

Peer Review Guidelines

Peer review is an integral part of academic and scientific writing. It enables authors to produce valid, accurate and well-formed reports. In this course, at this stage, you are helping each other.

This is an outline of how to approach the peer review.

1. Read the report all the way through to gain an overall impression.
2. Make a brief note as a summary of what you believe the report to be about.
3. Re-read the report looking at the detail. Use the comment facility in Word or PDF considering the points laid out below.

Note: This following list is not exhaustive and builds upon the lectures. If you wish to comment on your peer's report in additional ways than those shown below you are welcome to do so.

Report structure

Was the template used?

Are all of the following elements present and are they fit for purpose?

Title - Do the main and sub-title adequately describe the contents of the report

Abstract - Is this a concise executive summary of the whole report

Key words - Are they relevant?

Table of contents - Is the section and page numbering accurate?

Introduction - Does it adequately prepare the reader for the report?

Aim - Is the aim clearly outlined?

Research questions - Are the research questions coherent and correctly formed?

Results - Do the results satisfy what was promised in the previous three sections?

Discussion and conclusion

1. Are the arguments well-made, the research questions answered and the aim achieved?
2. Has any new or superfluous information been introduced?

References

1. Has the IEEE citation system been applied correctly in the text?
2. Check all online references. Are they peer reviewed?
3. Are the references appropriate, accurate and relevant to the text?
4. Are the references sufficient and from varied sources?

Coherence

1. Is the text understandable?
2. Is there any confusion or doubt over the meanings of individual words and/or sentences? If so, highlight these and request that the author clarify.
3. Add a note if further explanation is required.
4. Check for **unity** between sections and that paragraphs and sentences are properly linked.
5. Remember: a paragraph must be more than a single sentence and a whole page will contain several paragraphs.

Content

1. Is the report informative and, as far as you can ascertain, factually correct?
2. Is there a sufficient and even **information density**?

Language and form

1. Is the language use clearly in the *academic domain*? Look for *inappropriate register*.
2. Is the report *precise*?
3. Point out any slang, colloquialisms or language use.
4. Check the *author visibility*.
5. Are any personal pronouns used?
6. Note any sentence fragments or sentences that contain more than one concept.
7. Are the font (typeface) and line-spacing correct?
8. Have the paragraphs been correctly indented?

Spelling, punctuation, grammar and syntax

Highlight any errors that you find of the above.

Finally

1. Remember to bring out the positives and strengths as well as pointing out the weaknesses and errors in the report.
2. Be constructive in your criticism. As well as highlighting errors, try to offer suggestions.
3. Make sure that your comments are clear, make sense and that your peer will understand what you are referring to
4. Re-read your comments before passing them on to your peer.
5. Send the commented draft and arrange to meet in person, if possible, or communicate online.
6. Review your own report: accept or reject the comments of your peer.

Don't forget

Be honest, don't pull any punches

Be kind and helpful. Your aim is to aid, not hurt.

Respect misunderstandings. Do not take criticism personally.

Encourage!