



Soft Computing Research Society

New Delhi, India

Registered under the societies registration act XXI of 1860

Registration No. S/1649/SDM/NW/2013

GENERAL CIRCULAR

SUBJECT: REVIEWER CONFIDENTIALITY, DISCLOSURE AND REVIEW ETHICS POLICY

Circular No.: SCRS/GC/2025/01

Effective Date: 01st May, 2025

PREAMBLE

In order to preserve the integrity, independence, fairness, transparency and credibility of all review, assessment, evaluation, accreditation, fellowship, award, publication, conference, membership, grant, certification and other peer-review processes conducted by the Soft Computing Research Society ("SCRS" or "Society"), this Reviewer Confidentiality, Disclosure and Review Ethics Policy ("Policy") is hereby adopted pursuant to the powers vested in the Governing Body/Executive Council under the Constitution and By-laws of the Society.

This Policy shall apply to all reviewers, assessors, evaluators, experts, referees, committee members, editorial board members, panel members, office bearers and any other individuals participating in any review-related activity conducted by or on behalf of SCRS.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this Policy are to:

- (a) ensure independent, objective and merit-based evaluation;
- (b) protect the confidentiality and integrity of the review process;
- (c) establish standards for reviewer selection and conduct;
- (d) prevent undue influence, bias, conflict of interest or interference;
- (e) provide a framework for disclosure of information to members and stakeholders; and
- (f) maintain the professional credibility and reputation of SCRS.

REVIEWER CONFIDENTIALITY

1. Confidential Information

The following information shall be treated as confidential:

- (a) identities of reviewers and assessors;
- (b) reviewer reports, comments, observations and recommendations;
- (c) deliberations, voting records and internal discussions;
- (d) evaluation criteria applied in a specific review assignment;
- (e) communications exchanged during the review process;
- (f) documents, materials, submissions and supporting records received for evaluation; and
- (g) any information which may directly or indirectly reveal the identity of a reviewer.



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2. Non-Disclosure

SCRS shall not disclose reviewer identities or confidential review records to applicants, nominees, members or third parties except:

- (a) where disclosure is required under applicable law, pursuant to a binding order of a competent court, tribunal, or statutory authority having jurisdiction; or
- (b) where disclosure has been expressly approved by the Governing Body of the Society through a duly recorded resolution and such disclosure is considered necessary in the interests of the Society, provided that such disclosure shall not adversely affect the integrity, independence, confidentiality, fairness, or credibility of the review process.

3. Protection of Reviewer Independence

No member, applicant, nominee, institution, organization or third party shall attempt to:

- (a) identify anonymous reviewers;
- (b) contact reviewers regarding an ongoing review;
- (c) influence, pressure or interfere with reviewer decisions; or
- (d) solicit confidential review information.

Any such conduct may result in disciplinary action by the Society.

REVIEWER ELIGIBILITY AND SELECTION

1. Reviewers shall be selected on the basis of their expertise, qualifications, professional standing and subject-matter competence.
2. Reviewers may include national and international experts, academicians, scientists, researchers, engineers, technologists, industry professionals, innovators, policy experts, editorial board members and recognized practitioners.
3. Reviewers may possess one or more of the following qualifications:
 - (a) substantial academic or professional experience;
 - (b) significant research contributions;
 - (c) publications in reputed journals, conferences or books;
 - (d) editorial or peer-review experience;
 - (e) technical leadership or innovation achievements;
 - (f) professional recognitions, awards or fellowships; and
 - (g) demonstrated expertise relevant to the subject matter under review.



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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

1. Reviewers shall disclose any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest before accepting a review assignment.
2. A reviewer shall recuse himself/herself from any review process where impartiality may reasonably be questioned.
3. SCRS reserves the right to replace a reviewer where a conflict of interest exists or is subsequently identified.

DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION TO MEMBERS

1. SCRS shall maintain transparency regarding its review framework while preserving reviewer confidentiality.
2. Members may be informed regarding:
 - (a) general review procedures;
 - (b) eligibility requirements;
 - (c) evaluation criteria and standards;
 - (d) governance mechanisms;
 - (e) timelines and procedural requirements; and
 - (f) aggregate or anonymized review statistics.
3. Members shall not be entitled to receive:
 - (a) reviewer identities;
 - (b) reviewer contact details;
 - (c) individual reviewer reports;
 - (d) internal deliberations;
 - (e) voting records; or
 - (f) confidential evaluation materials.
4. The Society may communicate final outcomes, decisions or recommendations to concerned applicants or members without disclosing reviewer-specific information.

ETHICAL OBLIGATIONS OF REVIEWERS

Reviewers shall:

- (a) act fairly, independently and objectively;
- (b) evaluate submissions solely on merit;
- (c) maintain confidentiality of all materials reviewed;
- (d) avoid discrimination, favoritism or bias;



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- (e) refrain from using confidential information for personal benefit; and
 - (f) comply with all policies, regulations and ethical standards of SCRS.

RECORD RETENTION

SCRS may maintain review records, reports and related documentation for such period as may be determined by the Governing Body in accordance with applicable legal, regulatory and organizational requirements.

AUTHORITY OF THE SOCIETY

The Governing Body shall have the authority to interpret, amend, modify, suspend or supplement this Policy from time to time.

Any matter not expressly covered under this Policy shall be decided by the Governing Body, whose decision shall be final and binding.

APPLICABILITY

This Policy shall apply to all review-related activities conducted by SCRS, including but not limited to:

- (a) Membership evaluations;
- (b) Fellow and Distinguished Fellow nominations;
- (c) Awards and recognitions;
- (d) Research assessments;
- (e) Conference paper reviews;
- (f) Journal and publication peer review;
- (g) Grant and project evaluations;
- (h) Technical assessments;
- (i) Accreditation or certification activities; and
- (j) Any other review process conducted under the authority of SCRS.

By Order of the Governing Body

Soft Computing Research Society (SCRS)

(Signature)

Authorised Signatory

Note: For the purpose of “Fellow Membership Program” the word “Reviewer” should be read as “Assessor”.