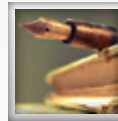


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# How to referee an article



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## Why referee?

When your time is stretched it's tempting to say no to requests to referee, but there are a number of very valid reasons why you should accept:

- Help the author to improve the paper – in the light of your own professional expertise.
- Make the author aware of any additional literature that may provide useful comparison, or clarification of an approach.
- Assist in a rigorous process to ensure only the best research is published.
- Maintain your awareness of current research emerging within the discipline.

## Investigate the journal's content

You've agreed to referee a paper, so what should you do next? Start by visiting the journal homepage to get a sense of the journal's usual content and house style to help decide whether the paper being reviewed is suitable.

Refer to the Instructions for Authors to see if the paper meets the submission criteria of the journal (e.g. length, scope and presentation).

## Make an assessment

Complete the review questions or score sheet to indicate the relative strengths or weaknesses of the paper. Remember that authors will welcome positive feedback as well as constructive criticism from you.

Key questions to ask: Is the paper original? Is the relative contribution made to the existing literature good enough? Will the paper be interesting to the readership of the journal?

## Make a recommendation

Once you've read the paper and have assessed its quality, you need to make a recommendation to the editor regarding publication. Should it be accepted? Revised and resubmitted? Rejected pending revision? Supply some comments suitable for transmission to the author as an opportunity to seek clarification on any unclear points and for further elaboration. If you have time, make suggestions as to how the author can improve clarity, succinctness, and the overall quality of presentation. Confirm whether you feel the subject of the paper is sufficiently interesting to justify its length. If you recommend shortening it, it is useful to the author(s) if you can indicate specific areas where you think that shortening is required.

## Unable to referee?

It won't be possible for you to accept every invitation to referee. In this situation it is very helpful if you are able to recommend an alternative expert or someone whose opinion you trust. If you are unable to complete your report on a paper then inform the editorial office as soon as possible so that the refereeing process is not delayed.

Make the editors aware of any potential conflict of interest that may affect the paper under review. We are always very grateful for the contribution made to our journals by our referees and would be pleased to hear any comments or suggestions on our current peer review procedures.

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