



# ASSOCIATE EDITOR GUIDELINES

## Welcome to the Frontiers community of editors

The following guidelines are meant to provide you with further practical information regarding your role as Associate Editor as well as the Frontiers peer-review process and platform. This is in conjunction with the Terms of your role (available as a separate document on your My Frontiers tab).

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact the journal team directly using their field Editorial Office account. Please also do not hesitate to request an online demo of any of the features of the platform from your journal team.

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# 1. HOW-TO'S FOR YOUR ROLE AS ASSOCIATE EDITOR

As an Associate Editor, you play a key role in establishing and growing your specialty. Each specialty section has an average of 10-20 Associate Editors, including yourself. Your primary role will be to oversee and manage the peer-review process of manuscripts. Associate Editors also contribute to the strategic direction of the section by annually co-editing or nominating a high-profile Research Topic (article collection) around an influential scientific theme.

## 1.1. COMPLETE YOUR PROFILE ON LOOP

To join the editorial board, you created an account on our research network, Loop, which allows you to receive invitations and access your editorial assignment. We ask that you complete your profile within two weeks by adding a photo, a brief bio, and a list of your publications.

To add publications to your Loop profile, visit the relevant tab and go through the suggested list and confirm/reject records, as needed.

## 1.2 BUILD A BOARD OF 10-15 REVIEW EDITORS

Invite 10-15 Review Editors **within the first month** of your appointment. Review Editors form an essential part of our editorial board and serve as a trusted network of experts who have agreed to regularly receive review invitations matched to their expertise, and to accept to review 5-10 manuscripts per year, depending on the journal and their availability.

These should be established researchers or experts in the field—e.g. readers, lecturers, principal investigators, assistant professors (not necessarily with tenure), or more senior. Outstanding senior postdocs can also be permitted in exceptional circumstances, such as by contributing a specific expertise to the board. When inviting potential Review Editors, aim for diversity in gender balance; geographical spread; foci of research, within the scope of the specialty.

Your fellow Associate Editors will also invite Review Editors, to jointly establish a large, representative board who are familiar with Frontiers' interactive review process.

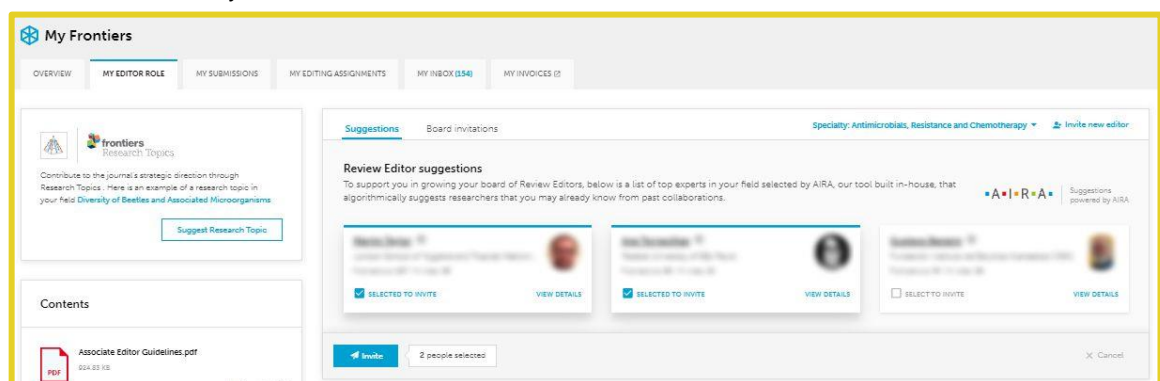
### How to invite Review Editors?

Login to your Frontiers account

Enter 'My Frontiers' > 'My Editor Role'

Browse the suggested list of experts in your field to invite

Select the contacts you wish to invite and click "Invite"



The screenshot shows the 'My Frontiers' user interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs: OVERVIEW, MY EDITOR ROLE (selected), MY SUBMISSIONS, MY EDITING ASSIGNMENTS, MY INBOX (254), and MY INVOICES (0). The main content area is titled 'Review Editor suggestions' and includes a 'Specialty: Antimicrobials, Resistance and Chemotherapy' dropdown and an 'Invite new editor' button. Below this, there is a list of suggested experts with their names, photos, and a 'SELECTED TO INVITE' checkbox. Two experts are currently selected. At the bottom, there is an 'Invite' button and a status indicator showing '2 people selected'.

