Publons for Editors: Overview

Publons speeds up research by harnessing the power of peer review. We work with reviewers, editors, and journals to track, verify and showcase experts’ peer review and editorial activity across the world’s journals, without compromising reviewer anonymity or infringing on journal policies.

Table of contents
How does Publons work?
Why recognise reviewers?
Are there editor profiles?
How does Publons help editors get review done?
How do I use the Partner Dashboard?
Does Publons keep me notified of what's happening?
You can help speed up research!
How are reviews added to Publons?
What information does Publons display about reviews?
What happens when a manuscript is rejected?
How does Publons verify reviews?
What should an editor do if they receive an email from Publons about verifying a review?
Should editors verify reviews that weren’t very useful?
Rating review quality, feedback and ‘Excellent’ reviews
Interested reviewers

How does Publons work?

Publons collects information about peer review and editorial activity and builds public profiles for participating reviewers and editors. A Publons profile shows an expert’s verified review and editorial history across all journals.

Why recognise reviewers?

Peer review is at the heart of research communication. We rely on peer review to ensure research findings are reliable and relevant before they are communicated to the world. Until now, it has been difficult to publicly acknowledge the efforts and expertise of reviewers without compromising reviewer anonymity. The result has been a shrinking pool of reviewers and increasing delays between submission and publication of research findings, effectively slowing down research.
Publons has developed a platform that effortlessly tracks, verifies and showcases peer review activity. Reviewers can now get the credit they deserve for these previously hidden contributions.

Are there editor profiles?

Yes! Publons also recognises editorial work. Editors who sign up to Publons can track and verify:

- Every manuscript they handle for different journals
- Current editorial board posts.

There are two ways to add editorial records to your Publons profile:

1. **Forward your Editorial receipts** ("Decision has been made" emails) to edits@publons.com. We verify the receipts and add the records to your profile.

Editorial receipts can also be in form of editorial management system screenshots with a list of your editorial contributions.
Please note that Editorial receipts are any email sent during the editorial process that adequately identify you as the handling editor of the paper. This does not include invitations or acceptance of invitations to edit a paper. These receipts must contain the journal and title of the paper.

2. Fill in the manuscript’s details from your dashboard.

Add manuscripts you have edited to get recognition on your profile, reward your reviewers, and provide feedback on the quality of reviews.

We currently support editorial records for manuscripts submitted to journals or conferences. For every editorial record you add, you will earn editor merit.

Editors can then use their verified editorial record as evidence of their editorial contributions and expertise in their résumé.

As it is for reviewers, participating in Publons is completely free and optional for editors.

We are currently researching ways to make Publons even better for editors, so if you have any ideas and/or want to be involved in this process, then get in touch: editors@publons.com
How does Publons help editors to get review done?

We’ve developed the Publons platform with editors in mind. In addition to benefiting from more motivated reviewers, Publons’ Partner Dashboard gives editors access to a range of tools and data designed to improve the editorial management process, as listed below:

- **Find new reviewers**
  Use our ‘Suggested Reviewers’ tool to see a list of researchers your journal could be asking to review, but currently isn’t. Alternatively, browse over 130,000 reviewer profiles to find the right reviewer for the manuscript on your desk.

  *Note: We are also developing a powerful reviewer finder tool. Watch this space!*

- **Related journal searches**
  See what other journals your reviewers are contributing to and how much reviewer overlap there is between similar journals.

- **Monitor reviewer workload**
  Editors can monitor the workload of existing reviewers to help determine who might be a suitable peer review candidate.

- **Reviewer demographics**
  See where in the world your reviewers are and what research institutions they work for.

- **Reviewer Satisfaction**
  We track reviewers’ satisfaction with Publons service, by asking how likely (out of 10) they are to recommend Publons to a colleague.

- **Assess suitability of unfamiliar reviewers**
  Look up a particular reviewer to see their level of review experience, the other journals they review for, and stats about their reviewing characteristics.

- **Screen reviewer email addresses against fraud**
  Use the Reviewer Screening tool to query the Publons database for an unfamiliar reviewer’s email address, to see whether or not the email address has been used when publishing or peer reviewing before.
How do I use the Partner Dashboard?

Your Publons administrator will send you a link to access the Partner Dashboard. All you need to do is:

1. Click on the link provided
2. Create a Publons account or log into your existing account. You will then be directed to the dashboard help page
3. Once you are comfortable with how everything works, click through to the dashboard overview to begin accessing the tools and insights for your journal.

You can also refer to our Partner Dashboard Slidedeck for more information about what is on the dashboard and how to use it.

Does Publons keep me notified of what’s happening?

Yes. Anyone with access to the Partner Dashboard will receive a weekly notification email summarising:

- Your journal’s review activity on Publons
- Tips about how to optimise the tools and insights on the Partner Dashboard
- New product features we release

"The biggest time sink for papers submitted to journals is finding reviewers. Many aren’t willing / able or don’t reply."

Dr Alexander Bond - Senior Conservation Scientist, RSPB Centre for Conservation Science, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

You can help speed up research!

The tools and insights on the Partner Dashboard, like our suggested reviewers feature, become far more powerful as more reviewers sign up. You can help Publons to improve the precision and utility of its features by inviting experts in your network to sign up.
By helping reviewers get the credit they deserve, Publons can help editors easily find the experts they need to speed up research!

