

5-2016

Improving the Review Policy and Process for Authors and Reviewers

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Recommended Citation

Lynn, W. M. (2016). Improving the review policy and process for authors and reviewers. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, 57(2), 120-121.
doi:10.1177/1938965516648434

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Improving the Review Policy and Process for Authors and Reviewers

Abstract

[Excerpt] In this issue's "From the Editor," I describe a new review policy and process for both authors and reviewers. Authors should find that this new policy and process provides them with faster editorial decisions, higher quality feedback, and greater clarity about required revisions, as well as greater freedom to disagree with reviewers and to write the papers they (the authors) want. Reviewers should find that this new policy and process saves them from having to review obviously flawed papers and from having to review different versions of the same paper over and over again.

Keywords

Cornell, editorial, publishing, article submission, peer review

Disciplines

Hospitality Administration and Management

Comments

Required Publisher Statement

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Cornell Hospitality Quarterly
2016, Vol. 57(2) 120–121
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sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav
DOI: 10.1177/1938965516648434
cqx.sagepub.com



In this issue's "From the Editor," I describe a new review policy and process for both authors and reviewers. Authors should find that this new policy and process provides them with faster editorial decisions, higher quality feedback, and greater clarity about required revisions, as well as greater freedom to disagree with reviewers and to write the papers they (the authors) want. Reviewers should find that this new policy and process saves them from having to review obviously flawed papers and from having to review different versions of the same paper over and over again.

Under my editorship, the *CQ*'s review policy and process includes the following key elements:

Manuscripts may be submitted for review in any recognized formatting style. No longer do papers have to be formatted using the journal's style guide on the first round of reviews. Also, the managing editor no longer has to check and approve a paper's formatting before it is put in the editor's queue.

All submitted papers are first read by me. I then decide either to desk-reject the paper or to send it out for review. The desk-reject rate is deliberately high (about 60%) in order to reduce both the journal's demands on reviewers and the amount of time authors must wait before receiving negative decisions on their manuscripts.

Submissions passing my initial screening are then sent to several reviewers, who are recruited from the list of authors in the manuscripts' references, from the results of electronic/web searches for authors of related papers on the topic, and from the journal's editorial board (typically, at least one editorial board member is assigned to each paper sent out for review). Reviewers are solicited in waves until at least two reviewers agree to provide the requested feedback on a manuscript. Those agreeing to provide reviews of a manuscript are given 21 days to complete and submit those reviews, with reminders being sent to them as the deadline approaches.

Once the promised reviews are in, I read them, re-read the manuscript, and make a first-round decision to reject, invite a revise and resubmit, conditionally accept, or accept the manuscript. In making this decision, I rely on reviewers to help me identify strengths and/or weakness in the manuscripts. Given the cross-disciplinary nature of the *CQ* and the breadth of submissions received, I especially value reviewers' help evaluating the adequacy and accuracy of the literature reviews and the appropriateness and correctness

of the methodologies employed. However, the reviewers' overall recommendations regarding the decision are not determinative—I am not a vote counter.

When only one review has been completed in the required time, I typically give the reviewer a few extra days to get the review in late, but if it is not submitted within 25 days, I will go ahead and make an editorial decision based on the lone review that is available and my own reading of the paper. When no reviews have been received in the required time or when I have some reviews but feel that I need more input to make a sound decision, I ask select members of the editorial board and close personal colleagues to provide expedited reviews and proceed with a decision once I have those in hand.

Editorial decisions are explained and needed revisions are described as clearly as I am able. Except in very rare cases when reviewers exactly express all of my opinions and evaluations, I do more than refer readers to the reviews. I provide my own thoughts about and comments on manuscripts—identifying the reason(s) behind decisions and detailing what needs to be done in revisions.

