



ACS ON CAMPUS

acsoncampus.acs.org

PEER-REVIEW

Why, How-To, and What Not To Do

OVERVIEW

After attending “Peer-Review: Why, How-To, and What Not To Do,” attendees should be well versed in how the peer-review process is carried out at ACS Publications, what editors look for when reviewing submissions, qualifications needed to become a reviewer, strategies to evaluate a manuscript, and tips for responding to reviewer reports.

KEY POINTS

Definition

Peer-review is the evaluation of a manuscript by people with relevant expertise and is intended to determine a manuscript’s relevance and suitability for publication in a journal.

To warrant peer-review, a manuscript should have:

- Appropriate scope (resonate with the journal’s target audience)
- Technical validity (have well-designed experiments, high level data interpretation)
- High quality writing (be clear, concise, free of grammatical errors)

Reviewers should have:

- Broad knowledge
- Technical expertise
- Ability to provide an unbiased opinion

Handling editors:

- Invite reviewers suggested by the author and chosen from an independent pool to ensure a fair review process
- Carefully review each manuscript before and after external peer-review
- Analyze reviewer comments and make a decision about the manuscript

Upon receiving reviews, authors should:

- Carefully read the decision letter and comments
- Evaluate the relative importance of the comments
- Perform necessary experiments and include the results in the revised text
- Be timely if a revision or resubmission is requested

CONTINUED ON BACK

Remember to:

- Be professional in responses to the reviewer comments
- Respond to each comment noting if/what changes were made
- If a reviewer misunderstood the content, provide scientific support or rewrite text for clarity

What to do if a manuscript is declined:

- Step back for a few days to regain perspective
- Refocus on the science and examine the editors' and reviewers' comments again
- Use the comments constructively to improve the manuscript
- Submit to a new journal with an appropriate scope that reaches the target audience

To become a peer-reviewer:

- Publish high quality work in reputable journals
- Attend conferences and network to enhance your standing within the scientific community
- Let your interest be known to colleagues and advisors, who might suggest you as a reviewer
- Let your interest be known to the journal office if you hold an independent research position

Additional Resources

Publishing your Research 101, Episode 6: The Review Process
Mastering the Art of Scientific Publication

To access these resources and more, visit acsoncampus.acs.org/resources