An official invitation email (with links for the invitee to accept or decline) will be automatically generated, which you are welcome to contribute a personal message to. Invitees who accept will be prompted to create a profile on Loop, after which they will immediately be listed on the editorial board. Please note, to ensure all necessary details are conveyed to those invited, the official invitation text itself cannot be edited. You can see the status of invitations in My Frontiers > My Editor Role.

You can also send the Editorial Office a list of peers whom you would like to invite as Review Editors, and we can contact them on your behalf.

### 1.3 NOMINATE AND CO-EDIT A RESEARCH TOPIC

Associate Editors contribute to the development of the section by nominating and co-editing a **Research Topic** - a collection of peer-reviewed articles around an influential research theme of their choice. Defined, managed, and led by leading researchers like yourself, such collections unite international experts around emerging topic areas, stimulating collaboration and accelerating research. By inviting top authors to submit to your topic(s) and overseeing the peer-review process of contributing manuscripts, you will build strong foundations for growth and set the high-quality standards expected for the section.

#### What makes Research Topics unique?

- Research Topic projects are led by you, the researchers: once a topical, appropriate theme is identified, the leading Editors determine the scope of their own article collection, and also identify key experts as potential contributing authors. This gives you a great opportunity to collaborate with esteemed colleagues from around the world, and/or grow your network, to create a stellar collection of research in your area of expertise.
- With a unique homepage for each project, the collections are **fully available online** and,
- once completed, also downloadable as a **free open eBook** (see [here](#) for an example), ensuring further dissemination and promotion of your project.
- **Any article type** can be submitted e.g. Original Research, Review etc.
- Frontiers Open Science Platform makes managing your collection easy, and increases discoverability, readership and citations.

### 1.4 SUBMITTING YOUR OWN ARTICLES

Submitting your own work to the journal is welcomed and encouraged. Your contributions will serve as an important foundation for the journal, showing support and setting a quality standard therein. If you have any questions regarding your own submissions please do not hesitate to contact your journal team. Please note that your submissions will undergo the regular peer review process of the journal.

## 2. THE FRONTIERS PEER-REVIEW PROCESS

The Frontiers peer-review process has been designed to optimize the quality of published articles by fostering objectivity, rigor and collaboration. The Associate Editor and reviewers who endorse a manuscript are all acknowledged publicly on all published articles, and your final decision on a manuscript should consider all the reviewers' feedback. It is important that you are familiar with Frontiers policies and practices covered in this section.

As the Associate Editor handling the peer-review process for a submitted manuscript, you are responsible for:

- The initial evaluation of the manuscript, to decide whether it is eligible for review;
- Inviting reviewers and ensuring the thoroughness of the reviews;
- Giving authors access to the interactive review forum;
- Mediating the discussion to ensure a timely and fair review;
- Making a final decision for acceptance or recommendation for rejection

## 2.1 INITIAL VALIDATION

To support you in ensuring the quality of the manuscripts, all submissions undergo standard initial checks by the Research Integrity team. All submissions are pre-screened for:

- Textual overlap with and similarity to published material;
- Potential image or data manipulation;
- Language quality;
- Adherence to editorial policies;
- Adherence to ethical standards;
- Potential conflicts of interest.

Following completion of these initial checks, the manuscripts are sent to a relevant Associate Editor on the board.

If issues are identified in manuscripts you are handling, the Research Integrity team will notify you and the authors as part of our standard procedure. No action is required from you unless specifically requested.

## 2.2 EDITORIAL ASSIGNMENT

When submitting a manuscript, authors may select an Associate Editor from the board whom they believe to be well-suited to edit their manuscript. This “preferred editor” will be invited to handle the peer-review process. Should the Associate Editor decline the assignment or not reply after a few days, invitations will be sent to other Associate Editors based on relevant expertise, as indicated by the publications listed on their Loop profile.

When you receive an invitation to edit, ask yourself the following questions:

- Do I have the right expertise?
- Can I be objective in my evaluation of the manuscript? (Please consider potential conflicts of interest, see below.)
- Do I have the time to handle the manuscript?

If you are unable to answer yes to all the questions, please click on the Decline link immediately to avoid receiving reminders and delaying the process for the authors. If your answer is yes to all the above, then you can consider accepting the invitation.

After clicking on the Accept link you will be prompted to answer a list of questions regarding potential conflicts of interest (COI) and will be unable to accept the assignment if one or more COIs apply. Ensure that you do not have a COI with either the authors or the submitted research. You may always refer to the Conflict of Interest section of the Review Guidelines for a list of potential COIs.

If you think that you are qualified to edit the manuscript but cannot answer yes to all the questions, then contact the Editorial Office. Some minor COIs are permissible but require a public statement on the published manuscript.

