

## Quality control tips for managing an academic journal

By

**Christopher Isike**  
Department of Political Sciences, University of Pretoria

Good quality control and quality assurance processes are essential for editing a journal effectively. A few tips to consider are:

1. **Conflict of Interest Policy:** Quality control and assurance starts from the editor and or editorial team committing to not publish themselves during their tenure in office.
2. **Editorial Policies:** Establish comprehensive editorial policies that outline the journal's scope, focus, and standards. Clearly communicate these policies to authors, reviewers, and readers to maintain consistency and transparency in the journal's operations
3. **Role of Editorial Board:** An editorial board plays a key role in managing a quality academic journal. The board is responsible for developing the journal's policies and procedures, selecting manuscripts for publication, and ensuring that the content meets the quality standards of the journal. Relatedly, the practice of having an editorial team consisting of the editor-in-chief, assistant editors and book review editor is becoming more popular. This is a good quality assurance measure if managed well. My journal for example has toyed with also having editors-at-large to be part of the editorial team to help reduce the work burden on the editors and in so doing improve quality.
1. **Formatting Standards and author guidelines:** It's useful to have clear formatting standards to ensure that the articles are consistent in appearance and easy to read. This includes guidelines for font size, spacing, headings, citations, reference style and submission requirements such as blind review copy. Part of these standards which should be clearly defined and communicated include guidelines for authors, ethical considerations, and submission requirements. This helps ensure that submissions meet the journal's standards and align with ethical guidelines, such as proper citation and plagiarism checks.
4. **Technical check:** Taking every submission through a technical check to ensure they align with the format of the journal i.e. blind review copy and house style or guidelines
5. **Plagiarism Check:** A plagiarism check is another important quality control process that can help ensure the originality of the research being published. I urge you to get your journals to get and use software tools to check for plagiarism and ensure that the articles submitted are original.
6. **Peer Review:** The most important quality control process in academic journals is peer review. It is important to put in place a robust peer review process made of experts

to ensure the quality and integrity of the articles published in the journal. reviewers provide feedback on the quality, accuracy, and relevance of the research, and suggest improvements to be made before publication.

7. **Publication Standards:** Academic journals should have clear publication standards that define the criteria for publishing articles. These standards should be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that they are up-to-date and relevant. This helps with standardizing quality.
8. **Open Access:** Journals can also ensure quality control by providing open access to their articles. This allows researchers to access the articles easily and ensures that the research is available to a wider audience.
9. **Regular Review of processes:** Academic journals should regularly review their processes and policies to ensure that they are meeting quality standards. This can include reviewing the peer review process, editorial policies, and formatting standards. It also helps to seek feedback from authors, reviewers, and readers in the reviews to gather insights and implement necessary changes to enhance the journal's quality.