



JOURNAL OF INDIAN LAW AND SOCIETY

EDITORIAL REVIEW POLICY

The Editorial Board of the Journal of Indian Law and Society (JILS) has devised the following Editorial Review Policy to elucidate the process by which it determines the papers it considers fit for publication in the Journal.

I. SUBMISSION

The process of editorial review of a paper commences with its submission to the Journal by the author. This may be done by submitting the paper by way of e-mail to the official e-mail ID of the Journal, at jils@nujs.edu.

II. EDITORIAL TEAM ASSESSMENT

Subsequent to its submission, the paper is assigned to one of the six Editors by the Editor-in-Chief. The Editor, in consultation with his/her team, conducts an editorial review of the paper, on the basis of which he/she determines whether the paper is to be advanced to the next stage of review.

Preliminary Review Criteria

The following factors are indicative of the various aspects of a paper considered by the Editorial Board during the process of review. These factors, however, are not exhaustive, but in the nature of guidelines on the subject. Preliminary decisions as to the suitability of a publication may also depend on external factors such as the availability of slots in the upcoming issue of the Journal.

- What is the main question/issue that the paper seeks to address? Is it interesting and relevant?

- Does the paper satisfy the requirement of interdisciplinarity of the Journal?
- Are the ideas/arguments elaborated in the paper original? To what extent does it contribute to the existing body of literature on the subject?
- Is the paper will written, in terms of coherence and readability?
- Are the conclusions arrived at consistent with the arguments and evidence presented? Do the conclusions satisfactorily address the research questions posed?

Note: The readership of the Journal is not concentrated solely on laypersons. The Journal seeks to target a “knowledgeable” audience, who may be able to comprehend technical aspects of the paper without difficulty.

Completion of the editorial review will result in one of the following decisions by the Editorial Board:

1. Outright Rejection: If the paper is rejected outright, it will not be reviewed again by the Journal even if the author(s) makes substantial changes to the same.
2. Conditional Rejection: If the paper is conditionally rejected, the Journal will consider it again, provided the author(s) makes substantial changes to the same.
3. Unconditional Acceptance: If the paper is unconditionally accepted, it proceeds to the subsequent stage of the review process, i.e., peer review.
4. Acceptance with Minor Changes: If the paper is accepted with minor changes, it proceeds to the subsequent stage of the review process, i.e., peer review, provided the author makes minor changes to the same as suggested by the Editorial Board.
5. Acceptance with Major Changes: If the paper is accepted with major changes, it proceeds to the subsequent stage of the review process, i.e., peer review, provided the author makes substantial changes to the same as suggested by the Editorial Board.

Note: In the interest of reducing the time spent on the review process, a paper accepted with minor changes may be sent directly for the process of peer review, as per the discretion of the Editor. In such a situation, the minor changes required may be addressed along with the comments made at the stage of peer review.

III. PEER REVIEW ASSESSMENT

Following the stage of editorial review, the paper is sent to a peer reviewer. The peer reviewer is selected by the Editor-in-Chief, in consultation with the Editor who conducted the editorial review. The peer reviewer will be a person well versed in the subject areas discussed in the paper, whose expertise in the same will enable them to effectively review the paper. The peer review will be a double-blind review.¹

The process of peer-review generally spans a period of six to eight weeks, depending on the availability of the peer reviewer. In case the peer reviewer is unable to review the paper within a reasonable time frame, the Editorial Board reserves the right to appoint another peer reviewer.

The time dedicated to the peer reviewer is to allow him/her to read the paper multiple times. The first read enables the peer reviewer to form an initial impression of the work. After the first read, if the peer reviewer concludes that the paper suffers from significant infirmities, he/she is empowered to reject the paper at this stage itself. If no such infirmities are found, the peer reviewer proceeds to conduct a detailed review of the paper, by making comments, in order to ensure a comprehensive assessment of the same. This final review is then submitted to the Journal, with a recommendation of acceptance or rejection of the paper, or with a request for revision (the revision may be flagged as major or minor), before the paper is reconsidered.

Note: The recommendation of the peer reviewer is considered by the Editor who conducted the initial editorial review, in consultation with the Editor-in-Chief. In the event that these parties fail to reach a consensus as to the status of the paper, the Editor-in-Chief can refer the matter to the entire Editorial Board.

Peer Review Criteria

The following factors indicate the aspects of the paper generally considered by the peer reviewer:

- Does the paper have any significant errors?
- To what extent does the paper contribute to existing literature on the subject?
- Does the paper meet the requisite standard of originality? Does it raise interesting and relevant research questions?

