

**An empirical examination of the editorial review processes  
of accounting journals**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study examines the editorial review processes of 40 main English-language accounting journals. It reports findings for individual journals, as well as clusters of journals that have been categorized by the geographical region of their editorial offices and functional specialty. A survey-based study was used. Authors who had papers accepted at one of the 40 accounting journals during the period 2004-2005 were asked to comment on their experiences with the editorial review process. The authors were also separately asked to comment on the editorial review process of a journal in which they received their most recent manuscript rejection. As the present study reveals, while the editorial review processes of accounting journals are generally rated quite high, there are particular journals and clusters of journals that stand out from the rest.

**Key words:** *Journal quality, editorial review processes, peer review*

## INTRODUCTION

Academic journals are a highly prized and highly visible element of any given academic discipline. Over the years, a growing number of papers have attempted to measure the importance/influence of the journals comprising different academic disciplines. Many of these studies, and this is most certainly the case in accounting, seek to present a ranking or pecking order of their disciplines' journals (see, for example, Lowe and Locke, 2006; Bonner, Hesford, Van der Stede, and Young, 2006; Reinstein and Calderon, 2006; Brinn, Jones, and Pendlebury, 1996; and Hull and Wright, 1990).

In contrast to perceptions of journal importance/influence, the editorial review process of academic journals, particularly accounting journals, has been much less studied. Some research, such as Beattie and Emmanuel's (2008), has sought to provide greater transparency to this process by disclosing review turnaround times, characteristics of the research (topic studied and method employed), and characteristics of the authors (number of authors per paper and their geographical locations) for both accepted and rejected manuscripts of the *British Accounting Review* over the 10 year period 1997 to 2006. Other research has attempted to provide context about and insight into the editorial review process. Mozier (2009), for example, offers a detailed exposé of an editorial review process that he found guilty of unacceptable levels of waste. Mozier (2009: 285) noted that the typically high manuscript rejection rates (which topped 90% for "top quality journals") produced waste of authors', reviewers', and editors' time.

Missing from these studies of the editorial review process has been any attempt to evaluate how well the accounting journals perform on factors directly related to the provision of feedback to authors. These feedback factors can be derived not only from the education

literature, i.e., feedback characteristics for effective learning, but the factors are also routinely stated in many accounting journals' editorial mission statements and/or communicated to the journals' reviewers at the time papers are sent out for review.

The purpose of the present paper is to evaluate the performance of a broad set of widely circulated and read academic accounting journals on such factors as the timeliness of manuscript reviews, the timeliness of manuscript acceptance to publication lead times, and the standard/quality of the reviewer comments. It is hoped that the findings from this study will, in the continuing vein of Beattie and Emmanuel (2008a, 2008b), help introduce greater transparency to a process that has historically epitomized what might euphemistically be described as the hallmark of profound discreteness.

This quest for greater transparency of accounting journals' editorial review processes should benefit authors, whose close scrutiny under such systems as the RAE (Research Assessment Exercise) in the UK and PBRF (Performance-Based Research Funding) in New Zealand means that they may wish to avoid journals with poor editorial review processes. Or, in the words of Mozier (2009: 290), avoid journals where "publishing is a lottery" and/or where long review times mean that the author "... will be lucky if, after something like a year, he or she gets an invitation to resubmit the paper" (Mozier, 2009: 291). The present study should also benefit the editors of accounting journals, who should be interested in ensuring their respective journals feature strong editorial review processes as one way to legitimize their activities to key stakeholders (e.g., publishers, authors, benefactors, etc.) and thereby maintain the flow of money and manuscripts.

The paper is organized into the following sections. The next section discusses the relevant prior literature. It includes a discussion of the public policy implications associated with

accounting journals' editorial review processes, as well as the legitimate expectations about these processes that authors and other key stakeholders might reasonably expect editors to uphold. The third section describes this study's method. This is followed by a discussion and analysis of the collected data, with the final section providing the paper's conclusion.

## **II. RELEVANT LITERATURE**

### **Previous research**

There have been very few published studies examining the editorial review processes and performance of accounting academic journals. Instead, much of the literature seeks to rank journals or to explore publication trends .

As previously noted, some journal editors have on occasion written editorials that have disclosed statistics about acceptance rates, as well as statistics about the average number of days to review a paper, lag times between manuscript acceptance and publication date, author demographics, and subdiscipline and methodology characteristics of accepted and rejected papers (Beattie and Emmanuel, 2008a, 2008b). It is also true that some journals, in their natural course of publication, regularly report data about review and publication times by including this information with each article, [see, for example, *Accounting Education: An International Journal* where the first submission date, revision date(s), and acceptance date are reported on the first page of each article directly under the name(s) of the author(s)].

Mozier (2009) provides a wide ranging examination, and at times indictment, of the editorial review process and the outcomes it produces. His paper provides an in-depth discussion of the three main parties involved in the editorial review process (i.e., authors, reviewers, and

editors). The main purpose of his paper is to promote some understanding of, or at least discussion about, what he calls the “waste” of the typical editorial review process, which produces extraordinarily high rejection rates (up to 90% at some accounting journals) of manuscripts. Mozier concludes his paper by identifying various ways to improve the editorial review process, often drawing upon the earlier work of Epstein (1995).

Bailey *et al.* (2006) examined various ethical issues of the editorial review process of accounting journals. They surveyed North American accounting academics about their direct or indirect observation of such occurrences as what Bailey *et al.* term the “violation of the blind review process” (e.g., a reviewer reviews the manuscript of a friend without disclosing the relationship to the editor), “subversion of anonymity” (e.g., reviewer attempts to identify the author), “Fairness issues” (e.g., editor yields to author pressure), “Editor obstruction or delays” (e.g., new editor advises author(s) that in-process submissions will be treated as new submissions), and “violating the spirit of the review of the process” (e.g., editor biases the reviewers). While Bailey *et al.* (2006: 24) find that respondents are overall “reasonably satisfied” with the review process, significant respondent concerns are voiced about the perceived injustice, lack of timelines, and lack of quality surrounding the editorial review process.

A common thread to the research of Beattie and Emmanuel’s (2008a, 2008b), Bailey *et al.* (2006), and Mozier (2009) is an attempt to provide greater transparency to and understanding about the editorial review processes of accounting academic journals. It can be argued that this need for greater transparency has taken on ever greater urgency in today’s increasingly high-stakes research process. There is growing evidence to suggest, for example, that decisions about tenure, promotion, salary increases, teaching and research funding support (e.g., research assistants, teaching assistants, etc.), and teaching loads are becoming evermore

closely linked with an academic's research record (Swanson, 2004). Jönsson (2006) tells how the editors of the *Journal of Accounting and Economics* have calculated the financial return to an author from publishing in their journal at US\$30,000 of increased life-time income.

Not only does publishing have important implications for individual researchers, but there are also wide-ranging implications for the researchers' host institutions as well. In the UK, a substantial portion of every university's largely government-funded annual budget is based on a government-appointed panel of expert's assessment of each university's respective research performance. This process is called the Research Assessment Exercise or RAE. While the research performance is reported at each tertiary institution's "academic unit" level, it is the collective performance of individual staff members that determines any given academic unit's RAE score and the government funding that is received as a result of this score. In other words, there are significant public policy outcomes occurring under the RAE, as public monies are allocated first to the tertiary education institutions and then subsequently to individual academics in the form of tenure, promotion, etc.

In New Zealand, a process similar to the RAE occurs. New Zealand calls it Performance-Based Research Funding or PBRF. As with the RAE, individual academics have their "portfolio" of research evaluated by government-appointed panels of experts. Performance scores are assigned to each academic. These individual academics' scores are consolidated and averaged by "subject area" for each university (e.g., accounting and finance; marketing and tourism; molecular, cellular and whole organism biology; etc.). Again, similar to the RAE process, greater government funding is allocated to the universities of high performing subject areas, and lesser funding is allocated to universities with low performing subject areas. The government funding of New Zealand universities is quite significant, generally

representing two-thirds or more of a university's income. As a result, PBRF serves to impact the financial health of each tertiary educational institution in the short-term, due to the amount of government funding provided, as well as impact the tertiary institution's long-term performance by enhancing or eroding the tertiary institution's reputational value as a result of the PBRF score it achieves. Accordingly, similar to the RAE, significant public policy outcomes occur under PBRF.

The substantial public policy issues that are connected with the assessment of individual academic's research performance points to the need to ensure that the assessment system features strong procedural fairness. Not only is it typically the case that research assessment systems like the RAE and PBRF place the majority of the evaluation on published journal articles (for example, it comprises 70% of an academic's PBRF score in New Zealand), but as Starbuck (2005) notes, deans of US business Schools are increasingly placing concentrated emphasis on requiring their faculty members to publish in "A" or "Tier 1" journals. Accordingly, it can be argued that an important first place to search for procedural fairness is in the editorial review processes of academic journals; for as Mozier (2009: 294) so aptly summarizes the situation, "you are where you publish."

### **Procedural fairness in the editorial review process**

The editorial review process consists of three main parties: authors, reviewers, and editors. In an ideal world, the three parties work to produce and see published research of the highest quality. But as scholars have previously shown, problems can occur. The classic study of Peters and Ceci (1982) is a very poignant example of journal editorial review process breakdown. In their study, Peters and Ceci resubmitted 12 highly regarded articles to the same journals that had previously published the papers 18-36 months earlier. The resubmissions had disguised names and institutional affiliations. Only three of the 12 papers



were detected by the editors or reviewers as already published papers. Eight of the remaining nine papers were rejected, generally on the grounds of there being “serious methodological flaws.” Given the grim results of the Peters and Ceci study, it is not surprising that a certain cynicism about the editorial review process prevails; and this perception leads to what Mozier (2009: 290) terms as “publishing is a lottery” and “submission to a journal is a gamble with the chance variable being the quality of the review.”

The discussion to this point raises the question: What should authors reasonably expect of editors and reviewers? Since editors are ultimately responsible for the actions of their reviewers, the question can become more focused to authors and the editorial review process the editors oversee. In other words, the questions can become restated as “What should authors reasonably expect of the editorial review process?” Unfortunately, the literature to address this question is generally deeply lacking.

One way to approach the question is to look for clues in the education literature. For example, it is possible to view the editorial review process as the feedback loop of a learning situation. The topic of feedback has certainly been well studied, especially among student populations (see, for example, Hattie, 1999, 2007; and Black and Wiliam, 1998). Typical hallmarks of good feedback include the timely provision of feedback that is clear, helpful, and respectful (Ingenhamp, 1986; and Olson and Raffeld, 1987).

