

## Guidelines for Referees

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Referees play a very important role in the publication process and their work is crucial for the success of the journal.

When accepting an article to review please ensure that the content of the manuscript is close enough to your area of expertise so that you can provide a prompt and professional review. If this is not the case or you cannot provide a timely review, please decline as soon as possible and if known suggest names for alternate reviewers. The *Journal of Statistical Mechanics: Theory and Experiment* (JSTAT) maintains the highest standards of publication and research ethics. Referees are expected to comply with [COPE Ethical guidelines for peer reviewers](#).

In assessing the manuscript please keep in mind the journal [scope](#), and that the criteria for acceptance of a preprint by JSTAT are high scientific quality, originality and relevance. Routine or "not wrong" work is not sufficient for acceptance.

Below are some guidelines to help you when performing the review of the manuscript and writing your report. These guidelines are aligned to the journal standards and expectations for a professional and constructive report.

**In general:** be clear and concrete when pointing out flaws, criticisms should be scientifically substantiated. Provide clear evidence and carefully explain your reasoning for your criticism.

Use clear simple wording that is respectful. Avoid unnecessary overly negative comments or polemics. Offensive and/or derogative language will not be tolerated.

Be critical but constructive. If there is a chance that the above criteria for acceptance can be met, focus on improvement.

Start by summarising the main results of the manuscript, what are the key results and the value they add to the field:

- Evaluate the significance of the results
- Evaluate the originality of the results
- What does the manuscript add to the subject area compared with other published material?
- Report manuscript strengths. Then state flaws or weaknesses.
- Has similar work been published already without authors acknowledging it?

Evaluate technical quality of the manuscript:

- Are the methods used appropriate?
- Is the work technically correct?
- Are models, methods, approximation etc. sufficiently well described and motivated?
- Are the conclusions consistent with the evidence and arguments presented? Do they address the main question posed?

Evaluate the presentation:

- Is the manuscript well written? Is the text clear and easy to read, written in standard, comprehensible English? Is the presentation well organised?
- Is the description of the technical part clear and comprehensive?
- Is the article complete in all its parts (references, supplementary material etc.)

Conclude with your recommendation:

- Can be published as it stands
- Should be sent back to authors for minor revisions
- Should be sent back to authors for major revisions
- Cannot be published.

**Revised versions.** If you are asked to review a revised manuscript, a list of changes to the article may be included (this will have been provided by the author). You should judge the revised manuscript according to the same quality criteria as you did the original version. If the authors have not addressed your concerns satisfactorily make this clear in your report.