REVIEWER GUIDELINES

SPUR Policies and Practices

Journal Purpose

Scholarship and Practice of Undergraduate Research (SPUR) serves as the leading international, cross-disciplinary scholarly destination for those committed to effective, inclusive, and diverse experiences in mentored undergraduate research, scholarship, and creative inquiry. *SPUR* advances knowledge and understanding of novel and effective approaches to mentored undergraduate research, scholar- ship, and creative inquiry by publishing high-quality, rigorously peer- reviewed studies written by scholars and practitioners of undergraduate research, scholarship, and creative inquiry.

Journal Audience

The audience includes many individuals interested in quality undergraduate-level education and professional preparation, such as post-secondary administrators, faculty, staff, researchers, and student mentors both on- and offcampus, as well as industry professionals— all those involved in the scholarship and practice of undergraduate research around the world.

Journal Policies

Journal-specific policies are available on the SPUR website. The Author Submission Guidelines provide the details of what should be included in the manuscript.

Note that *SPUR* does not publish supplementary information at the present time. In summary, key data, critical questions used in scripts, and instruments must appear in the body, figures, and tables of the manuscript so that the readers and reviewers of manuscripts can adequately evaluate the quality of the work performed. Authors must deposit per- tinent data and information not included in the body of the manuscript in a digital repository and disclose (in a *Data Availability Statement* at the end of the manuscript) where the data, critical questions used in scripts, and instruments associated with this manuscript are available. Authors are expected to make their raw data available to interested readers and researchers who wish to replicate or analyze the authors' data in new ways.

The SPUR Authorship Policy provides details of what constitutes authorship. The corresponding author assumes the primary responsibility for managing all correspondence between coauthors and *SPUR* and responding to all inquiries from manuscript submission to publication.

The journal adheres to strict publication ethical guidelines detailed in the SPUR Publication Ethics and Publication Malpractice Statement, and follows guidance from the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) when considering any ethical concerns regarding a published article, retractions, or expressions of concern.

Journal Peer Review Process

SPUR uses the single-blind peer review process in which the authors do not know the identity of the reviewers. However, the reviewers know who the authors are. Upon submission, the Editor-in-Chief, Dr. Mabrouk, completes an initial review of manuscript suitability before assigning it to a handling editor, usually an associate editor, or in the case of a themed issue a special issue editor, to manage the peer review process. The handling editor identifies suitable reviewers (two to three experts in the field) and invites them to review the manuscript. Each reviewer evaluates the manuscript against journal-specific criteria and makes a recommendation on whether the manuscript should be published or revised in some manner. The handling editor compiles the reviewer recommendations and comments and makes a recommendation that is shared with the Editor-in-Chief, Dr. Mabrouk and subsequently with the author.

Reviewer Checklist

This checklist is adapted in part from Robert J. DiDomenico, William L. Baker, and Stuart T Haines, 2017, "Improving Peer Review: What Reviewers Can Do," *American Journal of Health-System Pharmacy* 74: 2080–2084, doi: 10.2146/ajhp170190.

Reviewer Responsibilities:

Requests for review are considered confidential. Reviewers may not share manuscripts with anyone, including student trainees at any level. Upon completion of any review assignment, reviewers are expected to delete any copy of the manuscript in their possession.

Reviewer Self-assessment:

To assess whether you are a suitable reviewer, consider the following questions.

1. Do you have the experience to review of this paper?
    a. If not, please decline to review promptly so that the editor handling this manuscript can identify an alternative reviewer.
    b. Recommend a good reviewer who has the expertise to review this manuscript and provide contact information, including email, for this individual.

2. Do you have any potential conflict of interest (personal, professional, financial, etc.) that might prevent you from evaluating this paper fairly and without any bias?
    a. If the answer is yes, then please decline to review.
        i. It is inevitable that you will be asked to evaluate the work of colleagues in the field with whom you have collaborated or worked in some capacity. Certainly, you should decline to review a paper if you are a coauthor or current collaborator.
    b. Recommend a good reviewer who has the expertise to review this manuscript and provide contact information, including email, for this individual.

3. Can you complete your review assignment on time?
    a. We request the receipt of your review within 21 days. If you cannot complete the review within this time frame, please decline the assignment promptly so that the editor handling this manuscript can identify an alternative reviewer.
    b. Recommend a good reviewer who has the expertise to review this manuscript and provide contact information, including email, for this individual.

