

PEER REVIEW POLICY



NLIU LAW REVIEW
2025-26

The NLIU Law Review remains committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity, transparency, and excellence in legal scholarship through its robust and impartial peer review process.

The NLIU Law Review follows a rigorous double-blind peer review process ensuring complete anonymity between authors and reviewers to maintain fairness, impartiality, and academic integrity. The peer review constitutes the final stage of the editorial assessment and is initiated only after a manuscript successfully clears the preliminary stages of Technical Review and the Content Review.

The Technical Review consists of Stage I and Stage II review. In this stage compliance with submission guidelines, plagiarism standards, citation format are focused upon. After which the accepted manuscripts are forwarded for Content Review. The content review assesses the manuscript's use of grammar and language, contemporary relevance, structure and logical coherency, contribution to existing literature and reference and research. Only manuscripts meeting these criteria advance to the peer review stage.

At this stage, manuscripts are evaluated by independent subject experts possessing recognised expertise in the relevant area of law. Their review determines the scholarly merit and publication-worthiness of the submission.

If a manuscript is rejected by the peer reviewers, it will be excluded from the review process and no further consideration will be given for publication in the present and future publication cycles.

Authors will receive constructive feedback from the peer review process, aimed at enhancing the quality of the work and supporting scholarly development. Such feedback, while not guaranteeing publication, serves as valuable input for refining the manuscript.

ETHICAL GUIDELINES

The NLIU Law Review outlines the following ethical guidelines that every reviewer must strictly adhere to during the review process.

- **Integrity and Responsibility in Review-:** Peer reviewers are entrusted with upholding the integrity of the scholarly record. They must perform their evaluations conscientiously, ensuring that each assessment contributes meaningfully to maintaining high academic standards. Reviewers are expected to conduct themselves with professionalism, diligence, and fairness throughout the review process.
- **Objectivity and Constructive Assessment-:** Reviewers should provide unbiased, objective, and constructive critiques of manuscripts. Personal judgments or preferences should never influence their recommendations. The feedback should be specific, well-reasoned, and directed at enhancing the clarity, coherence, and scholarly rigor of the submitted work. All criticism should be constructive, aimed at helping authors improve the quality of their research and writing.

- **Confidentiality and Data Protection-:** Every manuscript submitted for review is a confidential document. Reviewers must respect the confidentiality of all materials received and should not disclose, discuss, or share the content with anyone other than the editorial board. They must never use unpublished material from a manuscript for their own research or personal advantage. Any breach of confidentiality undermines the integrity of the peer review process and will not be tolerated.
- **Timeliness and Academic Accountability-:** Reviewers are encouraged to complete their evaluations within the stipulated timelines to ensure an efficient and fair review process. Delays in peer review can impede the publication of important research and adversely impact authors' academic progress. If a reviewer anticipates difficulty in meeting a deadline, they should inform the editorial board in advance to allow reallocation of the manuscript.
- **Intellectual Honesty and Respect for Scholarly Contributions-:** Reviewers must avoid any form of bias and respect the intellectual property rights of authors. Proper acknowledgment should be made where ideas, sources, or theories of others are referenced or recognized within the manuscript. Reviewers should also refrain from imposing their personal research agenda or perspectives on the author and must base their assessment solely on the manuscript's academic content and merit.

- Upholding Ethical Standards-: Ultimately, reviewers are expected to uphold the highest ethical and professional standards in all their evaluations. Their responsibility extends beyond merely recommending acceptance or rejection- it encompasses contributing to the advancement of legal scholarship by engaging critically, fairly, and responsibly with the work of their peers.

BEING A REVIEWER

Serving as a peer reviewer for the NLIU Law Review represents a scholarly and professional responsibility that contributes directly to the maintenance of academic integrity and excellence. Reviewers play a foundational role in vetting research that shapes contemporary legal discourse, and their participation strengthens the credibility and quality of the publication. Individuals who have themselves benefited from the peer review process are encouraged to undertake reviewing duties as part of their ongoing professional commitment to the legal academic community.

Acting as a reviewer demands not only subject-matter expertise but also accountability, efficiency, and ethical conduct. The process relies on competent reviewers who can critically evaluate manuscripts in their respective areas of specialization while maintaining neutrality and confidentiality. Editors are responsible for ensuring that reviewers are appropriately matched with manuscripts that align with their expertise to obtain informed and fair assessments.

a. **Professional Responsibility-** Peer reviewers are entrusted with evaluating manuscripts in accordance with recognized standards of professional conduct. They must approach each review with seriousness, respect for author efforts, and a commitment to the advancement of knowledge. Reviewers should be mindful that their assessment significantly influences both editorial decisions and author development. Accordingly, they should offer balanced, evidence-based, and constructive feedback rather than subjective or unsubstantiated criticism.

Prospective reviewers wishing to contribute to The NLIU Law Review should familiarize themselves with the Journal's peer review guidelines and be prepared to comply with its ethical and procedural expectations. By participating in the review process, they support a collective endeavour of intellectual integrity and public trust in academic research.

b. **Declaring Competing Interests-** Reviewers must declare any potential competing or conflicting interests before agreeing to evaluate a manuscript. A conflict may arise due to personal, professional, or financial relationships with authors, institutions, or subjects covered in the manuscript. In cases where uncertainty persists about a potential conflict, reviewers must inform the editorial team before proceeding. Review requests must never be accepted merely to obtain confidential access to unpublished work.

c. **Timeliness and Commitment-** Respecting timelines forms an integral aspect of professional courtesy. Reviewers should respond promptly to review invitations, whether accepting or declining them. Acceptance should be contingent upon their availability to complete and return the review within the stipulated timeframe agreed upon with the editors.

Delays in review submission impact editorial procedures and author expectations. Hence, reviewers must adhere to agreed deadlines and notify the editorial team at the earliest possible moment if unforeseen circumstances prevent timely completion. Such transparency ensures efficiency, consistency, and mutual respect across all stages of publication.

CONDUCTING A REVIEW

Reviewers are expected to approach each manuscript with a clear and analytical mindset, focusing on both the overall scholarly merit and the finer details of argumentation, methodology, and presentation. The process is not simply about identifying flaws but about offering a reflective and balanced evaluation that strengthens the work. At the NLIU Law Review, reviewers are encouraged to critically engage with the manuscript as a contribution to the broader discourse in legal research, assessing its originality, academic rigour, and coherence within a structured evaluation framework.

a. Overall Impression and Understanding-: A reviewer's first responsibility is to develop an overall understanding of the manuscript's argument, structure, and relevance. This involves assessing whether the article is clearly written, logically organized, and intellectually consistent. The reviewer should determine if the research problem has been effectively articulated and if the arguments unfold coherently from introduction to conclusion.

In evaluating the overall impression, reviewers should consider how successfully the author engages with readers, communicates complex legal ideas, and establishes the importance of the topic. The goal is to ascertain whether the manuscript demonstrates both clarity of purpose and adequacy of scholarly engagement with the chosen area of law.

b. **Article's Contribution to the Discipline-** Reviewers should next assess the originality and significance of the manuscript's contribution to legal scholarship. This entails examining whether the article provides fresh insights or perspectives that advance the discipline, whether it fills a gap in existing literature, and whether its findings or arguments are conceptually innovative. Reviewers should also evaluate whether the authors have adequately justified the article's importance and positioned it within the broader scholarly context.

Some guiding questions include: Does the article make a discernible and meaningful contribution to the discipline? How significant is that contribution? Do the authors effectively explain its relevance within the existing body of research? Finally, does the article align well with the thematic scope and editorial objectives of The NLIU Law Review?

c. **Academic Rigour and Accuracy-** An essential element of the review concerns the manuscript's academic rigour- the depth of analysis, strength of methodology, validity of reasoning, and accuracy of content. Reviewers must ensure that the methodology or argumentative framework adopted in the article is sound and appropriate to the research questions. The reasoning should be coherent, evidence must be sufficient to support each claim, and conclusions should logically follow from the premises stated.

In this regard, reviewers should ask: Is the interpretation of data, evidence, or sources reasonable and balanced? Do the authors fairly assess the existing literature, and are all essential references accurately cited? Are there other key works that should be included to strengthen the argument? Moreover, is all factual and analytical information- such as data, quotations, references, or case citations, correct, precise, and verifiable?

Reviewers should also verify that the manuscript upholds a high standard of research ethics, avoiding plagiarism or misrepresentation. Constructive comments regarding strengthening argumentation, expanding sources, or refining methodology are particularly valuable here.

d. Style and Structure-: Finally, reviewers should assess the presentation and organization of the manuscript. A well-written article must reflect clarity in both language and structure. The reviewer should examine whether the paper's sections are logically ordered and whether its ideas flow seamlessly from one segment to another. The author's introduction should contextualize the research, clearly state the objectives, and effectively set forth the argument, while the conclusion should aptly summarize findings and implications.

Key considerations include: Is the structure of the paper clear and coherent? Does the author effectively introduce and contextualize the aims of the article? Are the conclusions logically derived and clearly summarized? Does the abstract accurately reflect the article's purpose, arguments, and key conclusions? Additionally, is the language precise, grammatically correct, and suitable for an academic journal?

The reviewer should also note whether the article adheres to the journal's citation style and formatting guidelines. Consistency in referencing, clarity in expression, and a professional writing tone contribute to the overall readability and scholarly quality of the piece.

PREPARING THE REVIEW REPORT AND FEEDBACK FORM

The final stage of the peer review process involves the preparation and submission of the Feedback Form which serves as a formal and structured record of the reviewer's evaluation. The purpose of this exercise is to document the reviewer's reasoned assessment of the manuscript's quality, relevance, and suitability for publication while ensuring that all remarks are clear, actionable, and respectful. The NLIU Law Review places great emphasis on the quality of reviewer feedback, as it not only assists the editors in making publication decisions but also provides vital guidance to authors for improving their research.

a. A strong feedback form strikes a balance between appreciation and critique. While it identifies weaknesses in the manuscript, it also highlights areas of strength and potential. Reviewers are encouraged to avoid vague phrases like “needs improvement” or “lacks clarity” without elaboration. Instead, they should specify what requires improvement and how it might be addressed. Where appropriate, reviewers may reference sections or examples from the manuscript to illustrate their points. This specificity ensures that the feedback is actionable and valuable to both the author and the editorial board.

b. Each review report should also conclude with a clear recommendation on the manuscript’s status- accepted without revision/ accepted with minor or major revision/ rejected.

COMMUNICATION OF DECISION

Once all review reports are received, the editorial board undertakes a comprehensive assessment of the reviewers' recommendations and comments. The final decision- whether to accept, revise, or reject, is communicated to the author in a timely and transparent manner. The NLIU Law Review ensures that this communication remains neutral, courteous, and constructive.

a. Authors of accepted manuscripts may receive minor editorial suggestions for revision before publication, whereas those whose manuscripts are recommended for revision will be provided with a detailed list of reviewer comments. In cases of rejection, the decision is accompanied by constructive feedback intended to assist authors in refining their research for future submissions, whether to this journal or elsewhere.

b. Importantly, all communication between the editorial team and authors continues to uphold the principles of double-blind review confidentiality. The identities of both reviewers and authors remain undisclosed throughout the process. This ensures that decisions are based entirely on the merit of the work and not influenced by personal, institutional, or reputational considerations.

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