

# **GUIDE FOR AUTHORS, REVIEWERS, AND EDITORS**

The Editorial Board of the  
*Electronic Journal of Severe Storms Meteorology*

Last Revision: 2 January 2006

E-Journals of Meteorology, Inc.  
Norman, Oklahoma ,USA

## **Part I: Principles**

### **1. Purpose**

The *Electronic Journal of Severe Storms Meteorology* (EJSSM) is an open-access international, scientific, formal, online journal for the publication of original and updated research. Through peer-reviewed notes and articles, EJSSM serves the community of meteorology concerned with severe storms, including both convective and nonconvective severe weather. EJSSM exists to improve understanding, prediction, preparedness and mitigation of all severe local storm hazards, through:

- Theoretical development of conceptual and predictive models for severe storms;
- Observational and diagnostic studies based on the variety of surface, upper air, satellite, radar, aircraft and other platforms;
- Operational forecasting techniques and methods;
- Historical and biographical studies;
- Review articles; and
- Interdisciplinary studies of the risks and impacts on humans and the environment, including storm damage analyses, social implications and economic effects.

The journal will publish research articles, research and technical notes, book reviews, letters and comments on prior papers in EJSSM. Papers on theory, prediction methods and techniques, causes, impacts, and measuring and monitoring in the following areas will be particularly welcome (the list is neither exhaustive, nor rank-ordered):

- Any and all types of severe convective weather
- Lightning and related storm electrification
- Severe local storm effects produced in tropical and winter weather systems
- Damage analysis and mitigation, human or environmental
- Scientific documentation and analysis of extreme and/or rare events
- Forecast development and verification concepts
- Climatology of and/or influencing severe storm events
- Severe winter storms, including heavy snow, ice, and wind
- Heavy rainfall events, convective and nonconvective
- Pyroconvective storms and fire storms

EJSSM also publishes occasional special editions that concentrate on specific topics or events regarding severe storms.

## **2. Philosophy**

The following principles embody the philosophy of EJSSM.

***EJSSM encourages open access.*** Accepted manuscripts are available to all with internet access immediately upon publication. Accepted manuscripts are subject to only minimal page charges, and lack of ability to pay does not preclude or hamper publication.

***EJSSM strives to uphold high standards on our published manuscripts.*** Submitted manuscripts are welcome from all. The review process is designed to be a constructive and prompt way to improve and approve submitted manuscripts. All manuscripts, however, must maintain the high standards of EJSSM. EJSSM is a formal peer-reviewed publication.

***EJSSM encourages active participation and debate of our published manuscripts.*** Reviewers do not maintain their anonymity. Edited versions of the reviews and authors' responses to substantive comments are published along with the accepted manuscript. Readers are encouraged to post their comments on published manuscripts online.

***EJSSM strives for rapid dissemination of research results and immediate feedback online.*** Authors, reviewers, and editors strive to make the time from initial submission of a manuscript to the final version of the article appearing online be no more than a few months.

## **3. Open Access Policy**

EJSSM publishes articles by copyright-holder consent to exclusive right of first publishing and Open Access, meaning it does not require the abolition, reform, or infringement of copyright law. Nor does EJSSM require that copyright holders waive all the rights that run to them under copyright law and assign their work to the public domain.

By submitting texts to EJSSM, copyright holders consent to the unrestricted reading, downloading, copying, sharing, storing, printing, searching, linking, and crawling of the full-text of the work. Authors can choose to retain the right to block the distribution of mangled or misattributed copies. Authors also can choose to block commercial re-use of the work. Essentially, these conditions block plagiarism, misrepresentation, and sometimes commercial re-use, and authorize all the uses required by legitimate scholarship, including those required by the technologies that facilitate online scholarly research.

EJSSM recommends copyright holders use one of the [Creative Commons licenses](#), an easy, effective and increasingly common way for copyright holders to manifest their consent to Open Access. Many other open-content licenses will also work. Copyright holders can also compose their own licenses or permission statements and attach them to their works.

