

## **Editorial and Review Policy**

### **General**

- I. The Focus Conference is hosted annually by Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT) and focuses on higher education issues and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL).
- II. A rigorous double-blind peer review system is followed to ensure the highest quality in the conference proceedings and comply with the requirements for subsidy as stated by the South African Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET).

### **Double-blind peer review policy**

- I. All abstracts and manuscripts are circulated anonymously to no less than two reviewers who are specialists in the subject area for evaluation.
- II. Each abstract and manuscript received undergoes a double-blinded review and is considered in terms of:
  - Relevance to overall conference theme and objectives;
  - Relevance to selected sub-theme;
  - The originality of material;
  - Academic rigour and critical review of literature
  - Contribution to knowledge and practice;
  - Research methodology, empirical findings, and robustness of analysis of findings/results.
- III. Authors whose manuscripts abstracts and are accepted after the double-blind review process is completed are provided with anonymous reviewers' reports and requested to submit their full papers addressing these comments. Evidence is required relative to the authors' actions regarding the comments received.
- IV. Based on the reviewer reports, the editors reserve the right to make minor alterations and accept or reject any manuscript.
- V. Final papers are published in the conference proceedings after evidence and after further technical alignment by editors and copy editors.
- VI. At no stage shall the editors, get involved in the review of their own authored or co-authored papers.

### **Manuscript Specifications**

All manuscripts must be written in English, and proof of language editing may be requested. Manuscripts should be typed in 1.5 line spacing, 12pt Aerial. Each manuscript should be accompanied by an abstract of 200-250 words. The full manuscript must be between 5000 to 6000 words. Since manuscripts are circulated anonymously for evaluation, the name and affiliation of the author(s) should appear on a separate page.

### **Confidentiality Information**

Strict confidentiality is maintained to matters related to manuscripts, correspondences made with authors and reviewers and complaints made. The same is expected of the Authors, Reviewers and Editorial Staff. The manuscripts, comments from the peer-reviewers, correspondences made, emails etc should not be released to any unauthorized person/body/forum/website.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### Focus Conference Organisers

- I. Facilitate manuscript submissions process
  - II. Facilitate communication between the reviewers and authors
  - III. Identify and appoint subject experts as reviewers
  - IV. Identify and appoint editors
  - V. Maintaining confidentiality and professionalism of the review process
- a. Authors
- I. Authors must certify that their manuscripts are their original work.
  - II. Authors must certify that the manuscript has not previously been published elsewhere.
  - III. Authors must certify that the manuscript is not currently being considered for publication elsewhere.
  - IV. Authors should submit the manuscript in linguistically and grammatically correct English and formatted in accordance with the journal's Author Guidelines.
  - V. Authors must participate in the peer review process.
  - VI. Authors are obliged to provide retractions or corrections of mistakes.
  - VII. All Authors mentioned are expected to have significantly contributed to the research.
  - VIII. Authors must notify the Editors of any conflicts of interest.
  - IX. Authors must identify all sources used in the creation of their manuscript.
  - X. Authors must report any errors they discover in their published paper to the Editors.
  - XI. Authors should acknowledge all significant funders of the research pertaining to their article and list all relevant competing interests.
  - XII. Other sources of support for publications should also be clearly identified in the manuscript, usually in an acknowledgement (e.g., funding for the article processing charge; language editing or editorial assistance).
  - XIII. The Corresponding author should provide the declaration of any conflicts of interest on behalf of all Authors. Conflicts of interest may be associated with employment, sources of funding, personal financial interests, membership of relevant organisations or others.
- b. Reviewers
- I. Reviewers are asked to check whether the manuscript is scientifically sound and coherent, how interesting it is and whether the quality of the writing is acceptable.
  - II. Reviewers are asked to be polite and constructive in their reports. Reports that may be insulting or uninformative will be rescinded.
  - III. Further, Reviewers are asked to comment on originality, structure and previous research: (1) Is the paper sufficiently novel and does it contribute to a better

understanding of the topic under scrutiny? Is the work rather confirmatory and repetitive? (2) Is the introduction clear and concise? Does it place the work into the context that is necessary for a reader to comprehend the aims, hypotheses tested, experimental design or methods? Are Material and Methods clearly described and sufficiently explained? Are reasons given when choosing one method over another one from a set of comparable methods? Are the results clearly but concisely described? Do they relate to the topic outlined in the introduction? Do they follow a logical sequence? Does the discussion place the paper in scientific context and go a step beyond the current scientific knowledge on the basis of the results? Are competing hypotheses or theories reasonably related to each other and properly discussed? Do conclusions seem reasonable? Is previous research adequately incorporated into the paper? Are references complete, necessary and accurate? Is there any sign that substantial parts of the paper were copies of other works?

- IV. Reviewers should not review manuscripts in which they have conflicts of interest resulting from competitive, collaborative, or other relationships or connections with any of the authors, companies, or institutions connected to the papers.
- V. Reviewers should keep all information regarding papers confidential and treat them as privileged information.
- VI. Reviewers should express their views clearly with supporting arguments.
- VII. Reviewers should identify relevant published work that has not been cited by the authors.