## 2.3 YOUR INITIAL ASSESSMENT

The next step is to download the manuscript and any supplementary materials, if applicable. Please read through the manuscript and determine whether it should be sent for review or recommended for rejection to the Specialty Chief Editor.

Whilst doing so, please consider that manuscripts may only be rejected without peer-review for the following reasons:

- An objective error (i.e. an error that is generally recognized by the community);
- Substantially below standard research quality;
- Lack of appropriate ethical considerations and/or non-compliance with ethical standards.

Should you deem a manuscript as **out of scope**, please do not recommend the manuscript for rejection. Instead, let the Editorial Office know by recommending the manuscript for transfer by clicking “Recommend Transfer” (1).

The screenshot displays a manuscript review interface. At the top, a progress bar shows seven stages: 1. Initial Validation (checked), 2. Editorial Assignment (current stage), 3. Independent Review, 4. Interactive Review, 5. Review Finalized, 6. Final Validation, and 7. Final Decision. Below the progress bar, the manuscript title is partially visible: "Specific interaction and selective carbon addition during antibiotic resistance...". The journal information is "Original Research, Front. Bioeng. Biotechnol. - Biomaterials", received on 05 Feb 2019, edited by [redacted], with manuscript ID [redacted]. Keywords include: Resistive biosensor, Conductive microfibers, Lysozyme immobilization, Antibody adhesion, Pathogen Detection. A prominent red "DELAYED" warning is shown, stating: "Send a reminder to the pending Reviewer(s). Remind the reviewer(s) who are overdue to respond to their review invitation. If they are significantly delayed, their invitations can be revoked and additional reviewer(s) invited." Below this, it notes "2 Reviewer(s) are delayed in their response to the review invitation. The required number of assigned Reviewers is not yet reached." On the right side, a vertical menu of actions is visible: "Download latest manuscript", "View submitted files history", "Accept manuscript (Initiate final validation)", "Recommend to reject manuscript", and "Recommend Transfer" (highlighted with a yellow circle containing the number 1).

You will be able to provide a reason for suggesting the transfer (mandatory)(2) as well as suggest an alternative journal and/or section (optional)(3).

**INFO!**  
You can recommend transfer of this manuscript if it is out of the scope of this Journal or Specialty section. You may suggest an alternative Journal or Specialty section that has a closer fit to the manuscript's subject area. Please provide a reason for this transfer recommendation. This will be validated by the editorial office, and the authors will be contacted.

**Destination Journal** 3  
Search and Select...

**Article type**  
Original Research

**Research Topic**  
Select...

**Reason \*** 2  
Please provide a reason to recommend this transfer (min 20 characters)...

2000 CHARACTERS LEFT

Once a suggestion is provided, no further action is be required from your side. The Editorial Office will follow up with the authors to complete the needed transfer.

## 2.4 AIRA – ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE REVIEW ASSISTANT

Frontiers peer review incorporates powerful AI technology to safeguard both manuscript and peer-review quality more efficiently. AIRA assists editors, reviewers, and internal teams by analyzing, interpreting, and communicating the quality of submitted manuscripts.

Its algorithms quickly and accurately evaluate submitted manuscripts against a set of quality measures, including:

- 1) Ethics guidelines
- 2) The presence of human images
- 3) Text overlap
- 4) Language quality
- 5) Scope verification
- 6) Duplicate submissions
- 7) Controversial topics
- 8) Commercial Conflicts
- 9) Data Availability verification

You can access AIRA by clicking the AIRA tab (1). For more information on the AIRA quality checks, you can “[Click here](#)” (2) which will direct you to our [Knowledge Hub](#).

The screenshot shows the AIRA interface for a manuscript. At the top, there are tabs for 'History', 'AIRA' (highlighted with a yellow circle '1'), 'Manage reviewers', and 'Editor Active'. Below the tabs, the report title is 'MANUSCRIPT' and it states 'This report was last updated on: 12 Aug 2020-05:01 GMT'. A yellow circle '2' points to a 'Click here' link for more information. The main content area displays several checks, all marked as 'CHECKED':

- Repeat submission (Duplicates)**: 10 Aug 2020-20:39 GMT. Description: 'I am checking the current submission against existing articles in our database.'
- Text overlap**: 10 Aug 2020-21:09 GMT. Description: 'I am checking with iThenticate to get a text-overlap score of the manuscript.'
- Language quality**: 11 Aug 2020-12:44 GMT. Description: 'I am checking the language quality of the manuscript and assigning it a recommended copy-editing level score for our production...'
- Frontiers manuscript matches**: 10 Aug 2020-20:39 GMT. Description: 'I did not detect similarities with any other manuscript submitted to Frontiers.'
- Detection done by iThenticate**: 10 Aug 2020-21:09 GMT. Description: 'I searched in the iThenticate database, and this manuscript has an acceptable level of textual overlap with published articles.'
- Frontiers language rating**: 11 Aug 2020-12:44 GMT. Description: 'The language quality of this manuscript is suitable for peer review.'