## Part II: For Authors

### 1. Submission preparation checklist

The following criteria must be met in order for manuscripts to be submitted to EJSSM:

- The submission has not been previously published, nor is it before another journal for consideration (or an explanation has been provided in Comments to the Editor).
- The submission file for review is in Microsoft Word, PDF, or RTF file format. Accepted final draft is in Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) format.
- All URL addresses in the text (e.g., <http://ejssm.org>) are activated and ready to click. Such URLs should be on nonperishable web sites.
- The text for submissions is double-spaced; uses a 12-point font; employs italics, rather than underlining (except with URL addresses); and all illustrations, figures, and tables are placed within the text.
- The text adheres to the stylistic and bibliographic requirements outlined in this guide.
- Stand-alone copies of web images (.jpg, .png, .gif, .swf or .mpeg file formats - please write the editor regarding other formats), animations, and animation poster (static) images are ready to be uploaded as supplemental files.

### 2. How to submit a manuscript

Go to [www.ejssm.org](http://www.ejssm.org), and upload your PDF, Microsoft Word, or RTF document. Fill in the required fields on the web site.

### 3. Parts of a manuscript

Submitted manuscripts should be less than or equal to 32 pages of text (title page, abstract, body of text, and acknowledgements). If an author wishes to submit a manuscript longer than this, a letter to the Editor must be submitted at the time of the manuscript submission explaining why a longer manuscript should be considered. EJSSM strongly encourages authors to submit shorter, rather than longer, manuscripts.

All submissions to EJSSM must contain the following parts in the following order. Follow the [Microsoft Word template available online](#) for the proper formatting.

- a. **Header** containing the title of the article, authors, their affiliations, type of submission (e.g., Article, Note, Correspondence), name of journal (i.e., *Electronic Journal of Severe Storms Meteorology*), date of submission, corresponding author name, mailing address, and email address.
- b. **Abstract** summarizing the paper in 250 words or less.

- c. **Text**, with figure and table embedded at the paragraph break nearest to the location of first citation. For figures, standard web animations in .gif, .swf or .mpeg file formats are acceptable. (Please write the editor regarding other formats.) Stand-alone copies of images, animations and animation poster (static) images must be uploaded as supplemental files to facilitate the HTML presentation of the article.
- d. **Acknowledgments**, if any.
- e. **Appendices**, if any.
- f. **References** in the same format as the American Meteorological Society's technical journals, found online at [www.ametsoc.org/PUBS/refstyl.html](http://www.ametsoc.org/PUBS/refstyl.html).

#### **4. Style**

Refer to the [American Meteorological Society's Author's Guide online](#) for specifics about the required style of submitted manuscripts not specifically addressed by this document.

One difference between the American Meteorological Society's *Author's Guide* and the style adopted by EJSSM is the hyphenation of "sea-level pressure" in EJSSM.

We strongly encourage authors to consult the guidelines for reviewers, especially Part III, section 2.B.i. This will help them to understand the content standards to which manuscripts will be held.

#### **5. Responding to reviewer comments**

When responding to reviewer comments, the author will divide the responses into two sections: substantive and technical. Substantive comments refer to a manuscript's scientific content, including the overall quality of the presentation. Technical comments refer to minor issues, such as suggested rewording of sentences or phrases, identifying spelling errors, typographical errors, punctuation, grammar, and so on. In responding, the authors should provide a point-by-point response to each separate critical comment. The reason for the distinction between substantive and technical is that substantive comments and the author's responses will be appended to the article at the time of publication. Technical comments will not be appended.

#### **6. Cost to Author**

Cost to the author for an accepted manuscript is \$50.00 USD for up to 50MB. Cost for larger files is determined on a case-by-case basis. These charges serve as the EJSSM's primary means of support. However, inability to pay should not preclude the opportunity to publish. Grants or exemptions may apply to hardship cases.

Checks should be made payable to E-Journals of Meteorology and sent to:

E-Journals of Meteorology  
P.O. Box 5043  
Norman, OK 73070-5043

## **Part III: For Reviewers**

### **1. Introduction**

This guide is mostly about the principles for reviewers to use when called upon to assist us in maintaining high scientific standards for the EJSSM. We will include some technical information, but our primary emphasis is to help our reviewers to understand how to approach reviews for EJSSM.

A distinguishing feature of the EJSSM is that the reviews and author responses to those reviews will become part of the public archive associated with the article. Reviews will *not* be anonymous. The goal is to help the readers of the EJSSM to see and understand the issues that concern the reviewers and to use the dialog between author(s)—hereafter, referred to in the singular—and reviewer as a basis for making a personal decision about those issues. It is our belief that a journal is medium for scientific communication, and part of communication of scientific ideas is the open acceptance of the possibility for reasonable disputes about various aspects of the work.

