



Peer-Review Statements

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All of the articles in this proceedings volume have been presented at the Future of Life - Legal, Scientific, and Geopolitical Challenges Conference (TFOL 2025) which was held in Bolton and Bengaluru, United Kingdom and India during May 16-17 2025. These articles have been peer reviewed by the members of the Scientific Committee and approved by the Editor-in-Chief, who affirms that this document is a truthful description of the conference's review process.

1. REVIEW PROCEDURE

The reviews were predominantly double-blind. Each submission was examined by at least two independent reviewers, with additional reviewers (three or more) assigned where required. Additional reviews were commissioned in cases where the initial reviews differed substantially in outcome, and where submissions were authored by editors or conference organisers, in order to mitigate conflicts of interest.

Microsoft CMT was used for initial submissions and conference management. For later stages of the peer-review process, email-based handling was utilised in order to improve accessibility and ease of participation for peer reviewers.

Following submission, papers were anonymised and allocated reference numbers. An initial screening was undertaken by the editorial team to assess general suitability and quality. This screening was limited to identifying clearly inappropriate submissions, such as those that did not constitute a research or conference proceedings paper, or submissions reasonably assessed as being entirely AI-generated.

Reviewer assignment was handled by the editors, with particular emphasis placed on matching submissions to reviewers with relevant subject-matter expertise, reflecting the broad thematic scope of the conference. While submissions were anonymised, the organisers acknowledge that anonymity could not be guaranteed in all cases, as papers had been presented at the conference. However, many reviewers serving on the scientific committee were not directly involved in the conference organisation or delivery.

Reviewers completed a standardised review form based on Atlantis Press requirements. Completed reviews were returned to the editorial team, reviewed in full, and anonymised summaries of reviewer feedback were provided to authors in tabular form. Editors also prepared a prioritised list of recommended and required amendments to assist authors in revising their manuscripts.

Authors of submissions requiring revision were invited to resubmit after addressing reviewer and editorial comments. Rejected submissions were not invited to revise and resubmit. Revised manuscripts were assessed by the editors in light of the reviewer comments and revisions made. Submissions were checked for formatting and referencing compliance and were either accepted, returned for further amendment, or (at earlier stages) rejected. Decisions on revised manuscripts were final.

To manage conflicts of interest, editors did not serve as reviewers for any submissions. Where editors or conference organisers were authors, additional independent reviews were requested and editors recused themselves from handling submissions involving close professional contacts, particularly those from the same institutional affiliation. External reviewers were engaged where necessary to ensure appropriate subject expertise. All anonymisation was undertaken by a single member of the editorial team to ensure consistency.

Measures to promote fairness and reduce unconscious bias included the use of double-blind review where possible, additional independent reviews in relevant cases, standardised review forms, emphasis on subject expertise over institutional prestige, and the use of a diverse reviewer pool. *S*

2. QUALITY CRITERIA

Reviewers were instructed to assess submissions solely on the basis of academic merit, using a standardised review form and the following criteria, listed in order of importance:

1. Practical or societal relevance, including policy, legal, or real-world impact;
2. Clarity and coherence of argument and presentation, including structure, language, and use of figures or tables;
3. Ethical robustness, including legal and ethical compliance and responsible conduct of research;
4. Soundness of methods, analyses, or evidence;
5. Relevance to the conference scope and themes.

Reviews employed a 1–5 numerical scoring scale with defined anchors, alongside categorical recommendations (accept, minor revision, major revision, reject). Reviewers were also asked to indicate the strength of their expertise in relation to the submission. Reviewers were explicitly instructed to assess ethical and legal considerations where relevant. Ethics statements were required only when applicable. Ethical concerns were addressed on a case-by-case basis, with serious issues (such as plagiarism or substantially AI-generated text) typically resulting in rejection, and minor concerns handled through requests for clarification or amendment.

All accepted papers underwent plagiarism and textual overlap checks using Turnitin. Similarity results were assessed using editorial judgement rather than fixed percentage thresholds, recognising disciplinary variation. Overlap concerns were addressed through a combination of revisions or rejection, depending on severity.

To ensure the ethical, transparent, and responsible use of generative AI tools in academic publishing, TFoL-25 implemented a dedicated disclosure and verification process for all accepted manuscripts. Authors of accepted papers were required to complete a Generative AI Use Disclosure Questionnaire.

- Whether any generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Copilot, Claude, Grammarly, Elicit, Perplexity) were used;
- The *specific tools* involved, their purpose, scope of use, and the type of content entered into them;
- Steps taken to verify the accuracy of any AI-assisted text;
- Assurances that no confidential, sensitive, or identifiable personal data were input into AI systems;
- Confirmation that authors retained full responsibility for the accuracy, interpretation, and integrity of their work.

In addition to completing the questionnaire, authors were required to include a “Generative AI Use Disclosure” statement within their manuscript, placed immediately before the Disclosure of Interests section. These statements ensured that the nature and extent of AI assistance were transparent to readers, reviewers, and editors.

Recognising that completely excluding generative AI from academic workflows is no longer aligned with contemporary research realities, the editorial team adopted an approach that balances modern practice with academic rigour. Use of AI for language editing, structural suggestions, formatting, or similar non-creative assistance was permitted, provided that:

- AI tools did not replace scholarly judgement;
- AI tools were not used to fabricate data, quotations, citations, or results;
- All AI-influenced content was independently reviewed and verified by the authors;
- AI systems were not listed as authors, and their contributions were fully documented;
- Authors remained wholly accountable for the accuracy and originality of their submissions.

During the initial editorial screening, submissions that appeared to be substantially or entirely AI-generated, or which breached ethical expectations, were identified as unsuitable and were removed from further consideration. This ensured integrity within the review pipeline while acknowledging the legitimate use of AI for linguistic refinement or administrative support.

The implementation of this structured and transparent disclosure process aligns with the conference’s wider commitment to ethical research practices, fairness, and accountability within the peer-review process. It also reflects an evolving academic environment in which judicious, responsible use of generative AI can enhance scholarly communication without compromising intellectual standards.

3. KEY METRICS

<i>Total submissions</i>	73
<i>Number of articles sent for peer review</i>	22
<i>Number of accepted articles</i>	16
<i>Acceptance rate</i>	22% total/73% post peer-review
<i>Number of reviewers</i>	16

4. COMPETING INTERESTS

Competing interests refer to any interests of the Editor-in-Chief and/or members of the editorial or review bodies that may, or may be perceived to, influence editorial decision-making.

The conference was organised by the Hume Institute for Postgraduate Studies, REVE University, and the Centre for Contemporary Colonial Law at the University of Greater Manchester. There were no external sponsors or funders. While some submissions were authored by individuals who work or study at the organising institutions, institutional affiliation alone was not treated as determinative, and significant measures were implemented to mitigate any potential competing interests.

Some submissions were from colleagues or doctoral students; however, editors recused themselves from handling manuscripts involving close professional relationships, and additional independent reviewers were appointed to ensure impartial evaluation.

The Editor-in-Chief submitted one single-authored paper and one co-authored paper (with two other editors). In accordance with the conference's conflict-of-interest procedures, the Editor-in-Chief did not handle or take part in editorial decision-making for these submissions. These papers were subject to additional independent peer review, reviewer anonymisation, and editorial decisions were made by non-conflicted members of the editorial team, as far as practicable. The same procedures were followed for the two other papers of which editors were authors.

All submissions were anonymised prior to circulation to reviewers, and editors did not act as reviewers for any papers. Where necessary, external reviewers were engaged to ensure appropriate subject-matter expertise and independence.

No other competing interests were declared.

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