

## *International Journal of School Social Work Peer Review Form Guidance*

This document is intended to serve as a reference to peer reviewers for the *International Journal of School Social Work*.

### **Format**

The purpose of peer review is to help editors determine if a manuscript is informative and well-constructed, if it is rigorous and valid, and, most importantly, if it falls within the journal's scope and is of interest to School Social Work practitioners and researchers. Reviewers can address these concerns in a variety of ways. Previously, the IJSSW provided a short checklist for reviewers to complete that highlighted the elements most necessary in a successful manuscript. However, this method does not track with industry-standard peer review practices, nor does it result in the most effective and highest quality reviews. Instead, reviewers are now invited to respond in the manner they feel appropriate, provided the review accurately addresses the criteria detailed below.

Most commonly, submitted reviews will take the form of a short, written response that details a manuscript's strengths, weaknesses, and areas requiring revision. Some reviewers might instead wish to make notes in the manuscript itself using track changes and commentary functions, such as those found in Microsoft Word. Regardless of format, be generous with your thoughts. You, as a reviewer, were selected for your disciplinary expertise, and your comments are pivotal in helping authors revise and strengthen their manuscripts, which in turn helps to increase both the impact and the standing of the IJSSW.

Regardless of format, **all** reviews should include the following:

- Engagement with the primary argument presented, including identification of its scope and relevance to school based social workers and researchers.
- Suggestions for necessary revisions, expansions, or recategorization into another of IJSSW's article categories
- **A suggested disposition that falls into one of the following categories:**
  - Accept Submission
  - Accept Submission, with minor revisions
  - Major revisions required for acceptance
  - Reject submission

### **Criteria to Consider**

**IMPORTANCE: Is a topic important enough to merit space in *IJSSW*? Does the manuscript advance the theory or practice, address a contemporary or emerging issue affecting school social workers, and/or address the intersection between social work practice and education?**

- The manuscript discusses unique, substantiated, and timely methods, findings, and/or concepts.

**INTEREST: Does the manuscript captures and hold readers' attention?**

- The writing is clear and well-structured. The author does not ramble and is not wordy, redundant, or overly dependent on unnecessary jargon.

**CLEAR FOCUS: Does the manuscript have a clear main point?**

- The manuscript addresses a single, identifiable topic, and the authors' purpose is clear.
- Referenced literature includes only relevant sources.

**COHERENCE: Are sections, paragraphs, and sentences appropriately sequenced and constructed to support the central idea and conclusions? Do the authors present ideas and data in an accurate and consistent manner?**

- Narrative about data aligns with any graphical representations of the data (i.e., tables, figures).
- Conclusions and/or implications are based on facts presented in the manuscript and relevant sound reasoning.
- Our goal is to provide access and to ensure that important global work is seen by many. Please distinguish between content and language issues to the degree possible for authors whose first language may not be English. We want to provide support if available to those authors who have good content but need additional mentoring in this area.

**COMPREHENSION: Does the author use easy-to-understand language? Is the manuscript free from errors of carelessness (e.g., missing words, typos)?**

- The author uses clear, accurate, and precise language and correct terminology.
- Information presented in figures and tables is logically ordered and easily grasped.

**CITATIONS: Does the manuscript contain appropriate scholarly citations? Is cited literature accurately paraphrased or quoted?**

- The manuscript includes appropriately current citations to support references to the works of others and all facts and figures that are not common knowledge.

**APA FORMAT: Does the author appropriately utilize APA formatting for the manuscript?**

**RIGOR (criteria differ across article types)**

- **FEATURE/RESEARCH RIGOR/EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE: Does the manuscript offer a clear description of problem studied and methods used? Is based on valid and reliable information, documentation, and sound concepts/methods? Is the content empirically, logically, and/or theoretically supported?**
  - The description of the problem studied, methods used, and findings is clear to readers.
  - The author provides adequate information about the tools and methods used to gather and analyze data.
- **PRACTICE WISDOM: Does the manuscript describe ideas, programs, or methods that are novel, innovative, or new? Does the author provide information that allows for adaptation or replication?**

- The author has included evidence that the idea, program, or method described has been used successfully.

#### **CONTRIBUTION (criteria differ across article types)**

- **FEATURE/RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION:** Does the manuscript address a topic of broad interest to school social workers or those working in a specific geographic region or specific population?
- **IDEAS AT WORK CONTRIBUTION:** Does the manuscript provide suggestions for practical application or policy for school social workers?

#### **Overall Rating**

The choices for recommendation are *accept for publication*, *accept for publication with minor revision*, *request resubmission with significant revisions*, and *reject*. Following are explanations of and guidelines for each recommendation:

- **Accept for publication:** The manuscript is acceptable for publication as written.
- **Accept for publication with minor revisions:** The manuscript requires minor revisions before publication. In general, you should reserve this recommendation for manuscripts having only grammar, mechanics, and style errors and/or only the most minor flaws related to literature reviewed, methodology, findings, discussion, or implications. Be specific about the minor revisions required.
- **Major revisions requested for resubmission:** The manuscript requires major, extensive revisions and an additional round of peer review before publication. Apply this recommendation to manuscripts having any issues beyond the most minor flaws related to literature reviewed, methodology, findings, discussion, or implications. Be specific about the major revisions required.
- **Reject:** The manuscript does not meet the criteria for publication in *IJSSW*. For example, the manuscript fails to make a significant enough contribution to the knowledge base or effective practice of U.S. Extension professionals, or it demonstrates a severely flawed research effort or inappropriate interpretation of results.

Of course, if any questions arise during the peer review process, please do not hesitate to contact the Associate Editor managing the manuscript.

Thank you once again for your service to *IJSSW*. You make an important contribution to profession. We rely on you to provide access to social work research to a global audience. *IJSSW* authors express grateful sentiments about reviewers' critiques, queries, and suggestions. They remark about how helpful the insights are and how vastly improved their manuscripts are as a result of the peer-review process. The *IJSSW* editors are also very grateful for your service!