In the interest of keeping the content as concise as possible, our Editors will not include as part of the public record comments/responses of a trivial nature, such as the insertion of commas or typographical errors (the so-called technical comments, see Part II, section 5), but they should still be included within any private review and response between the author and reviewer. Grammatical issues may or may not become part of the public record, at the discretion of the Editor.

The decision about publication is entirely the Editor's responsibility. In most cases, the Editor will follow the will of the majority of the reviewers, but in some cases, that might not happen. In such cases, the Editor will be expected to provide substantive reasons for not accepting the recommendations of the majority of reviewers. See Part III for more information on the decision-making process by Editors.

### **2. Reviewer guidelines**

First and foremost, *the goal of the review process is to improve the scientific quality of the submission*. Reviewers will work with the author through a collaborative process to ensure scientific integrity. Constructive criticism is a necessary part of this collaborative effort and as such shall be offered and received in a professional manner. Authors and reviewers are reminded that both reviews and responses will become part of the open-access public record associated with each manuscript.

The Editor's role includes that of being a moderator, in a literal way, of the discourse between reviewers and authors, and will enforce ethical standards of behavior in the review and response process.

Reviewers are expected to return their reviews within three weeks, unless otherwise specified by the Editor. The author may request an extension from the Editor, if needed. For more on timelines for reviews, see Part IV, section 8.

### ***A. Reviewer recommendations***

Every review will include a recommendation to the Editor. This recommendation will be one of the following:

1. The paper is accepted in its present form.
2. The paper is acceptable with minor revisions and no further review is requested unless major changes are made in accordance with other reviews (at the discretion of the Editor).
3. The paper may be acceptable with minor revisions, but send the revised manuscript back for further review.
4. The paper may be acceptable with major revisions. Further review of the manuscript by the reviewer is automatic, unless the reviewer requests otherwise.
5. The paper is rejected. Further review of the manuscript by the reviewer is possible if the Editor decides against the reviewer's rejection recommendation, unless the reviewer requests otherwise.

Given that option 1 is unlikely following an initial submission, reviewers likely will see the manuscript at least twice, unless they specifically request otherwise.

If a reviewer has a problem with the way an Editor has responded to his/her recommendations, the reviewer can submit a complaint to the Editorial Board for review by following the procedures given in Part III, section 3 of this document. The Board will review all such complaints and render a decision as soon as possible after receiving them. Decisions of the Board are final.

### ***B. Review content***

There are two basic components to the review of a scientific manuscript: (1) scientific content, and (2) quality of the presentation. Either or both of these can be grounds for rejection of the submission and both should be considered within the review.

#### ***i. Scientific content***

Although there can be no simple formula for what is acceptable scientific content, there are some basic principles that generally apply. The standards for a manuscript depend somewhat on the category of submission, but there are some general guidelines.

- a. **References in support of an assertion** – Generally, references are used to provide support for assertions within a paper. There is no simple way to determine what assertions do or do not require substantiation. It is within the purview of a reviewer to request references if the reviewer believes a reference is needed where none was provided. The use of “principal source” references (e.g., the original source of information) is encouraged whenever possible. Generally, refereed publications are more acceptable for this purpose than unrefereed material. Thus, if the author uses an unrefereed reference, this may not be considered acceptable support. The availability of unrefereed manuscripts is a major issue with their use in support of an assertion within the manuscript, and the author can be asked to provide a copy of such to the reviewer.
- b. **Speculation** – For the most part, speculation in a scientific manuscript is not acceptable. Speculation is defined as an unsubstantiated assertion or hypothesis. Very limited speculation is possible but it should be confined to the end of a manuscript, within a “discussion” of the paper’s content or areas of future research, and it should be identified clearly as speculation.
- c. **Significance of results** – Whenever possible, authors are expected to analyze the statistical significance of their calculations. The use of statistical analysis to assess the confidence that can be placed on a calculation based on real data is essential to any scientific paper. Generally, failure to provide statistical analysis of results is not acceptable. Sample size is an important aspect of statistical confidence limits and small samples need to be identified as such. Verification of forecasting schemes should be as extensive as possible and any limitations to the credibility of a verification analysis, such as failing to consider false alarms, or correct predictions of nonevents, need to be identified.
- d. **Reproducibility** – It should be possible for anyone reading the manuscript to reproduce the results. The manuscript, therefore, should provide any and all information necessary for a reader to repeat any analysis contained therein. Any withholding of needed information is unacceptable. However, it is acceptable to use references to accomplish this. To the maximum extent possible consistent with a concise presentation, a manuscript should be self-contained. Extensive mathematical derivations can be moved to an Appendix. Large datasets and detailed software information need not be provided, although it is encouraged to make software and data available whenever possible, perhaps by the World Wide Web or in an unrefereed technical paper.
- e. **Proof** – Reviewers should recognize that in a formal sense, “proof” of scientific ideas is never possible. Proof is feasible in pure mathematics, but it not possible in science that uses experimental data or observations in support of ideas. Thus, it is not appropriate for a reviewer to ask for proof, unless it refers to mathematical issues. Rather, it is appropriate to review how convincing the supporting analysis is in terms of accepting some hypothesis. The rigor of the test

