

RTI Press publications are stringently peer reviewed. The peer review process requires at least two formal reviews by experts, who are drawn both from within and from outside RTI. Research Briefs and Policy Briefs require only one peer review. In addition, RTI Press editors (one Associate Editor and one Executive Editor) review all manuscripts. For an overview of the RTI Press production process, including peer review, see the [Editorial Production Process guide](#).

Peer reviewers are expected to:

- Adhere to review guidelines
- Evaluate the manuscript
- Return reviews in a timely manner
- Provide constructive guidance
- Present guidance in a positive, impartial, and polite tone.

### Adhere to review guidelines

- Reviewers who believe they have a clear conflict of interest in acting as a reviewer of any manuscript—for financial, intellectual, or institutional reasons—should decline the invitation; those with less clear conflicts should consult with the associate editor who issued the review invitation.
- The manuscript is a privileged document; it should not be distributed, cited, quoted, retained, or otherwise used for any purpose unrelated to the peer-review process.
- RTI Press manuscripts are single-anonymous. Reviewers should treat the manuscript in confidence, including guarding the identity of the author(s). If reviewers wish to enlist help from colleagues as part of their review, they should contact the associate editor who issued the review invitation before proceeding.
- Reviewers also have responsibilities to readers, including protecting them from inaccurate or misleading work and ensuring that the manuscript cites appropriate, relevant work by other scientists.
- Peer reviewers may not use large language models when peer reviewing manuscripts for RTI Press. We rely on reviewers' expertise to evaluate manuscripts.

### Evaluate the manuscript for ...

- Appeal to and utility for the designated audience
- Timeliness and accuracy of information
- Structure and exposition
- Usefulness of tables and figures
- Usefulness of any specialized elements (e.g., appendices) as appropriate.

### Return reviews in a timely manner

- In fairness to other reviewers, editors, and authors, reviews should be completed on time. This includes the confidential comments to the associate editor and anonymous comments to the authors.
- If you find that you may be delayed, please alert the associate editor who issued your invitation and the RTI Press team (at [rtipress@rti.org](mailto:rtipress@rti.org)) immediately.

### Provide constructive guidance

- Reviewers should comment on the relevance and context of the manuscript to the field or target audiences; of special interest is what is new or unique about the work.
- Reviewers should provide well-supported comments about both the strengths and weaknesses of the manuscript. As appropriate for the topic, comments should cover:
  - Conceptualization, design, methods, statistical analyses, etc.
  - Links between results, conclusions, interpretations, and recommendations.
- Reviewers should offer specific, clear ideas for improving the manuscript, including:
  - Actionable advice on material that warrants revisions on substantive grounds
  - Suggestions for reorganizing the manuscript, revising ambiguous material, shortening the manuscript and, if needed, obtaining editing assistance.

### Present guidance in a positive, impartial, and polite tone

- Reviewers should adopt a courteous and uncontentious tone and avoid biased or impolitic language.
- Although reviews are single-anonymous, reviewers may want to assume that their comments, at least the ones directed to authors (rather than the confidential comments to associate editors), could become public and, therefore, should withstand public scrutiny. The model for decorum may be the open journals that publish (signed) reviews.

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