

Consent form

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Description: This is a survey on peer review, which should take about 15-20 minutes of your time. We are interested in your view of the current peer review process and how it can be improved.

Eligibility criteria: You are eligible to participate in this survey if, **over the last two years**, (i) you **completed at least one peer review**; and (ii) you **received referee reports** on a paper you submitted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal.

Risks and benefits: There are no physical or emotional risks associated with this study that would go beyond the risks of daily life. Your participation in this study may improve the peer review process and, therefore, benefit the scientific community. In addition, we will give \$100 (cash or gift certificate) to two people drawn randomly from the respondents; you will be asked to leave your email address in a separate survey link if you wish to be entered in the lottery.

Confidentiality: The information collected in this survey may be published in a report or a journal article and presented to interested parties, including possibly, but not exclusively, members of editorial boards or scientific committees. In no circumstances will your identity or personal involvement in this study be disclosed. No personal data (e.g., your IP address) will be collected, except for your email address if you wish to be emailed the report and/or participate in the prize draw (this information will not be connected to your survey responses and will be destroyed after the prize draw). Other information (e.g., survey responses, time of the survey) will be kept by the researchers and may be used for future studies.

Your rights as a participant: Participation is entirely voluntary. You may leave the survey at any time without any penalty or prejudice.

Ethics approval: This research has been reviewed according to the ethics procedures for research involving human subjects of the University of Oxford (approval # ECONCIA-21-21-20). If you wish to raise any concerns about this study to the ethics committee, please email ethics@economics.ox.ac.uk.

Please indicate below that you have read the above, that you meet the eligibility criteria, and that you are willing to participate in this online survey.

Yes, proceed to the survey

Your experience of the peer review process as an author

Your experience of the peer review process as an author

Over the last two years, how many times did you submit a paper to an economics journal? Please include only first-time submissions (not revisions), with submissions of the same paper to different journals counted separately.

[Choice from 0 to 100+]

How would you rate the overall quality of the referee reports you received over this period? Please indicate what approximate percentage of reports were of the following quality (total should sum to 100):

Very low	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Fairly low	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Average	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Fairly high	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Very high	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Total	<input type="text" value="0"/>

What were the characteristics of the low-quality reports? Please tick all that apply:

- Inaccurate statements about what the paper does or does not do
- Overly short report
- Very vague and unconstructive comments
- Written with an aggressive tone
- Personal insults
- Unrealistic demands
- Inconsistent demands
- Other - please specify:

A referee report can achieve multiple objectives. How important do you consider each of the following objectives? Please rank 1-4 in order of importance (with 1 being most important) by dragging and dropping the various items:

[Items presented in a randomized order]

Help editor reach an informed decision on the paper

Give general comments that improve the paper

Provide detailed feedback on the paper

Make precise suggestions that improve the paper

As an author, what do you expect from the peer-review process? Please rank 1-3 in order of importance (with 1 being most important):

[Items presented in a randomized order]

A timely decision (whether good or bad)

Getting useful feedback on my work

Getting a reasonable and well-substantiated decision

Improving the quality of peer reviews

Below is a list of proposals to improve peer reviews. On a scale from 1 to 5, how useful do you find each of them? (1 = not useful at all; 5 = extremely useful)

	1	2	3	4	5
Providing a set of guidelines for writing referee reports.	<input type="radio"/>				
Providing doctoral training on how to write peer reviews.	<input type="radio"/>				
Making the history of (anonymous) reviews and authors' responses publicly available.	<input type="radio"/>				
Removing the anonymity of senior referees.	<input type="radio"/>				
Removing the anonymity of associate editors.	<input type="radio"/>				
Somehow grading reports and rewarding referees for high-quality reports.	<input type="radio"/>				
Encouraging the use of a platform that tracks referee activity in a centralized way.	<input type="radio"/>				
Making all reports available to all of the reviewers and making sure reviewers know this is being done.	<input type="radio"/>				

Guidelines for writing a report

What type of comments do you find most useful or would you like to see more of?

