

Call for Papers: XSci Open Review Award 2026

XSci invites preprints and working papers in any discipline to the XSci Open Review Competition 2026. XSci is a preprint platform where papers are reviewed in the open.

Submission deadline: 30 November 2026, 23:59 Anywhere on Earth.

Up to 100 submissions will be reviewed by an independent expert in the field, paid by XSci, who answers one question: after the revisions a journal would normally ask for, does the paper have the potential to be published in the journals the authors are aiming at? Papers the expert certifies become XSci Peer-Certified Preprints. With the report made public, their authors receive the XSci Open Review Award 2026 and \$500 cash prize.

Submission is free. Authors keep all rights and may submit their papers to any journal at any time. Early submission is encouraged, as up to 60 papers are selected on a rolling basis.

Eligibility

- Researchers in any discipline and any country may submit. The submitting author must verify an ORCID iD or an institutional email address.
- Each author may submit up to three papers, with the agreement of their co-authors.
- Papers must not yet be published in a journal or conference proceedings. Papers posted on another preprint server, or under review elsewhere, are eligible.
- AI reports are optional. Authors may submit with none, or take them down, without affecting eligibility.

Benefits to authors

- Posting as a preprint with a DOI, free to read.
- Reports from AI reviewers of your choice, in minutes to hours, free during the competition when made public.
- For up to 100 papers, a review by an independent expert in the field, usually in about five to ten days, paid for by XSci.
- Access to the expert's report 48 hours before anyone else, with the option to take it down at no charge. Taking it down ends eligibility for the award but does not affect certification.
- A public right of reply to any report, on the same page as the paper.

Submissions not selected receive \$49 off XSci Human Review service for the same paper, valid until 31 March 2027.

Evaluation

The expert makes one decision against the published XSci Certification Standard. The expert certifies the paper if it (a) contains no major error, that is, no defect that leaves its central claims wrong, unsupported or impossible to evaluate, and (b) has a genuine prospect of publication in the target journals, assuming revision of the kind a journal would normally ask for.

The bar is relative to the target the authors name, not absolute. Authors may name up to three target journals. Where none is named, the expert identifies the leading journals of the field and judges against them. Where a sound paper is aimed higher than it can reach, the expert says where it would fit instead.

The report gives a finding on each assessment area the paper engages and a section on fit. There is no score or grade: a paper is certified, or it stays an XSci Preprint. Certification is not a journal acceptance, and it does not verify the results.

Expert reviewers

For each paper, XSci invites experts from three groups: authors of work the paper cites, close collaborators of those authors, and researchers who have published on similar questions in the journals the authors are aiming at. The last group is preferred, because they are best placed to judge fit. Experts cannot sign up to review; they are invited. The expert is anonymous on the paper page and is paid the same whatever the verdict. Four interests bar an expert outright: a prior role in the work, a close personal relationship or a dispute with an author, a financial or commercial interest in the outcome, and a current supervisory relationship with an author. Other interests, such as recent co-authorship or a shared affiliation, are declared and recorded.

Appeals

Authors may appeal within 14 days of the report, at no cost, if the review was not done properly: the procedure was not followed, the expert held an undisclosed interest that should have barred them, the report contains an error of fact about the paper, or it lacks the required detail. Disagreement with the expert's judgment is not a ground. In the competition, a successful appeal leads XSci to commission a second expert, whose view is final.

Selection for expert review

Rolling selection (up to 60 papers)

From the opening date, submissions whose AI reports clearly place them as candidates for the leading journals in their field are selected daily, in order of submission. All other submissions remain under consideration.

Selection after the deadline (remaining places)

Remaining places are allocated across disciplines in proportion to submissions received, then by ranking within each discipline. The ranking uses the AI reports and the paper, and weighs novelty, rigor, clarity and fit with the named target. An ambitious target counts in a paper's favor where the reviewers find the fit plausible.

After the competition closes, XSci will publish the selection method, the breakdown of submissions and awards by discipline, and where the process went wrong and should be improved.

Important dates

DATE	MILESTONE
25 September 2026	Submissions open; rolling selection begins
30 November 2026, 23:59 AoE	Submission deadline
End of December 2026	Final results

Submission

Papers are submitted at xsci.com/submit. The full terms are in the [Full Rules](#).

Organizers and contact

Jiangrui Qian, Jeffrey Poon and Gareth Dyke.

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About XSci

Science has never produced so much, and never checked so little of it. The bottleneck of science has moved. It is no longer hard to produce a paper. It is hard to know which papers to trust.

XSci is a preprint platform where papers are reviewed in the open. Authors post for free and get a DOI. They can choose from the top AI reviewers in one place and publish the reports beside the paper, and they can request a review from an independent expert in the field. If the expert judges that the paper has the potential to be published in the journals the authors are aiming at, it carries a public badge: XSci Peer-Certified. The expert is paid the same whatever the verdict. Reading requires nothing: no account, no institutional login, no paywall. XSci does not charge authors to publish, and no paper is more visible because someone paid. XSci is a member of Crossref and ORCID. Its mission is to make the validation of science as open, as fast, and as fairly rewarded as its production. XSci was founded by Shumiao Ouyang, Associate Professor of Finance at Saïd Business School, University of Oxford.