While parallels would reasonably seem to exist between student learning feedback and editorial feedback, the relationship between students and teachers is substantially different from the relationship between authors and reviewers. As Mozier (2009) points out, the role of the journal reviewer can be seen from two very contrasting perspectives. Is the job of the reviewer to “... suggest how the authors can improve their performance ... or is it simply the

job of the reviewer to say that the paper is not capable of being improved sufficiently to make it publishable quality?" Mozier (2009: 296). How one answers these question will lead to different interpretations of what should be expected of the editorial review process.

While it is therefore unlikely to expect uniform types/kinds of feedback for students and authors, certain commonalities would nevertheless seem to prevail. In particular, the limited literature on editorial review processes does refer to the need for timely feedback (see, for example, Mozier (2009) and Azar (2004)). Furthermore, many academic journals themselves commonly proclaim in their editorial policy statements and guidelines to reviewers and authors such staples of feedback as timeliness, clarity, helpfulness, and respect. The paragraphs below reveal the routine practice by which these four factors are often enshrined in espoused journal policy.

### **Timeliness**

Journal reviewers are invariably exhorted to be prompt with their reviews. The exhortations are typically communicated in the cover letter accompanying the editor's solicitation of a potential reviewer to submit a review. For example, a typical instruction contained in the cover letter is that reviewers are expected to return their review within some specified period, often stated as 4-6 weeks; and that if the potential reviewer does not expect to do this, then he/she should advise the editor and return the manuscript immediately.

Some journals go well beyond the routine cover letter communication of reviewer promptness and make public statements about their expectations. For example, in its Statement of Editorial Policy, *The Accounting Review* makes specific reference to reviewers and associate editors being responsible for "prompt evaluations." Meanwhile, *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, the *Journal of Accounting Research*, the *Journal of Accounting*

*and Economics*, and the *Journal of Accounting and Public Policy* are more explicit with their expectations. *Accounting, Organizations and Society* and the *Journal of Accounting Research* instruct their reviewers to complete their reviews within five and six weeks, respectively. The *Journal of Accounting and Economics* states in its standard letter to reviewers that the policy of the JAE is “to keep our turnaround time for papers submitted to a maximum of five (5) weeks from the date of submission to final notification of the author.” The *Journal of Accounting and Public Policy* states that submitted work “will be reviewed within four weeks of receipt ... and [assuming a work’s acceptance] publication will occur within four months of acceptance.”

Financial incentives are also being used by some journals to encourage the timely completion of reviews. As one example, the *Journal of Accounting and Economics* pays reviewers US\$150 if their review is completed within three weeks of the invitation to serve as a reviewer.

### **Clarity, helpfulness, and respect**

A second component of journal feedback is commonly termed “quality of review.” Higher quality editorial processes occur when reviewers provide comments that are clear (e.g., *Journal of International Business Studies*), critically constructive (e.g., *The Accounting Review*), and include a friendly, non-threatening tone (e.g., *British Accounting Review*).

The importance of clarity is well captured in the *Academy of Management Journal’s* Reviewer Guidelines, where it is stated, “It is crucial that you tell the author what the problems are and how these problems can be addressed (where possible).” In a related manner, the *Journal of International Business Studies’* Reviewer Guidelines requests reviewers to provide a clear comment on the paper’s strengths and weaknesses, as well as a

clear comment on the (innovative) contribution the paper makes and how this contribution might be further developed.

Reviewers are further asked to structure their comments in a constructive and helpful manner.

For instance, the *British Accounting Review*'s Guidance Notes to Referees' states that

“wherever possible we would hope to provide constructive reviews to the authors ...” The

*Accounting Review* encourages its reviewers to offer constructive reviews, describing in its

Reviewer Guidelines:

*Constructive reviews often begin with a succinct summary of the study's contribution, from the reviewer's perspective. After this summary, reviewers can summarize the overall conclusion from a cost-benefit perspective: how do the manuscript's strengths compare to its limitations?*

In a similar vein, the *Academy of Management Journal*'s Reviewer Guidelines advise that

“even if a paper appears beyond salvation, it is still important that your review be

constructive.” An apparent extension of the need for reviewers to be helpful is the *Canadian*

*Accounting Review*'s encouragement of its reviewers “to work with authors to improve the paper.”

Journals are also eager to ensure their reviewers use an appropriately respectful, non-

threatening tone. The *British Accounting Review* requests its reviewers to “pay particular

attention to the tone” of their review. The *Journal of International Business Studies* instructs

its reviewers to be “author friendly” and to “be critical of the manuscript and not of the

author.” The *Academy of Management Journal* also asks its reviewers to “try to be author-

friendly,” further suggesting that “this may be your toughest task as a reviewer” but that “it is

important to treat authors and their work with respect.”

In summary, journal editorial policy statements, as well as the associated notes and guidelines to reviewers and authors, indicate that academic journals commonly commit to and espouse ideals about the timeliness and quality with which they promise to undertake reviews of authors' submitted work. A journal such as the *Academy of Management Journal* even goes as far as to say that its competitive advantage derives partly from "AMJ's excellent reputation for short manuscript turnaround time and very high quality reviews." As Appendix A reveals, editor-supplied formal and informal reviewer guidelines for what are commonly considered the "Top-5" accounting journals (*The Accounting Review*; *Accounting, Organizations and Society*; *Journal of Accounting and Economics*; *Contemporary Accounting Research*; and *Journal of Research*) typically include instruction to the reviewers about the need to produce timely reviews and to provide constructive and helpful feedback.

It appears, therefore, that academic journals in general, and accounting journals more specifically, are committed to and interested in providing authors with good feedback. Whether this need derives from simple collegial obligation or is instead viewed as a source of competitive advantage is not as important as the fact that the claims are made. Accordingly, in the remainder of this paper a study is described that seeks to examine how well accounting journals are performing on the various feedback factors. The research investigates performance of the editorial review processes of a broad set of widely circulated and read academic accounting journals. Guiding this research are the following research questions:

1. What is the perceived timeliness and quality of the editorial review processes of accounting journals, both as a whole and individually?
2. When accounting journals are grouped based on their functional specialty, do differences in the timeliness or quality of the editorial review process appear across these groupings?
3. When accounting journals are grouped based on the geographical region of their editorial offices, do differences in the timeliness or quality of the editorial review process appear across these groupings?

## **METHOD**

### **Sample**

The study examines authors' views about accounting journals' editorial review processes. The set of accounting journals examined in the present study includes the list of accounting journals commonly appearing in recent journal ranking exercises (e.g., Lowe and Locke, 2005). Forty journals comprise the sample of the present study, an alphabetical listing of which can be found in Appendix B. The journals represent what are commonly viewed as the main accounting journals and includes a mixture of journals published in North America, Europe, Asia, and Australasia. The study limited the source of its data to the two year period 2004 and 2005 as a way to produce a sample that was sufficiently large enough to test the study's research questions, while effectively managing the threat that a longer sample period would have on author recall.

For sampling purposes, unless the number of main/feature articles of any given journal was more than 40 during the two year period, all corresponding authors with publications during 2004 and 2005 in the given journal were sent a questionnaire. For those journals in which the number of main/feature articles was greater than 40 during the two year period, a random sample of 40 articles was chosen and the corresponding authors of these 40 articles were sent a questionnaire.

### **Questionnaire**

Data was collected using a web-based questionnaire, which was developed by the authors. A pilot test of the questionnaire was conducted using a small group of academics with considerable experience in research and publication. The pilot test revealed that the questions were clear, meaningful, and the time required to complete the questionnaire was reasonable. The questionnaire consisted of three parts: (a) authors' views on the editorial process for an

accepted article, (b) views on the editorial process for a rejected article, and (c) demographic data. The questions included in the questionnaire focus on several dimensions of quality that can be expected in the editorial review process (e.g., the timeliness and content/substance of feedback). The corresponding authors of articles published in Appendix B's list of 40 journals during the period 1 January 2004 and 31 December 2005 were contacted in October 2006 and sent a link to the web site containing the questionnaire (see Appendix C for a copy of questionnaire). A second response request was made in December 2006 and the web-site closed on 9 February 2007. Participation was voluntary and ethical clearance for the research project was obtained from the relevant Ethics Committee of the researchers' University.

### **Responses**

A total of 298 responses were received, providing a response rate of 30%. Table 1 provides a reconciliation of the response rate. As this table reveals, 63 authors could not be contacted and another 13 authors declined to participate due to a perceived inappropriateness (i.e., an invited piece), a perceived conflict of interest (i.e., being an editor), or an unwillingness to participate.

[insert Table 1 about here]

### **Sample characteristics**

Table 2 shows a summary of responses by name of journal. Responses indicate that 72% of the participants are male and 25% female and 3% left the question unanswered. Responses are present from all three tiers of journals, with nearly one-half of the responses coming from what are commonly perceived as lower or tier-3 journals. As Table 2 reveals, responses are fairly evenly distributed across journals with editorial review offices in the three major regions of North America, Europe, Australasia.

[insert Table 2 about here]

## **Results**

Prior to the statistical testing of this paper's three research questions, some initial reliability and validity assessment of the data was conducted using a principal components factor analysis. All data except question #13 (which solicited one, global, overall perception of editorial review process quality) was included in two separate factor analyses: one that examined the perceptions related to accepted manuscripts and another examining the perceptions related to rejected manuscripts. Since the two factor analyses produced similar results, this paper reports the results from the data of accepted manuscripts.

Inspection of the correlation matrix showed many factors with coefficients of 0.3 or above. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was high (85%) and the results of the Bartlett's test of Sphericity was significant (Chi-Square = 2867;  $p < 0.01$ ), indicating the suitability of the correlation matrix for factoring. The results of principal component analysis revealed four factors with eigenvalues greater than 1. Item 10, which asked respondents to comment on the advice the journal editor provided on occasions when there was an inconsistency in reviewer comments, was the only questionnaire item not to load on any of the four factors.

The four factors collectively explained 67.4% of the variance (factor 1, 40.3%; factor 2, 10.4%; factor 3, 9.7%; and factor 4, 7%). By classifying the questions used in the instrument under each of these factors, 4 different factors relating to the dimensions of feedback quality of the journal editorial process could be identified (see Table 3). These four factors are as follows.

