

Mediterranean Politics

Guidance on Good Practice for the Review of Manuscripts

Mediterranean Politics appreciates the work of referees who give freely of their time to comment on manuscripts and this helps us to maintain and improve the standard of the research articles that we publish. This Guidance on Good Practice is being offered to referees both to assist them in writing their reports and also to inspire further confidence among authors in the constructive nature of this process. After being rendered anonymous, these reports are sent to authors as a justification of the outcome finally decided by the editors and in order to provide helpful and appropriate feedback.

Referees are asked to bear in mind the following points:

- Whatever the final recommendation, comments should be constructive, providing useful feedback as well as a reasoned case for reaching the final opinion offered on the manuscript.
- Where the advice is to offer authors an opportunity to revise, it is essential that specific guidance is provided.
- Referees should refer to the submitted work (e.g. ‘this piece is not clear...’; ‘this piece does not explain...’). Comments that refer to the author (e.g. ‘the author is not clear...’; ‘the author has not understood...’) should be avoided.
- Referees are reminded that they are being asked for their opinion, based on their expertise. This should be reflected in their comments (e.g. ‘in my opinion, this piece...’), and not presented as an absolute truth (e.g. ‘this is not the finest hour for...’).
- While there is no standard length for a report, a substantial and reasoned statement is required. It is not acceptable to send just a few sentences, even if the referee believes the manuscript to be outstanding or very poor. Manuscripts are looked at initially by the editorial team (the editors and the deputy editor): they are only sent out for full review if the team considers that they may have some potential for publication. Beyond this stage, final decisions are taken on the basis of (3 or more) reports. It does not help the editors weigh up the sometimes conflicting recommendations of the reviewers if the reports are not sufficiently substantial.

Reviewers may find it useful to organise their report into sections which deal specifically with some or all of the following:

- The originality of the research, the argument and/or the data presented
 - The importance of the research
 - The structure of the manuscript and the arguments presented in it.
 - The quality of the writing and the presentation.
 - The degree of “fit” with the objectives and profile of Mediterranean Politics
 - The nature and extent of any changes that would be required to bring the manuscript to an acceptable standard for publication.
- Referees should bear in mind that, as a result of the Freedom of Information Act (2000), any author may file a request to be informed of a referee’s name, and under certain circumstances the Editorial Board would have to comply. While this has not yet happened so far in the history of the journal, it is always advisable for referees to write only what they would be happy to sign in their own name.