

Suggestions to Referees

The role played by the referee in maintaining the standing of *Physical Review Special Topics - Physics Education Research* is a crucial one. The high standards associated with this journal can only be achieved with the active and conscientious involvement of you as referee. To be of value, your recommendations must be accompanied by a detailed and reasoned evaluation. To be publishable, papers must contain significant new physics or understanding, must be of high quality and scientific interest, and must be written in good, scientific English. Mere correctness is not sufficient justification for publication in this journal.

Do not otherwise distribute copies of the manuscript or use results contained in it without permission from the authors. Feel free to show it to knowledgeable colleagues and to consult them about your review. Suggestions for alternative referees are helpful to the editors and would be appreciated.

It is the job of the referee to judge clarity and content of the manuscript, not issues of style. Comments dealing with issues of personal preference, such as how data is presented or writing styles or format, should be kept to a minimum. Aside from whether these sorts of comments are appropriate, having many comments of this type slows down the reviewing process considerably and should be avoided.

The reviews are expected to be completed and returned in a timely manner. An automated email reminder will be sent by APS two weeks after you receive the manuscript.

Please consider the points below when reviewing a manuscript:

General

- What is the purpose of the paper? Does the paper meet its goals?
- Do you recommend that the paper be accepted for publication? Accept after revision? Does the revised paper need to be re-reviewed?

The research problem

- What specific question or questions does this paper address?
- Does the paper make a strong argument for its place in the body of existing knowledge?
- Does the paper present the necessary theoretical and experimental background, including citations of current literature? Do you have suggestions for additional references?

Methodology

- What type of study is it (qualitative/quantitative, experimental/quasi-experimental, ethnographic, case study, theoretical, etc.)? Is the research design appropriate for the questions being addressed? Was the methodology effectively implemented?
- Are data, statistical results, populations, instrumentation, interview/observation protocols, and other procedures adequately reported? Are validity and reliability issues addressed? Is there sufficient detail to facilitate replication of the study?

Results and conclusions

- Are data tables and figures complete?
- Do the data support the paper's assertions? Are the questions answered? Are there implications for instruction?
- Are the limitations of the findings described?

The following should also be considered, but not used as grounds for rejection

General

- Do the title and abstract summarize the paper in a useful way?
- Is the writing clear and concise? Is the quality of writing (vocabulary, grammar, and style) satisfactory? Could the paper be shorter?
- Is the paper in an APS-approved format?

Results and conclusions

- Are data tables and figures appropriate or excessive?

More detailed guidelines are available at:

<http://FORMS.aps.org/referees/suggestionforrefs-per-detail.pdf>