Aperture Editorial Guide

*Aperture* is an open-access peer-reviewed online journal created by members of the Organization for Human Brain Mapping to share and promote research, including and beyond the traditional PDF. *Aperture* encourages and welcomes both OHBM members and non-members to submit. Aperture is looking for research that will enhance, innovate, and advance neuroscience. Aperture publishes articles (research reports and reviews) and other research objects, including tutorials, workshops, processing pipelines, software, simulations, computational notebooks, and datasets.

Any accepted Research Object for publication should fit the scope and mission of Aperture (see above). Editors should only consider high-quality works and will have the freedom to reject a paper outright. The term quality is understandably vague, but Editors should be familiar with Aperture's scope, mission, and five pillars of publishing.

These are:

1. High-quality Research
2. Open, accessible, and open-source to the greatest extent possible
3. Low cost
4. Community-driven
5. Diverse Research Objects

Aperture welcomes negative results and replication studies as long as publishing these results would contribute to the community.

Editors should be familiar with the Author Guidelines available online. After a manuscript is passed from the Editor-in-Chief to the handling editor, the handling editor should review the manuscript to determine if the submission is a good fit for Aperture and if it is ready for peer-review. Handling editors should evaluate the quality of the work and assess whether the research object is meaningful and of interest to the community.

Aperture is committed to the highest standards of excellence when it comes to Peer Review and published Research Objects. All authors, editors, and Peer Reviewers are required to declare any
conflicting interests that could negatively impact handling specific manuscripts, which would also have an impact on the integrity of the journal.

How Submissions Are Assigned

Once an author submits a Research Object, the journal manager will check the submission to assure that it is complete and adheres to the author guidelines. In addition, a plagiarism checker will be applied to the manuscript to check the work. The journal manager will also review the references, making sure they are formatted correctly. If the submission is incomplete, the journal manager will notify the author and likely return the manuscript to the authors for correction.

If the submission is complete, the Editor-in-Chief will review the work and will assign a Handling Editor to the Research Object. The Editor-in-Chief will try and match the submission to the Handling Editor with the best background and expertise, but there may be submissions that do not fit specific categories or domains. If there is no obvious editor to match the assignment or the handling editor who would be the best fit is already handling a number of submissions, a handling editor may find themselves with a submission that is not directly within their domain. If a handling editor does not feel comfortable with the material, they should alert the journal manager and the Editor-in-Chief.

Once a Handling Editor has been assigned, they will be notified about the submission and invited to access the submission through the Aperture submission and review platform. The submission will be accessible under the review link.

The handling editor will likely be directed to a pre-print, a GitHub page, or a jupyter notebook that is hosted on an external platform. At this time, Aperture does not support PDF uploads, and so we are encouraging authors to link to the bulk of their submission. Aperture has certain criteria for authors to follow on what is and what is not acceptable for hosting sites and linking items. It will be part of the handling editor's job to determine if the linked object or hosting site fits that criteria. To learn more about these criteria, please view the author guidelines.

The Handling Editor Review Form

Once a handling editor has thoroughly reviewed the work, they will be prompted to fill out a Handling Editor Review Form. In this form, the handling editor will be able to make comments and also come to an initial decision:

1. Assigning reviewers and having the manuscript sent out for peer review
2. Recommend rejection of the paper
3. Recommend the paper be resubmitted following specific edits, additions, etc..
The journal manager will then be notified that the form is complete and assign peer-reviewers based on the answers on the form.

**Assigning Reviewers**

It is the job of the handling editor to identify reviewers who have sufficient expertise and knowledge of the domain and field of the category(s) of the submission. Aperture requires at least two Peer-Reviewers per submission, with three being the preferred standard. If the consensus among two reviewers is positive, a third reviewer may be unnecessary, but it is up to the discretion of the Handling Editor to decide or break a tie if need be.

Authors are asked to suggest four peer-reviewers, and the handling editor can use these peer-reviewer suggestions as a starting point. Handling editors are encouraged to list OHBM members as these are directly linked to the Aperture Platform, and the admin will be able to easily look up these names.

Please include as much information as possible, such as the full name, institution, link to a web site, or contact information, if possible, when listing Peer-Reviewers.

Handling Editors are recommended to list six or more individuals for the journal manager, and the reviewers will be assigned on a first-come, first-serve basis. If none of the potential reviewers respond, or if there are not enough, the handling editor will be notified and asked to recommend more peer-reviewers.

The journal manager will then assign the Research Object to the listed peer-reviewers who volunteered to take on the review.

**Finding Reviewers**

Handling Editors have several different options for finding reviewers. We know that finding good reviewers for specific manuscripts can be challenging.

1. Handling Editors are encouraged to tap into the OHBM database, which is linked to the Aperture admin platform.
2. The authors will recommend six peer-reviewers in order of preference, provided there is no conflict of interest, and these initial six names will be sent to the journal manager who will invite the reviewers.
3. All handling editors will be given access to a master list of Editorial Team members, including the Editorial Board. These are editorial team members who will be asked to review at least four research objects per year. The Editorial Board is an excellent source if review options are scarce.
   a. Reviewers who do exceptional work can be requested should be considered as members of the editorial board.

4. Handling Editors can search the references for authors that would be suitable to review the work.

5. Handling Editors can also contact the author of the Research Object and request more names. This should go through the journal manager and can be done if the Handling Editor is having trouble finding suitable reviewers.

**During Peer-Review**

Reviewers will be asked to complete their review within two weeks’ time. The journal manager will work to keep track of where submissions are in the review process. If it is determined that the work will need more than two week’s time, the reviewer should alert the handling editor and journal manager.

If a reviewer does not respond within the allotted time, the journal manager will first contact the peer-reviewer to assess the status and make sure that there are no circumstances that will delay or hinder the review. If a reviewer (who has initially accepted the role as peer-reviewer) recants or does not respond to emails, then the journal manager will contact the handling editor to recommend additional reviewers.

The reviewer will be asked to fill out a Peer-Review Form, but editors and reviewers will also be able to comment on the research object via a social media source.

The handling editor will be given access to the peer-review form.

Based on the outcome of the different reviews, the handling editor will come to an overall recommendation for the manuscript:

- Reject
- Reject and Resubmit
- Major Revision with re-review
- Accept with Minor Revision
- Accept with textual edits
- Accept
For papers in which the outcome is less clear, the handling editor can work with the Editor-in-Chief (and perhaps other handling editors in overlapping areas of expertise) to come to a final decision.

The handling editor will pass their recommendation to the Editor in Chief, who will also be able to see the reviews.

**Expectations of Handling Editors**

Handling Editors should adhere to Aperture’s code of conduct and best practices in all Aperture spaces, including the Aperture-based social media and during the review processes.

All manuscripts should be handled with the utmost confidentiality. It is possible to speak with other handling editors on specific domains of a manuscript, so long as that handling editor has no conflicts of interest.

When assigned a research object, handling editors should respond to the invitation within five business days. The journal manager will follow up with handling editors and reviewers who have been assigned research objects.

Aperture expects all editors, reviewers, and authors to conduct themselves ethically. Unethical behavior will be brought to the attention of the Editor-in-Chief and the Aperture Oversight Committee. Such behavior could result in the termination of an individual’s role within Aperture or the paper’s withdrawal. If an author brings up a concern, Aperture will record these issues and give a resolution to the author, editor, or reviewer depending on the circumstance and context surrounding the case. To report a concern, please contact the journal manager.

Editors and Reviewers are expected to conduct themselves with integrity and objectivity. Aperture’s editorial team is composed of experts in the field and individuals who may be at the start or midpoint of their careers.