Guidelines for Reviewers

Peer review represents a vital element of maintaining high standards in scholarly publishing. This process could not be managed without the knowledge and experience of contributing specialists. We are very grateful to all our reviewers for the time and effort they spend evaluating manuscripts for **IZA Journal Series**.

General Expectations

The journal uses a closed single-blind peer review system (the names of the reviewers are hidden from the authors). Submitted manuscripts are reviewed by two or more experts. Reviewers are asked to recommend whether a manuscript should be accepted, revised or rejected. Although the journal uses the plagiarism detection system CrossCheck, reviewers should alert the editors if they suspect any issues relating to author misconduct such as plagiarism.

Reviewers are asked to provide detailed, constructive comments that will help both the editors make a decision on the publication and the author(s) to improve their manuscript. They should point out whether the work has serious flaws that preclude its publication, or whether additional experiments should be carried out or additional data should be collected to support the conclusions drawn.

Reviewers invited by the editors of the journal should reveal any potential conflict of interest they may have with respect to the manuscript or the authors. All likely personal, professional or financial conflicts of interest should be considered.

Specific Expectations

When preparing the reports, we ask our reviewers to consider the following points:
Originality and significance of presented work.
Reviewers are asked to comment on the originality and significance of the work for the scientific community. If the presented research is unoriginal and similar work has been published previously, reviewers should give references.

Strengths and weaknesses of the methods used.
Reviewers should assess the appropriateness of the methods used. If necessary, technical aspects of the paper, such as the statistical analyses, should be commented. They should suggest improvements that will result in the enhancement of the quality of the paper.

Reliability of the results and validity of the conclusions.
Reviewers are requested to comment on the reliability of new methods developed. They should consider whether the conclusion(s) drawn are supported by the data collected.

Organization of the manuscript.
Reviewers should comment whether the manuscript is easy to read and the arguments are described in a logical and understandable way. They should suggest improvements, if necessary.

Discussion of the most relevant literature on the topic.
Reviewers should comment on the relevance of literature cited in the manuscript. They should give reference to any important research not mentioned in the paper.

Revisions

When revision of the manuscript is suggested, reviewers are asked to recommend which aspects of the work should be improved: better motivation for the research, additional data to confirm conclusions, better organization of the paper.

Please note that accepted papers will undergo language editing. Incorrect grammar, style or punctuation should not constitute a sufficient reason to reject a paper if it is still intelligible for the reviewer and its content warrants publication from a scientific point of view.

Confidentiality

Reviewers are asked not to distribute copies of the manuscript or use results contained in it without the authors' permission. However, they are free to show it to knowledgeable colleagues and to consult them about the review. Suggestions for alternative reviewers are helpful to the Editors and would be appreciated.

Technicalities

We ask reviewers to return their reports within the specified deadline or inform the Editor as soon as possible if they are not able to do so. Reviewer reports can be submitted via online submission system.

Revising

When revising your manuscript and responding to peer review comments:

- Address all points raised by the editor and reviewers
- Describe the revisions to your manuscript in your response letter
- Perform any additional experiments or analyses the reviewers recommend (unless you feel that they would not make your paper better; if this is the case, explain why in your response letter)
- Provide a polite and scientific rebuttal to any points or comments you disagree with
- Differentiate between reviewer comments and your responses in your letter
- Clearly show the major revisions in the text, either with a different color text, by highlighting the changes, or with Microsoft Word's Track Changes feature
- Return the revised manuscript and response letter within the time period the editor tells you

Examples

Reviewer comment: "In your analysis of the data you have chosen to use a somewhat obscure fitting function (regression). In my opinion, a simple Gaussian function would have sufficed. Moreover, the results would be more instructive and easier to compare to previous results."

Response in agreement with the reviewer: "We agree with the reviewer's assessment of the analysis. Our tailored function does make it impossible to fully interpret the data in terms of the prevailing theories. In addition, in its current form, we agree it would be difficult to tell that this measurement constitutes a significant improvement over previously reported values. We have therefore re-analyzed the data using a Gaussian fitting function."

Response disagreeing with the reviewer: "We agree with the reviewer that a simple Gaussian fit would facilitate comparison with the results of other studies. However, our tailored function allows for the analysis of the data in terms of the Smith model [Smith et al, 1998]. We have added two sentences to the paper (page 3, paragraph 2) to explain the use of this function and Smith's model."

Note that in both comments (agreeing and disagreeing) the author is polite and shows respect for the reviewer's opinion. Also, in both circumstances the author makes a change to the manuscript that addresses the reviewer's question.

Remember, the reviewer is probably a highly knowledgeable person. If their suggestion is incorrect, it is likely because they misunderstood your manuscript, indicating that you should make your text clearer.