Factor 1: Timeliness of feedback (Cronbach's alpha = 0.811)



Factor 2: Substance/quality of feedback (Cronbach's alpha = 0.918)

Factor 3: Timeliness of publication (Cronbach's alpha = 0.694)

Factor 4: Tone of feedback (Cronbach's alpha = 0.606)

[insert Table 3 about here]

Factors 1 and 2 exhibited Cronbach's alphas above the commonly used threshold of 70%. Factor 3 was nominally below this threshold, while Factor 4 was substantially below it. Accordingly, only the factor scores for Factors 1 and 2 are used in the data analysis. The unaggregated item scores are used for analysing timeliness of publication and the tone of feedback. Unaggregated item scores are also provided for timeliness of feedback and substance/quality of review to further aid readers in their own interpretations of the data. Finally, the data analysis also includes the one overall survey question that seeks respondents' views of their overall perception of a given journal's editorial review process (see question #13 in Appendix B).

Research question 1 sought to examine the perceived quality of the editorial review processes of accounting journals, both as a whole and individually. Table 4 shows authors' perceptions for the pooled set of 40 accounting journals' editorial review processes. The mean values are the combined product of authors' experiences with accepted and rejected manuscripts. Not every respondent answered every question, and therefore the total number of responses for each item varied from 536 – 552. Furthermore, not every respondent completed Part B of the questionnaire, which asked respondents about their journal experiences with their most recently rejected manuscript. Accordingly, while there were about 290 responses for each question relating to accepted manuscripts, there were only about 250 responses to the

questions about rejected manuscripts. Table 4 is consequently based on a greater representation of accepted authors' experiences.

[insert Table 4 about here]

Panel A of Table 4 shows mean values at or near 2. On those occasions where the relevant scale is anchored by "very acceptable" at one end and "very unacceptable" at the other, a value of 2 indicates a positive perception. It should be noted, however, that responses to questions 1 and 3 are defined in terms of months. In particular, a value of 2 means that it took between 3-6 months to receive reviewer comments. Such a period of time substantially exceeds the time frames noted above, where various journals' reviewer guidelines and editorial policy statements make reference to 4-6 weeks for reviewers to provide their feedback. Even assuming that an editor requires another two weeks to finalise and send out a decision letter, thereby lengthening the process to 6-8 weeks, it would appear that the average author's experience falls short of what many journals seek to promise.

Panel B shows mean values that are close to 2.5. All the items are anchored by "Very acceptable" at one end and "very unacceptable" at the other. As such, authors' average experiences with the feedback quality offered might best be described as slightly positive.

Panel C provides data about the timeliness of the publication process. As such, it is only relevant to and consists of the experiences of authors who responded to the survey questions about their accepted manuscripts. In answering the questions about the timeliness of publication, authors are saying that it takes on average 7-9 months from the time that their paper is accepted until the time that it is published. Question 6's mean value of almost 2 indicates that authors find this time lag between a paper's acceptance and its publication to be quite acceptable.

Panel D shows the mean values associated with authors' perceptions about the tone of feedback received. Generally speaking, the authors find the tone to be midway between acceptable and unacceptable. Question 11 does deviate a little from this generalisation. In particular, a value of 3.8 indicates that respondents believe reviewers on average lean more in the direction of not being interested in engaging the author in dialogue. Such a result is consistent with the idea that reviewers serve more as judges of a paper's publishability and less as trainers of future researchers.

Panel E shows authors' perceptions of the overall editorial review process of accounting journals. The mean score of 2.48 indicates that authors have a slightly positive overall view.

Table 5 reports similar statistics about the editorial review processes of the entire set of 40 accounting journals, but does so by looking only at authors' experiences with their accepted manuscripts. The results are more positive than Table 4's, and these more positive perceptions are statistically significant. In general, the authors of accepted manuscripts have slightly to quite strongly positive perceptions of the editorial review processes. It is only on the tone of feedback questionnaire items that perceptions of the editorial review process are more muted. Here the average score is close to 3, indicating a neutral view of the editorial review process.

[insert Table 5 about here]

The significant differences in the mean scores between authors' accepted and rejected experiences indicated that the use of pooled accepted and rejected perceptions to gauge a journal's editorial feedback processes would not be appropriate. This conclusion is reached for the following two reasons. First, it appears that it is likely that a halo effect could be

occurring, whereby the authors remember editorial review process more favorably for accepted manuscripts than rejected manuscripts. As a second reason for not pooling the data, it was observed that the vast majority of rejection experiences related to what this paper calls the “Top 5” accounting journals. Such an occurrence is not surprising. As noted earlier in this paper, there is substantial pressure these days on academics to publish in “top” journals. Academics are therefore likely to target these top journals. These “top” journals have much higher rejection rates, with some approaching 90%. Accordingly, if the perceptions relating to rejected manuscripts were pooled with the accepted manuscript data, the effect would be to skew (in a negative direction) the performance of the “top” journals. Any comparisons between journals would be compromised.

Table 6 provides median scores of the editorial review process for every journal that had five or more author responses. The analysis was conducted using median scores due to the low sample sizes associated with some of the journals. Also shown in the table are the median scores for the “Top-5” journals. While the set of five journals has earned its reputation based on their perceived influence as opposed to their editorial review processes, the inclusion of a combined score for the “Top-5” accounting journals is offered as a way to explore if journals with supposedly high influence are also associated with better editorial review processes. Furthermore, the presentation of a combined “Top-5” score offers the opportunity to create a benchmark, which can be used gauge other journals’ performance.

[insert Table 6 about here]

As Table 6 shows, there is substantial variation in individual journal’s timeliness of review. Question 1, for example, asks respondents to report how long it took to receive the reviewers’ comments on their initial submission. Table 6 reveals a range of median scores between 1 and 2. It should be noted that a score of 1 equates to less than three months, while a score of

2 equates to 3-6 months. In other words, respondents are indicating an approximately three month difference.

The “Top-5” journals as a group appear in the middle of the table. As noted earlier in this paper, there is increasing pressure on authors to publish in what are perceived to be top journals (Mozier, 2009). Evidence suggests that the editorial review processes of these top journals are being inundated with ever greater numbers of manuscripts, making it potentially harder for these top journals to provide timely feedback. The data, however, does not really support this contention. Three of the “Top-5” journals are in the top half of the table, with two of the journals being in the top three. It would appear that some factor or set of factors other than the number of manuscripts received by a journal explains the differences in feedback timeliness. One possible factor might be the quality of feedback a journal provides. In particular, it might be argued that higher quality feedback takes longer time to provide.

Table 7 provides median scores of authors’ perceptions of different journal’s quality of review. Again, there is substantial variation in the scores, with Question 9f and the factor score exhibiting the greatest amount of variation. Question 9f asks respondents for their perceptions about the consistency of the reviews provided. Better scoring journals generally had median scores of 1, while the “Top-5” yardstick and journals appearing below it had scores of 2 and sometimes 3. The factor scores showed a spread ranging from median scores of 1.2 to 2.7. The variation on the other questions displayed a range in median scores from 1 to 2.

[insert Table 7 about here]

No formal hypothesis was presented about the relationship between the timeliness and quality of editorial feedback. A *post-hoc* test was conducted to explore the possibility of such a

relationship. In particular, if the act of ensuring higher quality reviews causes the occurrence of less timely feedback, then a significant negative correlation should exist between quality and timeliness.

Both parametric and non-parametric correlation tests showed that this was not the case. In fact, the observed correlations were .47 and .46 for the Pearson and Spearman's correlation respectively, with both correlations being statistically significant at the  $p < .01$  level. Such a finding undermines the idea of there being a tradeoff between quality and timeliness, and instead suggests the opposite.

Table 8 displays authors' perceptions of the various journals' publication timeliness. There is a wide spread in the median scores on Question 5. A score of 1 indicates an elapsed time of less than three months between the time a paper is accepted and its publication, while a score of 4 indicates a lag of between 10-12 months. The most frequent median score is 3, which equates to 7-9 months.

[insert Table 8 Examines about here]

The scores for Question 6 reveal that authors are generally quite satisfied with these publication times. Only three journals have median scores greater than 2. Even the "Top-5" journals are associated with good levels of satisfaction. Thus, in spite of the view that these journals are being inundated with a flood of manuscripts, the journals appear to be achieving timely publication of the manuscripts they accept, or at least as timely as most other accounting journals.

Table 9 reports author perceptions about the tone of the feedback they are given. Question 9e indicates that the feedback is best seen as straddling the divide between personal and impersonal. Question 11 indicates that the reviewers of about two-thirds of the journals

engage in moderate levels of with the author, while a third of the journals engage in very minimal dialogue. Almost invariably, as revealed in responses to Question 12, authors want the reviewers to engage in greater dialogue. In other words, the data suggests that authors would like the role of the reviewers to go beyond being simply a judge of a paper's publishability.

[insert Table 9 about here]

The exploration for differences in the editorial review process across journals' functional speciality is the subject of Research Question 2. Functional specialty was determined by reference to each journal's editorial policy. The following classifications were created: generalist, accounting and finance, management accounting, and other. The final classification primarily consisted of journals with editorial aims emphasising accounting history, accounting education, or critical accounting.

Table 11 provides the results. Timeliness differences are noted on Question 3 and the factor score between generalist accounting journals and the grouping called "other" journals. The former set of journals is seen to provide less timely feedback between the time a paper is resubmitted and reviewer comments are received by the author than the latter set of journals (see Panel A of Table 10).

[insert Table 10 about here]

The quality of the editorial feedback is fairly consistent across the functional specialities, with one exception. Question 9c, which relates to authors' perceptions of the constructiveness of the reviewers' comments, indicates that management accounting journals are rated as significantly better than both generalist and "other" classification of accounting journals (see Panel B).

The timeliness of journal publication reveals a significant difference on Question 5 between management accounting journals and the other three groupings. Management accounting journals are perceived to offer quicker, earlier publication times than the other sets of journals (see Panel C).

The functional speciality of a journal was not related to authors' perceptions of the tone of feedback or the overall editorial review process (see Panels D and E).

Research Question 3 addresses whether there are any associated differences between the location of a journal's editorial offices and the reported quality of editorial review process. The editorial offices' locations were classified into North America, Europe, and Australasia. A breakdown of the responses received from each region shows that 40% of the responses were from North America, while 35% and 25% respectively were from Europe and Australasia. Table 11 reports the results.

[insert Table 11 about here]

As Panel A of Table 11 shows, the North American headquartered journals are associated with more timely editorial review processes than their European counterparts. For example, on Question 1 the median score for North American journals is 1.7 compared to a median score of 2.0 for European journals. Although the effect size is only .3, when matched to the question this effect translates into a full month's difference. There were no statistically significant differences between Australasian journals and other geographically-based journals on this dimension of editorial review timeliness.



Panel B reveals a statistically significant difference on Question 9f between North American and European journals. In particular, North American journals are perceived to provide more consistent comments than European journals. Again, there were no statistically significant differences between Australasian journals and other geographically-based journals for feedback quality.