A 'DETAILS' link is visible at the bottom right of the checks.

You will be able to see the checks performed by AIRA and marked as **CHECKED** when AIRA did not identify an issue and the manuscript is ready to proceed to review.

The check will be marked as **ONGOING**, when AIRA has identified a problem in the manuscript and the Editorial Office is investigating on this (3), or when the manuscript needs to be manually checked and might need improvements (4).

This screenshot shows two checks marked as 'ONGOING' (highlighted with a yellow circle '3'):

- Commercial conflicts**: 11 Aug 2020-20:12 GMT. Description: 'I am checking the submission and manuscript for potential commercial conflicts.'
- Frontiers Commercial keyword detection**: 11 Aug 2020-20:12 GMT. Description: 'I checked for potential commercial conflicts of interest and found the following: Author affiliations: Corporation The editorial office is monitoring this.'

A 'DETAILS' link is visible at the bottom right of the second check.

This screenshot shows two checks marked as 'ONGOING' (highlighted with a yellow circle '4'):

- Ethics guidelines**: 12 Aug 2020-06:36 GMT. Description: 'I am checking that the ethics statement and manuscript comply with our ethics guidelines.'
- Animal studies statement verification**: 12 Aug 2020-06:36 GMT. Description: 'The author stated that no animal studies are presented in the manuscript. However, I found the following words and expressions: Global list : animals Journal specific list : Please check if this manuscript contains animal studies.'

A 'DETAILS' link is visible at the bottom right of the second check.

If you identify an issue in the manuscript regarding the quality checks, you can communicate this to the authors and ensure that the concerns will be addressed during review. For major concerns, please contact the Editorial Office.



## 2.5 INVITING REVIEWERS

### How to invite reviewers?

If no issues are identified in the initial assessment of the manuscript, you will be asked to invite reviewers within 5 days of accepting to handle the manuscript. Frontiers requires a minimum of 2 reviewers for most article types and, as such, we recommend that you invite at least 4 potential reviewers.

There are three options for sending invitations to reviewers: (i) Suggestions including Review Editors and external candidates within the Frontiers database (ii) Review Editors exclusively from the Editorial Board or (iii) external candidates not included in our database.

### To invite from the Suggested Reviewer list:

- Select the “Manage Reviewers” tab (1);
- Select “Suggested Reviewers” (2);
- Use “filters” and “keyterms” to specify your search if the initial suggestions are not appropriate or can be refined (3). Click on “Details” to see why these candidates have been recommended (4).

### To invite from the Suggested Reviewer list:

- Select the “Manage Reviewers” tab (1);
- Select “Editorial Board” (5);
- Use “filters” to specify your search if the initial suggestions are not appropriate or can be refined (3). Click on “Details” to see why these candidates have been recommended (4).

### To invite external reviewers:

- Select the “Manage Reviewers” tab (1);
- Select “Invite an external reviewer” (6);
- Fill out the relevant information.

Once this has been completed, click on the “Invite” icon (6) and choose to compose a personal message or simply send the templated invitation. You may also select multiple Review Editors to invite in a single batch.

The screenshot shows the 'Manage Reviewers' interface. At the top, there are tabs for 'History', 'A | R | A', 'Manage Reviewers' (1), and 'Editor Active'. Below the tabs, there are sections for 'Summary', 'Suggested Reviewers' (2), 'Editorial Board' (5), and 'Advanced Search'. Under 'Suggested Reviewers', there are 'FILTERS' (3) and 'KEYTERMS' options. The main area displays a grid of reviewer suggestions, each with a checkbox, a blurred profile picture, and text: 'Status: Not yet invited', 'H-Index: [value]', and 'Keyterms ranking: #[value]'. Each suggestion has 'INVITE' and 'DETAILS' (4) buttons. At the bottom right, there is a box (6) titled 'Looking for someone you know?' with a magnifying glass icon and text: 'You can search our database of 60 million researchers in the [advanced search](#) tab or [invite an external reviewer](#).' The interface also shows 'Displaying 20 suggestion(s), generated by AIRA on 20 Aug 2021'.

