

health education assets library



national digital library

Editorial Policy

**Version 2
October 18, 2006**

Introduction

In higher education, digital educational materials developed by faculty members are rarely recognized during the tenure and promotion review process. For centuries, scholarship has been documented through peer-reviewed publications. Until recently, only research reports, book chapters, and other scholarly texts were peer reviewed and published. No outlets for peer-reviewed educational materials existed. Increasing numbers of educators, however, dedicate much of their time and expertise to the development of teaching and learning tools. Fueled by new dissemination outlets such as the Health Education Assets Library (HEAL), there is an increasing demand for formal, academic recognition for development of digital educational products.

This document outlines the following aspects of HEAL's editorial process:

1. The objectives of the review process;
2. The roles of the Editor, Associate Editors, Reviewers, and Editorial Staff;
3. A description of the editorial process and procedures; and
4. The review categories used to describe the quality and usefulness of HEAL content.

1. Objectives of the Review Process

The core of HEAL's mission is *"to provide free digital materials of the highest quality that meet the needs of today's health sciences educators and learners."* HEAL's peer review process helps assure the quality and usefulness of its collection. But at the same time, it recognizes the author's contribution to the field in parallel with other forms of scholarship. It is this dual purpose, quality assurance and academic recognition, that drives HEAL's review process.

The objectives of HEAL's peer review process are:

- a. Assure the quality of the HEAL collection;
- b. Formalize the appraisal of digital scholarship;
- c. Provide a review process that is nationally recognized as transparent, fair, valid and reliable; and
- d. Foster the recognition of HEAL as a dynamic publication outlet for digital educational scholarship.

2. Roles of the Editor, Associate Editors, Reviewers, and Editorial Staff

A. Editor's Role

- Assume accountability of the peer review process.
- Make final publication decisions.
- Communicate with author re: rejected submissions.
- Approve certificates of publication.
- Communicate with the HEAL Advisory Council.
- Conduct periodic evaluation of the peer review process.
- Conduct expedited review of re-submitted materials.

B. Associate Editors' Role

- Notify Editor and Editorial Staff within three business days if the materials are not within the area of expertise, or if personal or professional activities or conflict of interest hampers a timely or fair review.
- Identify external reviewers as appropriate. Two reviewers evaluate each submission.
- Forward reviews to Editor and Editorial Staff with a recommendation regarding publication, including a list of comments and required modifications (if applicable).

C. Reviewers' Role

- Notify Associate Editor within three business days if the materials are not within the area of expertise, or if personal or professional activities or conflict of interest hampers a timely or fair review.
- Read guidelines prior to review activity.
- Review materials according to guidelines prior to the deadline.
- Forward reviews to Associate Editor with a recommendation regarding publication, including a list of comments and required modifications (if applicable).

D. Editorial Staff's Role

- Communicate with author when materials have been received.
- Conduct a cursory review prior to editorial review.
- Contact author if materials appear to infringe on copyright, violate HIPAA or are not within HEAL's collection scope.
- Contact author if insufficient metadata has been provided to support peer review.
- Notify Editor when materials are ready for review.
- Forward items for review to Associate Editors.
- Compile final reviews, issue certificates of publication for accepted materials to authors, and maintain the peer review database.
- Upon acceptance, add material to HEAL Reviewed Collection and complete cataloging where necessary.

3. Editorial Process and Procedures

- HEAL adheres to the Guidelines and Code of Conduct as specified by the Committee on Publication Ethics (<http://www.publicationethics.org.uk/guidelines>).
- Reviewers must have the following qualifications:
 - a. Faculty position at an accredited institution of higher education
 - b. "Peer user" of instructional technology (and not necessarily "peer developer")
 - c. Expertise in one of the basic sciences or clinical sciences
- Prospective reviewers sign up online and indicate their qualifications and areas of expertise. The Editor manages the database and approves or disqualifies applications.
- Authors may recommend reviewers.

- For re-submitted materials, the Editor will conduct an expedited review to confirm that required changes have been made.
- Sets of multimedia (e.g., images, videos, animations) submitted under one publication are reviewed as a set. The review of a set, however, is based on the systematic and thorough examination of each individual item.
- Materials can be published previously in other outlets. Also, arrangements with partner organizations can be made for joint review and publication.
- The copyright of the materials remains with the original copyright owner.
- HEAL's editorial process, including review criteria, and the names of reviewers are published on www.healcentral.org.
- HEAL communicates with the author when
 - a. material is received (Editorial Staff)
 - b. material does not meet review requirements (Editorial Staff)
 - c. an editorial decision has been made (Editor or Editorial Staff)

4. Review Categories and Standards

- A list of review criteria has been developed in collaboration with an AAMC Taskforce for quality appraisal of digital educational materials. Most of these review criteria are embedded in an electronic review instrument that provides guidance to HEAL reviewers.
- The review instrument contains the following categories:
 - a. Goals
 - b. Preparation and content quality
 - c. Effectiveness of material
 - d. Presentation and ease of use
 - e. Significance—does it contribute to the field?
- Acceptance and Rejection criteria are:
 - a. Reject: Does not meet minimal quality standards or requires substantial revision.
 - b. Accept with Revisions: Does meet most quality standards but requires minimal revision.
 - c. Accept: Meets all important quality standards and contributes to the field.
 - d. Accept with Acclamation: Is excellent overall and significantly contributes to the field.