Panel C shows a difference between North American and European journals for Question 6, which relates to the timeliness of publication. North American journals are rated as having more acceptable elapsed times between a paper's acceptance and its publication. Australasian journals exhibited no statistically significant differences on this publication timeliness dimension and other geographically-based journals.

No differences were noted between the geographical location of journals and the tone of feedback (see Panel D). There was, however, a statistically significant difference between the perceived quality of the editorial feedback of the different geographically located journals. In particular, North American and Australian-based journals were perceived as having superior overall editorial review processes than European-based journals (see Panel E).

## **CONCLUSION**

An accounting scholar's ability to publish, and to publish in academic as opposed to professional accounting journals, is becoming an increasingly important measure of his/her job performance (Jones and Roberts, 2005; Brown, Jones, and Steele, 2007). As universities and academic units jostle for reputation supremacy, and as greater demands for accountability are placed on academic institutions by their funding governments, publication proficiency has

become a guiding metric. This mentality is well captured in a *Duke Magazine*, which reported:

*Love them or hate them, college rankings appeal to a culture that worships consumer choice and is seduced by prestige value (Duke Magazine, September – October, 2001, p. 3).*

Publications have always featured prominently as part of an accounting academic's job. Increasingly, especially as the result of business schools seeking to establish their academic legitimacy by adopting the same publication yardsticks as their traditional, non-business school colleagues, as well as the introduction of various government research funding initiatives (e.g., the RAE in the UK and Performance Based Research Funding (PBRF) in New Zealand), the need to publish – and to do so in what are considered top tier journals - has taken on greater urgency.

The publication process is a function of three main parties: the submitting authors, the reviewers, and the editors. Weakness in any one of these three areas is likely to degrade the publication process and lead to poorer published outputs.

This paper focused on authors' perceptions of the quality of the editorial review processes of accounting journals, both at the macro field level as well as at the individual journal level. In particular, the paper reports authors' perceptions of how well reviewers and editors (certainly in an indirect fashion) are executing their roles. The paper reveals that accounting journals, at least generally speaking, are achieving good standards of editorial review quality. Some journals, however, are seen as having superior editorial review processes. Furthermore, authors' perceptions of journals' editorial review processes show some statistically significant differences for journal functional specialty and the geographic location of the

editorial offices. Management accounting journals were generally perceived as better than the other functional specialities, while accounting journals with North American editorial review offices were rated better than accounting journals with European Editorial review offices. What is causing these functional speciality and location of editorial review office relationships to occur could prove an interesting line of future inquiry.

This study comes with the usual set of caveats. First, the sample size for some journal titles is small. Attempts to minimise the sample size problem included eschewing statistical analysis for journal titles with less than five responses, using median scores, and choosing to focus, although not exclusively, at the group level (i.e., using such grouping variables as location of editorial offices and a journal's functional speciality).

A second limitation of this study concerns the length of the interval between the collection of data and the period to which the data relates. Authors who published an article in one of the 40 accounting journals during the 2004 and 2005 period were candidates for inclusion in the research. A conscious choice was made to limit the window of potential respondent inclusion to this two-year period as a means to minimise memory recall problems, even though such a choice contributed to the small sample size issue discussed above. While the collection of data occurred shortly after 2005, it is nevertheless recognised that it is possible that some authors may have begun the journal review process 2-4 years before the publication date. It is therefore possible that memory recall may not be perfect and could affect this paper's results.

Notwithstanding these limitations, these findings suggest that some sets of accounting journals have superior editorial review processes to other sets of journals. Hopefully, journal editors and reviewers of all journals, but especially those working for journals whose editorial

review processes are perceived as lagging, will seek to improve their performance. Certainly, if it is the intention of the business disciplines, with accounting being one of them, to project a more scholarly and scientific profile (as evidenced through publications), then they are well advised to do all they can to improve their editorial review processes.

**Table 1: Response rate**

|                          |           |
|--------------------------|-----------|
| Surveys sent             | 1042      |
| Less: Returned emails    | <u>63</u> |
| Total responses possible | 979       |
| Responses received:      |           |
| Completed surveys        | 294       |
| Declined to participate  | <u>13</u> |
| Total responses          | 307       |
| Response rate            | 30%       |

**Table 2: Response rate for each journal included in the sample**

| Journal  | No. of responses* | No. of surveys sent | Response rate |
|--|-------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| Abacus   | 5                 | 22                  | 22.7%         |
| Accounting and Business Research (ABR)                               | 10                | 22                  | 45.5%         |
| Accounting and Finance (AF)  | 9                 | 45                  | 20.0%         |
| Accounting and the Public Interest (API)                             | 3                 | 8                   | 37.5%         |
| Accounting, Auditing and Accountability Journal (AAAJ)               | 12                | 30                  | 26.7%         |
| Accounting, Business and Financial History (ABFH)                    | 5                 | 25                  | 20.0%         |
| Accounting Education (AE)  | 4                 | 36                  | 30.6%         |
| Accounting Education: an international journal (AEIJ)                | 10                |                     |               |
| Accounting Forum (A. Forum)  | 11                | 37                  | 27.0%         |
| Accounting Historians Journal (AHJ)                                  | 9                 | 26                  | 30.8%         |
| Accounting Horizons (AH)   | 9                 | 24                  | 37.5%         |
| Accounting, Organizations and Society (AOS)                          | 6                 | 32                  | 18.8%         |
| Accounting Review (TAR)  | 12                | 40                  | 27.5%         |
| Advances in Accounting (AA)  | 3                 | 12                  | 33.3%         |
| Advances in International Accounting (AIA)                           | 2                 | 22                  | 9.1%          |
| Auditing: A Journal of Practice and Theory (AJPT)                    | 2                 | 28                  | 7.1%          |
| Australian Accounting Review (AAR)                                   | 13                | 47                  | 27.7%         |
| Behavioral Research in Accounting (BRA)                              | 4                 | 17                  | 23.5%         |
| British Accounting Review (BAR)                                      | 7                 | 24                  | 29.2%         |
| Contemporary Accounting Research (CAR)                               | 10                | 36                  | 25.0%         |
| Critical Perspectives on Accounting (CPA)                            | 11                | 38                  | 21.1%         |
| European Accounting Review (EAR)                                     | 17                | 42                  | 40.5%         |
| Financial Accountability and Management (FAM)                        | 12                | 31                  | 38.7%         |
| International Journal of Accounting (IJA)                            | 5                 | 25                  | 20.0%         |
| Irish Accounting Review (IAR)  | 4                 | 14                  | 28.6%         |
| Issues in Accounting Education (IAE)                                 | 2                 | 24                  | 8.3%          |
| Journal of Accounting, Auditing and Finance (JAAF)                   | 5                 | 35                  | 14.3%         |
| Journal of Accounting and Economics (JAE)                            | 6                 | 35                  | 20.0%         |
| Journal of Accounting and Public Policy (JAPP)                       | 6                 | 31                  | 19.4%         |
| Journal of Accounting Education (JAE)                                | 4                 | 12                  | 16.7%         |
| Journal of Accounting Literature (JAL)                               | 1                 | 6                   | 16.7%         |
| Journal of Accounting Research (JAR)                                 | 5                 | 38                  | 13.2%         |
| Journal of Business Finance and Accounting (JBFA)                    | 10                | 43                  | 23.3%         |
| Journal of International Accounting Research (JIAR)                  | 4                 | 13                  | 30.8%         |
| Journal of International Financial Management and Accounting (JIFMA) | 5                 | 16                  | 31.3%         |
| Journal of Management Accounting Research (JMAR)                     | 6                 | 17                  | 35.3%         |
| Management Accounting Research (MAR)                                 | 16                | 30                  | 50.0%         |
| Pacific Accounting Review (PAR)                                      | 5                 | 8                   | 62.5%         |
| Qualitative Research in Accounting and Management (QRAM)             | 1                 | 0                   |               |
| Review of Accounting Studies (RAS)                                   | 4                 | 27                  | 14.8%         |
| No journal name indicated by respondents                             | 20                |                     |               |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>289</b>        | <b>1,018</b>        |               |

**Table 3: Survey questions relating to four factors**

**FACTOR 1: Timeliness of the review process [Cronbach's Alpha = 0.811]**

- Q 1. How long did it take to receive the reviewers' comments on your initial submission?
- Q 2. How acceptable would you rate this part of the review process?
- Q 3. How long did it take to receive the reviewers' comments following your first resubmission? If revisions were not required, go to Q 5.
- Q 4. How acceptable would you rate this part of the review process?

**FACTOR 2: Substance/Quality of feedback [Cronbach's Alpha = 0.918]**

- Q 8. Did the reviewers' comments show a good understanding of your paper?
- Q 9. Were the reviewers' comments:
- |                   |                     |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| very clear        | very unclear        |
| very helpful      | very unhelpful      |
| very constructive | very unconstructive |
| very respectful   | very condescending  |
| very consistent   | very inconsistent   |

**FACTOR 3: Timeliness of the publication process [Cronbach's Alpha = 0.694]**

- Q 5. How long did it take between the time your paper was accepted and the time it was published?
- Q 6. How acceptable would you rate this part of the review process?

**FACTOR 4: Tone of feedback [Cronbach's Alpha = 0.606]**

- Q 9. Were the reviewers' comments: very personal very impersonal
- Q 11. Did the reviewers' comments seek to engage you in a dialogue?
- Q 12. Do you think reviewers should seek to promote dialogue?

