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Nova Acta Leopoldina: Quality Assurance and Peer Review

According to a decision made by the Leopoldina Presidium in 2017, volumes of the Nova Acta Leopoldina (NAL) will be reviewed before their publication. The options for quality assurance of NAL volumes are described below. Fundamental prerequisite for publication is always an agreement with the editorial office and the respective editors about the appropriate way of quality assurance made prior to the event. This may already have consequences for the realization of the event itself as well as for the necessary editing steps prior to publication.

All manuscripts must be submitted electronically via the Leopoldina's submission platform (access is provided by the editorial office). This platform also documents quality assurance. The submission of A/V materials must be coordinated with the editorial office.

1. Manuscripts newly created or largely revised for publication

In most cases, NAL volumes are intended to document conferences and symposia by printing the presentations given. If the editors of a volume – in most cases also responsible for the documented event – solicit this from the speakers, the contributions will be revised for the print version after the event, for example by adjusting the text style, adding references or modifying the content. This makes them suitable for review in one of the following ways:

1. Review of individual articles by at least two conference participants or authors of the volume (mutual review), organized by the editors of the volume – especially in the case of highly specialized volumes for which no reviewers can be found outside the group of authors.
2. Review of the entire volume by at least two external reviewers, organized by an editorial board or an external review editor, if necessary.
3. Review of individual articles by at least two external reviewers, organized by an editorial board or, if applicable, by an external review editor (peer review according to a journal article). This is also the standard procedure for NAL-live.

Reviews should normally be anonymous, i.e. only the responsible editors know the reviewers. This may be waived if reviewers give their explicit permission. The editors decide whether the reviews and responses to the reviews will be published.

2. Manuscripts from lecture transcripts and/or video recordings (NAL-conference)

If a NAL volume is meant to document an event directly and the lecture manuscripts are created from its presentations (by the authors and/or by the editors by means of transcribing audio/video recordings), or if a volume is to consist of such written contributions and/or video recordings, the volume is not suitable for peer review, or such a review is not necessary or not useful. Among other reasons, this is also because the content of video recordings cannot be edited afterwards.

In the best case, scientific quality assurance has already taken place by means of discussion during the event. Therefore, the discussion should also be documented – either by video recordings or by transcription of the recordings. In these cases, all participants in the event – not only the speakers but also the audience – must be informed in advance, especially that the names of the discussants must be mentioned before each contribution. Prior to publication, the discussants also need to approve their contributions. It should be taken into account that not every conference participant will give his or her prior consent; in these cases, contributions to the discussion may not be documented.

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