Guidelines for Reviewers

About the Journal
The mission of Nursing for Women’s Health is to improve outcomes for women and newborns through the dissemination of clinical scholarship. It is an official publication of AWHONN. Types of manuscripts reviewed include clinically focused research, reports of quality improvement and evidence-based practice projects, systematic reviews, integrative reviews, literature reviews, case reports, practice articles, continuing nursing education (CNE) articles, commentaries, and letters to the editor. Manuscript types are described in more detail in the Guidelines for Authors.

How to Become a Reviewer
Prospective reviewers can request a reviewer application by emailing nwh@awhonn.org. To be selected as a reviewer, applicants must meet the following qualifications:

- Be a registered nurse or other clinician with substantial experience in maternity care, women’s health across the lifespan, and/or neonatal health.
- Be a published author or have some previous experience with scholarly publishing and peer reviewing.
- Be abreast of the latest issues and trends in the field.

Being a reviewer is strictly voluntary; you can request to be removed from the reviewer pool at any time. Reviewers who consistently fail to respond to review invitations (by either accepting or declining the invitation) will be removed from the reviewer pool.

What is Expected of Reviewers?

- **Maintain a working email address that you check regularly.** Make sure that the domains @editorialmanager.com and @awhonn.org are allowed by your email program. This will ensure that review invitations and correspondence with the editorial office are not filtered as spam.

- **Register at Editorial Manager** and keep an up-to-date profile there, including current email address, mailing address, phone number, and professional credentials. If you plan to use your work email as your primary email address, we highly recommend that you also add a personal email address as a backup, as some reviewers’ work emails filter review invitations as junk.

- **Select and keep up-to-date the “personal classifications” in your Editorial Manager profile.** These classifications are what the Editorial Manager system uses to match potential reviewers to manuscripts. IMPORTANT: If there are no personal classifications selected in your Editorial Manager profile, the system will never match you to manuscripts.

- **Set your “Unavailable Dates” in your Editorial Manager profile for dates that you know you will be unavailable to review (e.g., when you are going on vacation or when you know you will be busy with work deadlines).**

- **Respond to all invitations to review, by either accepting or declining the invitation, within 5 days of receipt.** This is very important in helping us meet our timelines.

- **Submit your review at Editorial Manager within the requested timeframe.** Most reviews are expected within 21 days of accepting an invitation; sometimes a shorter timeframe may be indicated, such as for short articles.

- **Read Nursing for Women’s Health regularly to get a sense of what has been published recently.**

How Many Manuscripts Will You Review?
There is no minimum or maximum number of manuscripts you will be invited to review each year. The number depends on how many manuscripts are submitted and the topics that they cover. When authors submit manuscripts, they must designate topic “classifications,” which the system uses to match manuscripts with reviewers. You are not obligated to accept all invitations to review; however, we ask that you promptly respond (within 5 days) to all review invitations by either accepting or declining the invitation. There will be specific links in the email you receive to enable you to accept or decline.

How to Submit a Great Review
When reviewing for Nursing for Women’s Health, remember that our readers want evidence-based information that they can apply to their practice. A manuscript should always answer the question, “So what?”

First and foremost, the role of a reviewer is to **review** a manuscript—not to **edit** it. If you feel a manuscript has problems with grammar, style, spelling, etc., note that in your comments, but don’t feel you must correct these mistakes line by line. It is much more important for you to apply your expertise to evaluate the content rather than the format of the manuscript. Certainly, if you feel there are overall structural changes an author could make, such as clarifying an abstract, expanding a certain section, or reorganizing the text, by all means suggest as such. But don’t get trapped in the minutiae of the manuscript. That’s what we have a copyeditors and proofreaders for. We are more interested in how you think the content will (or won’t) serve the readers and, ultimately, meet the mission of the journal.

Questions to Consider
When reading a manuscript, consider these questions:

- Is the scholarship of high quality?
- Are implications for clinical practice made clear and discussed in enough detail so as to be useful and replicable?
- Is the writing clear and concise and is the article well-organized?
- For reports of research and program evaluation, are the appropriate research and evaluation methods applied?
- When citing outcomes of previously published work, does the author characterize those outcomes correctly and appropriately?
- Are recent and appropriate references cited? Are there any crucial references missing?
- Does the manuscript add something new to the existing body of knowledge or at least present the topic in a timely or fresh way?
- Is there information in the text that would be better conveyed in an image, table, or box?
- If the article already has images, tables, and boxes, are they clear and useful?
- Will readers walk away having learned something, or does the manuscript raise more questions than it answers?
Submitting Your Review in Editorial Manager
It is very important that all reviews be completed in Editorial Manager, because this allows us to capture all feedback within one system and to keep the process blinded. If you are unfamiliar with Editorial Manager, you may wish to view their Reviewer Tutorial.