is the primary means of judging how convincing the evidence is. Data sample size, accuracy and precision of the data, and the degree to which the data permit an unambiguous interpretation all are part of a convincing argument. Thus, these are all fair issues for a reviewer to consider when reviewing the scientific content. Of course, for mathematical content, the logic must follow the appropriate rules without error, including such issues as the existence and uniqueness of solutions.

f. **Relevance** – The only issue of the relevance of a paper that is appropriate for a reviewer to consider is whether or not the content of the presentation fit within the guidelines of what is acceptable content for the EJSSM. Otherwise, it is not up to the reviewer to assess the relevance of a manuscript for publication in EJSSM.

g. **Originality** – It is our belief that papers reproducing already published work may or may not be acceptable. If the manuscript simply reproduces the results of an already published work with no change and adds nothing else, this is probably not acceptable. In some cases, it is valuable to the community if a particular piece of work can be confirmed (see item d). In particular, if the analysis methods of an already published work are reproduced, but with a different set of data, or an expanded data set, this is quite likely to be acceptable.

h. **Comparisons with existing work** – To the maximum extent possible, comparisons within a manuscript with already published work should be as unambiguous as possible. If a comparison with previous work is made, the same definitions should be used, as well as the same data. If it is felt that the definitions and/or data of an existing work have problems, then a comparison with that existing work should be done both with the original definitions and/or data, as well as with the changed definitions and/or data.

i. **Negative results** – The EJSSM Editorial Board has determined that papers reporting negative results may or may not be acceptable for publication. Based on the reviews, the Editor decides whether to accept any manuscript reporting negative results for an experiment or analysis. We believe that negative results can be useful to the scientific community.

## ii. **Quality of presentation**

Again, there is no simple formula to follow for a successful presentation. The Editorial Board is quite agreeable to accepting a variety of stylistic choices, permitting authors to express themselves in their own unique way. The EJSSM will generally follow the American Meteorological Society's guidelines for basic style issues, since those formats are familiar to most of our authors, but the EJSSM will allow extra flexibility, including allowing the use of first person within the text, references within an abstract, etc. Reviewers can find the [American Meteorological Society's Author's Guide online](http://www.ametsoc.org/PUBS/Authorsguide/pdf_vs/authguide.pdf) at ([http://www.ametsoc.org/PUBS/Authorsguide/pdf\\_vs/authguide.pdf](http://www.ametsoc.org/PUBS/Authorsguide/pdf_vs/authguide.pdf)). Here are some basic recommendations for authors to follow and reviewers to consider.

