

HESS is an open-access journal. For your review, I have included an excerpt from the journal office's official website(<https://www.hydrology-and-earth-system-sciences.net/>) below.

“Hydrology and Earth System Sciences (HESS) is a not-for-profit international two-stage **open-access journal** for the publication of original research in hydrology. HESS encourages and supports **fundamental and applied research** that advances the understanding of hydrological systems, their role in **providing water for ecosystems and society, and the role of the water cycle in the functioning of the Earth system**. A multi-disciplinary approach is encouraged that broadens the hydrological perspective and the **advancement of hydrological science through integration with other cognate sciences and cross-fertilization across disciplinary boundaries.**”

Why would the journal office entertain anonymous referees? If the journal is an open-access journal, how could the anonymous referees' reviews fit into the journal's statement of openness?

Do the authors have rights to request the journal office to disclose the names of the referees who are scared to disclose their names?

Do the readers of the journal have rights to request the journal office to disclose the names of the referees who are scared to disclose their names?

Could it be possible for the journal office to have clerical staff to post reviews as invited referees? Is this what we expect from EU and its official statements?

What is the relationship between the handling editor and the invited referees? Are the referees paying the handling editors to get them invited?

Why would an invited referee be scared to disclose his/her name in an open-access journal? Is it because he/she is unqualified and lacks potential and expertise in his/her field of specialization to demonstrate in an open-access journal?

I am requesting the handling editor to disclose the reason for promoting anonymity in an open-access journal. I am also requesting the journal office to disclose the rationale behind appointing the handling editors and referees. I request the journal office to disclose academic transcripts of the handling editors and referees. What did they do in their PhD work? Who were their supervisors? What were their GER scores in their postgraduate studies? How many billions have been invested in their PhD philosophies? These details are pertinent to showcase that the EU and the journal office don't favor appointing handling editors and referees in an open-access journal.