

GUIDELINES FOR REFEREES

Thank you for being willing to referee an article for potential publication in *Andrews University Seminary Studies (AUSS)*. Before beginning the referee process, please take a few moments to review the following guidelines and instructions.

Purpose of Referees

Because *AUSS* strives for the highest quality in publishing content, it is a double-blind refereed journal. Academic publishing is dependent upon the willingness of those with expertise to provide referee reports. After an article is submitted to *AUSS*, it is sent to at least two scholars in the area(s) addressed in the article. These scholars referee the article by assessing the appropriateness of its content for the *AUSS* readership, whether it meets *AUSS* standards of scholarship, and whether it articulates its subject matter clearly, cohesively, and concisely. Referees should focus primarily on evaluating the content and the level of scholarship in the article, and only secondarily on language mechanics. They need not always agree with the conclusions found therein, but should judge the appropriateness of its arguments as a part of the academic conversation. Statements that are relayed confidentially to the editors are never shared with the author(s). However, *AUSS* editors will refer helpful referee comments to the author to facilitate the process of rewriting, if necessary.

Beginning the Referee Process

The referee process begins with an e-mail invitation sent from *AUSS* to the referee via the *AUSS* website (www.andrews.edu/auss). This invitation contains pertinent information regarding the article—such as its title and abstract—as well as a URL that directs to the *AUSS* website where a PDF file of the article can be downloaded.

To maintain objectivity in this process, articles will be made available to referees blindly—without identifying their authors—for them to carefully and critically evaluate. Referees may choose whether or not they want to reveal their identities to the author(s) when submitting their referee reports to *AUSS*. In order to ensure a double-blind referee report, the instructions in the “Ensuring a Blind Referee Process” section below should be followed carefully.

The URL received in the invitation e-mail also presents the referee with the options to accept or to decline the invitation to referee the article. Referees are given ten days to respond to this invitation. If the referee needs more time to make a decision, he or she can request this by sending an e-mail to the

editors at auss@andrews.edu. Referees who choose to decline the invitation are invited to assist *AUSS* by suggesting alternative referees.

Ensuring a Blind Referee Process

To ensure the integrity of the blind referee process for this journal, every effort should be made to prevent the identities of the authors and referees from being known to each other. This requires that authors, editors, and referees (who upload documents as part of this process) check to see if the following steps have been taken with regard to the text and the file properties:

- The name of the referee should not appear on the PDF report form that is addressed to the author of the article, unless the referee wishes to declare his or her identity.
- Referee identification should be removed from the properties of the PDF report form that is addressed to the author of the article.

Method for Refereeing

Referees who accept the invitation to referee an article will receive a follow-up e-mail that contains important instructions regarding how to proceed in the referee process, along with two URLs for accessing the two referee forms discussed below.

Referee Report Forms

Two fillable PDF forms will be linked in an e-mail containing referee instructions: (1) “Referee Report to Author(s)” and (2) “Cover Letter to Editors.” Both of these forms should be completed and submitted to *AUSS* via the website. To view and complete them, a PDF reader software is required. *AUSS* recommends that referees who do not have an appropriate software installed on their computers download and install the latest free version of Adobe Acrobat Reader (<https://get.adobe.com/reader>). The steps below should be followed when filling out the two referee report forms.

First, the “Cover Letter to Editors” PDF form should be downloaded and opened. It has fillable form fields that should be used to enter comments, critique, and a recommendation. This cover letter form is confidential and will not be seen by the author(s); it is exclusively for the *AUSS* editorial team. After the form is completed, the responses should be saved.

Next, the “Referee Report to Author(s)” PDF form should be downloaded and opened. Again, there are fillable form fields for entering constructive comments for the author(s). Any references to the referee should be omitted when filling in this form so that the referee report remains anonymous to the author(s). This form may be made available to the author(s). After the form is completed, the responses should be saved.

Referee Notations

In addition to the two forms above, some referees may want to use the comments feature in Adobe Acrobat Reader to make comments for the

author(s) in the margins of the PDF file of the article. This electronically annotated manuscript can be submitted along with the two forms above. It is important that the PDF file of the article with the referee comments be saved before it is submitted.

Referee Report Submission

After completing the two forms discussed above, the referee should return them to *AUSS*. Using only the URL in the e-mail containing referee instructions, the forms should be uploaded onto the referee report submission webpage on the *AUSS* website. Before submission, the referee should make sure that the instructions in the “Ensuring a Blind Referee Process” section were followed for the form addressed to the author(s) (if the form is intended to be sent blindly).

To submit the referee report, referees should go to the aforementioned URL. There they will be prompted to log in to their own *AUSS* online account with the e-mail address that is used to communicate with *AUSS* and a password. If an online account has not been set up with *AUSS*, one can be created by scrolling down to the “Create New Account” section and clicking on the “Sign Up” button. After entering and submitting the account information and password, the referee will be directed to the *AUSS* website (note: the e-mail used to set up the account should be the same one used for communication with *AUSS*). To continue with submitting the referee report, the referee should click on the “Submit Review” button and navigate the following steps:

1. The “Referee Report to Author(s)” PDF form should be uploaded as a PDF file in the first section.
2. The annotated PDF file of the article should be uploaded in the “Annotated Manuscript” section.
3. One of the three recommendation options should be selected in the next section.
4. In the last cover letter section, the “Cover Letter to Editors” PDF form should be uploaded as a PDF file.
5. Finally, the referee report should be sent by clicking the “Submit Report” button at the bottom.

Follow-up for Referees

In cases where additional clarification is needed in order to make a decision concerning a refereed article, the editors may make further contact with the referee via e-mail.

The *AUSS* editorial team appreciates the willingness of referees to assist in evaluating articles that are submitted for publication. For record-keeping purposes, *AUSS* will provide referees with an official letter of appreciation upon request. *AUSS* depends on the helpful feedback of referees for doing its academic publishing and appreciates the support received in this regard.