- a. **Quality of figures** – Figures should be legible as well as easy to read and understand. Generally, figures provide supporting documentation and illustrate some important point within the paper. Thus, reviewers should pay close attention to the figures and offer specific suggestions for changing them, if need be, to help the authors improve the presentation.
- b. **Quality of the English** – For nonnative English speakers, and perhaps even for some native English speakers, the grammar, spelling, usage, and punctuation of the text are very important for an effective presentation. EJSSM Editor(s) will not put a paper into review if the English presentation is inadequate. Furthermore, if the reviewer feels the paper is not readable, the reviewer may reject such a paper on those grounds alone.
- c. **Organization** – The quality of presentation includes the issue of how the paper is organized. To some extent, the organization of the content is a style issue and the author should be allowed to do whatever s/he wishes, provided the resulting content can be followed reasonably easily. However, it is appropriate for a reviewer to make recommendations for reorganizing a paper's content in an effort to improve the presentation. Again, there is no magic formula for a proper organization, but this is fair game for a reviewer.
- d. **Completeness** – An important issue is whether or not everything that needs to be in the manuscript is actually there. Of particular significance is that all the literature citations should be included in the reference list, and all the items in the reference list should actually be cited somewhere in the text. All figures and tables should have captions that describe their content sufficiently well that interpretation of their content is straightforward. Equations in the text need not all be numbered, but all equations cited in the text should have numbers.

### ***C. Manuscript Length***

Although electronic publishing is inherently less concerned with space limitations than printed journals, the Editorial Board wishes to keep manuscripts within some bounds. Hence, any manuscript that exceeds 32 pages in length (title page, abstract, text of manuscript, and acknowledgments), double-spaced and using 12-point font, will need to receive special permission from the Editor. Thus, it is in the author's interest to avoid deadwood in the text, such as extensive description of the figures, using figures of dubious relevance to the material, or repeating the content of figure captions in the text, which are common problems with submitted manuscripts. Reviewers should be prepared to offer specific suggestions for shortening long manuscripts.

When reviewers offer suggestions, it is common to ask for more supporting evidence and additional analysis. Please keep in mind that when the paper is at or near the length limit, asking for more material will put the author in the position of having to remove other content to stay

within the length limit. Please be considerate of the author when asking for additional material and offer suggestions where the manuscript can be trimmed to make room for the requested content.

#### ***D. Unreviewed content***

Sometimes, reviewers choose to not review some parts of the content, for any of a number of reasons. If, for any reason, a review does not consider some part of the manuscript's content, that should be specifically noted by the reviewer. Examples might include the details of a mathematical derivation, or some aspect of the paper upon which the reviewer is not qualified to comment. There can be many good reasons for this, but it is important for the reviewer to inform the Editor about any such omission.

### **3. Conflict resolution**

Reviewers perform a valuable service to the EJSSM and the Editorial Board wishes to maintain a good relationship between the journal and the volunteers who donate their efforts on behalf of the science of severe storms meteorology. Therefore, we have established a procedure to resolve conflicts that might arise during the review process. If for any reason, a reviewer has a problem and feels that it cannot be resolved this by working with the Editor, we urge that reviewer to inform the Board of the problem. Such notification should be done by email to [board.chair@ejssm.org](mailto:board.chair@ejssm.org). Problems will be discussed by the Editorial Board, and a decision rendered by majority vote among the Board members. All such Board decisions are final. There is no further appeal procedure. Depending on the circumstances, the decision can include: dismissal of the Editor in the case of major ethical violations, overriding the Editor's actions, admonition of the Editor for a minor problem, or sustaining the Editor's actions. All complaints will be considered, and the person lodging a complaint will be informed of the Editorial Board's decision as soon as possible.

### **4. Organization of the Review**

In addition to making a recommendation, reviewers are expected to provide detailed comments to the author, describing any shortcomings and recommending changes that would address those shortcomings. In general, there are two types of comments: substantive and technical, as described in Part II, section 5. To assist the Editor in posting the review and responses by the author as part of an accepted paper, it is the reviewer's responsibility to divide the review content into separate sections for substantive and technical comments.

## **Part IV: For Editors**

### **1. Introduction**

Accepting a position as an Editor carries with it great opportunity, and great responsibility. Editors have the opportunity to exercise considerable control over what does and does not appear in the journal. This means that the Editor also has the responsibility to make decisions as impartially as is humanly possible. The goal of EJSSM is to foster scientific communication and to maintain an archive of publications and subsequent communication that can serve as a resource for future generations of scientists and historians of science.

*A guiding principle for EJSSM Editors should be to allow the debate to be carried on within EJSSM, rather than rejection, which renders the debate inaccessible to the larger community.* Nevertheless, high scientific standards must be maintained. All EJSSM content must meet those standards. EJSSM will publish those manuscripts accepted by the Editor but will also include, with accepted publication, the substantive content of the reviews and responses by the author(s). Trivial content, such as minor grammatical and editorial suggestions and the author responses to those suggestions will be edited from the published content of the reviews and the responses, at the discretion of the Editor. Editing of the review and response content is an important responsibility of the Editor.

