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NAL-live: Guidelines for Authors

NAL-live is an open access journal fully controlled by independent scientists and is not driven by commercial interests. The open access journal represents a new concept in communicating and discussing science because it does not consider a document finished after publication. It lies in the very nature of science that ideas are developed and scientists reach new conclusions based on their research. Therefore, new interpretations become necessary. NAL-live offers scientists the opportunity to update articles in response to comments and new data. This process can go on over decades. NAL-live is run by the Leopoldina. Thus, it can give the long-term support that such articles need. NAL-live will be based on a platform that allows for the updating process to be comprehensive and subject to scientific control.

Editors and structure of NAL-live

NAL-live is supervised by a group of five Senior Editors, the editor in chief and one Co-Editor for each class of the Leopoldina:

- Class I: Mathematics, Natural Sciences and Engineering including six Sections
- Class II: Life Sciences including seven Sections
- Class III: Medicine including nine Sections
- Class IV: Humanities, Social and Behavioural Sciences including five Sections

Each Section is represented by at least one Section Editor. The Section Editors handle the articles and assign members of the Leopoldina or Guest Editors from any scientific institution as Reviewing Editors.

Scope of articles

Articles are usually solicited by an Editor. However, they can also be proposed by scientists. The topic and scope of an article is discussed by a Section Editor and one or more authors who are outstanding experts in their fields. Following the Leopoldina's main task to advise policy, NAL-live also welcomes articles on topics studying scientific issues that are of specific societal and political interest.

Structure of articles

- Articles have a review style character, summarizing the state of a research field based on available publications. They should not include primary research data, but may include meta-analyses of published literature and data.
- Authors need to reach a compromise between sufficient detail and readability.
- Articles should normally not exceed 10,000 words, excluding the list of citations.
- Sources must be acknowledged.
- Citations should be always by author names followed by the year of publication in round brackets; publications with more than two authors should be cited by »et al.« behind the name of the primary author.
- Manuscripts should include a section that describes the strategy of literature search for the topic.

- Figures and tables are not limited.
- Supplementary files should only be provided in special circumstances (e.g. source files for meta-analyses).
- Articles include two summaries: one written in scientific terms (approx. 300 words), one written in general language (approx. 500 words). The second summary is only required when the first version of the article is accepted. It will be translated into different languages by the editorial office.
- Scientifically controversial issues need to be clearly stated – authors should describe controversies rather than suggest solutions.

First submission

Manuscripts are first assigned to a Section Editor. After discussing with one or more Reviewing Editors, the Section Editor decides whether the article is suitable. When an article is suitable, a Reviewing Editor is assigned. The Reviewing Editor obtains at least two independent reviews and can provide his/her own review. These reviews are discussed by all reviewers. The Reviewing Editor writes a decision letter that includes the different reviews. Author(s) prepare a revised version based on the comments in the decision letter. This version is published as version 1.0 without re-review. The names of the Reviewing Editor and the reviewers are acknowledged (unless they prefer to remain anonymous). The texts of the first round of reviews are published.

Commenting stage

Any person who is registered in an acknowledged registration system (e.g. ORCID) can write a comment. The reviewers of the first round can also write comments in case they think authors have not fully complied with their original comments. The comments need to be concise and can include references. Before being published together with the main publication, all comments will be checked by the editorial staff (if necessary in conjunction with an Editor). The names of the authors who wrote the comments will also be published. Authors can provide their responses to the comments via the commenting system.

Revision stage

If there are sufficient comments to an article or significant new data/research results have appeared, the Section Editor can ask the original author(s) for revision. In case they are not available, new author(s) can be asked for revision. Since the original article is published under the CCBY4.0 license, any author can use and modify its text elements, figures and tables. The original authors will be acknowledged. The revised version will be published as version 2.0 and will then be subject to a new round of commenting.

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