

## **Reviewing for Medical Teacher – hints to help you through the reviewing process**

MORAG ALLAN CAMPBELL

Medical Teacher Journal Co-ordinator, AMEE

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Full details of our feature areas and the aims and scope of the journal are available on the publisher's website at <http://informahealthcare.com/journal/mte>, and there are guidelines for reviewers on the Medical Teacher website at [www.medicalteacher.org](http://www.medicalteacher.org). You might also find it useful to look at the recent publication by Samy Azer on the subject of reviewing for medical education journals (Azer, 2012).

For some help on the more practical process of actually carrying out and submitting your review, here are some basic tips.

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### **Keep us up to date**

All our submissions and reviews are handled through our online system ScholarOne <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/cmte>. If you have submitted to Medical Teacher in the past, you will already have a ScholarOne account, or you might have only recently received your login details on becoming a reviewer. Go straight to your ScholarOne account and check that all the details we have for you are correct and up-to-date. Click on 'Edit Account' to make any changes. We won't pass your name on to the authors of the papers you review (unless you ask us to), and the more information we have, the better able we are to assign suitable papers to you. For example, we don't want to send you a paper written by someone in the same department or institution as you, and we need to have the correct information about you to ensure this doesn't happen. If your contact details or any other details change please log in and update your account – do not create a new account.

### **Help us to get to know you**

While you are logged in, add some keywords to your account. The keyword fields are not for your password prompt, so don't add your mother's maiden name or the name of your first pet – we want to know the areas of medical education that you are really interested in. We use keywords to search the system for appropriate reviewers, and good relevant keywords will help us to send you papers which are suited to your area of interest and expertise.

### **Don't be afraid to say no**

We're all busy people. We appreciate that there are times when it's just not possible to devote the time to a review. We don't have a 'Decline' button in our ScholarOne system, so you'll have to write and tell us that you can't review a paper, but please don't hesitate to turn down a review if the timing just isn't right.

### **Let us know when you are busy**

If you know that you won't be able to review for a longer term, let us know and we can mark you as unavailable in the system. You can also do this yourself – log in to your Reviewer Centre, click 'Edit Account' and select your unavailable dates at Stage 3 in your account details.

### **Give us some names**

If you can't review a paper, it would be very helpful if you could suggest an alternative reviewer. We will have contacted you because you have an insight or knowledge in a particular field, and it's likely that you will know other potential reviewers with similar expertise and knowledge. We're always keen to add suitable new reviewers to our list.

## Look for the abstract

When you log in to ScholarOne and go to your Reviewer Centre, you will have access to a score sheet in which to enter your comments on the paper. The paper itself is available to you by clicking either the 'HTML' or 'PDF' buttons at the top of the score sheet. The abstract is available by clicking the 'Abstract' button at the top of the sheet (Figure 1).

When submitting a paper through ScholarOne, authors are asked to add the abstract to a separate field in the file. This is a required field so unless the paper does not need an abstract, it will have been entered here. If you can't see the abstract in the paper itself, look again at your score sheet and click the abstract button.

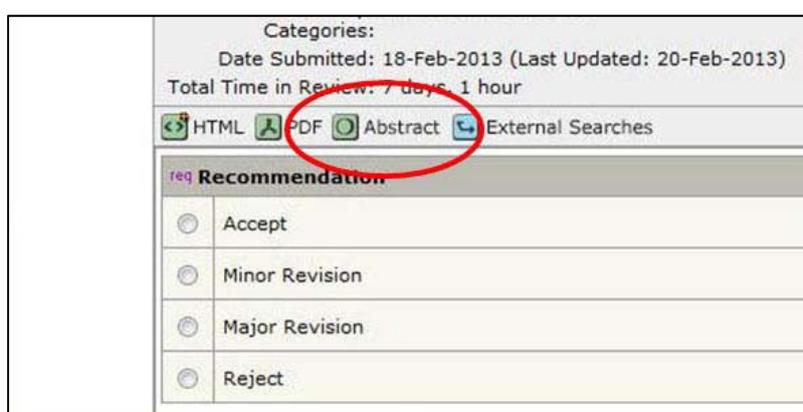


Figure 1. The abstract might not be included in the document itself. Click the abstract button at the top of your score sheet.

## Tell the authors what they need to know

There are two fields on the score sheet – one for comments to the editorial office and one for comments to the authors. Please use the 'Confidential Comments to the EIC' box for comments you wish to make only to the editorial office and use the other box to tell the authors what they really need to know to improve their manuscript (Figure 2).

We want to be able to go back to each author with really constructive advice on how to improve their paper. This is true in all cases – even if it is unlikely that we will accept a paper, we need to be able to tell authors where they went wrong and how they could improve this and subsequent submissions. We accept very, very few papers without some revision. Your comments to the authors can help us make peer review a valuable part of each contributor's learning process.

## Remember to click 'Submit' once you have filled in your score sheet

It's surprising how many don't. If you get an email reminding you about your review, and you think you have already submitted it, before contacting the editorial office go into your Reviewer Centre and check that the review is not still sitting there. Clicking the 'Save as Draft' button will not submit

the review. Please note, if you don't enter comments in the Comments to Author box, the system will not let you submit your review, even if you have entered comments in the top box or uploaded your review as an attached file.

**Comments**

Confidential Comments to the EIC

I recommend acceptance of this paper after revisions in accordance with my comments below.

**req Comments to the Author**

This is an interesting and timely paper about an important emergent area in medical education. I have some recommendations.

The title of the paper needs to be rewritten to relate more closely to the subject of the paper. The Practice Points should also be rewritten, and I would also recommend that the paper is looked at by a native English speaker

Figure 2. The Comments to the Author box is a required field. Use this box to provide detailed comments and useful feedback to the author.

### **Use the reference number**

Please always use the reference number when contacting the editorial office about a review – this helps us to go straight to the file and take any necessary action. The easiest way is to hit reply to one of our messages.

### **Let us know if you think you have more than one account**

When an account is created in the ScholarOne system, the account holder is sent a notification. If you receive a notification when you already have an account, please let us know. It could be that a co-author has created a new account for you, and it will save later confusion if we can merge these accounts straightaway. Each new account is treated by the ScholarOne system as a new individual and you will not have access to your Reviewer Centre from another account created in your name.

### **Look back**

All your reviews are stored in your Reviewer Centre, so you can look back and see what you have written about any paper you have reviewed. This can be especially useful if you are asked to review a revision of a paper (you can check a box on the score sheet when submitting your review to indicate whether or not you are willing to do this). You will also be (blind) copied in on the decision letter to let you know the outcome of the review process, and also to let you see the comments of the other reviewers.

## **Enjoy!**

Peer reviewing is 'an art, a privilege, a responsibility and a service to the profession' (Azer, 2012). The process of reviewing has many benefits, and is in itself a valuable learning experience, beneficial to both the novice researcher and the experienced academic. Each reviewer who submits a review to Medical Teacher will have their name included in our annual list published in the journal, and there are further incentives for our most frequent reviewers. We hope you will enjoy reviewing for Medical Teacher and find it a worthwhile and rewarding experience.

## **Notes on Contributor**

MORAG ALLAN CAMPBELL is Journal Co-ordinator for Medical Teacher and has been working on the journal since 2005. She is the primary contact for the journal and oversees every manuscript through the peer review process from submission to decision, and, in the case of accepted papers, right through to final publication.

## **Reference**

Azer, S. A., Ramani, S., & Peterson, R. (2012). Becoming a peer reviewer to medical education journals. *Medical Teacher*, 34(9), 698-704.