# Double-Blind Peer Review Policy

## 1. Overview of the Peer Review Process

AATCC Journal follows a rigorous Double-Blind Peer Review process to ensure fairness, objectivity, and academic integrity. In this model, the identities of both authors and reviewers are concealed throughout the review process. This approach minimizes bias related to author identity, institutional affiliation, nationality, or academic reputation.

## 2. Double-Blind Review: Author Guidelines

### 2.1 Manuscript File (Anonymized)

Authors must submit an anonymized main manuscript file that does not contain any identifying information. The manuscript file should include only:

- Title of the manuscript
- Abstract
- Keywords
- Main text (Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion, Conclusion)
- Tables and figures
- The following must NOT appear in the main manuscript file:
- Author names
- Affiliations
- Email addresses
- ORCID IDs
- Acknowledgments
- Funding information



### 2.2 Title Page (Separate File)

A separate Title Page must be submitted as an independent file containing:

- Full names of all authors
- Institutional affiliations
- Corresponding author details (email address)
- ORCID ID of the corresponding author
- Acknowledgments
- Funding information
- Conflict of Interest statement
- This file is retained by the Editorial Office and is not shared with reviewers.

### 2.3 Self-Citation Policy

When citing previous work authored by the submitting authors, citations must be written in a neutral, third-person style to avoid revealing author identity.

Acceptable example:
“Previous studies have demonstrated that…”

Not acceptable:
“In our earlier work, we demonstrated that…”

### 2.4 Figures, Tables, and File Properties

Figures and tables must not include references to author names, institutions, or funding bodies.

File names must be anonymized (e.g., Figure1.tif, Manuscript.docx).

Authors should remove document metadata using tools such as the Document Inspector in Microsoft Word (Office 2007 or later).

Only the Title Page, Cover Letter, and LaTeX source files are excluded from reviewer access.

## 3. Double-Blind Review: Reviewer Guidelines

### 3.1 Confidentiality

Reviewers must:

- Treat all manuscripts as confidential documents.
- Not attempt to identify the authors or disclose their identity.
- Not share manuscript content or data with any third party outside the review process.

### 3.2 Unbiased and Objective Evaluation

Reviewers must evaluate manuscripts solely on the basis of:

- Scientific quality
- Methodological rigor
- Originality
- Relevance to the journal scope
- Contribution to the field
- Personal bias related to author identity, institution, nationality, gender, or beliefs must be strictly avoided.

### 3.3 Constructive Feedback

- Reviewer comments must be professional, respectful, and constructive.
- Direct references to author identity must be avoided in reviewer reports.
- Feedback should aim to improve manuscript quality, clarity, and scientific value.

## 4. Double-Blind Review: Editor Responsibilities

### 4.1 Ensuring Anonymity

Editors are responsible for ensuring that all identifying information is removed from manuscripts before they are sent for peer review. Reviewer identities must never be disclosed to authors.

### 4.2 Reviewer Selection

- Each manuscript is evaluated by at least two independent reviewers with relevant subject expertise.
- Editors must identify and avoid potential conflicts of interest when assigning reviewers.

### 4.3 Editorial Decision-Making

Editorial decisions are based on:

- Reviewer reports
- Editorial assessment
- Journal quality and ethical standards
- Reviewer comments are forwarded to authors anonymously to support manuscript improvement and transparency.

## 5. Ethical Standards and Best Practices

The Double-Blind Peer Review process of AATCC Journal aligns with internationally recognized publishing standards, including:

- Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) Guidelines
- Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing (COPE, DOAJ, OASPA, WAME)

## 6. Policy Review and Updates

This policy is reviewed periodically to ensure continued compliance with international peer review standards, indexing requirements, and best practices in scholarly publishing.

AATCC Journal remains committed to maintaining transparency, fairness, and integrity in the peer review process.