## Who to invite?

When inviting reviewers please take the following into consideration:



### Smart reviewer invitations

If the required number of reviewers is not reached after 5 days, invitations will be sent by the Editorial Office to appropriate Review Editors on board who are matched based on their expertise by our semantic algorithm. This serves to avoid undue delays and to ensure the authors can receive prompt feedback on their submission.

If you have sent out at least 3 invitations within the previous 3 days before the deadline, smart invitations will be temporarily postponed for a further 3 days.

You are strongly encouraged to invite reviewers yourself and can also revoke any reviewers invited by smart invitations.

Should you require any additional time to invite reviewers personally, please let the Editorial Office know as soon as possible within the 5 days (as above) and we can accommodate this.

### Revoking a reviewer

Please consider revoking invited or appointed reviewers if:

- You consider them no longer suitable to review the manuscript;
- They become severely delayed or unresponsive;
- They are not constructively contributing to the review.

You may remove them from the assignment by clicking on the “Revoke” icon and writing a personal note explaining why this action had to be taken. If the minimum number of active reviewers is not met, you will be required to secure a replacement reviewer.

## 2.6 INDEPENDENT REVIEW

Once reviewers are assigned, they are expected to fill out a review questionnaire within 7 days, though they can request an automatic extension after accepting the assignment. The review questionnaires vary depending on the article type and have been designed to facilitate the work of the reviewers as well as to focus on objective issues and the validity of the manuscript.

At this stage, reviewers conduct their review independently and do not have access to any comments made by the other parties. The status of each review report is shown in the “Manage Reviewers” tab, where it is also possible to send reminders to delayed reviewers (1). A reviewer’s submitted report is stored in their dedicated tab (2).

If a reviewer contacts you to request additional time to submit their report, you may directly grant an extension of up to 21 days via the review forum. Please note that reviewers can grant themselves a 5-day extension in the system.

Upon completion of their review report, the reviewer will submit a recommendation to the editor to assist in guiding your decision. Recommendations to the editor:

- Manuscript can be accepted
- Revision is required
- Substantial revision is required

Should the reviewer indicate that the manuscript can be accepted, they can endorse the manuscript in the Independent Review stage and finalize their review process. If you would like the authors to respond directly to the reviewer, you can reactivate the reviewer's tab once the manuscript enters the Interactive Review or Review Finalized stage. This will require the reviewer to then reconfirm their decision on the manuscript.

Reviewer	Status	Actions
Tanner Demetrius (Reviewer 2) Accepted on: 07 Jun 2018	Needs to submit review report within 15 day(s)	Contact Revoke
Nicolaas Dragamona (Reviewer 1) Accepted on: 06 Jun 2018	Needs to submit review report within 14 day(s)	Contact Revoke

## Assessing the review reports

You will be automatically notified once an independent review report has been submitted. Reviewers are expected to provide rigorous and in-depth reports. Your next step is to assess their quality and carry out an appropriate action:

### Is the reviewers' feedback objective, constructive, appropriate and sufficient?

Reviewers' feedback objective and constructive?	Reviewer's feedback inappropriate, not sufficiently rigorous, or too brief? *	Reviewer's feedback is out of scope?	Reviewer identifies fundamental flaws that cannot be addressed via revisions?
Accept the Article if you have received the required number of endorsements	Reactivate the Review report	Request the reviewer to provide additional feedback	Leave your recommendation notes in the Editor tab.
Activate the review forum.	Invite additional reviewers.	Consider revoking the reviewer if this is not possible/they do not respond.	Recommend the manuscript for rejection by activating the review forum with major concerns.
Select the level of revisions Minor, Moderate, or Substantial.			
Add a personal message and click 'Activate'.		Inform the Editorial Office.	

\* In cases where a brief review report is submitted, you will be notified and asked to assess the submitted report. It may be the case that the report is positive.

## Your communication tools

There are two channels that you can use to communicate with participants of the review process:

- During the independent review: please send a message to either the authors or a reviewer via the review forum with the Editorial Office in copy;
- At the point of making the review reports available – you can leave comments for the authors in the Editor tab. The reviewers will also be able to see these comments;
- accordingly, please refrain from posting any identifying or sensitive information in this tab.