Peer Review Best Practice

Quickly read through the manuscript. After reading the manuscript, mentally summarize your understanding of

- the study's purpose;
- key findings and their significance;
- the relevance and value of the work to SPUR's readers given the aims and scope of the journal; and
- existence of any fatal flaws (size of study, methodology, statistical analysis, etc.).

Do a <u>second</u> deep dive rereading the manuscript. Evaluate the work critically as follows:

- What is the research question?
- Has the relevant literature been reviewed?
- Have valid and appropriate research methods been used?
- Have sufficient data been collected and are they of good quality?
- How have the data been analyzed?
- Are the conclusions credible and supported by the data?

Specifically, evaluate the manuscript in the following categories and determine whether the manuscript <u>meets the highest standards</u>, is <u>acceptable</u>, or is <u>not acceptable</u>.

- Scholarship (scholarly rigor)
- Methodology (research methods, sampling)
- Analysis (data analysis)
- Pedagogy (educational relevance, insight)
- Utility (perceived value to SPUR readers)
- Presentation (organization, comprehensiveness, readability, proofing)
- Originality (novelty, innovation, creativity)

Problems with scholarship, methodology, and pedagogy that require acquiring new data and rethinking analysis and pedagogy should be regarded as significant flaws that prevent publication.

Review the abstract and title carefully to determine whether these elements are consistent with the manuscript.

Composing Your Review

Start your review with a few sentences of an *overall assessment* that include:

- Your understanding of the purpose of the study, the key findings and their significance, and the relevance and value of the work for SPUR readers.
- followed by a succinct summary of the strengths and weaknesses.

The next section of the review should present *major problems and concerns*. Be specific, provide examples and details. Consider:

- Identify the main concerns or issues you found in the evaluation categories of scholarship, methodology, analysis, pedagogy, utility, presentation, and originality. Provide specific page numbers and line numbers and cite the evaluation category so that the author can address each of your comments.
- Whenever possible, offer specific recommendations for how the author can address your concerns.

The last section should present *minor concerns*. Here you may want to mention issues such as readability, typos, spelling errors, sentence structure, etc. Be sure to include the specific page and line numbers. Do not worry about minor concerns if you feel that the manuscript has major problems and will require another round of review.

Reread your review to ensure that it is objective and constructive. This can be challenging with a seriously flawed study, but it is important that the authors can 'hear' your feedback. A *friendly review* may:

- o Explain why the flaw is serious or even fatal.
- o Identify and suggest possible remedies if the issue can be addressed through revisions to the manuscript.
- o attack only the argument of the manuscript, not the people. Also, be careful not to make assumptions based on your perceptions of the identity of an author.

Reviewer's Recommendation

In the reviewer dashboard, you will have the opportunity to rank the manuscript, make a recommendation, and provide detailed comments to the author and editor. Do not complete this section until you have completed your review of the manuscript.

Based on your overall evaluation of the work, rank the manuscript as follows:

- Top 10%
- Top 25%
- Top 50%
- Bottom 50%

Based on your detailed evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses, make one of the following recommendations:

- Publish as is without revisions (this should be used only in exceptional cases)
- Publish with minor revisions, as specified below (in comments).
- Publish with major revision, as specified below (in comments)
- The manuscript is not suitable for publication in SPUR

Your confidential comments should reference your evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses in the categories noted above, scholarships, methodology, analysis, pedagogy, utility, presentation, and originality.

Questions or concerns about editorial policies and decisions should be addressed to the editors. The final editorial judgment regarding the publication of manuscripts rests with the Editor-in-Chief, Dr. Mabrouk.

Post-Review

SPUR values the contributions of its reviewers to the journal. You will receive an email after the editor makes a decision handling the manuscript informing you of the editor's decision.

You can also find the status of your assigned manuscript(s) via:

1. Logging into the system (https://*SPUR*.msubmit.net) with your password.
2. Clicking on the link represented by the manuscript tracking number and abbreviated title.
3. Click on the "Check Status" link at the bottom of the page displayed

This procedure will display detailed tracking information about where the manuscript is in the submission and peer review process.

Questions

Questions regarding the suitability of the content and the peer review process should be directed to Editor-in-Chief Patricia Mabrouk, p.mabrouk@northeastern.edu.

Send your questions about the submission system, production process, and publication timelines to *SPUR*@technicaeditorial.com.

All other questions: *SPUR*@cur.org