Summary of NAFE Journal Peer Review Process – updated 3/7/2019

1. Potential authors submit abstracts (approximately 100 to 150 words) for consideration to the Journal Editor (JE) at least 60 days prior to a conference.

2. The Technical Editor (TechE) (also known as the Technical Review Committee Chair) reviews abstracts, suggests modifications, and approves or rejects abstracts based on technical merit and appropriateness for publication in the Journal. A check is made to ensure no topics conflict with other recent or planned presentations / papers. If the abstract is approved, authors are given instructions by the JE for content requirements, publication details, deadlines, and reference documents. Authors must confirm their thorough review of these instructions.

3. Authors must complete a draft manuscript (90% complete), due 30 days prior to a conference. An Associate Technical Editor (ATE) will review the 90% drafts for clarity, completeness, and for any obvious technical content issues. Presentations take place at winter and summer conferences; authors must provide their presentation slides for ATE review 15 days prior to the conference. The ATE may require presentation changes. Disputes between authors and the ATE will be settled by the TechE. Authors may not present unless the draft manuscript and slides are provided in advance and all disputes are resolved by the Wednesday preceding the conference.

4. Authors submit final manuscripts (with any post-presentation changes) and final presentation slideshows to the JE 30 days after the conference. Slideshows are retained to support possible audits by state licensure boards regarding continuing education.

5. Prior to peer review, the JE reviews the manuscript for obvious formatting or organizational issues, and checks to see if the manuscript meets NAFE Journal requirements. Significant issues may require author resolution prior to peer review. The NAFE Journal Editorial staff cannot guide significant rewriting of manuscripts. Authors may wish to obtain professional guidance on technical paper creation in advance, regarding editing, graphics creation, and citation/reference formatting.

6. An ATE is assigned by the TechE for each paper. The ATE then solicits at least two peer reviewers (PR) (based on their areas of expertise) for each manuscript. It may take some time to locate two PRs with the necessary expertise – which can cause delays in the review process. Authors may request that certain persons not review their manuscript. The peer review is “blind” (authors are unaware of PR identity); this is the most common type of peer review for scholarly journals.

7. The JE sends manuscripts out for blind peer review with specific instructions to offer constructive feedback. The PR’s goals are to:
   a) Objectively determine whether the manuscript describes methodologies and concepts clearly.
   b) Objectively determine whether those methodologies and concepts are technically sound.
   c) Objectively determine whether the final conclusions reached by the author(s), based on those methodologies and concepts, are reasonable.

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8. The peer-reviewed manuscript is then reviewed/edited by the assigned ATE, who looks for redundancy, underexplained concepts, unsupported inferences, superfluous content, and poor flow of content. Following this, PR & ATE comments and edits will be forwarded to the author directly. If the comments/edits significantly question the author’s methodologies or conclusions, the manuscript may be forwarded to the TechE for additional review. In this situation, the PR, ATE, and TechE comments/edits will be sent to the author by the JE.

9. Authors revise their drafts based on the reviews & edits and send back to JE. All comments must be addressed by the author, though not necessarily acted upon in the manner requested by the PR and ATE. If an author believes any comments are unfounded, they can so indicate in their revised version sent back to the JE. If the reviewers/editors had significant concerns with the draft, the revised manuscript will likely be returned to them to determine if the concerns were addressed. The assigned ATE will mediate between the author and PR while attempting to resolve differing opinions. The peer review process often takes several iterations. Following the resolution of the PR & ATE edits, the manuscript goes to the TechE for final review – and then back to the author if necessary. If a manuscript is rejected by either PR, the ATEs and TechE will decide on whether the rejection is well founded or what would need to be done to remediate the paper. The author will typically be allowed to resubmit a rejected paper at a later date following any necessary revisions.

10. If the author, PRs, ATE, and TechE have agreed on revisions, the JE does the publication layout and sends it to authors for accuracy check and approval. Following final edits to the layout, the author receives an electronic copy for their own use, and the paper is published.

Note: There is no guarantee that all papers will be published. The TechE and JE reserve the right to not publish a paper (or put it on hold for author rework) if it does not meet the criteria for publication due to any number of issues, including, but not limited to, situations where technical or presentation issues still exist despite repeated review cycles/revisions or when authors, PRs, ATEs and the TechE cannot agree on the quality or technical validity of a final version. Please keep in mind that the PRs, ATEs and TechE are volunteers with other commitments, and their time must be respected.