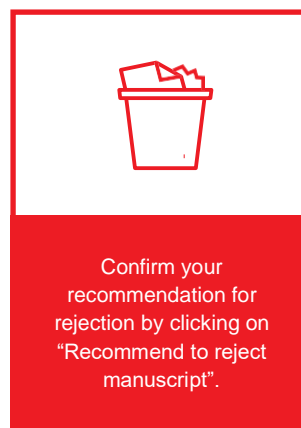
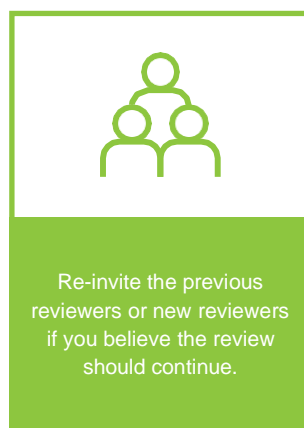
At any point during the peer-review process, should you or any of the reviewers have an annotated PDF, with comments relevant to the authors, please contact the Editorial Office to ensure an anonymized version is delivered. The Frontiers peer- review process takes place on the online discussion forum; therefore, we recommend that all comments are posted directly on there.

## Recommending rejection specifically during the independent review

If you would like to recommend rejection during the independent review, take the following action:

- If you have not already done so, provide feedback to the authors in the Editor tab regarding your decision to recommend rejection;
- Click on “Recommend to reject manuscript” in the review forum in the right-hand pane;
- The authors will be informed of the recommendation and any active reviewers will be made inactive on the assignment.

The authors will then have 7 days to submit a rebuttal and/or upload a revised manuscript. If the authors respond, please take one of the following actions:



If, after 7 days, the authors do not respond, the recommendation for rejection will be sent directly to the Specialty Chief Editor and no action is required from you.

## Activating the review forum

If you are satisfied that at least two review reports are complete and adhere to the criteria above, grant authors access to the review reports by clicking “activate the interactive review”. Please select the appropriate level of revisions (minor, moderate or substantial) and enter a personal message, that will accompany the automatically generated message detailing the necessary action.

## 2.7 MEDIATING THE DISCUSSION

### Timely peer-review process: how does the interactive review work?

You, the authors and the reviewers can now see all comments in each reviewer's and Editor's tabs. Authors are asked to respond to reviewers' comments in the review forum and to upload a revised version of their manuscript. If the authors encounter a delay with their resubmission, they may grant themselves up to three 7-day **extensions** via the review forum; if an author contacts you to request additional time, you may directly grant an extension of up to 21 days via the review forum.

Our system automatically notifies participants when a new comment or revised manuscript is uploaded and allows 7 days for participants to respond.

### Adding your own comments

Please note that you can access and post comments in the interactive review forum at any time. To do so, you can either:

- Click on the “Add Comment” icon (1) below the relevant comment that has been posted;
- Enter comments in the Editor tab (2);

Once you have entered your comments, please ensure that you click “Submit all Comments” (3) – this will make your comments visible to all other participants, who will be notified by email.

The screenshot displays the interactive review forum interface. At the top, there are tabs for 'History', 'Manage Reviewers', 'Editor' (highlighted with a yellow box and a '1' in a yellow circle), 'Reviewer 1', and 'Reviewer 2'. Below the tabs, the 'Editor' tab is active, showing a message from 'Reviewer 1: Gillian Bruce' with dates for the independent review report and interactive review activation. A text box contains instructions: 'You can post and reply to comments within this review forum here. On completion, ensure that you click on Submit all comments in order to alert the other participants to your changes.' Below this is a blue button labeled 'Submit all comments' (highlighted with a yellow box and a '2' in a yellow circle). Underneath is an 'EVALUATION' section with a question 'Q 1' asking to summarize the main findings. A comment from 'Reviewer 1: Gillian Bruce' is shown, dated 06 Jun 2018 at 11:40. At the bottom right, there is an 'Add comment' button (highlighted with a yellow box and a '3' in a yellow circle).

During the interactive review stage, we ask you to ensure that the dialogue between the reviewers and the authors is constructive, professional and timely.

Please pay attention to the following:

Are the reviewers providing an expert opinion and critical evaluation?

Have there been multiple rounds of revisions, beyond what is necessary or feasible?

Should a dispute arise at this stage, you will act as a mediator or invite new reviewers for additional opinions.

### **Reviewers' recommendation**

During the interactive review stage reviewers can either:

- **Endorse** – if they are satisfied with the changes made and have no further requests and you will be notified of this via email;
- **Reject** – if they disagree with the manuscript's contents or consider that it cannot be further improved;
- **Withdraw** – if they are no longer available, the manuscript develops beyond their expertise or personal circumstances prevent them from continuing with the review.

