Peer Review Process Description

All manuscripts submitted to the *TalTech Journal of European Studies* undergo a rigorous peer review process designed to ensure the publication of high-quality, original, and scientifically sound research.

1. Manuscript Submission and Initial Editorial Assessment

Manuscripts are submitted through to tjes@taltech.ee. Upon submission, the Editorial Team conducts an initial administrative check to ensure that the manuscript complies with the journal's formatting requirements, ethical standards, and submission guidelines. Manuscripts that are incomplete or fail to meet the basic submission requirements will be returned to the authors.

2. Editorial Screening

Following the administrative check, the Editor-in-Chief or a designated Associate Editor performs an initial editorial assessment. At this stage, the manuscript is evaluated for:

- relevance to the journal's aims and scope;
- originality and scientific contribution;
- methodological soundness;
- compliance with ethical standards and publication policies;
- overall quality of presentation and language.

Manuscripts deemed unsuitable for the journal, outside its scope, or not meeting the required scholarly standards may be rejected without external review (desk rejection).

3. Peer Review Model

The *TalTech Journal of European Studies* employs a **double-blind peer review** model. Under this system:

- the identities of the authors are not disclosed to reviewers;
- the identities of reviewers are not disclosed to authors.

Authors are required to remove identifying information from manuscripts and supplementary files before submission to preserve anonymity throughout the review process.

4. Reviewer Selection

Manuscripts that pass editorial screening are assigned to at least **two independent expert reviewers** with relevant expertise in the subject area. Reviewers are selected based on their academic qualifications, research experience, publication record, and absence of conflicts of interest.

The editorial team seeks reviewers from different institutions and, where appropriate, different countries to ensure an impartial and balanced evaluation.

5. Review Process

Reviewers are invited to evaluate the manuscript according to established criteria, including:

- Formulation of scientific research problem, aim and tasks. Evaluation of the chosen problem analysis.
- Presentation of research methodology and methods. Application of the used research methods.
- Correlation of conclusions with the formulated tasks, presented and reasoned research results.
- Clearness and completeness of the conclusions and recommendations.
- Relevance of the article to digitalisation and technology implementation.

Reviewers provide detailed comments for both authors and editors and recommend one of the following outcomes:

- accept without revisions;
- accept with minor revisions;
- revise and resubmit (major revisions required);
- reject.

6. Review Timelines

Reviewers are generally requested to submit their reports within **three to four weeks** of accepting the review invitation. The journal aims to provide authors with an initial editorial decision within **six to eight weeks** of submission, although actual timelines may vary depending on reviewer availability and the complexity of the manuscript.

7. Editorial Decision-Making

The final publication decision rests with the Editor-in-Chief or the designated handling editor. Editorial decisions are based on the reviewers' recommendations, the quality of the manuscript, and its suitability for the journal.

Possible editorial decisions include:

- acceptance;
- acceptance subject to minor revisions;
- invitation to revise and resubmit following major revisions;
- rejection.

8. Handling Contradictory Reviewer Recommendations

When reviewer recommendations substantially differ, the handling editor evaluates the reports and may take one or more of the following actions:

- make an editorial decision based on the strength and quality of the reviewers' arguments;
- request additional clarification from one or both reviewers;

- seek an assessment from a **third independent reviewer**.

A manuscript is not automatically accepted or rejected solely because reviewers disagree. The final decision is made by the editor after considering all available evaluations and the scientific merit of the manuscript.

9. Manuscript Revision Procedures

When revisions are requested, authors are invited to submit:

1. a revised version of the manuscript; and
2. a detailed response letter explaining how each reviewer comment has been addressed.

Revised manuscripts may be assessed by the handling editor alone or returned to one or more original reviewers for further evaluation, particularly in cases involving major revisions.

Failure to adequately address reviewer comments may result in rejection of the manuscript.

10. Final Acceptance and Publication

A manuscript is accepted for publication only after the editor determines that all substantive reviewer concerns have been satisfactorily addressed and that the manuscript meets the journal's scientific and editorial standards.

Following acceptance, manuscripts proceed to copyediting, proofreading, and production before publication.

11. Review Costs

The *TalTech Journal of European Studies* does **not charge any fees for peer review**. Authors are not required to pay reviewers, and reviewers receive no financial compensation for their evaluations. Any publication-related fees, if applicable, are communicated separately in the journal's author guidelines.

12. Ethical Standards and Confidentiality

Reviewers are expected to maintain the confidentiality of all materials received for review and to disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest. Editors and reviewers are required to evaluate manuscripts solely on their scholarly merit, without discrimination based on authors' nationality, institutional affiliation, gender, ethnicity, political views, or other personal characteristics.

The journal follows internationally recognized standards of publication ethics and integrity throughout the peer review and editorial decision-making process.