¹ A double-blind review purports a scenario where the identities of both, the author and the peer reviewer, will remain anonymous.

- Is the structure, writing, flow of arguments, and reasoning employed by the paper satisfactory in terms of a legal paper?
- In case experimental design features prominently in the paper, is the methodology employed for the same, sound?
- Is the research employed in the paper replicable, reproducible, and robust? Does it comply with the best practices and ethical standards prevalent in that subject area?
- Has similar work already been published without due acknowledgement by the author?
- Are there existing studies that show relevant trends that ought to be discussed in the paper?
- Are the findings presented in the paper such that will question current trends/thinking? Is the evidence and reasoning used sufficient to arrive at the findings presented? Does the paper address contradictory arguments and other relevant material on the subject?
- Does the paper have any major presentational problems? Is the language used in the paper coherent? Are the figures, graphs, and tables used, if any, accurate and clearly decipherable?
- Does the paper pose any ethical issues?

Completion of the peer review will result in one of the following decisions by the Editorial Board:

1. Outright Rejection: If the paper is rejected outright, it will not be reviewed again by the Journal even if the author(s) makes substantial changes to the same.
2. Conditional Rejection: If the paper is conditionally rejected, the Journal will consider it again, provided the author(s) makes substantial changes to the same.
3. Unconditional Acceptance: If the paper is unconditionally accepted, it will be published as it is.
4. Acceptance with Minor Changes: If the paper is accepted with minor changes, it will be published, provided the author makes minor changes to the same as suggested by the peer reviewer.
5. Acceptance with Major Changes: If the paper is accepted with major changes, it will be published, provided the author makes substantial changes to the same as suggested by the peer reviewer.

In case of situations (1), (2), or (5), the paper will be resent to the peer reviewer, who is usually the same peer reviewer as has previously reviewed the paper. However, the Editor-in-Chief, in

concurrence with the Editor who conducted the editorial review, and one other Editor, can choose to dispense with this requirement.

The following table indicates the papers that are subject to a peer review:

S. No.	Nature of Content	Peer Reviewed	Not Peer Reviewed
1.	Articles	✓	
2.	Notes	✓	
3.	Legislative Briefs	✓	
4.	Bill Reviews	✓	
5.	Reports	✓	
6.	Obituaries	✓	
7.	Case Comments	✓	
8.	Book Reviews		✓
9.	Lectures		✓
6.	Editorial Notes		✓

IV. APPEAL

Appeal of the Decision of the Editorial Review

The decision of the Editorial Review cannot be appealed. This is due to the fact that the judgment made by an editor to accept or reject a manuscript for publication is based on the Editor's discretion and his/her consideration of external factors. Such factors are such that can usually not be addressed through an appeal and are unknown to authors.

Appeal of the Decision of the Peer Review

The Editorial Board rarely reverses their original decisions and does not expect or advise frequent appeals requesting the same. Thus, if a decision rejecting a manuscript is communicated, authors are strongly advised to submit it to another journal. However, if an author strongly believes that there is a case to be made for a genuine appeal against the decision of the Board, **please follow the instructions below:**

- Provide a detailed explanation as to why you disagree with the final decision of the Editorial Board. Please provide specific responses to the comments of the editor/reviewer that contributed to the decision to reject the manuscript.
- Provide any fresh data or information, not previously considered, that you would like the Journal to take into consideration.
- Provide evidence indicating any technical errors made by a reviewer/editor in assessing the manuscript, if so believed.
- Provide evidence indicating that the reviewer has a conflict of interest, if so believed.

Note: In case of scholarly articles in the nature of an opinion piece, an appeal requesting reversal of an editor's decision, is less likely to be considered. Such articles include commentaries, author's opinion, and book reviews, wherein peer reviewed judgment regarding the readability and relevance of the article, bear the most weight. All opinion-led pieces must put forth concrete and reliable evidence, on the basis of which, well-reasoned opinions are presented.

On receiving an appeal, the Editorial Board as a whole will decide the same. Depending on the nature of the appeal, the Board is empowered to consult any Associate Editors who handled review of the original submission. The Editorial Board may (a) confirm their decision to reject the manuscript, (b) invite a revised manuscript, or (c) seek additional peer review or statistical review of the original manuscript.

Editors will consider one appeal per paper and all decisions on appeals are final. The timely review and decisions regarding new submissions will take precedence over appeals. The Editorial Board is not mandated to provide a detailed explanation while deciding appeals.

