

Guidelines for Referees

The primary task of a Referee is to evaluate the arguments and ideas that underpin a research article, and to seek to foster, develop, sharpen, and improve them.

The referee's report is therefore written with two audiences in mind; the editor of the journal, and, most importantly, the author of the paper.

For the Editor

The referee acts as an advisor to the Editor, who ultimately takes the decision on whether to publish an article or not.

A review should therefore be more than a simple "accept" or "reject", as that decision lies with the Editor. The Referee's role is to provide the Editor with sufficient information to enable them to make an informed decision on whether to accept a manuscript. When writing a review, you should describe reasons for your recommendation, so that the Editor can make an informed decision.

It is far more important to comment on the academic content of a paper than on its grammar and punctuation. Also note that the journal does not make any corrections to the text of manuscripts prior to sending them out.

We are grateful if Referees take it upon themselves to correct and copyedit a piece of writing, but this is not strictly the Referee's role. However, if the language is too poor to understand the contents of a manuscript adequately, then let us know.

For the Author

Remember that you should ideally seek to coach the development of a piece of academic writing, rather than cast judgment on somebody's work.

Try to include the author in the process, helping them find the draft's strengths and weaknesses rather than telling them what they are or are not doing wrong.

Check with the author of the manuscript to make sure you have correctly understood the main ideas of the work. Having author's respond to requests for clarification is a useful means of encouraging author's to clarify their ideas. If you find a passage confusing, ask for clarification.

Try to give specific compliments as well as specific criticism; reviewing isn't just about one or the other.

Remain objective, but be polite and collegial, and always express an interest in reading the next draft.