

Activity: Check the Journal Guidelines

Pick a journal and take a moment to see if the journal has specific guidelines for reviewers.

Criteria for publication

Each journal has their own criteria for publication. It is important to be aware of these before you write your review. Here are the main ones to look out for:

1. What articles types does the journal publish?
2. Which fields of research does the journal publish?
3. Is the journal additionally interested in perceived impact or novelty?
4. What level of scientific advance is expected?
5. Does the journal have specific requirements about ethics or data?

Reviewer form

Some journals have a special reviewer form. Checking these before you start your review will save you time reformatting your comments later.

6. Do they ask any special questions?
7. What format should you upload your reviewer comments in?



Want more reviewing tips? Visit reviewers.plos.org

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Activity: What Makes Good Feedback?

Review some published peer review histories on PLOS articles.

Did the reviewers...

- ☐ Use examples and evidence to back up their statements?
- ☐ Talk about what they liked too?
- ☐ Avoid talking about themselves and their research too much?
- ☐ Avoid focusing too much on small things like typos?
- ☐ Keep their recommendations bounded by the scope of the study?

Are their comments...

- ☐ Professional?
- ☐ Respectful?
- ☐ Clear?
- ☐ Concise?
- ☐ Easy to follow?
- ☐ Specific enough? Do they give page, paragraph references etc.?
- ☐ Mindful of the author's perspective?

How could they improve their reviewer comments?

#1

#2

#3



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Action Plan Checklist

Here are some easy things you can do to prepare to be a reviewer and put yourself in a position to start reviewing.

Some of these are so simple you can do them in the next five minutes. Get started now!

Status Key

- ☐ to do
- ☒ done
- ☒ not needed

Action

Status

When

Update my public profile

☐

Make my email address findable

☐

Keep up to date with current research

☐

Keep up the good work

☐

Authorize ORCID to link up my publications

☐

Find a mentor

☐

Go to (virtual) conferences

☐

Connect with experts in my field through social media

☐

Join (or start) a journal club

☐

Comment on preprints

☐

Ask your PI to co-author reviews with you

☐

Ask your PI to recommend you as a reviewer if they decline

☐☐☐☐

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