**Table 4**

**Accepted and rejected authors' perceptions of editorial review processes for entire set of accounting journals (5-point scale; the lower the score the more positive the perception)**

**Panel A: Mean values of authors perceptions of timeliness (with standard deviations shown in parentheses)**

| <b>Q1</b>   | <b>Q2</b>   | <b>Q3</b>  | <b>Q4</b>   | <b>Factor score</b> |
|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|---------------------|
| 2.00 (1.00) | 2.30 (1.34) | 1.73 (.91) | 2.12 (1.34) | 2.00 (.97)          |

**Panel B: Mean values of authors' perceptions of feedback quality (with standard deviations shown in parentheses)**

| <b>Q8</b>      | <b>Q9a</b>     | <b>Q9b</b>     | <b>Q9c</b>     | <b>Q9d</b>     | <b>Q9f</b>     | <b>Factor score</b> |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|
| 2.41<br>(1.35) | 2.10<br>(1.08) | 2.57<br>(1.31) | 2.56<br>(1.34) | 2.38<br>(1.24) | 2.62<br>(1.20) | 2.91<br>(1.31)      |

**Panel C: Mean values of authors' perceptions of timeliness of publication (with standard deviations shown in parentheses)**

| <b>Q5</b>   | <b>Q6</b>   |
|-------------|-------------|
| 3.02 (1.19) | 1.98 (1.09) |

**Panel D: Mean values of authors' perceptions of tone of feedback (with standard deviations shown in parentheses)**

| <b>Q9e</b>  | <b>Q11</b>  | <b>Q12</b>  |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 3.29 (1.03) | 3.81 (1.17) | 2.85 (1.23) |

**Panel E: Mean value of authors' perceptions of overall editorial review process (with standard deviation shown in parentheses)**

| <b>Q13</b>  |
|-------------|
| 2.48 (1.24) |

**Table 5**  
**Accepted authors' perceptions of editorial review processes for entire set of accounting journals (5-point scale; the lower the score the more positive the perception)**

**Panel A: Mean values of authors' perceptions of timeliness (with standard deviations shown in parentheses)**

| Q1         | Q2          | Q3         | Q4          | Factor score |
|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|--------------|
| 1.84 (.90) | 1.97 (1.14) | 1.56 (.77) | 1.83 (1.14) | 1.79 (.81)   |

**Panel B: Mean values of authors' perceptions of feedback quality (with standard deviations shown in parentheses)**

| Q8            | Q9a           | Q9b           | Q9c           | Q9d           | Q9f           | Factor score  |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1.65<br>(.84) | 1.68<br>(.75) | 1.90<br>(.93) | 1.84<br>(.91) | 1.83<br>(.91) | 2.16<br>(.99) | 1.79<br>(.81) |

**Panel C: Mean values of authors' perceptions of timeliness of publication (with standard deviations shown in parentheses)**

| Q5          | Q6          |
|-------------|-------------|
| 3.02 (1.19) | 1.98 (1.09) |

**Panel D: Mean values of authors' perceptions of tone of feedback (with standard deviations shown in parentheses)**

| Q9e         | Q11         | Q12         |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 3.15 (1.05) | 3.36 (1.21) | 2.73 (1.21) |

**Panel E: Mean value of authors' perceptions of overall editorial review process (with standard deviation shown in parentheses)**

| Q13        |
|------------|
| 1.84 (.86) |



**Table 6: Accepted authors' perceptions of feedback timeliness (median scores shown with ordering based on simple average factor score for timeliness)**

| Journal name    | n         | Question 1 | Question 2 | Question 3 | Question 4 | Factor score |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| AHJ             | 9         | 1.0        | 1.0        | 1.0        | 1.0        | 1.0          |
| JAR             | 5         | 1.0        | 1.0        | 1.0        | 1.0        | 1.0          |
| JAE             | 6         | 1.0        | 1.0        | 1.0        | 1.0        | 1.1          |
| JMAR            | 6         | 1.5        | 1.0        | 1.0        | 1.0        | 1.1          |
| AF              | 9         | 1.0        | 1.0        | 1.0        | 1.0        | 1.3          |
| AH              | 9         | 2.0        | 1.0        | 1.0        | 1.0        | 1.3          |
| CPA             | 11        | 1.0        | 1.0        | 1.0        | 1.0        | 1.3          |
| CAR             | 10        | 1.5        | 2.0        | 1.0        | 1.5        | 1.4          |
| ABFH            | 5         | 1.0        | 2.0        | 1.0        | 1.0        | 1.5          |
| AE:IJ           | 10        | 1.5        | 2.0        | 1.0        | 1.0        | 1.5          |
| BAR             | 7         | 2.0        | 1.0        | 2.0        | 1.0        | 1.5          |
| IJA             | 5         | 2.0        | 2.0        | 1.0        | 1.0        | 1.5          |
| JAPP            | 6         | 2.0        | 1.0        | 1.0        | 1.0        | 1.5          |
| <b>“Top- 5”</b> | <b>39</b> | <b>2.0</b> | <b>2.0</b> | <b>1.0</b> | <b>1.0</b> | <b>1.5</b>   |
| TAR             | 12        | 2.0        | 2.0        | 2.0        | 1.5        | 1.6          |
| FAM             | 12        | 2.0        | 2.0        | 1.5        | 2.0        | 1.6          |
| A.Fourm         | 11        | 2.0        | 2.0        | 1.0        | 2.0        | 1.8          |
| AAAJ            | 10        | 2.0        | 2.0        | 1.0        | 1.5        | 1.8          |
| AAR             | 13        | 2.0        | 2.0        | 1.5        | 1.5        | 1.8          |
| ABR             | 10        | 2.0        | 2.0        | 2.0        | 1.5        | 1.8          |
| JAF             | 5         | 1.0        | 1.0        | 2.0        | 2.0        | 1.8          |
| JBFA            | 10        | 2.0        | 2.5        | 1.5        | 1.5        | 1.9          |
| ABACUS          | 5         | 2.0        | 2.0        | 2.0        | 2.0        | 2.0          |
| JIFMA           | 5         | 2.0        | 2.0        | 2.0        | 2.0        | 2.0          |
| MAR             | 16        | 2.0        | 2.0        | 1.5        | 1.0        | 2.0          |
| PAR             | 5         | 2.0        | 2.0        | 1.0        | 1.0        | 2.3          |
| AOS             | 6         | 2.5        | 2.5        | 2.0        | 2.5        | 2.5          |
| EAR             | 17        | 2.0        | 3.0        | 2.0        | 3.0        | 2.5          |

**Table 7: Accepted authors' perceptions of feedback quality (median scores shown with ordering based on the factor score for feedback quality)**

| <b>Journal name</b> | <b>n</b>  | <b>Question 8</b> | <b>Question 9a</b> | <b>Question 9b</b> | <b>Question 9c</b> | <b>Question 9d</b> | <b>Question 9f</b> | <b>Factor score</b> |
|---------------------|-----------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| JAF                 | 5         | 1.0               | 1.0                | 1.0                | 1.0                | 1.0                | 1.0                | 1.2                 |
| AHJ                 | 9         | 2.0               | 1.0                | 1.0                | 1.0                | 1.0                | 2.0                | 1.4                 |
| JAPP                | 6         | 1.0               | 1.0                | 1.0                | 1.0                | 1.0                | 2.0                | 1.4                 |
| CAR                 | 10        | 1.0               | 1.0                | 1.0                | 1.0                | 1.0                | 1.0                | 1.5                 |
| ABACUS              | 5         | 2.0               | 1.0                | 1.0                | 1.0                | 1.0                | 1.0                | 1.6                 |
| JAE                 | 6         | 1.0               | 1.0                | 2.0                | 1.0                | 1.0                | 1.0                | 1.6                 |
| JAR                 | 5         | 1.0               | 1.0                | 1.0                | 1.0                | 1.0                | 1.0                | 1.6                 |
| JIFMA               | 5         | 2.0               | 1.0                | 1.0                | 1.0                | 1.0                | 2.0                | 1.6                 |
| JMAR                | 6         | 1.0               | 1.0                | 1.0                | 1.0                | 2.0                | 1.5                | 1.7                 |
| <b>“Top-5”</b>      | <b>39</b> | <b>1.0</b>        | <b>1.0</b>         | <b>2.0</b>         | <b>2.0</b>         | <b>1.0</b>         | <b>2.0</b>         | <b>1.8</b>          |
| MAR                 | 16        | 1.0               | 1.5                | 1.5                | 1.0                | 1.0                | 2.0                | 1.8                 |
| A.Fourm             | 11        | 2.0               | 2.0                | 1.0                | 1.0                | 2.0                | 2.0                | 1.9                 |
| AOS                 | 6         | 1.5               | 1.5                | 1.5                | 2.0                | 1.5                | 2.0                | 2.0                 |
| CPA                 | 11        | 2.0               | 1.0                | 2.0                | 2.0                | 2.0                | 2.0                | 2.1                 |
| ABR                 | 10        | 1.5               | 1.0                | 1.5                | 2.0                | 2.0                | 2.0                | 2.2                 |
| BAR                 | 7         | 1.0               | 2.0                | 2.0                | 2.0                | 2.0                | 3.0                | 2.2                 |
| FAM                 | 12        | 1.0               | 2.0                | 2.0                | 2.0                | 2.0                | 2.0                | 2.3                 |
| AH                  | 9         | 1.0               | 2.0                | 2.0                | 2.0                | 2.0                | 2.0                | 2.4                 |
| AE:IJ               | 10        | 1.5               | 2.0                | 2.0                | 2.0                | 2.0                | 2.0                | 2.4                 |
| JBFA                | 10        | 1.5               | 2.0                | 2.0                | 1.5                | 1.5                | 2.0                | 2.4                 |
| AAAJ                | 12        | 2.0               | 2.0                | 2.0                | 2.0                | 2.0                | 2.0                | 2.4                 |
| ABFH                | 5         | 1.0               | 1.0                | 2.0                | 1.0                | 3.0                | 2.5                | 2.4                 |
| AF                  | 9         | 1.0               | 1.0                | 2.0                | 2.0                | 2.0                | 3.0                | 2.4                 |
| TAR                 | 12        | 2.0               | 2.0                | 2.0                | 2.0                | 2.0                | 2.5                | 2.5                 |
| IJA                 | 5         | 1.0               | 2.0                | 2.0                | 2.0                | 2.0                | 2.0                | 2.6                 |
| PAR                 | 5         | 2.0               | 2.0                | 2.0                | 2.0                | 2.0                | 2.0                | 2.6                 |
| EAR                 | 17        | 2.0               | 2.0                | 2.0                | 2.0                | 2.0                | 3.0                | 2.6                 |
| AAR                 | 13        | 2.0               | 2.0                | 2.0                | 2.0                | 2.0                | 3.0                | 2.7                 |

**Table 8: Accepted authors' perceptions of publication timeliness (median scores shown with table ordering based on simple average of median scores for Questions 5 and 6)**

| <b>Journal name</b> | <b>n</b>  | <b>Question 5</b> | <b>Question 6</b> |
|---------------------|-----------|-------------------|-------------------|
| PAR                 | 5         | 1.0               | 1.0               |
| AH                  | 9         | 2.0               | 1.0               |
| JAPP                | 6         | 2.0               | 1.0               |
| MAR                 | 16        | 2.0               | 1.0               |
| JMAR                | 6         | 2.0               | 1.5               |
| AHJ                 | 9         | 3.0               | 1.0               |
| CAR                 | 10        | 2.5               | 1.5               |
| IJA                 | 5         | 2.0               | 2.0               |
| ABR                 | 10        | 2.5               | 2.0               |
| BAR                 | 7         | 3.0               | 1.5               |
| JAR                 | 5         | 3.5               | 1.0               |
| AOS                 | 6         | 3.0               | 2.0               |
| AAR                 | 13        | 3.0               | 2.0               |
| ABACUS              | 5         | 4.0               | 1.0               |
| ABFH                | 5         | 3.0               | 2.0               |
| AE:IJ               | 10        | 3.0               | 2.0               |
| FAM                 | 12        | 3.0               | 2.0               |
| JAE                 | 6         | 3.0               | 2.0               |
| JAF                 | 5         | 3.0               | 2.0               |
| JIFMA               | 5         | 4.0               | 1.0               |
| TAR                 | 12        | 3.0               | 2.0               |
| <b>“Top-5”</b>      | <b>39</b> | <b>3.0</b>        | <b>2.0</b>        |
| AAAJ                | 12        | 4.0               | 1.5               |
| AF                  | 9         | 4.0               | 2.0               |
| CPA                 | 11        | 4.0               | 3.0               |
| EAR                 | 17        | 4.0               | 3.0               |
| JBFA                | 10        | 4.5               | 3.0               |