If a reviewer withdraws or recommends rejection, they become inactive and you will be notified.

- The reasons for a reviewer's recommendation or withdrawal are accessible in the review forum in their tab and will be visible at the top of the report in red font. These reasons are only visible to you and the Chief Editors – the authors or reviewers will not have access to these. This is also the case if a reviewer withdraws or recommends rejection without submitting a report. If appropriate, you may forward these comments to the authors, with due care for preserving the anonymity of the reviewer.
- Their report is saved but it is not possible for anyone to engage with this tab further. These reviewers will remain anonymous regardless of the final decision for the manuscript.

Consider one of the following actions:

- Invite additional reviewers if you either do not agree with the recommendation or require further input;
- Recommend rejection based on the reviewer's comments.

## **2.8 MAKING THE FINAL DECISION**

Once all reviewers have completed the review process, either by endorsing, recommending rejection, or withdrawing their participation, you should proceed to take a final decision on the manuscript. When deciding, you should read the final version of the manuscript, and consider all reviewer comments and author responses, whilst applying your own judgement and expertise. Please note, you will not be able to endorse the manuscript for publication, if an appointed reviewer is due to act.

When making your final decision, please consider the following points:

- Are the reviews appropriate and of high quality?
- Has the final manuscript been submitted?
- Does the manuscript propose a suitable research question and hypothesis, supported by relevant theory?
- Do the authors apply a correct and transparent methodology?
- Are the study, design and materials clearly laid out?
- Is the language and presentation clear and adequate?
- Are figures and tables in line with scientific norms and standards?
- Do the authors follow Frontiers' Author Guidelines on editorial and ethical policies?
- Is the manuscript grounded in existing literature through sufficient referencing and does it offer an appropriate coverage of the relevant literature?

Where a decision is unclear, you should consider inviting further reviewers, or get in touch with the

Editorial Office for advice on how to proceed.

If there are pending comments in the manuscript that were not addressed, you can request the final changes in the Editor tab before accepting the final version of the manuscript.

Please note that if you accept the manuscript your name will appear on the article as the handling editor. You thereby publicly certify the paper as a valid scholarly contribution. Do not accept a manuscript if there are concerns raised that have not been addressed – you are responsible for safeguarding the publication record in your role as Editor.

### Recommending rejection

Should you decide to recommend a manuscript for rejection based on **reviewers' recommendations**, click "Recommend to reject manuscript" (1) on the right-hand side menu and provide clear justifications for your decision.

Your recommendation will be sent directly to the Specialty Chief Editor, who verifies that the review was conducted in accordance with Frontiers' policies and takes the final decision.

Note that, at this point, the authors are not aware of your recommendation. Only after the Specialty Chief Editor confirms a rejection are you, the authors, and the reviewers notified of this final decision. Furthermore, while the Specialty Chief Editor may decide to forward your feedback to the authors, this will not be done automatically.

The screenshot displays the 'REVIEW FORUM' interface for Elizabeth Chastil (GAE). At the top, a progress bar shows seven stages: 1. Initial Validation, 2. Editorial Assignment, 3. Independent Review, 4. Interactive Review, 5. Review Finalized, 6. Final Validation, and 7. Final Decision. The current stage is '5. Review Finalized'. Below the progress bar, the manuscript title is 'Virtual orientation overrides physical orientation to define a reference frame in spatial updating'. The interface includes a sidebar with several action options: 'Download latest manuscript', 'View submitted files history', 'Assign another Topic Editor', 'Accept manuscript (Initiate final validation)', and 'Recommend to reject manuscript'. The 'Recommend to reject manuscript' option is highlighted with a yellow box and a red circle containing the number '1'. The main content area contains an 'ON TIME' notification and a list of actions to be taken within the next 2 days: request further revisions, invite additional reviewers, and take a final decision. It also notes that all 2 assigned reviewers have endorsed publication, but the paper still requires the editor's endorsement.

### High quality research supported by valid methodologies

Remember that, at Frontiers, it is the validity and quality of the research that should be evaluated, **not** its potential impact. Rejection is only justified if the manuscript contains technical or ethical issues, or is below the standards of the field and cannot be sufficiently improved.

