undermine the integrity of the principle of editorial independence altogether.

3.0 AUTHORSHIP SECTION

Trust is fundamental to scientific communication: trust that the authors have accurately reported their methods and findings, trust that authors have disclosed all potential interest, and trust that editors have exercised sufficient diligence to ensure accurate and disclosure by authors. Principles related to authorship with general consensus include the following:

- Identification of authors and other contributors is the responsibility of researchers that conducted the work and not the people who publish the work. Researchers should determine which individuals have contributed sufficiently to the work to warrant identification as an author.
- Individuals who contributed to the work but whose contributions were not sufficient to warrant authorship should be identified by name in an acknowledgments section.
- Individuals listed as authors should review and approve the manuscript before publication.
- The ultimate reason for the identification of authors and other contributors is to establish accountability for the reported work.

4.0 PEER REVIEWER SECTION

Peer review is the principal role by which the quality of research is judged. *The Saharan* depends heavily on the scientific referees or reviewers who typically volunteer their time and expertise. In addition to fairness in judgment and expertise in the field, peer reviewers have significant responsibilities toward authors, editors, and readers.

4.1 Peer-reviewer responsibilities toward authors

Providing written, unbiased feedback in a timely manner on the scholarly merits and the scientific value of the work, together with the documented basis for the reviewer's opinion. Indicating whether the writing is clear, concise, and relevant and judging the work's composition, scientific originality, accuracy, and interest to the journal's readers. Furthermore, peer reviewers must be avoiding personal comments or negative criticism towards authors, while maintaining the confidentiality of the review process. This includes: not sharing, discussing with third parties, or disclosing information from the reviewed paper

4.2 Peer-reviewer responsibilities toward editors

Notifying the editor immediately if unable to review in a timely manner and providing the names of other potential reviewers. Alerting the editor about any potential personal or financial conflict of interest and declining to review when a possibility of conflict arises. Complying with the editor's written instructions on the journal's expectations for the scope, content, and quality of the review. Providing a thoughtful, fair, constructive, and informative critique of the submitted work, which may include supplementary material provided to *The Saharan* journal by the author. In addition, the peer reviewer must refrain from direct author contact but must be determining scientific merit, originality, and scope of the work; indicating ways to improve it, and recommending acceptance or rejection using whatever rating scale the editor deems most useful.

4.3 Peer-reviewer responsibilities toward readers

Ensuring that the methods are adequately detailed to allow the reader to judge the scientific merit of the study design and be able to replicate the study if desired. Ultimately, the peer reviewer must be ensuring that the article cites all relevant work by other scientists.

5.0 REVIEWER SECTION

Reviewers evaluate article submissions to journals focused on the requirements of *The Saharan* journal, predefined criteria, and the quality, completeness, and accuracy of the research presented. The ultimate decision always rests with the Editor-in-Chief but the reviewer plays a significant role in determining the outcome. Reviewers must also follow certain ethical standards to ensure the integrity and their excellence of work.

5.1 Confidentiality

Material under review should not be shared or discussed with persons outside the review process unless necessary and approved by the editor. Material submitted for peer-review is a privileged communication that should be treated in confidence, guarding the author's identity and work. Reviewers should not retain copies of submitted manuscripts and should not use the knowledge of their content for any purpose unrelated to the peer-review process.

5.2 Constructive critique

Reviewer comments should acknowledge the positive aspects of the material under review, identify negative aspects constructively, and indicate the improvements needed. A reviewer should explain and support his or her judgment clearly enough that editors and authors can understand the basis of the comments. The reviewer should ensure that an observation or argument that has been previously reported to be accompanied by a relevant citation and should immediately alert the editor when he or she becomes aware of duplicate publication. Reviewers should respect the intellectual independence of the author.

5.3 Competence

Reviewers who realise that their expertise is limited, have a responsibility to make their degree of competence clear to the editor. Reviewers need not be experts in every aspect of an article's content, but they should accept an assignment only if they have adequate expertise to provide an authoritative assessment.

5.4 Impartiality and integrity

Reviewer comments and conclusions should be based on an objective and impartial consideration of the facts, exclusive of personal or professional bias. All comments by reviewers should be based solely on the paper's scientific merit, originality, and quality of writing as well as on the relevance to the journal's scope and mission, without regard to race, ethnic origin, sex, religion, or citizenship of the authors.

A reviewer should not take scientific, financial, personal, or another advantage of material available through the privileged communication of peer review, and every effort should be made to avoid even the appearance of taking advantage of information obtained through the review process.

5.5 Disclosure of conflict of interest

If reviewers have any interest that might interfere with an objective review, they should either decline the role of the reviewer or disclose a conflict of interest to the editor and ask how best to address it.

5.6 Timeliness and responsiveness

Reviewers are responsible for acting promptly, adhering to the instructions for completing a review and submitting it in a timely manner. Failure to do so undermines the review process. Every effort should be made to complete the review within the time requested. If it is not possible to meet the deadline for the review, then the reviewer should promptly decline to perform the review or should inquire whether some accommodation can be made to resolve the problem.