

# Professional Conduct Primer for Reviewers

## Tone

- Write the type of review you wish you would receive as an author; use the same language you would if you were speaking in person
- There is no place for rudeness; editors often intercept those comments instead of sending them to authors and do not invite such reviewers in the future

## Candor

- Sometimes bluntness comes across rudely because of the nature of written communications
- When in doubt, show your comments to colleagues or friends to see how they would take or interpret them
- Do not make knee jerk comments

## Contact the editor

- If the research in a submission directly competes with your own, recuse yourself; don't take opportunity to undermine someone
- If you believe the author's return comments really are rude, remain neutral and calm and notify the editor

## Overall

- Always offer objective, fair, professional, constructive comments; even if you recommend rejection, you can be polite and helpful
- Expect to review an original submission **and** any subsequent revisions
- Do not accept review invitations if you cannot finish the review in the time requested; if something causes a delay, suggest a colleague with similar expertise who could take over
- Do not try to act as language or copy editors; commenting about a language problem is fine but do not actually correct papers line by line
- Follow whatever procedure the editor requests (use a review template or form, enter comments directly on a manuscript, etc.)
- Offer helpful suggestions to authors in addition to constructive criticism
- Preserve confidentiality

