

International Association for Identification
Journal of Forensic Identification
Guidelines for Reviewers
(Revised December 2004)

The overall goal of peer review is to provide the readers with a source of potentially beneficial information that has been objectively scrutinized to ensure the validity of the material.

The task of the reviewer is one of great responsibility and one of enormous service to the association. In essence, all reviewers function as associate editors who significantly contribute to the final product as well as to the image and reputation of the publication.

General Instructions

1. The unpublished manuscript is a privileged document. Please protect it from any form of exploitation. Manuscripts should not be copied or distributed to other individuals. Reviewers may not cite a manuscript or refer to the work it describes before it has been published. Reviewers may not use the information for any personal gain.
2. Expected review turnaround is two weeks. If this cannot be accomplished, reviewers should contact the editor immediately.
3. Material is forwarded according to expressed areas of knowledge or expertise. If the manuscript is beyond a reviewer's ability to evaluate, the manuscript should be returned immediately.
4. Reasonable effort will be made to conceal the identity of the author from the reviewer. At times, this is impossible without mutilating the document. Reviewers who ascertain an author's identity and feel such knowledge creates a bias should return the manuscript without evaluation. When the author's identity is known or suspected, reviewers must not discuss a submission or its assessment with the author. Direct communication between the reviewer and the author could prove confusing and counterproductive.
5. Reviews are considered confidential, and the identity of the reviewers will not be revealed to the author. In the event of rejection, a synopsis of reviewers' comments may be provided to the author.
6. Effective review is the product of a positive, impartial, and empathetic attitude toward the author while maintaining a strong, critical posture toward the material. Determining what is right about a manuscript is just as important as discerning what is wrong. Although there is no allowance for the acceptance of inaccurate or erroneous material, there is a need to foster the development of good ideas struggling to get out.
7. The ultimate decision of acceptance, revision, and rejection of a manuscript is the responsibility of the editor. Differing reviews frequently occur, sometimes to such an extent that they require additional reviews. Reviewers should not interpret the eventual publication of a manuscript considered unacceptable by them as a personal rebuff but merely the exercise of final editorial prerogative.
8. Assessments other than "a" evaluations should list some explanation for the rating. In cases of a reviewer's recommendation that the manuscript does not deserve consideration for publication, comments are essential.
9. When the review process is completed, the reviewer should return the review worksheet and manuscript to the editor, even if one or the other contains no editorial comment. The worksheet is needed for the editor's records, and manuscript privilege must be preserved.

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