Reviewers are not permitted to make comments or edits directly in the manuscript Word file or the PDF. All review comments must be entered into the online Editorial Manager system as follows:

- Log into Editorial Manager by entering your username and password and clicking “Reviewer Login”.
- At the next screen, click “Reviews Pending” and this will bring you to the screen for the manuscript you have agreed to review.
- Click “View Submission” to read the manuscript. Do not download the manuscript and make comments directly in the manuscript document. Rather, make your comments in the reviewer rating form, which you will access by clicking “Submit Recommendation” after you have read the manuscript.
- When you are ready to submit your recommendation with comments, click “Submit Recommendation.”
- This will bring you to the Reviewer Rating Form where you will be able to assign reviewer ratings for a list of questions, provide narrative comments to the editor and to the author, and submit a recommendation of either “accept,” “revise,” or “reject.” Explanations on how to complete each of these steps follow.

Ratings
Rate the questions with the numbered scale provided on the form.

Comments to the Editor
Write your confidential opinions in this section, including your compelling reasons for why you think the manuscript should be accepted, revised, or rejected. Include general suggestions and qualifications. Comments in this section are of great value to the editor in making a decision when reviewers have not reached a consensus, in writing rejection and revision letters, and in preparing accepted manuscripts for publication.

Comments to the Author
Write your comments to the author in this section using a respectful and constructive tone. Focus critical comments on the manuscript, rather than on the author. For example, instead of: You should strengthen your conclusion, write: The manuscript would benefit from a stronger conclusion. When appropriate, refer to the line numbers for passages that you are commenting on. Please read through your comments and check for errors or typos.

NOTE: Do not express your opinion about the overall quality and whether or not the article should be published in the comments to author—make these remarks in your confidential remarks to the editor only.

Submitting a Recommendation
The final part of your review involves submitting a recommendation. Your three choices are:

- Accept: If, aside from minor changes or “polishing edits,” you feel the manuscript could be published in its present form, check this option.
- Revise: If the manuscript contains good material but should be revised by the author and resubmitted for additional review, check this option. Please check this category only if the paper has a good chance to be acceptable after the author satisfies your present criticisms. Please distinguish essential revisions from those you judge merely desirable in your confidential remarks to the editor.
- Reject: If you feel the manuscript cannot be improved with revision and should not be published, check this option and please identify specific reasons for this decision.

General Principles to Keep in Mind

- Double Blinding. Editorial review for Nursing for Women’s Health is a double-blind process; the identities of the author and the reviewers are concealed from each other. Please contact the editorial office immediately if you think you might be biased because your interests conflict with those of an author or if you recognize a manuscript because you have a personal or professional relationship with the author.
- Confidentiality. The manuscript is a privileged communication for your personal review. You are free to solicit advice from others, but do not provide the manuscript to anyone else to review without approval from the editors. The manuscript is the property of the author and should not be reproduced or distributed in any manner.
- Suspicion of Plagiarism. If you suspect any parts of the manuscript have been plagiarized, please contact the editorial office.
- Editorial Decision. Reviewers are selected for their varying perspectives, and they may well render different opinions. Decisions to publish are not based on a “unanimous” vote by the reviewers; instead, the editor carefully considers all the reviews and weighs all factors, including timeliness of subject and availability of space in the journal, and makes the final decision as to whether a manuscript will be accepted. Once the editor has made her final decision about a manuscript, you can view in Editorial Manager the editor’s decision and comments, as well as the comment of the other reviewers. It can be useful to reviewers to see whether their view agreed or conflicted with those of the other reviewers.
- Feedback to Reviewers from the Editor. Reviews are rated by the editor, and you may receive individual feedback from the editor on your performance, as necessary. If you have questions about your reviews, never hesitate to contact the editor, Mary C. Brucker, CNM, PhD, FACNM, FAAN, at nwh@awhonn.org.

Additional Resources
Here are some helpful resources for peer reviewers:

- Elsevier’s Reviewer Hub
- Nurse Author & Editor
- Reviewing Journal Manuscripts, by Charon A. Piersen

Conclusion
Thank you for your interest in reviewing for Nursing for Women’s Health. Reviewers perform an important service to their profession. Reviewing is not a simple task—it requires time, thought, expertise, and clear communication. But it’s a vital part of helping Nursing for Women’s Health meet its mission. We greatly appreciate the work of reviewers, and we often receive notes of thanks from authors telling us that the reviewers’ feedback was very helpful to them.

QUESTIONS? CONTACT US at nwh@awhonn.org or call 202-261-1467.