

# *Psychology and Aging*

## REVIEWER INSTRUCTIONS

Thank you for agreeing to provide a review for *Psychology and Aging*. Please remember that a manuscript under review is a confidential document. You should not quote from it or discuss its contents with colleagues or students without the authors' explicit permission.

Your review will be most helpful to us if the following guidelines are kept in mind:

In general, your review should clearly inform the author(s) and the editor of your judgment about the overall quality and contribution of the manuscript and it should provide the major reasons for that judgment. If you think there are important weaknesses that require additional empirical work and/or substantive revision in theoretical orientation or interpretation, please be clear about that as well.

More specifically, as a reviewer you will be charged with two basic tasks. First, you are asked to make a Recommendation to the Action Editor as to whether the manuscript should be accepted, returned to the author with an invitation to revise and resubmit, or rejected. Specific Recommendation options can be found in the Evaluation section of your on-line review submission page. Your Evaluation ratings and Recommendation are not included in the text of the review sent to the author. Second, and equally important, you are asked to provide a detailed, educative review Narrative that the Action Editor will send to the author. Please do not include an explicit recommendation about acceptance, revision, or rejection in your review Narrative. Finally, you can also include additional information in the confidential Comments for Editor Only section.

In making your publication recommendation, please consider these guidelines developed by the APA Publication and Communication Board:

*To merit publication each manuscript must make an original, valid, and significant contribution to an area of psychology appropriate for the journal to which it is submitted. That is: (1) A manuscript cannot have been published, in whole or in part, in another journal or readily available work (see APA Publication Manual, 5<sup>th</sup> ed., p. 347, for more information on primary, or original, publication). (2) A manuscript must be accurate, and the conclusions and generalizations must follow from the data. (3) A manuscript must be more than free of major fault—it must be an important contribution to the literature. (4) A manuscript must be appropriate for the journal to which it is submitted. For a manuscript not meeting all those criteria, you will usually recommend rejection, with detailed reasons for your recommendation. (emphasis in the original)*

As you consider these policies in formulating your publication recommendation to the Action Editor, it may be helpful to think in terms of the answers to three sequential questions:

1. Is the topic of the manuscript appropriate for *Psychology and Aging*?
2. Can the flaws in this manuscript be remedied in a revision?
3. Does the manuscript make a significant scientific contribution?

Please maintain a considerate and impartial tone in your review. Point out strengths as well as weaknesses, even if you recommend against publication. In other words, please avoid writing a caustic, punitive review that is infused with a "gotcha" tone, pointing out errors with no suggestions for improvement, and lacking respect for the authors as scientific colleagues. Of course, you should not compromise a rigorous evaluation. Reviews must be critical. It is a basic task of reviewers to point out flaws in the manuscript, but this should be done with tact and respect for the authors. In addition, you may want to make helpful suggestions that address flaws in the present work, or make suggestions to minimize the problem in future projects.

Reviewers should be mindful of potential conflicts of interests. According to the *APA Handbook*, Section 1.03, "Reviewers should promptly decline to review manuscripts from recent collaborators, members of their own institution, recent students, or work from which they might obtain financial gain." In the case of a masked review when the identity of the author is unknown, reviewers should be sure that they have not recently worked on the project the manuscript reports on or arose from (for example, a specific university's twins study). If you suspect you might have a conflict of interest but aren't sure, please send an email to the editorial office (panda@psych.gatech.edu), detailing why this might be the case.