



Peer Reviewer Guide

Miskwaabiimag 2-Spirits Health Journal (M2SHJ) is an international, peer-reviewed health journal dedicated to advancing the wholistic wellbeing of 2-Spirit, Indigiqueer and Trans (2SIQT) Peoples and communities worldwide. Recognizing the systemic gaps in health research, policy, and care, the M2SHJ centres Indigenous knowledge systems, ways of being, and frameworks to help rectify ongoing colonial harm and uplift 2SIQT voices. The Journal is hosted by the Ontario-based organization 2-Spirited Peoples of the 1st Nations. If peer reviewers require assistance or advice at any point throughout the peer review process, kindly contact the Journal's managing editor at journaleditor@2spirits.org.

The Miskwaabiimag 2-Spirits Health Journal Review Process

The *Miskwaabiimag 2-Spirit Health Journal* depends on peer reviewers to deliver impartial, expert, and thoughtful critical evaluations in a timely manner. Through this process, reviewers assist the editorial team in upholding the Journal's rigorous publication standards. Each submitted paper is assessed by **a minimum of two peer reviewers**. Whenever possible, the Journal ensures that one reviewer is affiliated with a university or research institution, and that the other is connected to a 2SIQT or Indigenous organization, government body, or community. The M2SHJ guarantees that at least one 2SIQT person will be included in the evaluation process.

The Role of a Reviewer

Peer reviewers play a vital role in evaluating submissions to the Journal, helping to advance knowledge production and scientific inquiry. Reviewers are selected based on their expertise in 2SIQT and Indigenous health research, policy, practice, and/or traditional knowledge. The Journal prioritizes reviewers who understand historical and contemporary 2SIQT and Indigenous health challenges, and who are familiar with research considerations such as ethics, cultural diversity, and methodological rigor.

A peer reviewer's task is to thoroughly assess a paper's contribution to the broader field of Indigenous health and evaluate its merit, whether in research, evaluation, or innovative health practices. Their analysis ensures the work meets the highest standards of excellence and relevance. While a reviewer can correct grammar and typos, this is *not* the sole or main focus of the review. The reviewer should instead use their unique set of knowledge to offer a critical assessment, prioritizing value-added, scalable feedback to the author. In addition, they should work with the Journal's editorial team to determine whether the manuscript should be published, and if so, how much further work is needed to meet publication standards.

The M2SHJ requests that peer reviewers submit their appraisals within two weeks of receiving the manuscript. The decision to publish a paper is not made until all reviews have been received, meaning delay by a single reviewer can substantially postpone the publication process. In the case that reviewers require an extension or can no longer complete the review, please let the Journal's managing editor know as soon as possible so that alternative arrangements can be made.

The Preliminary Process

Prior to the assignment of a reviewer, each manuscript undergoes a preliminary screening by the editorial staff for its general suitability within the Journal's mandate, the current call for papers, and alignment with the Submission Guidelines.

The Journal suggests that all peer reviewers become familiar with the [Committee on Publication Ethics \(COPE\) COPE Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers](#). Reviewers are asked to discuss any concerns they might have with editorial staff as early as possible. Specifically, reviewers must declare any conflicts of interest, prejudice, lack of expertise, or other circumstances that might prevent them from completing an impartial review. If reviewers determine during the review process that they are no longer able to offer an impartial review for any of the above reasons, editorial staff should be contacted as early as possible so that another reviewer may be identified.

The Journal requests that potential reviewers please accept or decline the invitation to peer review **within seven days** of receiving it.

The Review Process

A. Feedback with ‘Track Changes’

After creating an account on the Journal’s website, the managing editor will then add a manuscript to the reviewer’s queue. The reviewer will then download the anonymized manuscript from the portal and commence their review. To make comments, reviewers should enable ‘track changes’ in the ‘Review’ tab in Microsoft Word, leaving their line-by-line comments directly within the margins of the document itself. It is very important that reviewers hide their name from being displayed in track changes; to learn how to hide a name, please see [this guide](#).

When writing feedback, reviewers must not identify themselves or their institutions. The Journal asks that reviewers provide respectful, specific feedback that identifies strengths and shortcomings, highlights concerns, and offers tangible suggestions for improvement. Reviewers should also take care to only provide feedback on aspects of the work that are within the scope of their expertise. If reviewers feel they do not possess the adequate experience to offer critical commentary, they should contact the managing editor to be given a different assignment.

In addition to line-by-line comments, reviewers are requested to round out their review using the Journal’s online peer review form. This form is only accessible via our website once you have been assigned as a reviewer to a specific submission. This form includes: 1) comments to the author, 2) comments to the editor, and 3) three multiple choice questions.

