Peer Reviewer Guidelines

Hispania - A journal devoted to the teaching of Spanish and Portuguese published by the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese is appreciative of our peer reviewers, of whom there are hundreds. It is only by collaboration with our reviewers that editors can ensure that the manuscripts we publish are among the most important in our discipline. We appreciate the time that referees devote to assessing both original manuscripts, essays, and book and media reviews that we send them, which helps ensure that we publish only material of the very highest quality. We thank our referees for their continued commitment to our publication process.

Peer review is commonly accepted as an essential part of scholarly publication. The process for Hispania is anonymous for both the peer reviewers and the author(s) in that reviewers do not know the identity of the author, and the author does not know the identity of the reviewers. Here you can read about our online manuscript review system; criteria for publication; the review process; how we select referees; writing the review; other questions to consider; timing; anonymity; the peer-review system in general; ethics and security considerations for reviewers.

Criteria for publication

Hispania receives many more submissions than it can publish. Therefore, we ask peer-reviewers to keep in mind that every paper that is accepted means that another good paper must be rejected. To be published in a Hispania, a paper should meet four general criteria:

- Provides strong evidence for its conclusions.
- Is original.
- Is of importance to the specific field or sub-specialty.
- Is, ideally, interesting to academics/educators in other related disciplines.

In general, to be acceptable, a paper should represent an advance in understanding likely to influence thinking in the field. There should be a discernible reason why the work deserves the visibility of a publication such as Hispania.

Manuscripts judged to be of potential interest to our readership are sent for formal review, typically to two or three reviewers, but sometimes more if special advice is needed (for example on statistics). The editor then makes a decision based on the associate editor's and reviewers' advice, from among several possibilities:

These guidelines were adapted in part from the editorial policies of the Nature journals.
• Accept outright
• Accept pending final edits (this allows the author one more chance to proofread before final acceptance)
• Accept with minor revisions
• Revise and resubmit (for further review)
• Reject outright (typically on grounds of lack of novelty, insufficient critical/conceptual advance or major technical and/or interpretational problems)

Writing the peer review

The primary purpose of the review is to provide the editors with the information needed to reach a decision. The review should also instruct the authors on how they can strengthen their paper to the point where it may be acceptable. As far as possible, a negative review should explain to the authors the weaknesses of their manuscript, so that rejected authors can understand the basis for the decision and see in broad terms what needs to be done to improve the manuscript for publication elsewhere. If the reviewer believes that a manuscript would not be suitable for publication, his/her report to the author should be as brief as is consistent with enabling the author to understand the reason for the decision.

Confidential comments to the editor are welcome, but it is helpful if the main points are stated in the comments for transmission to the authors, which are required by the online peer review system. The ideal review should answer the following questions:

• Who will be interested in reading the paper, and why?
• What are the main claims/points of the paper and how significant are they?
• Is the paper likely to be one of the ten most significant papers published in the subdiscipline this year?
• How does the paper stand out from others in its field?
• Are the claims/points original? If not, which published papers compromise novelty?
• Are the claims convincing? If not, what further evidence is needed?
• What would strengthen the paper further?
• How much would further work improve it, and how difficult would this be? Would it take a long time?
• Are the claims/points appropriately discussed in the context of previous literature?
• If the manuscript is unacceptable at this stage, is the study sufficiently promising to encourage the authors to resubmit?
• If the manuscript is unacceptable but promising, what specific work is needed to make it acceptable?

Selecting peer reviewers

Reviewer selection is critical to the publication process, and we base our choice on many factors, including expertise, reputation, specific recommendations, and our own previous
experience of a reviewer’s characteristics. For instance, we avoid using people who are slow, careless, or do not provide reasoning for their views, whether harsh or lenient.

We check with potential reviewers before sending them manuscripts to review. Reviewers should bear in mind that these messages contain confidential information, which should be treated as such.

**Online submission and reviewing**

If you are new to the online submission and reviewing system, we encourage you to access guidelines within the system that walk peer reviewers step by step through the online review process. If at any time you need technical support within the system, you may also click on “Get Help Now” at the top right of every page. This will take you to a link for “Author and Reviewer Guides”, where you can download a **Reviewer Quick Start Guide** and an **Online User Guide for Authors and Reviewers**.