

Guidelines for individual peer review

“As a peer reviewer, your job is not to provide answers. You raise questions; the writer makes the choices. You act as a mirror, showing the writer how the draft looks to you and pointing out areas which need attention.” - Sharon Williams, U Hawaii Writing Program

- I recommend you read a DAR all the way through before you begin to comment on it. Give yourself enough time to read and respond.
- If something on the feedback form is unclear, please ask me!
- Point out the strengths of the DAR as well as weaknesses.
- When discussing areas that need improvement, be nice. Offer appropriate, constructive comments from a reader's point of view.
- Make comments text-specific, referring specifically to the writer's draft (no “rubber stamps” such as “awkward” or “unclear” or “vague”, which are too general to be helpful).
- Make sure your suggestions are reasonable (i.e., don't suggest that they totally rewrite the paper because you didn't agree with the author's point of view or story line).
- Before giving your written comments to the author, reread your comments to make sure they are clear and make sense.

Appropriate, constructive comments:

- Be respectful and considerate of the writer's feelings.
- Offer suggestions, not commands.
- Raise questions from a reader's point of view, points that may not have occurred to the writer.
- Phrase comments clearly and carefully so that the writer can easily understand what needs to be improved.
- Make sure comments are constructive and specific (not “This paper is confusing. It keeps saying the same things over and over again” but rather “It sounds like paragraph five makes the same point as paragraphs 2 and 3.”).
- Always think about the constructive feedback you would like to receive from peer review comments. This thought-process includes level of detail and level of negativity.
- Avoid turning the writer's paper into your paper!

Kudos: The guidelines and criteria grid below are derived from suggestions by the University of Hawaii at Manoa Writing Program.

Please fill out the criteria grid on the next pages for each paper. Submit a separate pdf file of your criteria grid critique for each paper. Please label with the paper number and use the paper number in the file name; e.g., critique of paper 456 would be DAR456.pdf

Criteria	E/F/P	Comments
Layout/Organization		
Paper structure (organization into sections following DAR outline, appendices)?	E	Structured like the outline.
Figures and tables (clearly labeled, professional looking, informative captions)?	F	Page 3. Try <code>par(mfrow = c(3,2))</code> or go for a 3x2 rather than 2x3. Better yet, shorten your captions of the figures. The log income vs log expen, the y-axis has log growth rate. You might want to fix that.
Clearly stated purpose and objective(s)?	F	Stated in the Intro. Can it be restated in the conclusion? It would be better to remind the read what the original purpose was.
Accomplished its purpose?	F	Yes.
Good overall structure? Ideas ordered effectively? Organized story line?	P	The results had many figures and graphs. Does the author need all of them?
Transitions used? Smooth and clear flow?	F	
Introduction and conclusion focus clearly on the main point? Intro puts topic into context? Conclusion discusses scientific relevance and limitations?	P	Please restate the purpose of the analysis in the conclusion. Limitation included interaction terms.
Paragraphs right length for reading (not too long or too short)?	F	The paragraphs were a little short during the analysis/results

Criteria	E/F/P	Comments
Development/Support		
Major ideas/topics received enough attention and explanation? Were well developed?	P	Included the expenditure predictions and confidence intervals of the coefficients
Supporting material persuasive?	F	
Story line consistent and progresses logically?	E	
Presentation of exploratory data analysis: supports the story line? Justifies decisions made?	F	Log Linear model? This isn't a multiple regression, right?
Presentation of model selection: Clear? Concise? Well-justified?	F	Clear model selection.
Presentation of model diagnostics: Model assumptions justified? Presentation thorough, concise, and clear?	F	Could be more thorough.
Presentation of inferences: Clear and informative inference table? Inferences interpreted? Story line consistent and complete?	F	Everything was interpreted.
Appropriate use of figures/tables in the main text? Supporting figures/tables in Appendix? Appendix well organized?	F	Many too many figures?

Criteria	E/F/P	Comments
Style		
Topic and level of formality appropriate for audience?	F	Not formal enough with 'we'
Sentences and words varied? (scientifically and consistently accurate; attempt at lively prose)	P	Author should vary his/her writing. Please don't use We.
Wordiness avoided?	E	Yes. Maybe a tad too much.
Grammar and Mechanics		
Grammar?	F	
Spelling?	F	There is spell check in R Sweave. It's under edit. F7 might work.
Punctuation?	F	First paragraph has an unnecessary period

If you could recommend three specific changes in the writing, what would they be?

1. Eliminate 'we'
2. Write a little more for the executive summary and analysis/results
3. If possible, put most of your graphs in the appendix. The paper may just need expenditure predictions and confidence intervals of the coefficients.