Please make 3 selections from the following list:

- Robustness checks
- Comments about missing previous work and references
- Comments about the presentation of the results
- Comments that put in perspective the assumptions made in the paper
- Comments about shortening/restructuring the paper
- Comments that help me clarify the contribution of the paper relative to the literature
- Suggestions about possible extensions
- Suggestions to improve the existing analysis

Do you think journals or associations should provide a template for referee reports?

- Yes
- No

Information disclosure

In other disciplines, such as public health/medicine, many journals have an open peer review process: referees sign their reports and the entire review history (including responses to referees) is disclosed.

On a scale from 1 to 5, how favorable would you be to an open review policy?

1 - Not favorable at all	2	3	4	5 - Very favorable
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What if this only applied to senior reviewers?

1 - Not favorable at all	2	3	4	5 - Very favorable
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Another recent trend is to make the history of reports/responses to referees publicly available in an anonymized way unless the reviewers choose to disclose their identity; see e.g., [Nature Communications](#). On a scale from 1 to 5, how favorable would you be to such a policy?

1 - Not favorable at all	2	3	4	5 - Very favorable
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Tracking referee activity

At the moment, there is no centralized system that would allow journal editors to:

- check how many peer review requests a researcher has recently received across all journals.
- find suitable referees who might be currently available to provide a peer review.

One platform called [Publons](#) allows researchers to document their (verified) peer review activity and to register their interest in doing peer reviews for journals. However, it is not widely used at the moment in economics.

On a scale from 1 to 5, how favorable would you be to the more widespread use of Publons or a similar type of platform? (1 = not favorable at all; 5 = very favorable)

1 - Not favorable at all	2	3	4	5 - Very favorable
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Recognition

Do you think that referees would do a better job if they were better rewarded for their work?

- Yes
- No

How should referees be rewarded? Please tick all that apply:

- Excellence in refereeing awards based on specific criteria
- Payment for timely completion e.g., as at the *American Economic Review*
- Discount on submissions to the publisher
- Other - please specify:

Improving the peer review process more generally

What do you think is an appropriate time length to give to reviewers to submit their reports (in weeks)?

[Response items: "1 week"; "2 weeks"; ... ; "16+ weeks"]

How do you feel about the policy of having desk rejections?

1- Not favorable at all 2 3 4 5- Very favorable

The American Economic Association started a new journal in 2017 called *AER: Insights*. This journal follows a model close to the one of medicine, with the endeavor to accept or reject papers without having to go through a lengthy revision process. Like the papers that *AER: Insights* is looking to publish, reports are supposed to be short and to the point. The whole process is supposed to be fast.

How favorable are you to this type of model?

1- Not favorable at all 2 3 4 5- Very favorable

In the case of a rejection, the norm is not to challenge the decision made by the Editor or the views of the referees. This norm is not always followed in practice.

How favorable would you be to a policy allowing the authors to submit a (single) response to the referees and the Editor? The referees would be under no obligation to provide additional comments; a "cooling period" could be required before the authors can send their response. There would be no guarantee of the referees taking this rebuttal into account, and the decision would be final after the comment period.

1- Not favorable at all 2 3 4 5- Very favorable

At journals such as *Management Science*, the review process is double blind i.e., the identity of both the authors and the referees is kept anonymous. How favorable are you to double-blind reviewing? (1 = not favorable at all; 5 = very favorable)

1- Not favorable at all 2 3 4 5- Very favorable

In some fields, authors are allowed to suggest that certain reviewers should be disqualified from reviewing their work. How favorable are you to this possibility? (1 = not favorable at all; 5 = very favorable)

1- Not favorable at all 2 3 4 5- Very favorable

Are there other proposals you would like to make to improve the quality of peer reviews or the peer review process more generally?

Your experience of the peer review process as a referee

Your experience of the peer review process as a referee

On average, approximately how many referee reports do you write per year?