**Table 9: Accepted authors' perceptions of feedback tone (median scores shown with table ordering based on simple average of median scores for Questions 9e, 11, and 12)**

| <b>Journal name</b> | <b>n</b>  | <b>Question 9e</b> | <b>Question 11</b> | <b>Question 12</b> |
|---------------------|-----------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| JAPP                | 6         | 2.0                | 2.5                | 1.5                |
| CPA                 | 11        | 3.0                | 2.0                | 2.0                |
| A.Fourm             | 11        | 3.0                | 3.0                | 2.0                |
| ABR                 | 10        | 3.0                | 3.0                | 2.0                |
| JAR                 | 5         | 3.0                | 3.0                | 2.0                |
| JIFMA               | 5         | 3.0                | 3.0                | 2.0                |
| JMAR                | 6         | 3.5                | 3.0                | 1.5                |
| ABACUS              | 5         | 3.5                | 3.0                | 2.0                |
| AOS                 | 6         | 3.0                | 3.0                | 2.5                |
| BAR                 | 7         | 3.0                | 3.0                | 3.0                |
| CAR                 | 10        | 3.0                | 3.0                | 3.0                |
| IJA                 | 5         | 3.0                | 4.0                | 2.0                |
| JAF                 | 5         | 3.0                | 3.0                | 3.0                |
| MAR                 | 16        | 3.0                | 3.0                | 3.0                |
| <b>“Top-5”</b>      | <b>39</b> | <b>3.0</b>         | <b>3.0</b>         | <b>3.0</b>         |
| AAAJ                | 12        | 3.0                | 3.5                | 3.0                |
| ABFH                | 5         | 3.5                | 3.0                | 3.0                |
| AE:IJ               | 10        | 3.0                | 3.5                | 3.0                |
| AAR                 | 13        | 3.0                | 4.0                | 3.0                |
| AH                  | 9         | 3.0                | 4.0                | 3.0                |
| EAR                 | 17        | 3.0                | 4.0                | 3.0                |
| JAE                 | 6         | 3.0                | 4.0                | 3.0                |
| FAM                 | 12        | 3.5                | 4.0                | 3.0                |
| TAR                 | 12        | 3.5                | 4.0                | 3.0                |
| AF                  | 9         | 3.0                | 4.0                | 4.0                |
| AHJ                 | 9         | 3.0                | 5.0                | 3.0                |
| PAR                 | 5         | 3.0                | 4.0                | 4.0                |
| JBFA                | 10        | 3.5                | 5.0                | 4.0                |

**Table 10**  
**Perceived quality of editorial review process by accounting journal functional speciality**  
 (asterisks indicate means that are statistically significant from one another at  $p < .05$ )

**Panel A: Mean values of authors' perceptions of timeliness (with standard deviations shown in parentheses)**

| Functional speciality        | Q1         | Q2         | Q3         | Q4         | Factor score |
|------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| Generalist                   | 1.8 (.85)  | 2.0 (1.15) | 1.6* (.76) | 2.0 (1.16) | 1.9* (.94)   |
| Accounting and Finance (A&F) | 1.7 (1.11) | 1.7 (1.09) | 1.7 (.99)  | 1.7 (1.15) | 1.7 (.95)    |
| Management accounting (MA)   | 2.1 (1.25) | 2.0 (1.38) | 1.5 (.60)  | 1.7 (1.21) | 1.8 (.92)    |
| Other                        | 1.6 (.89)  | 1.8 (1.13) | 1.3* (.72) | 1.5 (.77)  | 1.6* (.67)   |

**Panel B: Mean values of authors' perceptions of feedback quality (with standard deviations shown in parentheses)**

| Functional speciality | Q8        | Q9a       | Q9b        | Q9c        | Q9d        | Q9f        | Factor score |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| Generalist            | 1.7 (.81) | 1.7 (.74) | 1.9 (.99)  | 1.9* (.93) | 1.9 (.95)  | 2.2 (.99)  | 2.3 (.90)    |
| A&F                   | 1.5 (.91) | 1.5 (.76) | 1.8 (.82)  | 1.8 (.82)  | 1.8 (.86)  | 2.0 (1.10) | 2.1 (.87)    |
| MA                    | 1.3 (.48) | 1.4 (.50) | 1.6 (.67)  | 1.3* (.46) | 1.6 (.60)  | 1.8 (.75)  | 1.8 (.92)    |
| Other                 | 1.7 (.97) | 1.7 (.82) | 2.0 (1.00) | 1.9* (.96) | 1.9 (1.01) | 2.2 (1.06) | 2.3 (1.03)   |

**Panel C: Mean values of authors' perceptions of timeliness of publication (with standard deviations shown in parentheses)**

| Functional speciality | Q5          | Q6         |
|-----------------------|-------------|------------|
| Generalist            | 3.1* (1.24) | 2.0 (1.10) |
| A&F                   | 3.4* (1.12) | 2.0 (1.04) |
| MA                    | 2.1* (.66)  | 1.7 (1.12) |
| Other                 | 3.0* (1.12) | 2.0 (1.15) |

**Panel D: Mean values of authors' perceptions of tone of feedback (with standard deviations shown in parentheses)**

| Functional speciality | Q9e        | Q11        | Q12        |
|-----------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Generalist            | 3.2 (1..8) | 3.4 (1.21) | 2.9 (1.31) |
| A&F                   | 3.3 (.97)  | 3.7 (1.03) | 2.9 (1.18) |
| MA                    | 3.1 (.89)  | 3.1 (1.29) | 2.5 (.86)  |
| Other                 | 3.0 (1.09) | 3.4 (1.20) | 2.6 (1.05) |

**Table 10 - continued**

**Perceived quality of editorial review process by accounting journal functional speciality**  
(asterisks denote means that are statistically significant from one another at  $p < .05$ )

**Panel E: Mean value of authors' perceptions of overall editorial review process (with  
standard deviation shown in parentheses)**

| <b>Functional speciality</b> | <b>Q13</b> |
|------------------------------|------------|
| Generalist                   | 2.0 (.94)  |
| A&F                          | 1.6 (.76)  |
| MA                           | 1.5 (.60)  |
| Other                        | 1.7 (.75)  |

**Table 11**  
**Perceived quality of editorial review process by accounting journals' region of editorial offices** (asterisks denote means that are statistically significant from one another at  $p < .05$ )

**Panel A: Mean values of authors' perceptions of timeliness (with standard deviations shown in parentheses)**

| Region of editorial office | Q1         | Q2           | Q3        | Q4          | Factor score |
|----------------------------|------------|--------------|-----------|-------------|--------------|
| North America              | 1.7* (.81) | 1.7* (1.06)  | 1.5 (.77) | 1.6* (1.01) | 1.6* (.76)   |
| Europe                     | 2.0* (.91) | 2.2 * (1.22) | 1.7 (.76) | 2.1* (1.27) | 2.0* (.88)   |
| Australasia                | 1.8 (.88)  | 1.87 (1.03)  | 1.4 (.77) | 1.7 (.97)   | 1.7 (.67)    |

**Panel B: Mean values of authors' perceptions of feedback quality (with standard deviations shown in parentheses)**

| Region      | Q8        | Q9a       | Q9b       | Q9c       | Q9d       | Q9f         | Factor score |
|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|--------------|
| N America   | 1.6 (.84) | 1.6 (.75) | 1.8 (.96) | 1.8 (.97) | 1.8 (.97) | 2.0* (1.00) | 2.1 (.96)    |
| Europe      | 1.7 (.88) | 1.7 (.71) | 2.0 (.91) | 1.9 (.85) | 1.9 (.87) | 2.3* (.98)  | 2.3 (.85)    |
| Australasia | 1.8 (.80) | 1.8 (.80) | 2.0 (.94) | 1.8 (.90) | 1.9 (.95) | 2.3 (1.01)  | 2.3 (.91)    |

**Panel C: Mean values of authors' perceptions of timeliness of publication (with standard deviations shown in parentheses)**

| Region      | Q5         | Q6          |
|-------------|------------|-------------|
| N America   | 3.0 (1.14) | 1.8* (.96)  |
| Europe      | 3.1 (1.22) | 2.2* (1.23) |
| Australasia | 3.0 (1.26) | 2.0 (1.1)   |

**Panel D: Mean values of authors' perceptions of tone of feedback (with standard deviations shown in parentheses)**

| Region      | Q9e        | Q11        | Q12        |
|-------------|------------|------------|------------|
| N America   | 3.1 (1.09) | 3.3 (1.21) | 2.6 (1.23) |
| Europe      | 3.2 (.95)  | 3.5 (1.18) | 3.0 (1.17) |
| Australasia | 3.2 (1.13) | 3.4 (1.23) | 2.8 (1.23) |

**Table 11 - continued**

**Perceived quality of editorial review process by accounting journal functional speciality**  
(asterisks denote means that are statistically significant from one another at  $p < .05$ )

**Panel E: Mean value of authors' perceptions of overall editorial review process (with  
standard deviation shown in parentheses)**

| <b>Region</b> | <b>Q13</b> |
|---------------|------------|
| N America     | 1.7* (.83) |
| Europe        | 2.0* (.92) |
| Australasia   | 1.8 (.82)  |



## Appendix A: Reviewer guidelines for the “Top-5” accounting journals

### AOS

AOS has no formal guidelines. The editor reports that he uses well tested, trusted reviewers; and, as a result, guidelines are not necessary. The reviewers are chosen for their specialist expertise.

Reviewers are asked to complete their reviews within six weeks of being assigned the paper. The journal uses an automatic tracking and reminder system, which is further supported by a personal email communication between the editor and reviewer for overdue reviews.

