

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	Like the outline
Figures and tables (clearly labeled, professional looking, informative captions)?	E	Think about making a table for the abstract. There were so many numbers in there.
Clearly stated purpose and objective(s)?	E	Stated in the abstract and intro. Please restate the purpose in the conclusion
Accomplished its purpose?	E	yes
Good overall structure? Ideas ordered effectively? Organized story line?	E	yes
Transitions used? Smooth and clear flow?	E	Yes
Introduction and conclusion focus clearly on the main point? Intro puts topic into context? Conclusion discusses scientific relevance and limitations?	E	Yes
Paragraphs right length for reading (not too long or too short)?	E	yes

Criteria	E/F/P	Comments
Development/Support		
Major ideas/topics received enough attention and explanation? Were well developed?	E	yes
Supporting material persuasive?	E	yes
Story line consistent and progresses logically?	E	yes
Presentation of exploratory data analysis: supports the story line? Justifies decisions made?	E	yes
Presentation of model selection: Clear? Concise? Well-justified?	E	yes
Presentation of model diagnostics: Model assumptions justified? Presentation thorough, concise, and clear?	E	yes
Presentation of inferences: Clear and informative inference table? Inferences interpreted? Story line consistent and complete?	E	yes
Appropriate use of figures/tables in the main text? Supporting figures/tables in Appendix? Appendix well organized?	E	Yes. Good work with the appendix

Criteria	E/F/P	Comments
Style		
Topic and level of formality appropriate for audience?	E	Avoid 'you' in the paper
Sentences and words varied? (scientifically and consistently accurate; attempt at lively prose)	E	Good work
Wordiness avoided?	E	Yes.
Grammar and Mechanics		
Grammar?	E	
Spelling?	E	
Punctuation?	E	

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

1. In 3.1, explain what lambda is.
2. Why all the numbers in the abstract? Place it into a table or refer the read to a table
3. Restate the purpose of the paper in the conclusion.