

Peace and Conflict Guidelines for Reviewers

The Editorial Board of [*Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*](#) (PAC) is grateful for the important contributions of our reviewers. To support you in evaluating a manuscript, we share the following guidelines.

As part of the scientific peer review process, you are asked to provide a detailed, educative narrative evaluation that the Action Editor will send to the authors.

We encourage you as a reviewer to see yourself as an anonymous consultant for every author, even (and especially) for manuscripts you believe should be rejected. Aspire to provide sufficiently helpful, educative feedback so that the next manuscript submitted by these authors makes a substantial contribution to the literature and is of publishable quality. In this way, you will fulfill the second vitally important role of a PAC reviewer: that of contributing to the development of future scholarship.

It may be helpful to think in terms of the answers to three sequential questions:

1. Is the topic of the manuscript appropriate for [PAC](#)?
2. Does the manuscript make a significant scientific contribution?
3. Can the flaws in this manuscript be remedied in a revision?

Confidentiality

The manuscripts to be reviewed are considered confidential communication. Once an unpublished manuscript is set in a fixed, tangible form (e.g., typed on a page), it is entitled to copyright protection. The author of an unpublished manuscript owns the copyright.

Narrative evaluation

Your comments to authors will be read both by the authors and by the editors. They should provide a critical but constructive review, in a considerate and impartial tone. They should not reveal your confidential recommendation to reject, revise, or accept the paper, or your opinion as to whether it should be published.

The actual decision to reject, revise, or accept the paper will be made by the editors, not by the reviewers. Null results, by themselves, also provide

an insufficient basis for rejection of a manuscript. If a study addresses an important question or tests an interesting hypothesis, and if it is well designed and well executed, it can be informative even if the results are null.

General style

The narrative should be phrased as a communication between you and the author about the manuscript. Please refer to the authors of the manuscript sparingly and, when doing so, use the third person. Critical feedback tends to be easier to accept when a review refers to some aspect of "the manuscript" and avoids phrasing in the second person.

Organization

For both the Action Editors and the authors, **clear separation of major and minor points is crucial**. A more effective review will emerge when you are able to separate the forest from the trees. Numbering your points facilitates the Action Editor's reference to your review in the editorial decision letter.

We suggest you divide your comments to authors into the following three sections:

- **Key Strengths:** Briefly describe the key strengths of the manuscript. Highlight points that make it interesting, informative, important, or novel. Many reviewers begin their narrative with a paragraph summarizing the study. This practice serves two useful functions: first, it provides a brief statement of your essential understanding of the study and its findings, thereby, authors are reassured that you have read the manuscript in detail. Second, this paragraph serves to remind you about the study when you receive copies of the editorial decision letter and other reviews.
- **Major Points:** Identify the most important problems, weaknesses, errors, omissions, or limitations. This section should focus primarily on deficiencies in the science, not in the writing. Preferred format: numbered list with no more than about 5–10 items.
- **Minor Points:** List any other problems, weaknesses, errors, omissions, or limitations that should be addressed; violations of [APA Style](#); problems with grammar; quality of writing; etc. Preferred format: list with no more than about 10–20 items. Use the manuscript's section and subsection headings to structure your

comments, and indicate the location(s) of the problems by page, paragraph, and/or line number.

Length

It is important that reviews provide enough information that the Action Editors and authors have enough to understand the evaluation. This is usually about a single-spaced page in length, but can be longer.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

PAC is committed to ensuring the scholarship it publishes is inclusive and equitable. Reviewers play a key role in supporting us in this mission.

In your evaluation, consider:

- How well the manuscript contributes to the psychological wellbeing of multiple or underrepresented communities;
- Whether it reinforces stereotypes or contributions of bias in the methods;
- If a paper's findings could be used or misused to cause harm, especially to vulnerable groups;
- Whether the participant sample been appropriately described in the Abstract and Methods-- did the authors justify their sample and describe their sample inclusion efforts?
- How inclusive the references are—if you have recommendations for relevant works by authors from historically excluded groups, please share those in your comments to the authors.

Please refrain from bias-free language, and refer to APA's [Bias-Free Language Guidelines](#) and [Inclusive Language Guidelines](#) for support.

Reviewers have the option to include an early career colleague, postdoc, or student as a co-reviewer on a manuscript. The co-reviewer's name can be added when the review is submitted in [Editorial Manager](#). We encourage reviewers to consider engaging their early career colleagues or students in the *PAC* review process.

Peer review ethics

PAC follows [COPE's Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers](#).

If you discover you have a conflict of interest after agreeing to review, please disclose this to the Action Editor. If you must recuse yourself from review, please consider recommending alternate reviewers, especially experts from underrepresented groups.

Ensure the tone of your review is professional and respectful. When suggesting language changes, focus on edits that improve clarity rather than assumptions about an author's first language.

If you suspect an ethical violation in a manuscript, please contact the Action Editor.

PAC recognizes the many commitments of reviewers. If you are unable to complete a review in the allotted timeframe, please let the Editorial Office know as soon as possible. We are happy to consider deadline extensions if reviewers need additional time to complete a thorough and constructive review.