

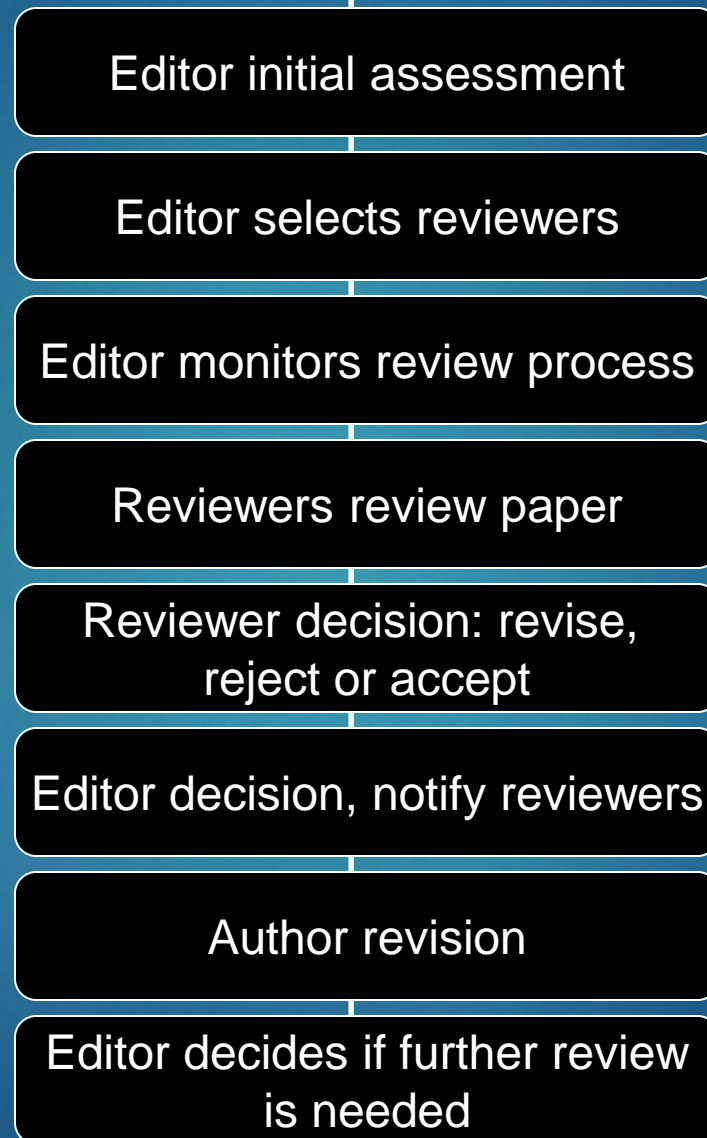


Lisbon Seminar 2022

Part 4

Reviewing Manuscripts
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Steps in the Review Process



Why Have Peer Review?

- Advises the editorial decision making process
- Justifies rejections
- Improves the quality of acceptable manuscripts
- Identifies instances of ethical or scientific misconduct

Possible Reviewer Recommendations

- Accept as is (usually only used for revisions)
- Minor revision (usually does not need to be reviewed again)
- Major revision (revised paper may still not be acceptable and may need to be reviewed again)
- Reject

Editorial Decision Making



- Reviewers make recommendations, but editors must make final decisions
- Editors may disagree with recommendations of the reviewers.
- Seeming to ignore the advice of a particular reviewer does not mean that the review was not excellent.

Reviewers Improve the Quality of Accepted Papers

- Constructive comments to authors from reviewers can be very important in improving the quality of scientific publications.
 - ▶ Quality of the science (e.g. data analysis)
 - ▶ Clarity of the presentation
 - ▶ Use of appropriate, unbiased citation practices
- Reviewer suggestions can also alter the course of future research or data analyses.



A Good Principle for Guiding Your Efforts as a Reviewer: The Reviewer's Golden Rule

**Review papers in the way you
would want your paper to be
reviewed!**

How to be a good reviewer?

- Respond quickly to requests to perform a review
- Notify editors of any conflicts of interest you have, ask advice if you are uncertain
- Maintain confidentiality during the review process
- Complete the review on time
- Prepare separate comments for the editor and comments for the author(s)

Writing a Good Review: Comments to the Editor

- These are confidential communications between you and the editor, not shared with authors or other reviewers.
- Identify COIs not previously reported
- Tell editor about areas of your expertise, especially if there are some aspects of paper you are not well qualified to review

Writing a Good Review: Comments to the Editor (cont.)

- Identify ethical or scientific misconduct issues
- Comment on problems with English usage
- You can give the editor a bottom line or highlight some aspects of your comments for authors

Comment for the Editor: Things Not To do

- Don't make jokes or disparaging remarks about the paper or the authors.
- Don't tell the editor one thing and tell the authors something different.

Reviewer Checklist

QUESTIONNAIRE (please place an 'x' beside the appropriate option):

1. Do you have any conflicts of interest that you need to report? Yes ___ No ___
If yes, please describe below:
2. Is the study acceptable on ethical grounds? Yes ___ No ___
If no, please comment below:
3. Is the English language usage acceptable? Yes ___ No ___
4. Did you enter the manuscript rating (1=worst; 100=best) Yes ___ No ___

Writing a Good Review: Comments for Authors

- State the paper's main strengths and weaknesses, consider the bigger picture
 - ▶ Try to balance technical merit with scientific significance. Is it a novel contribution?
- Provide specific suggestions for improvements
 - ▶ This is important whether or not you are recommending acceptance, revision or rejection.
 - ▶ Number your comments and suggestions

Comments for Authors: Suggestions for Improvements

- Be as constructive as you can
- Be both general and specific
- Help identify ways to reduce figures and tables or to shorten the paper
- Identify failures of compliance with the formatting requirements for the journal

Comments for Authors:

Do **NOT** Include

- Do not make personal or disparaging remarks about the authors, the scientific work or the specific manuscript.
- Do not tell include your specific recommendation to the editor.
- Limit the tendency to redesign the study. These are not constructive comments.
- Try not to identify yourself in your comments
 - ▶ “The authors failed to mention the important works of Smith and colleagues” when you are Smith
 - ▶ “We did a similar study a few years ago and found....”

Language Problems With Manuscripts

- Many authors of journal articles do not use English as their first language
- It is important to evaluate the quality of the work assuming that language problems could be fixed in a revision.
- You should comment on language problems to the editor but do not focus on these issues in comments for authors.

Reviewing Revisions

- Determine how well the authors responded to your concerns and those of the editor and other reviewer(s).
- Check to make sure the authors actually made changes in the manuscript, and not just provided missing information in the cover letter.
- Sometimes clarification of methods or analyses will lessen your enthusiasm for a paper. If so, respond accordingly.

How do Editors Choose Reviewers?

- They typically draw from a Reviewer Database which they keep, adding new reviewers as needed or when they volunteer.
- They try to match the content area of the submission with the expertise of the reviewer
- They usually try to limit the number of reviews persons are asked to do.
- They try to select reviewers who have done a good job in the past.

Summary



- Be honest and straightforward with editors in all aspects of the review process
- Imagine yourself as an author when you undertake to review scientific manuscripts (The Golden Rule)
- Peer review is a key element to the scientific process so do your part to make it work well.