### CAR

CAR offers the following advice to its reviewers:

#### *Contemporary Accounting Research* - Reviewer Instructions

Please make whatever comments on motivation, theory, method, analysis, results, exposition, etc. that you think would be helpful to the author(s) and the Editor. Also advise on the paper's present or potential contribution to accounting knowledge. In addition to your review report, you will be asked to make general recommendation of either revise, reject, or accept.

#### Submitting Your Review:

There are two possible ways to submit your review. Please select the appropriate method according to the criteria below.

1. If your review is less than two pages long, and does not contain any special formatting, symbols, equations, references, appendices, you can submit your review using the "Reviewer Blind Comments to Author" textbox. This can be done by either typing directly into the box, or copying and pasting from a file. Ensure that the review text does not include your identification.

OR

2. If your review is longer than two pages, and/or contains any special formatting, symbols, equations, references etc., it is preferable that you submit your review as a FILE ATTACHMENT using the "Upload Reviewer Attachment" button above. This will ensure that your formatting is preserved.

Before uploading your review file attachment,

a. Please ensure that it is either a WORD or Adobe .pdf file. The WORD document must be from a 2006 or older version of WORD. Please do not upload a file from WORD 2007.

b. Please ensure that your review file does not contain your identification (i.e. is blinded).

You can check to ensure that it is "blinded" by doing the following:

For WORD files:

- 1.Ensure there is no identifying information in the body of your review report.
- 2.Go to File, Properties, Summary. Delete any identifying info you see here.
- 3.Go to File, Properties, Custom. Occasionally (not often) info will be inserted here. You can go through each heading and click on delete if any info shows up in properties box below.(hint: delete key only becomes active if there is actually something there to delete).
- 4.Save document.

For Adobe .pdf files:

- 1.Ensure there is no identifying information in the body of your review report.
- 2.Go to File, Document Properties, Summary. Delete any identifying info here.
- 3.Save document.

Submitting Confidential Letter or Comments to the Editor:

Submit your cover letter/comments using the "Reviewer Confidential Comments to Editor" text box provided. This can be done by either typing directly into the box, or copying and pasting from a file. We prefer you use the text box whenever possible; however, if you should need to upload your cover letter as an attached file, please clearly specify it as confidential to the editor in the file description.

Marked up Manuscripts:

If you have marked up the manuscript in a way that would be useful to the author(s) or the Editor, you have the option of submitting it either online or in hard copy. If you are able to use the Comment feature available in Adobe, you can upload your marked up version of the manuscript as a Reviewer Attachment. If you prefer to handwrite your comments on the paper, you can send the marked up hard copy by regular mail to the Associate Editor, and indicate this in your cover letter.

If you have any questions, please contact the CAR office at: [car@caaa.ca](mailto:car@caaa.ca).

Thank you again for your assistance to CAR.

JAE

JAE sends all its reviewers the following standard letter:

Dear Professor xxxxxxxx,

Would you find it possible to advise us on the publishability of the enclosed manuscript, "xxxxxxxxxxxx". The manuscript number is: xxxxxxxx.

We request that you impose tough standards and, in particular, place a high price on length. We would like you to give specific attention to two issues: First, what is the contribution of the paper? (Does it address an interesting issue? What does it add to the literature?) Second, is the result explained intuitively, does the explanation make sense and is the process generating the result apparent to the reader?

Please download the paper now, to briefly peruse the paper, and to promptly confirm that you will be able to review the paper. If you do not respond to this letter within ten days you will automatically receive an "uninvited" notice. Please either "agree" or "decline" to review the manuscript upon receipt.

It is the policy of the JAE to keep our turnaround time for papers submitted to a maximum of five (5) weeks from the date of submission to final notification of the author. To maintain prompt editorial decisions, we request that all reviewers adopt a common format for referee reports: (1) a brief letter to the editor, recommending acceptance or rejection; and (2) a copy of a separate report, with comments on the paper and suggestions for revisions and shortening, that is suitable for transmission to the author. (It is not necessary to return the manuscript with your report unless you have written comments on it for the author's benefit.) Please submit this information by logging into the Elsevier Editorial System for JAE at: <http://ees.elsevier.com/jae/>. Your log-in details are below:

In addition, to encourage prompt response from reviewers, we will pay \$150 if the paper is returned within three weeks.

If you are unable to referee the paper, please decline via the JAE EES site (details above) and not by response to this e-mail. Thank you in advance for your help.

## JAR

JAR's review process involves one or two referees in a double blind review process. The reviewers are asked to return a report on the paper within five weeks of being invited to serve as a reviewer. The journal leaves referees open to their own interpretation of what their review should comprise and how it should be written. No specific expectations or instructions are given.

## TAR

TAR offers its reviewers the following guidelines:

### Reviewer Guidelines *The Accounting Review*

This document contains editorial suggestions regarding the review process for *The Accounting Review*, interpretations of recommendation categories on the review form, and other advice for TAR reviewers.

### **Overview**

*The Accounting Review* cannot succeed without constructive, timely evaluations of submitted manuscripts by expert reviewers. Part of the initial screening of a new submission involves keyword searches and other analyses to identify independent reviewers with expertise in the

research area of the submission. If this process identifies a reviewer at a relatively junior level (such as an assistant professor) as a prospective reviewer, it is because that individual is viewed to have expertise in the manuscript's research area, not because the Editor is signaling manuscript quality via the choice of reviewers. That is, relatively junior reviewers should never infer that they are more likely to receive relatively weak manuscripts. The primary basis for reviewer selection is expertise in the area of the submission.

### **Scope**

The mission of *The Accounting Review* is to publish significant research in *all* areas of accounting, broadly defined, including but not limited to accounting information systems, auditing and assurance services, financial accounting, governmental and not-for-profit accounting, international accounting, management accounting, and taxation. Reviewers should never recommend rejection of a manuscript solely because the topical area of a submission overlaps with the topical area featured in one of the section-specific journals of the American Accounting Association.

### **Independence and Conflicts of Interest**

Reviewers should approach the process from an independent and neutral perspective. Occasionally, relationships between the reviewer and author can impair independence. While editors try to avoid known conflicts of interest such as sending a manuscript to one of the author's colleagues or to the author's doctoral supervisor, other conflicts can sometimes emerge for a variety of reasons. If a reviewer perceives any conflict of interest that could impair independence, the reviewer should notify the Editor.

Moreover, although *The Accounting Review* endeavors to achieve a double-blind review process whenever possible, technologies such as the Social Science Research Network often result in a reviewer being aware of a manuscript and its authorship before receiving the review request. The Senior Editor's policy is that prior knowledge of a manuscript does not *necessarily* preclude an independent review, unless the reviewer feels otherwise due to the particular circumstances of that knowledge. Similarly, the fact that a reviewer has been asked to review a previous version of the submitted manuscript leading to its rejection by a different journal does not *necessarily* preclude an independent review, again unless the reviewer feels otherwise. However, in cases such as these or in other cases in which a prospective reviewer feels that s/he cannot approach the exercise from an independent and neutral perspective, the reviewer should decline the request, explaining the circumstances.

### **Review Form**

The *TAR* Review Form is for the editor's benefit (not forwarded to the author). It substitutes for the traditional cover letter from the reviewer to the editor, such that a separate cover letter is no longer necessary. Review comments and feedback notwithstanding, the review process invariably results in a categorical editorial decision: accept, revise, or reject. To help guide this decision, the review form asks reviewers to summarize the overall reaction to a manuscript in one of five categories, as follows:

## **1. Conditional accept**

This category expresses the reviewer's recommendation that the manuscript's incremental contribution is sufficient to warrant publication consideration in *The Accounting Review*. Note that the "conditional" part of this recommendation offers the opportunity to condition the acceptance on a final revision that incorporates the reviewer's suggestions to improve the published version. Thus, the manuscript need not be perfect to warrant a conditional acceptance. Reviewers should not hesitate to use this category even for first-round manuscripts (i.e., new submissions) if the incremental contribution is significant. The impact of *The Accounting Review* hinges on its willingness to publish good manuscripts in a timely manner.

## **2. Revise and resubmit**

This category expresses significant concerns about the manuscript's incremental contribution, while at the same time expressing a reasonable potential that a diligent revision could remedy those concerns. The most important distinction between an invitation to revise and a rejection is whether the concerns that jeopardize a manuscript's incremental contribution can potentially be addressed, short of conducting a different study.

## **3. Uncertain**

Sometimes a reviewer is genuinely unsure whether significant concerns can be remedied. The "uncertain" category is appropriate when the reviewer cannot envision a viable revision path, but holds out hope that the *author* might be able to identify such a path. That said, the "uncertain" category should be used sparingly, as it provides the least guidance to the author and to the editor. "Uncertain" outcomes can lead to multiple-round rejections even after diligent attempts by the author to revise, which is the worst-case scenario for author, reviewer, and editor. If the steps necessary to achieve a successful revision are clear, "revise and resubmit" is the more appropriate category. Conversely, if a candid assessment suggests that a viable revision path is unlikely, reviewers should recommend one of the rejection categories described below.

## **4. Reject due to insufficient contribution**

In principle, only two conclusions justify a rejection: (1) the manuscript's contribution is insufficient or inappropriate for the journal under consideration, or (2) the claimed contribution is doubtful due to threat(s) to the study's validity. This category reflects the first rationale, insufficient contribution. Sometimes a manuscript has no apparent "fatal flaws," but nevertheless offers too modest of an incremental contribution to be suitable for *The Accounting Review*. If such a manuscript's contribution cannot be enhanced short of a different study, this category is the appropriate recommendation. As noted under "Scope," however, this category should never be used to recommend rejection of a manuscript simply because it overlaps with the topical area of one of the AAA Section journals.

## **5. Reject due to validity flaw**

This category is appropriate when a manuscript's claimed contribution is not credible, and the concerns that lead to this conclusion are inherent to the study. If validity concerns are potentially fixable (for example, by a different statistical analysis) and the claimed

contribution is otherwise significant, an invitation to revise and resubmit is more appropriate. However, if addressing significant validity concerns would effectively require a different study, then the study currently under consideration should be rejected.

### **Review Report**

Separate from the review form, reviewers should also submit a report that serves two purposes: (1) additional evaluation guidance for the editor, and (2) constructive feedback for the author. Review reports are forwarded to authors, so reviewers should remove all identifying information from the report.

Constructive reviews often begin with a succinct summary of the study's contribution, from the reviewer's perspective. After this summary, reviewers can summarize the overall conclusion from a cost-benefit perspective: how do the manuscript's strengths compare to its limitations?