### **2. High scientific standards**

To accomplish this involves a commitment to high scientific standards, of course, but also to helping scientists carry on a discussion about their work. High standards are a necessary part of this, but this should not imply a sort of censorship for controversial ideas. The difference between plausibility and implausibility can be difficult to decide; what is plausible to one may be implausible to another. This necessarily relates to the topic of choosing reviewers for submissions. A basic principle for EJSSM is that scientific standards are served well by careful choice of reviewers. If the Editor has reason to doubt the capabilities of a candidate reviewer, then that reviewer should not be chosen to do a review.

### **3. Responsibility to the reviewers**

Generally speaking, if the Editor has chosen reviewers well, the recommendations from the reviewers will form the basis for the Editor's decision. In some situations, however, the Editor may choose to decide against the majority of the reviewer's recommendations, even to the point of deciding against *all* the reviewer's recommendations. In such cases, the Editor will be expected to provide a detailed explanation for deciding against the consensus recommendations of the reviewers to all reviewers. Such decisions will be included in the online comments. Although deciding against the consensus of reviewers will be infrequent, assuming the reviewers are chosen well (see below), such a decision is well within the authority granted to the Editor. An appeals process for any of the reviewers in such a case is discussed at length in the

Reviewer's Guide. When the Editor follows the majority in making a decision about the submitted paper, a minority reviewer cannot submit an appeal when the paper is accepted. When the paper is rejected, an appeal is possible for a minority reviewer. The reason for this asymmetry is that when the paper is accepted, a minority reviewer's comments are included as part of the publication. When the paper is rejected, the discussion about the issues is not going to be published.

#### **4. Choosing reviewers**

One critical way in which Editors exercise control over the content of a journal is in the choice of reviewers. This aspect of the job is easiest when the topic of the paper is within the Editor's sphere of competence. In particular, this means familiarity with who is doing work in the subfield and so would be a candidate for reviewing the manuscript. When the content of a submission departs from the Editor's domain of expertise, the Editor should seek assistance in obtaining a list of candidate reviewers.

This assistance can include asking the author(s) of the submitted papers for reviewer recommendations, choosing possible reviewers from among the papers listed in a submission's reference list, seeking suggestions from colleagues, consulting the EJSSM reviewer list, and consulting the EJSSM Editorial Board. In any case, at least two and preferably three reviewers should be chosen for all submissions.

EJSSM Editors may maintain, update and share a roster of potential reviewers, containing contact information and relevant specialties, in order to streamline the reviewer recruitment process and expedite timely reviews of submissions. The Editors always are open to nominations for high-quality scientific reviewers in any facet of severe storms meteorology.

Experts within the subfield of a submitted paper do not represent the only possible pool of reviewers. Some sections of the manuscript may have content that could be ably reviewed by someone not specifically working within the manuscript's subfield. For example, a paper that includes a detailed mathematical analysis of some aspect of the topic could usefully be reviewed by a referee who has demonstrated a comprehensive capability with mathematics, even if that referee is using that capability in a different subfield. At the Editor's discretion, any reviewer felt to be capable of contributing important information regarding the paper's content can be chosen by the Editor, even if that reviewer is only capable of reviewing a part of the whole work. Similarly, if a reviewer is capable of providing useful reviews over most of the paper, but is not qualified to comment on some portion of the work, it is nevertheless plausible for the Editor to seek the reviewer's recommendations even if s/he cannot review the entire content.

When a manuscript raises questions about some existing work, the authors of those papers being questioned are prime candidates for reviewers, of course. However, the Editor should be aware that such reviewers can have a vested interest in rejecting any submitted manuscript that criticizes their work. Thus, although such reviewers are obvious choices, their reviews should be carefully considered in light of what amounts to a natural human tendency to reject criticism.