B. Comments to the Author

Comments to the author’ are meant to offer a summary of the reviewer’s thoughts as per their track change feedback. To help with formatting their review, reviewers have the option to organize feedback into the following subheadings:

- a) Originality and Relevance
- b) Readability
- c) Clarity and Focus

- d) Organizational Structure
- e) Accuracy and Interpretation
- f) Attribution and Referencing
- g) Miscellaneous

The comments from this section are input directly into the Journal's website portal, and later shared directly with the author. While it is encouraged that comments and concerns be written freely, they should maintain a level of professional courtesy and respect for others.

C. Comments to the Editor

The third component of the review is shared with the editorial team only. In this section, reviewers are encouraged to raise questions and concerns, ask for clarification, and make recommendations that will be kept confidential. For example, reviewers might identify whether certain aspects of the paper require re-drafting before it is suitable for publication. Reviewers that have concerns about the author's ethics or other related issues may identify these for further inquiry by the editorial team.

D. Multiple Choice Questions

The fourth component of the review process is a set of three multiple choice questions. These are not shared with the authors and can only be accessed by the editorial team.

E. Uploading files

Before submitting a review, reviewers should be sure to upload the revised version of the original manuscript with 'track change' feedback enclosed. Depending on the reviewer's style, there may be additional resources uploaded here for either the author(s) or the Journal's editorial staff to consider. After clicking 'Submit review,' the review can be considered complete. .

Useful Questions Throughout Your Review

While reviewers can approach the review process in their own way, here is a non-exhaustive series of questions that can be useful in guiding the assessment of manuscripts:

Clarity and Coherence

- Is the research question clearly stated?
- Is the manuscript well-organized and logically structured?
- Are the methods, results, and discussion sections aligned with the research objectives?

Originality and Significance

- Does the study address a meaningful gap in the literature?
- Is the work novel, or does it simply replicate existing research?
- Will the findings have theoretical, practical, or policy implications?

Methodological Rigor

- Are the methods appropriate for the research question?
- Is the sample size justified? Are recruitment strategies clearly described?
- If applicable, are statistical analyses sound and correctly interpreted?
- For qualitative work, is the methodology (e.g., thematic analysis, narrative inquiry) well-applied?

Ethical Considerations

- Was ethics approval obtained?
- If working with marginalized populations, how were participants protected from harm?
- Are conflicts of interest disclosed?

Results and Interpretation

- Are the results clearly presented and supported by data?
- Do the authors overinterpret or overgeneralize findings?
- Are limitations adequately discussed?

Writing and Accessibility

- Is the manuscript free of jargon? If not, is the jargon well-defined?
- Are figures/tables clear and necessary?
- Are citations appropriate and current?

Cultural and Historical Context

- Do the authors demonstrate an understanding of Indigenous sovereignty, colonialism, and their impacts on health?
- Are 2SIQT identities addressed with cultural nuance?
- Are Indigenous knowledge systems respectfully incorporated?

Community Engagement and Representation

- Was the research developed with 2SIQT communities?
- Are Indigenous scholars or community members involved as co-authors?
- Does the manuscript avoid reinforcing stereotypes or deficit-based narratives?

Intersectional Analysis

- Does the study consider how homophobia, transphobia, racism, patriarchy, and colonialism intersect in health outcomes or health settings?
- Are differences within Indigenous communities (e.g., urban vs. rural, tribal affiliations) acknowledged?

Decolonial Considerations

- Were Indigenous protocols (e.g., OCAP principles) followed for data ownership?
- Is there evidence of free, prior, and informed consent from participants and/or communities?
- Does the research design avoid extractive research practices?

Terminology

- Are Indigenous and 2SIQT identities described in ways that align with community preferences?
- Is language affirming? Is it free of pathologizing terms or framing? Is it accessible to wider, non-academic audiences?

Policy and Practice Implications

- Do the findings support culturally safe healthcare interventions?
- Are recommendations actionable and grounded in Indigenous self-determination?

Author Confidentiality and Submission Disposal

Due to the anonymized nature of the Journal's review process, the identities of authors and reviewers are not revealed to one another. As such, the manuscript is a confidential document. Once the reviewer has sent the revised document to the editorial team, the Journal kindly asks that all versions of the manuscript, both digital and printed, be destroyed. Reviewers are asked to not make use of materials under their review prior to publication.

A Warm Thank-You

The M2SHJ's offers its heartfelt gratitude to all reviewers for offering their time and experience in the continuous pursuit of 2SIQT health equity. These invaluable contributions to the review process help to ensure both the excellence and relevance of the research published in this Journal.