Any concerns and suggestions for improvement can then be addressed. Editors and authors often appreciate prioritized concerns, addressing the most important item(s) first, followed by secondary points. Double-digit lists of numerous enumerated concerns are usually less helpful than one, two, or three primary concerns explained at a level that helps the editor and author to understand the most important obstacle(s) to publication. That said, a numbering scheme and/or outline generally aids the revision process if a revision is invited, so long as the numbers are kept manageable.

### **Marked Copy of Manuscript**

At the reviewer's discretion, a reviewer may in certain cases offer annotated comments and/or writing suggestions on a printed copy of the manuscript. The easiest way for the editorial office to handle marked copies is if the reviewer scans the marked copy and submits an electronic Adobe pdf facsimile of the scan along with the review.

## **Appendix B: Journals and their tier associations**

### **Commonly Perceived “Top” 5 Accounting Journals**

Accounting, Organization and Society (AOS)  
Contemporary Accounting Research (CAR)  
Journal of Accounting and Economics (JAE)  
Journal of Accounting Research (JAR)  
The Accounting Review (TAR)

### **Other Accounting Journals**

Abacus  
Accounting, Auditing and Accountability Journal (AAAJ)  
Accounting and Business Research (ABR)  
Accounting and Finance (AF)  
Accounting and the Public Interest (API)  
Accounting Education: An International Journal (AEIJ)  
Accounting Forum  
Accounting Historians Journal (AHJ)  
Accounting History  
Accounting Horizons (AH)  
Accounting, Business and Financial History (ABFH)  
Advances in Accounting (AA)  
Advances in International Accounting (AIA)  
Advances in Management Accounting (ADMA)  
Auditing: A Journal of Practice and Theory (AJPT)  
Australian Accounting Review (AAR)  
Behavioral Research in Accounting (BRA)  
Critical Perspectives on Accounting (CPA)  
Financial Accountability and Management (FAM)  
Irish Accounting Review (IAR)  
Issues in Accounting Education (IAE)  
Journal of Accounting and Public Policy (JAPP)  
Journal of Accounting Education (JAE)  
Journal of Accounting Literature (JAL)  
Journal of Accounting, Auditing and Finance (JAAF)  
Journal of Business Finance and Accounting (JBFA)  
Journal of International Accounting Research (JIAR)  
Journal of International Fin. Management & Acc. (JIFMA)  
Journal of Management Accounting Research (JMAR)  
Management Accounting Research (MAR)  
Pacific Accounting Review (PAR)  
Review of Accounting Studies (RAS)  
The British Accounting Review (BAR)  
The European Accounting Review (EAR)  
The International Journal of Accounting (IJA)

## Appendix C: Research Instrument

### A survey on authors' views on the editorial processes of accounting and finance journals

#### PART A

#### Your experiences with publishing in Journal X

*Instruction: When completing this part of the questionnaire, please use as your point of reference the editorial experience you encountered with the submission of your article referred to in the covering letter.*

*Please note that to ensure your anonymity this questionnaire includes no identifying markers or any links to the covering letter, where the title of the journal is contained. It is for this reason that we kindly ask you to write the title of the journal below.*

**Name of the journal\* :**

\* ( Please note that you are required to answer this question )

Q1. How long did it take to receive the reviewers' comments on your initial submission?

• < 3 months 0 3 - 6 months 0 7 - 9 months 0 10 - 12 months 0 > 12 months

Q2. How acceptable would you rate this part of the review process?

Very acceptable      • 1      • 2      • 3      • 4      • 5      Very unacceptable

Q3. How long did it take to receive the reviewers' comments following your first resubmission?

If revisions were not required, go to Q 5.

• < 3 months 0 3 - 6 months 0 7 - 9 months 0 10 - 12 months 0 > 12 months

Q4. How acceptable would you rate this part of the review process?

Very acceptable      • 1      • 2      • 3      • 4      • 5      Very unacceptable

Q5. How long did it take between the time your paper was accepted and the time it was published?

• < 3 months 0 3 - 6 months 0 7 - 9 months 0 10 - 12 months 0 > 12 months

Q6. How timely would you rate this process?

Very acceptable      • 1      • 2      • 3      • 4      • 5      Very unacceptable

Q7. What other journals & criteria did you use as your comparison for rating the timeliness of the above processes?

Q8. Did the reviewers' comments show a good understanding of your paper?

Yes, definitely      • 1      • 2      • 3      • 4      • 5      No, definitely not



Q9. Were the reviewers' comments:

|                   |     |     |     |     |     |                     |
|-------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|---------------------|
| Very clear        | • I | • 2 | • 3 | • 4 | • 5 | Very unclear        |
| Very helpful      | • I | • 2 | • 3 | • 4 | • 5 | Very unhelpful      |
| Very constructive | • I | • 2 | • 3 | • 4 | • 5 | Very unconstructive |
| Very respectful   | • 1 | • 2 | • 3 | • 4 | • 5 | Very condescending  |
| Very personal     | • 1 | • 2 | • 3 | • 4 | • 5 | Very impersonal     |
| Very consistent   | • 1 | • 2 | • 3 | • 4 | • 5 | Very inconsistent   |

Q10. To the extent that the reviewers' comments were inconsistent across reviewers, did the editor offer advice on how to deal with the lack of consistency?

|                 |     |     |     |     |     |                    |
|-----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------------------|
| Yes, definitely | • I | • 2 | • 3 | • 4 | • 5 | No, definitely not |
|-----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------------------|

Q11. Did the reviewers' comments seek to engage you in a dialogue?

|                 |     |     |     |     |     |                    |
|-----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------------------|
| Yes, definitely | • I | • 2 | • 3 | • 4 | • 5 | No, definitely not |
|-----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------------------|

Q12. Do you think reviewers should seek to promote dialogue?

|                 |     |     |     |     |     |                    |
|-----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------------------|
| Yes, definitely | • 1 | • 2 | • 3 | • 4 | • 5 | No, definitely not |
|-----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------------------|

Q13. Based on your experience in publishing your paper, how would you rate the journal's overall editorial review process? Please be sure to focus on your experience of the editorial review process and not the journal's perceived reputation.

|                    |     |     |     |     |     |                    |
|--------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------------------|
| Exceptionally good | • 1 | • 2 | • 3 | • 4 | • 5 | Exceptionally poor |
|--------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------------------|

Q14. Please describe any particularly noteworthy or significant factors that influence your overall assessment of the editorial review process.

Q15. Will you be submitting future work to this journal? Why or why not?

Q16. If you would like to add further comments about your experience of this editorial review process, please state these below.

**PART B**

**Your experience with a journal that rejected a paper**

*Instructions: when completing this part of the questionnaire, please use as your point of reference the most recent editorial experience relating to a paper of yours that was rejected for publication (whether initially or after revisions) in an academic journal*

Q1. Which journal rejected your -paper?\*

\* ( Please note that you are required to answer this question )

Q2. How long did it take to receive the reviewers' comments on your initial submission?

• < 3 months 0 3 - 6 months 0 7 - 9 months 0 10 - 12 months 0 > 12 months

Q3. How acceptable would you rate this -part of the review -process?

|                 |     |     |     |     |     |                   |
|-----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------------------|
| Very acceptable | • 1 | • 2 | • 3 | • 4 | • 5 | Very unacceptable |
|-----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------------------|

Q4. How long did it take to receive the reviewers' comments following your first

resubmission? If no opportunity for a resubmission was awarded, go to Q 6.

• < 3 months 0 3 - 6 months 0 7 - 9 months 0 10 - 12 months 0 > 12 months

Q5. How acceptable would you rate this part of the review process?

|                 |     |     |     |     |     |                   |
|-----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------------------|
| Very acceptable | • 1 | • 2 | • 3 | • 4 | • 5 | Very unacceptable |
|-----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------------------|

Q6. Did the reviewers' comments show a good understanding of your paper?

|                 |     |     |     |     |     |                    |
|-----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------------------|
| Yes, definitely | • 1 | • 2 | • 3 | • 4 | • 5 | No, definitely not |
|-----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------------------|

Q7. Were the reviewers' comments:

|                   |     |     |     |     |     |                     |
|-------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|---------------------|
| Very clear        | • 1 | • 2 | • 3 | • 4 | • 5 | Very unclear        |
| Very helpful      | • 1 | • 2 | • 3 | • 4 | • 5 | Very unhelpful      |
| Very constructive | • 1 | • 2 | • 3 | • 4 | • 5 | Very unconstructive |
| Very respectful   | • 1 | • 2 | • 3 | • 4 | • 5 | Very condescending  |

|                 |     |     |     |     |     |                   |
|-----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------------------|
| Very personal   | • 1 | • 2 | • 3 | • 4 | • 5 | Very impersonal   |
| Very consistent | • 1 | • 2 | • 3 | • 4 | • 5 | Very inconsistent |

Q8. To the extent that the reviewers' comments were inconsistent, did the editor offer advice on how to deal with the lack of consistency?

|                 |     |     |     |     |     |                    |
|-----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------------------|
| Yes, definitely | • 1 | • 2 | • 3 | • 4 | • 5 | No, definitely not |
|-----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------------------|

Q9. Did the reviewers' comments expose you to new ways of thinking about your paper's research?

|                 |     |     |     |     |     |                    |
|-----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------------------|
| Yes, definitely | • 1 | • 2 | • 3 | • 4 | • 5 | No, definitely not |
|-----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------------------|

Q 10. Did the reviewers' comments seek to engage you in a dialogue?

|                 |     |     |     |     |     |                    |
|-----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------------------|
| Yes, definitely | • 1 | • 2 | • 3 | • 4 | • 5 | No, definitely not |
|-----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------------------|

Q 11. Do you think reviewers should seek to promote dialogue?

|                 |     |     |     |     |     |                    |
|-----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------------------|
| Yes, definitely | • 1 | • 2 | • 3 | • 4 | • 5 | No, definitely not |
|-----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------------------|

Q 1 2 Based on your experience of having your paper rejected by the journal, how would you rate the journal's overall editorial review process?

Please be sure to focus on your experience of the editorial review process and not the journal's perceived reputation.

|                    |     |     |     |     |     |                    |
|--------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------------------|
| Exceptionally good | • 1 | • 2 | • 3 | • 4 | • 5 | Exceptionally poor |
|--------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------------------|

Q13 .Please describe any particularly noteworthy or significant factors that influence your overall assessment of the editorial review process.

Q14.Will you be submitting future work to this journal? Why or why not?

Q 1 5.If you would like to add further comments about your experience of this editorial review process, please state these below.

PART C  
**Demographics**

Please answer the following questions:

Your academic title:

Type of institution at which you are employed:

University:

Other (please specify):

Country in which your institution is located:

The approximate number of academic articles you have published:

The approximate number of academic articles you have reviewed:

You are:           • Female           • Male



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