Alexander Studies Online
Guidelines for Peer Commentary
Working draft

Contents

Purpose of the guidelines

1. This document is intended to help contributors to Alexander Studies Online review submissions by other ASO contributors via the "peer commentary" process. Peer commentary can be distinguished from more traditional peer review mechanisms, as outlined on the ASO web-page at www.alexanderstudies.org/collaboration/peer-review-and-commentary.

Introduction

Context

2. Peer commentary on the ASO website can occur either at the **pre-publication** or the **post-publication** stage. There is a significant difference between the input expected in either case. It is also necessary to differentiate between **open commentary** and **restricted commentary**. The difference between these scenarios is discussed on the website page cited above.

Confidentiality

3. The key difference between pre- and post-publication commentary is that post-publication commentary occurs in a public area of the website, whereas pre-publication commentary occurs in an area of the website that is only accessible to people who have been accredited by ASO as Contributors. **All the material in this restricted area must be treated as confidential amongst the accredited Contributors in perpetuity**, (allowing Contributors to discuss material amongst themselves but not with non-Contributors).

4. Confidentiality applies equally to the target contribution, to the peer commentary and to responses by the author of the target article.

Civility and Author Standards

5. High standards of civility are expected in any commentary or responses to commentary. Please refer to the ASO Standards for Authors, which are applicable to all peer commentary.

Destination of material

6. Material offered for peer commentary may not be destined to be published by ASO. We encourage contributors to seek publication of their material by the more widely circulated print or online journals of the main Alexander societies. Where an author is clear about their preferred route to publication we ask them to let us know and this will be publicised to the peer commentators so they can assess the suitability of the target contribution for the proposed readership.

Types of material

7. There is no restriction on the type of material that may be submitted for peer commentary. The *Guidelines* are framed as if the target material is an essay, research paper or research proposal: common sense is required to adjust the criteria for other types of material.

Selection of reviewers

8. With peer commentary all our Contributors are able to offer feedback (whilst there is no expectation that they should do so). Peer commentators thus self-select. This can be contrasted with traditional peer review where the reviewers are invited by the editorial team.

Purpose and scope of peer commentary

Pre-publication commentary

Purpose

9.   The aim of the peer commentary process is to ensure the highest standard of material that can reasonably be achieved by cultivating:

- **robustness**
- **originality**
- **significance**

10.   In pre-publication reviews:

- the main focus is on **robustness** (comprising qualities such as accuracy, validity, reliability), i.e. to address technical issues in the broadest sense from the minor (e.g. typographical errors) through to major issues of methodology and misunderstanding of other material;
- there is a lesser focus on **originality**, but it is important to identify where previous contributions may not have been addressed or sufficiently taken into account;
- the **significance** (including such as aspects as the importance or appropriateness of the material, the strength of the argument) should certainly be addressed pre-publication, but there is no expectation that the author need agree with the critique;

Scope

11.   We do not ask reviewers arrive at a global rating for a contribution (as may often be the case with traditional peer reviews), i.e., we do not ask reviewers to arrive at a balanced judgement, from an editorial perspective, about whether the target contribution should published or not, whether "major" or "minor" revision are appropriate.

Post-publication commentary

Purpose

12.   Post-publication review is only possible where contributions are published directly by ASO. Technical issues should have been ironed out during the pre-publication review; as should issues around originality. However, this may not always be the satisfaction of reviewers and it is legitimate for post-publication reviewers to repeat comments made previously.

13.   More importantly, post-publication reviews provide an opportunity for key aspects of any contribution to be challenged, expanded upon or re-interpreted and thus to deepen the currents of thought within the wider Alexander community. Again, this might involve repetition of points previously made during pre-publication review, but the arguments will now be made available to the wider readership.

Guidelines for reviewers

Use of language

A. Check for:

    A1   spelling mistakes

    A2   ambiguities

    A3   poor grammar

    A4   misused terms

    A5   terms that are not self-evident but lack explanation

B. Are there novel uses of terminology: if so are these appropriate and justified?

Title [and sub-title]

C. Do the title [and sub-title] reasonably reflect the topic area under discussion?

Abstract

D. Does the abstract conform to length requirements (maximum 200 words for an article or essay or paper, 400 words for a monograph of 35 or more pages)?

E. Does the abstract cover the main areas required i.e.:

    E1   context: problem definition (what is the problem being addressed?); the current state of the field (existing literature or ideas)?

    E2   methods / procedure /approach?

    E3   results or main argument?

    E4   conclusions?

Main body of contribution

Structure

F. Does the organisation of the contribution follow the broad outline indicated above for abstracts?

G. Should any topics be added, lengthened, deleted, or shortened to make the work more readable, coherent, or complete?

Scholarship

H. Has previously published material being taken into account and where appropriate referenced?

I. Are the references correct?

J. Is the content factually accurate?

K. Are the methods used sound?

L. For scientific / experimental material:

    L1   are/were the methods used appropriate?

    L2   are/were the methods described clearly enough for other researchers to replicate?

    L3   are/were the methods of statistical analysis and level of significance appropriate?

M. Are presentational aspects suitably clear ie

    M1   tables?

    M2   figures?

    M3   diagrams?

N. For research involving humans (and animals!) have ethical issues been adequately addressed including confidentiality and where necessary ethics committee approval?

O. Are the arguments / conclusions

    O1   logical?

    O2   supported by the evidence?

P. Have alternative explanations or arguments been adequately considered?

Conclusions

Q. Are the conclusions reasonable in the context of the material presented?

R. Are there further implications that are not considered but should be?

S. Have the practical implications for the Alexander Technique been sufficiently addressed across the following domains:

    S1   technique (ie the individual practice of the Alexander Technique)?

    S2   promotion?

    S3   pedagogy (teaching others)?

    S4   professionalism?

    S5   institutional and organisational aspects?

    S6   teacher training?

Supplementary Material

Further Information

For further information about this document contact:
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Disclaimer

No warranty is given to any person whomsoever as to the appropriateness for any purpose whatsoever of any of the content of these *Guidelines*.

Document History

See http://www.alexanderstudies.org/node/4104

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