**How are reviews added to Publons?**

1. **Automatic update upon submission of review**

When someone reviews for a partnered journal, they are asked if they would like to add a record of the review to Publons (via the editorial management software - like ScholarOne - or via email). If the reviewer agrees, they receive an email link to add the review to their Publons profile, after the review has been accepted by the journal. Reviewers simply click on the link and these reviews are instantly added to their profile with the journal’s default privacy settings.

2. **Manually adding reviews**

Reviewers can manually add reviews to Publons by:

- Entering a record of your review using the [forms on the site](#)
- Forwarding your review receipts (i.e. "thank you for reviewing" emails from journals) to reviews@publons.com

3. **Adding historical reviews**

Searching through old emails can take time. So where we can, we work with publishers to do find past reviews. With some partners we’ve been able to look back at review records for up to five years and update our users’ review history. All you need to do is indicate that you want these reviews automatically added to your profile by checking the box in your profile settings:

- Sign in to Publons
- Click on your profile picture in the top right-hand corner and select ‘Settings’
- Click on the ‘Reviews’ tab and check the box labelled ‘Automatically add reviews from partnered journals’
- Under the ‘Emails’ tab, add and verify any email addresses you used for past peer review work.

![Journal partnerships](https://example.com/journalpartnerships)
What information does Publons display about reviews?

Publons tracks, verifies and showcases peer review activity without compromising reviewer anonymity or infringing on journal policies. By default, the content of the review will not be publicly displayed, and only the year of the review and the journal title will be shown on reviewer profiles. Publons partners can customise their review privacy and content settings at any time via the Partner Dashboard.

Where a publisher or journal has privacy or content settings that differ from a reviewer’s, the publisher / journal settings always take precedence. For example, if a reviewer has indicated they want to sign and publish the content of their reviews, but the journal’s policy is for reviews to remain blind and unpublished, Publons will honour the journal’s policy.

Publons’ partners can track how many of their reviewers want to sign and publish their reviews via the Partner Dashboard.

For more information about how we approach privacy and content rights read our blog at: https://blog.publons.com/who-owns-the-review/

What happens when a manuscript is rejected?

The reviewer is not able to sign or publish their rejected review. However, they receive the same credit regardless. This means there is no undue incentive for reviewers to accept papers.

How does Publons verify reviews?

Reviews completed for Publons’ partner journals can are claimed, verified and added to the reviewer’s profile all with the click of a button during the review process.

For reviews that are manually added to Publons, the reviewer can either:

1. Instruct Publons to contact the editor for verification; or
2. Send the review receipt or confirmation email to reviews@publons.com
The verification process is a way to formally recognise reviewers even when their reviews are blind and to combat potential fraud in peer review.

What should an editor do if they receive an email from Publons about verifying a review?
You, or one of your colleagues may have been contacted by Publons about verifying a review. If the reviewer did indeed undertake the review, then it is fine to confirm this.

"By the way, if you peer review an article for me, I will be more than happy to verify your review on Publons"
Adam Dunn
Senior Research Fellow - Australian Institute of Health Innovation, Macquarie University

Should editors verify reviews that weren’t very useful?
Yes. Verification is not evaluation, it’s just proof that the review was performed.

Editors are encouraged to evaluate reviews using our review rating and feedback form. More on this below.

For more detailed FAQs about how Publons works for editors visit our knowledgebase.

Rating review quality, feedback and 'Excellent' reviews
We’ve always measured how many reviews experts perform at Publons. Now, we’re taking the first steps towards understanding the quality of reviews to:
- help editors find the best reviewers
- help reviewers improve
- give additional recognition to those reviewers who go above and beyond.

How does it work?
Whenever an editor adds an editorial record to Publons, they are invited to:

- give recognition to the experts who reviewed the manuscript
- rate the quality of the reviews received
- provide confidential written feedback to the reviewers
- score the quality of the manuscript
- facilitate post-publication discussion around the manuscript (if published).

The review rating and feedback form is depicted below:

A review is deemed 'Excellent' if it receives a score of 9 or more out of a possible 12.
Poor = 0 point
Below Average = 1 points
Above Average = 2 points
Exceptional = 3 points

Excellent reviews receive a gold star against the review record on the reviewer’s profile, like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Reviewed for</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>✔ Journal of Informetrics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>✔ Journal of Informetrics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 2016</td>
<td>⭐ Publons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2014</td>
<td>✔ Electronic transitions in G... for Journal of Applied Physics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 2014</td>
<td>✔ Electronic transitions in G... for Journal of Applied Physics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Reviewed for Radiation Physics and Chemistry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Scored reviews which do not meet the requirements for excellence are not indicated on any public part of the site. Exact scores are completely confidential to the editor. Only written feedback is confidentially shared with the reviewer.

You can read more about our ‘Excellent’ review feature and feedback form on our blog.

Interested reviewers

Publons users can volunteer to review for journals partnered with Publons by clicking the button shown below on the journal’s profile page:

INTERESTED IN REVIEWING FOR THIS JOURNAL?  
[CLICK TO LET THEM KNOW]

We are currently working on ways to display these interested reviewers on the partner dashboard, along with any additional information that will help editors to screen candidates to see if they are suitable to review any given manuscript. If you have any suggestions or feedback for this feature, please get in touch with laura@publons.com