Authors given invitations to revise and resubmit (R&R) must address my concerns. They will also be asked to consider all reviewer comments and to write a detailed response to the reviewers', but they do not have to do everything reviewers ask. I am usually able to evaluate how well an author has responded to the reviewers' and my comments, so R&Rs are rarely returned to the reviewers. This gives authors greater freedom to disagree with reviewers and, if they persuade me they are right, to limit revisions to changes they personally agree are warranted. It also saves reviewers from having to weigh in on essentially the same manuscript over and over again—an advantage that I highlight in my letters soliciting ad hoc reviews.

The fact that I typically seek only one round of input from reviewers provides me, *CQ*, and authors with an opportunity to benefit from existing reviews of meritorious manuscripts rejected by other journals. Authors of manuscripts rejected by another journal are encouraged to submit revisions of those rejected papers to the *CQ* along with supplemental files containing the previous editorial decision and reviews, a detailed response to those editor and reviewer comments, and the original version of the paper that was rejected. If I find the reviews sufficiently thoughtful and helpful, I will base my decision on the editorial

letter, reviews, response, and revision without seeking additional reviews. However, I reserve the right to seek additional reviews of these papers if I feel it is necessary.

Assuming that a rejected paper has merit and is consistent with the *CQ*'s focus on hospitality and tourism, then authors have a real chance of getting a different decision from me than they did from the original editor because the *CQ* is a different journal with a different set of priorities, standards, and set of submissions to select from. Furthermore, I am a different person and may evaluate the paper and reviewer comments differently. In fact, I will face much less pressure than the original editor to agree with the reviewers because I will not know their identities or be likely to need their help with future reviews. Of course, bad papers will be rejected by me too, so authors are encouraged to submit only manuscripts that they are confident make large and meaningful contributions to our understanding of hospitality and tourism management.

This new editorial policy of using existing reviews where available will shorten the editorial process for the relevant manuscripts and save authors' time as well as give authors a

greater opportunity to disagree with the reviewers than they felt the first time around. It will also avoid needless duplication of review effort and reduce system-wide demands on reviewers' time and energy. Hopefully, it will also encourage more authors of relevant and meritorious manuscripts to consider the *CQ* as a potential outlet for their work. To further the latter benefit to the *CQ*, I encourage readers of this "From the Editor" to share it with other scholars who might have manuscripts suitable for publication in the *CQ*.

Michael Lynn

Side note: Since taking over the editorship of the *CQ* last September, I have processed and made decisions on 154 original submissions and 54 R&Rs. Information about the decisions made on each type of submission is presented in Exhibit 1 and information about the number of days to make the decision is presented in Exhibit 2. I inherited many of the R&Rs from Mike LaTour, which is why the decision times are so long for some of these manuscripts. Of the R&Rs I alone have handled, only one was sent back out for a second review.

Exhibit 1:
Counts (and Row Percentages) of Decisions by Type of Submission.

Submission	<i>n</i>	Reject	Revise and Resubmit	Conditional Accept	Accept
Original	154	130 (84.4%)	15 (9.7%)	9 (5.8%)	0 (0%)
R&R 1	28	8 (28.6%)	4 (14.3%)	7 (25.0%)	8 (28.6%)
R&R 2	17	2 (11.8%)	3 (17.6%)	3 (17.6%)	9 (52.9%)
R&R 3	7	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (11.8%)	5 (71.4%)
R&R 4	2	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)

Note. R&R = revise and resubmit.

Exhibit 2:
Summary Statistics Regarding the Number of Days to Make a Decision by Submission Type.

Submission	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	Minimum	Maximum	<i>SD</i>
Original (all)	154	12.07	0.12	76.19	15.83
Original (≥ 5 days; not desk rejected)	62	26.88	5.26	76.19	15.88
R&R 1	28	8.76	0.09	58.12	14.85
R&R 2	17	8.94	0.05	49.97	14.14
R&R 3	7	11.93	0.43	40.13	16.61
R&R 4	2	0.91	0.81	1.01	0.14

Note. R&R = revise and resubmit.