

Guidelines for Reviewers of Manuscripts for the *International Journal of Testing*

The peer review process is designed to ensure published articles are of appropriate quality and accuracy. This peer review process also has an instructional function. Authors of manuscripts should learn from the comments provided by the reviewers and the editor and should become better researchers. Thus, the review process is important not only for guaranteeing the quality of articles published in *IJT*, but also for improving scholarship within the measurement profession.

The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines for reviewing manuscripts in a way that is most constructive to the authors and will result in a helpful review, regardless of the final editorial decision. -Here are seven points directed to the reviewer:

- 1) **Begin with a brief summary of the article.** It is helpful to state the purpose of the manuscript or at least the intent in one or two sentences. This suggestion does not mean you need to summarize the entire manuscript, but beginning in this way lets the authors know you understood the purpose, or in the worst case, that their intended purpose was not clear. For example, you may write in your review: "In this study, the authors evaluated the decision consistency of an employment exam using simulated data..." .
- 2) **Provide a statement regarding your general impression of the importance of the topic or the general quality of the manuscript.** For example, "Although there were many typos in the manuscript that need to be corrected, the study was well executed and should be of interest to readers of *IJT* who are interested in developments in item response time modeling."
- 3) **Separate your comments into major issues and minor issues.** You are likely to find grammatical errors, typos, and other minor problems with the manuscript that are important to communicate to the authors. However, it is more important to stress any major impressions you have regarding positive aspects, flaws in the methodology or in interpretation of the results, or inattention to previous literature. It is often helpful to state your major impressions first, and then leave the more minor issues to a later section of your review.
- 4) **Include positive comments, but point out weaknesses.** Even the worst manuscripts typically have some positive features. Please be critical because it is important to point out problems and let authors know when their work needs improvement. However, try to also note any positive features in the manuscript. Many authors of substandard work may be early career scholars and will benefit from any encouragement you can share. When pointing out weaknesses, try to distinguish between those that are correctable (e.g., an inadequate literature review) from those that are fatal flaws (e.g., poor research design). If

any problems are correctable, describe ways in which the authors could fix them. In general, make your review constructive rather than destructive so that it is helpful to the author.

- 5) **Consider the importance of the topic and interest to the international measurement community when making your publication decision.** Space in *IJT* is precious and so we want to publish only the best, most interesting work that is likely to be of interest to our readers and that contributes to the literature from methodological or theoretical perspectives. If you have learned something from the manuscript, it is likely to be of interest to others also. If you recommend rejection, your review will help in deciding on whether to encourage the authors to resubmit. To this end, please be sure to fill out the portion of the reviewer rating form that inquires about the likelihood of acceptance if the author revises the manuscript.
- 6) **Please maintain confidentiality of the manuscript.** The review process is blind and all manuscripts should be treated as confidential. If for some reason you want to share the research with others, contact the editors who will make contact with the authors for you to see if they will allow dissemination.
- 7) **Issues of competence or conflict.** Occasionally, we may send you a manuscript far outside of your area of expertise or one that presents a conflict for you. If so, please let the editors know, and if possible, suggest other reviewers.