The Editor's task is to make a decision about the suitability of a submitted manuscript for publication, not to decide the scientific questions considered. That is, the Editor must judge the validity of any scientific content that is critical of existing publications. If that content is based on valid scientific principles, the paper is worthy of publication, irrespective of the responses by the author(s) of papers being criticized. Having scientific debates carried on within the contents of the journal helps the whole scientific community come to their own decisions about the issues. It is not always easy to judge when the debate is a matter of opinion rather than when one party or the other has invalid arguments. In keeping with the basic principles of EJSSM, Editors are encouraged to allow publication when in doubt, rather than rejection.

## **5. Maintaining a civil discourse**

Another responsibility associated with the Editor is to maintain professionalism within the sometimes heated discourse associated with publication reviews. The authors and reviewers are expected to avoid *ad hominem* attacks, and profane or offensive language is not permitted. The fact that the exchanges between reviewers and authors will become part of the publication should usually be enough motivation to keep the discourse on a professional, not personal, level. On those rare occasions where this breaks down, the Editor's responsibility is to encourage a civil discussion. Since the EJSSM will not publish any content that is unprofessional, this has strong implications for any final decision by the Editor. The Editorial Board is fully supportive of the Editor's final choices in cases involving unprofessional behavior in the interaction between reviewers and authors.

## **6. Conflict of interest**

In cases where there is even the *appearance* of conflict of interest or partiality with respect to a particular submission, the Editor should recuse him/herself from editing that manuscript and turn over the responsibility to an Associate Editor. Examples of this include submissions of papers by: (1) current supervisors of the Editor, (2) Associate Editors, (3) authors critical of papers on which the Editor was an author or coauthor, (4) students currently or formerly advised by the Editor, (5) subordinates of the Editor, or any other cases where the impartiality of the Editor is questionable. The Editor is responsible for avoiding even the appearance of impropriety in carrying out his/her duties. Obviously, no Editor should edit a submission on which s/he is an author or coauthor.

## **7. Appeals to the Editorial Board**

The EJSSM has created an appeals process for the reviewers of papers, when the Editor has decided against the recommendations of the majority of reviewers. However, no such appeal process is currently envisioned for authors; the Editorial Board wishes to avoid bogging down an Editor's duties with a torrent of appeals associated with rejected papers. Thus, when it comes to rejections, the Editorial Board fully supports the decision of the Editor when reflecting the majority recommendations by the reviewers. In the case of a rejection decision that goes against the reviewer consensus, the Editor will be submitting a detailed explanation for that decision.

Only in extraordinary circumstances would the Editorial Board consider overturning an Editor's decision.

If it can be demonstrated convincingly to the Editorial Board that an Editor has committed an impropriety, exhibited unprofessional behavior, or shown evident partiality, the Editorial Board will consider what action is necessary, from simply reminding the Editor of his/her responsibilities up to and including immediate dismissal of the Editor. Dismissal of an Editor will require a unanimous vote by the Editorial Board, but any lesser action is decided by a simple majority of the Editorial Board. All decisions of the Editorial Board in such cases are final.

### **8. Obtaining reviews in a timely fashion**

The Editorial Board has recommended that reviews should be returned by the reviewers within two weeks. Candidate reviewers will be contacted before sending a submission to them, and their agreement to submit their review within the deadline set by the Editor should be obtained. If a reviewer does not agree to submit a review on or before the deadline, another candidate reviewer should be sought. The Editor's responsibility is to hold the reviewers to that deadline. Not all eventualities can be foreseen, but if a reviewer has a mitigating circumstance come up before the deadline that would compromise that deadline, he/she will be expected to contact the Editor to obtain permission for an extension of the deadline, which should be for no more than one to two weeks. The Editor has the discretion to permit such extensions. In the event a reviewer is unable to meet the deadline, the Editor should seek another candidate reviewer immediately, imposing the shortest possible deadline on that alternative reviewer. The goal is to limit the review process routinely to less than one month, and preferably to three weeks or less.

### **9. Obtaining author responses in a timely fashion**

Once the author has been forwarded the reviewer comments, it is in that author's best interests to respond to those comments and revise the manuscript as quickly as possible. The Editor is responsible for setting a reasonable deadline for receiving the revised manuscript. If the reviews are generally favorable and include only minor suggestions, that deadline could be as short as two weeks. If major changes are required, it could be up to one to two months. Extensions to the Editor's deadline can be granted at the Editor's discretion to accommodate an author's circumstances. Failure to meet the deadline will result in the author having to submit the revised paper as a new submission.