



keeping people safe from gambling harms

Report Review Guidelines

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Lead

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Reviewed by

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About Us

GambleAware is an independent, grant-making charity commissioning prevention and treatment services across England, Scotland, and Wales in partnership with expert organisations and agencies, including the NHS, across three areas:

- Commissioning the National Gambling Treatment Service
- Producing public health campaigns on a national scale and providing practical support to local services
- Commissioning research and evaluation to improve knowledge of what works in prevention.

Regulated by the Charity Commission for England and Wales, and the Scottish Charity Regulator, GambleAware is wholly independent and has a framework agreement with the Gambling Commission to deliver the National Strategy to Reduce Gambling Harms within the context of arrangements based on voluntary donations from the gambling industry.

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Overview

This document sets out GambleAware's report reviewing process, which includes timescales, the roles and responsibilities of each reviewer and specific guidelines for the External Peer Reviewer.

GambleAware is committed to commissioning robust, high quality research which is independent of industry, government, and the regulator and which helps to build the evidence base of what works in preventing and reducing gambling harm. Quality assurance is embedded in our end to end commissioning process and this guidance sets out our three-tier peer review system at the end of the process.

GambleAware have a three-tier peer review system, allowing for:

1. Collaborative support between GambleAware and the funded partner through their Research Manager
2. An objective internal review, drawing on GambleAware's own expertise in the form of a member of staff not directly associated with the research
3. An objective external review, drawing on the expertise (subject matter and/or methodological) of a research peer with professional, social, or academic research experience.

Roles and Responsibilities

1. GambleAware Research Manager

All GambleAware research and evaluation projects are allocated to a lead Research Manager who has the complete, end to end overview and understanding of that project. They are best placed to determine if the aims/objectives of the project have been met and the research questions answered.

Research Managers use their research experience and expertise to establish whether the research, analysis, data collection, methodology and writing is of an acceptable standard (as per the [Research Publication Guidelines](#)). In making this decision, the Research Managers consider the following:

- Have the authors followed the research guidelines and is the report at an acceptable standard for review?
- Have all the research questions been addressed adequately?
- Does the report meet expectations in terms of content, analysis, and findings?
- Are the conclusions (and recommendations, if present) consistent with the evidence and arguments presented? Do they address the main question posed?
- Are there any issues or concerns in how any research findings have been reported and analysed?
- Is the length of the report proportionate, relative to the content? Should any sections of the paper be expanded, condensed, combined, or deleted?

- Any copyediting that is possible or necessary. If there is extensive copyediting, the Research Manager should decide whether the draft needs to be returned prior to further review.

Review of research and evaluation reports are a core part of the GambleAware Research Manager's role.

2. GambleAware Internal Reviewer

The Internal Reviewer is another member of the Research and Evaluation Team but not the Research Manager overseeing the report. They will have a basic understanding of the project but will not have the same overview and knowledge as the lead Research Manager.

The Internal Reviewer will assess the quality of copy editing making sure the report is fit for purpose and easy to follow and understand. The Internal Reviewer will bring knowledge from GambleAware's broader work and research to add context and / or to question findings. The Internal Reviewer considers the following:

- Is the report clear, readable, and easy to follow?
- Is there a clear sense of the aims/outcomes of the research?
- Are there any areas of concern?
- Is there any additional information or literature that should be included or referenced?

3. External Reviewer

The External Reviewer is appointed by the lead Research Manager to provide additional expertise, related to the subject and/or methodology. The External Reviewer is issued a 'Subject Matter Expert' contract by GambleAware, which stipulates the hourly rate and anticipated time needed to review the report. The External Reviewer provides a research 'safety net' and a critical review of the research in its entirety, and in particular any area of the research that is unclear to the Research Manager and/or Internal Reviewer, or not an area of their shared expertise.

External Reviewers concentrate on a specific area whilst also reading the entire report and provide a summary of their findings as well as any specific comments. Their function is to provide:

- A 'safety net' for the Research Team, to highlight any issues within the report.
- A thorough read through of the report – noting any areas of concern.
- Tracked changes and comments throughout the report, to be accompanied by a covering email or paragraph with a review summary.

Reviewing Process

The process for reviewing and publishing research reports is broadly as follows:

First Draft

- Submitted to GambleAware for the Lead Research Manager and GambleAware Internal Reviewer to review.
- The first draft should be copy edited, and in a publishable form. We will only review work which adheres to the Research Publication Guidelines.
- The report will be returned to the research authors with comments and feedback within 10 working days of receipt.
- Where researchers are unclear or in disagreement with feedback from the internal review, we will offer an in-person meeting to talk it through.

Second Draft

- Submitted to GambleAware having been revised in the light of feedback on the first draft.
- The Lead Research Manager and Research Director will jointly decide if the report is ready to go to external review; and if so, will be shared with the External Reviewer.
- Comments will be received from the External Reviewer within 10 working days of them receiving the report from GambleAware.
- Following the External Review, authors will be expected to consider all comments. We do not expect authors to agree with all points made, and where this is the case, authors can provide a rationale for not taking the comments on board.

Third Draft

- Submitted to GambleAware having been revised in the light of feedback on the second draft, for final review by the Lead Research Manager.
- GambleAware's Research Director will be solely responsible for final sign off and release for publishing.

Guidelines for Peer Reviewing Papers (External Reviewer)

The External Reviewer is selected by the Lead Research Manager for their expertise in a specific methodology or subject area. External Reviewers are expected to read through the entire report thoroughly to provide an overall assessment of the quality of the work, as well as providing specific expertise on either the methodology or the subject matter as instructed by the Lead Research Manager.

GambleAware issues Non-Disclosure Agreements (the report reviewed will be pre-publication) and a contract stipulating the number of contracted hours and hourly rate.

As part of the general review we would expect the following areas to be addressed:

- Is the paper well written? Is the text clear and easy to read?
- Are there any major issues with the report? If there are major issues, they should be stated and the severity of their impact on the report delineated. If major revisions are required, these should be indicated clearly.
- Are all tables and figures appropriate and sufficiently described within the text?
- When results are stated in the text of the paper, are they supported by data? Can they be verified easily by examining tables and figures? Are any of the results counterintuitive?
- Are the conclusions adequately supported by the data presented?

An External Reviewer may be asked to focus specifically on methodology. We would expect the following areas to be addressed:

- Are the methods appropriate, scientifically sound, and described clearly enough that the work could be repeated by someone else?
- Are there any factual, numerical or unit errors? If so, what are they?
- Is there any indication that the data have been fabricated or inappropriately manipulated?

An External Reviewer may be asked to review a report because of their experience in the topic or subject area, and we would expect the following areas to be addressed:

- Are the references being cited the most appropriate to support the aims of the report?
- Are citations provided for all assertions made within the paper (which are not based on data analyses).
- Are any key citations missing?
- Are there any inaccuracies in the way a concept has been presented?

We would expect a peer review to take anywhere between 3 and 8 hours depending on the length and complexity of the report. The Lead Research Manager will provide an indication of the approximate number of hours needed to complete the review.

As a rough guide:

- For a short report of **up to 30 pages** – we would expect the review to take no longer than 3 hours.
- For a report of **30-60 pages** – we would expect the review to take between 3 and 5 hours.
- For a report of **60-100 pages** – we would expect the review to take between 5 and 8 hours.

GambleAware pay External Peer Reviewers within 30 days of receiving an invoice once work has been completed and signed off by the Lead Research Manager.

For more information

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