Furthermore, you are not bound to reviewers' reports. The final decision remains yours and even if

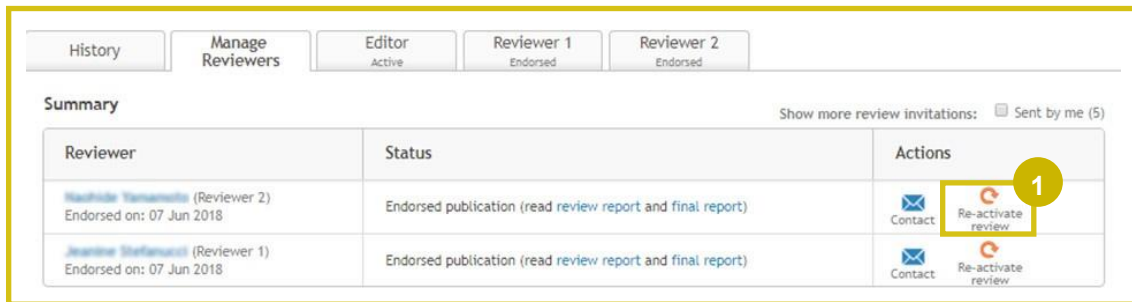
there are the required number of endorsements from reviewers, you do not have to accept a manuscript if you believe that it is not of sufficient quality or that it has not been reviewed thoroughly enough.

### Accepting a manuscript

If all reviewers endorse publication, you will be asked to take the final decision on the manuscript.

Should a reviewer endorse publication prematurely and you believe there are outstanding issues, you may reactivate their review by clicking on the “Re-activate review” (1) icon.

Similarly, if reviewers finalized prematurely before the authors resubmit their revised manuscript, you should ask the reviewer to evaluate the latest submission.



Reviewer	Status	Actions
<a href="#">Masahide Yamamoto</a> (Reviewer 2) Endorsed on: 07 Jun 2018	Endorsed publication (read <a href="#">review report</a> and <a href="#">final report</a> )	Contact <a href="#">Re-activate review</a> (1)
<a href="#">Jeanine Steffanucci</a> (Reviewer 1) Endorsed on: 07 Jun 2018	Endorsed publication (read <a href="#">review report</a> and <a href="#">final report</a> )	Contact <a href="#">Re-activate review</a>

The final validation stage includes a final technical check by the Editorial Office, to ensure that the manuscript is ready to enter production and starts immediately upon selection of the “Accept manuscript” option. The Editorial Office will contact you in the following days to confirm that production has been initiated, or if there are any outstanding concerns that have not been addressed during the review.

## 2.9 ACCESSING MANUSCRIPTS

Correspondence from the Editorial Office regarding a specific manuscript will always include a direct link to the review forum. Alternatively, your assignments may be accessed by selecting ‘Frontiers’ > ‘My Editorial Assignments’ (1), which will display the list of completed and ongoing assignments you may have.



Once you access the list, click on the “Go to Review Forum” button (2). You can filter the list by title, manuscript ID number, current status, or article type.

The screenshot displays the 'My Frontiers' dashboard. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'Frontiers Office' and a user profile icon. Below this, the 'My Frontiers' header includes a search icon and a menu. The main navigation tabs are: OVERVIEW, MY SUBMISSIONS, MY EDITING ASSIGNMENTS (61) (highlighted with a yellow box and a circled '1'), MY REVIEW ASSIGNMENTS, MY EDITOR ROLE, MY INBOX (10K+), MY INVOICES, and OTHER LINKS. The 'My Editing Assignments' section features a search bar, filters for 'Status: All' and 'Article types: All', and a summary bar showing 549 All, 3 Editorial Assignment, 9 Independent Review, 26 Interactive Review, 3 Review Finalized, 1 Final Validation, 3 Accepted, and 46. The main content area shows an 'Editorial Assignment' for 'Original Research' titled 'Hands-Free Human-Computer Interface based on Facial Myoelectric Pattern Recognition' with a green 'ON TIME' badge. The authors are 'Zhiqun Lu and Ping Zhu'. The Associate Editor is 'Michael Lütjens'. The journal is 'Frontiers in Neurology | Movement Disorders'. Submission dates are 'Submitted on 06/06/2018' and 'Editorial Assignment on 07/06/2018'. A 'Go to Review Forum' button (highlighted with a yellow box and a circled '2') is located at the bottom right.

## 2.10 EDITORIAL INDEPENDENCE

The Editors of each specialty have editorial independence over content-related decisions and will be supported in the accomplishment of their tasks by the Editorial Office. Frontiers, however, maintains discretion over the policies that are core to its mission, to ensure only high-quality articles enter the scholarly record. This includes issues such as: plagiarism, conflicts of interest, copyright and compliance with our [Author Guidelines](#).

For further information regarding the peer-review process, please refer to our [Review Guidelines](#) as well as our [Frontiers Peer Review Webinar](#).