[Choice from 1 to 150]

What percentage of the time do you write referee reports for the following types of journals? (total should sum to 100):

Top 5 journal	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Top field journal	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Other journal in economics	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Journals in other disciplines	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Total	<input type="text" value="0"/>

Have you occupied or are you currently occupying an editorial position?

- Yes
 No

Usually, how much time do you spend on a referee report, including reading the paper and writing the report?

[Response items: "Less than one hour"; "1 or 2 hours"; "Half a working day"; "1 day"; "2 days"; "More than 2 days"]

Over the past two years, what percentage of the time were you late submitting a referee report?

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

On average, what was your delay?

[Response items: "1 day"; "More than 1 day"; "less than 1 week"; "1-2 weeks"; "3-4 weeks"; "More than 1 month"]

What do you think is a reasonable number of reports to be assigned per year?

[Choice from 0 to 100+]

Did you reject a request to referee over these past two years?

- Yes
 No

How many times did you reject a request to referee?

[Choice from 1 to 100]

What were the main reasons? Please tick all that apply:

- Conflict of interest
 Inability to judge the paper
 Too remote from your research field
 Lack of time
 Low quality paper
 Lower-ranked journal
 Other - please specify:

How many times did you feel tempted to decline a report even if you ended up fulfilling the request?

[Choice from 0 to 100]

When you were tempted to decline a report, what were the main reasons? Please tick all that apply:

- Conflict of interest
 Inability to judge the paper

- Too remote from your research field
- Lack of time
- Low quality paper
- Lower-ranked journal
- Other - please specify:

How do you feel about people refereeing papers by co-authors or friends?

- This should never happen.
- This should happen as little as possible but cannot be avoided sometimes.
- This is not a problem as long as the editor is aware of the potential conflict of interest.
- This is not a problem and there is no reason to inform the editor.

What do you see as the biggest benefits of being a referee? Please rank 1-5 in order of importance (with 1 being most important) by dragging and dropping the various items:

[Items presented in a randomized order]

I can learn from the opinion of the other referees and the editor.

I can help to ensure the right papers are published or rejected.

I can get to know the editors and make myself known.

I can attentively read papers I would never read otherwise.

Being a referee makes me a better writer.

How important do you consider your role as a referee? (1 = not important at all; 5 = very important)

- | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1- Not important
at all | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5- Very important |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

How could your experience as a referee be improved? Please rank 1-4 in order of importance (with 1 being most important):

[Items presented in a randomized order]

The editors systematically share their decision and the other reports.

The editors assign me only papers that are related to my research.

The editors give clear guidance of what they would like to learn from my report.

There is a global annual limit on how many papers I am requested to review.

Please enter below any additional suggestion(s) to improve your experience as a referee:

A little more about you**A little more about you**

How many papers have you published in your career up to now? Please indicate a ballpark estimate.

What are your key areas of research? Please select all that apply:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Applied econometrics | <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial organization |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Applied microeconomics | <input type="checkbox"/> International trade |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Behavioral economics | <input type="checkbox"/> Labor economics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Decision theory | <input type="checkbox"/> Macroeconomics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Development economics | <input type="checkbox"/> Microeconomic theory |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic history | <input type="checkbox"/> Political economy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Econometric theory | <input type="checkbox"/> Public economics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Experimental economics | <input type="checkbox"/> Structural econometrics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial economics | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban economics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Game theory | <input type="checkbox"/> Other - indicate: |
| | <input type="text"/> |

What is your gender?

[Response items: "Male"; "Female"; "Other"; "Prefer not to say"]

What is your age?

[Response items: "Under 30"; "30-39"; "40-49"; "50-59"; "60-69"; "70+"; "Prefer not to say"]

What is your position?

[Response items: "PhD candidate"; "Post-doctoral researcher"; "Assistant professor"; "Associate professor"; "Full professor"; "Other"; "Prefer not to say"]

In what country is your job located?

Finally, if you have any comments about the survey itself, feel free to add in the text box below: