Review Procedure

1. Submission of Paper
The corresponding or submitting author submits the paper to the journal. This is usually via an online system such as Scholar-One Manuscripts. Occasionally, journals may accept submissions by email.

2. Editorial Office Assessment
The journal checks the paper’s composition and arrangement against the journal’s Author Guidelines to make sure it includes the required sections and stylizations. The quality of the paper is not assessed at this point.

3. Appraisal by the Editor-in-Chief (EIC)
The EIC checks that the paper is appropriate for the journal and is sufficiently original and interesting. If not, the paper may be rejected without being reviewed any further.

4. EIC Assigns an Associate Editor (AE)
Some journals have Associate Editors who handle the peer review. If they do, they would be assigned at this stage.

5. Invitation to Reviewers
The handling editor sends invitations to individuals he or she believes would be appropriate reviewers. As responses are received, further invitations are issued, if necessary, until the required number of acceptances is obtained &ndash; commonly this is 2, but there is some variation between journals.

6. Response to Invitations
Potential reviewers consider the invitation against their own expertise, conflicts of interest and availability. They then accept or decline. If possible, when declining, they might also suggest alternative reviewers.

7. Review is Conducted
The reviewer sets time aside to read the paper several times. The first read is used to form an initial impression of the work. If major problems are found at this stage, the reviewer may feel comfortable rejecting the paper without further work. Otherwise they will read the paper several more times, taking notes so as to build a detailed point-by-point review. The review is then submitted to the journal, with a recommendation to accept or reject it &ndash; or else with a request for revision (usually flagged as either major or minor) before it is reconsidered.

8. Journal Evaluates the Reviews
The handling editor considers all the returned reviews before making an overall decision. If the reviews differ widely, the editor may invite an additional reviewer so as to get an extra opinion before making a decision.

9. The Decision is Communicated
The editor sends a decision email to the author including any relevant reviewer comments. Whether
the comments are anonymous or not will depend on the type of peer review that the journal operates.

10. Next Steps
If accepted, the paper is sent to production. If the article is rejected or sent back for either major or minor revision, the handling editor should include constructive comments from the reviewers to help the author improve the article. At this point, reviewers should also be sent an email or letter letting them know the outcome of their review. If the paper was sent back for revision, the reviewers should expect to receive a new version, unless they have opted out of further participation. However, where only minor changes were requested this follow-up review might be done by the handling editor.