



Uni-Edit 写作技巧 012

为什么我应推荐同行评审员？

难度等级：初级

我们有位客户向我们咨询有关其目标期刊的一个具体要求，即在提交稿件给期刊时作者需要自行推荐同行评审员。

“我的目标期刊要求我提交一份同行评审员的名单以审查我的论文，这对我来说似乎不太寻常。不应该是由期刊选择我的同行评审员吗？这样审查才会是客观的。对我来说，好像我只需选择友好的评审员来确保正面积积极的评价，而无需在意的科研价值。”

我们的客户指的是一些期刊要求作者在投稿信中提交一份同行评审员的名单。一些期刊没有这样明确的要求，但如果作者有提供，则会予以考虑。

乍一看，客户的这种担忧是有道理的。出版决定应仅基于论文的科研价值，而不是基于作者认识谁，不是吗？然而，这种做法的原因并不是偏袒，实际上这有助于提高论文的质量并确保出版决定是公正的。

为什么推荐同行评审？

这种做法的目的不是给予作者优惠待遇，而是确保他们得到公平的待遇。主要原因是，期刊编辑需将各个领域的各种论文分配给同行评审员。与期刊编辑相比，论文作者可能更了解哪些专家最有资格评估其特定领域的研究。

这就是为什么这种做法在一般期刊中尤为常见：期刊范围越窄，编辑委员会越有可能已经与相关领域的权威专家取得联系（这些专家甚至可能在编辑委员会任职）。

记住，你提交的名单只是个建议：评审员可以拒绝评审工作，编辑委员会可以不请他们进行评审工作。这样，期刊可以避免怀疑有偏袒或存在偏见的情况。此外，同行评审是隐名的：你很可能永远不会知道任何同行评审员的姓名/身份。

第 1 步. 选择 7-10 个优选评审员

在相关研究领域中选择 7-10 个发表过论文的作者或权威专家。他们的研究课题与你的越相近，就越应该考虑列出他们的名字。他们可以是认识的，也可以是素未谋面的，可以是会议上的演讲者或行业专家。在推荐他们作为评审员之前与其联系并不必要，不过如果事先联系的话，在他们收到期刊的

正式审查邀请时，更有可能同意。

你可能会问，如果我的论文只需由两三人进行审查，为什么我应该推荐 7-10 个评审员？再说一次，你推荐的评审员清单只是一个建议：不是您推荐的每个评审员都会被邀请进行评审工作，也不是每个评审员都会同意接受评审工作。

选择你知道的和之前合作过的研究人员是可以的。但是，不要选择有**利益冲突**的评审员，这当然包括你或者合著者机构的研究人员，另外的例子是潜在评审员对您正在测试的技术、工艺流程、化合物等拥有专利。

第 2 步. 选择你所引用的作者或期刊知道的作者

你所引用的作者在确保您的论文正确描述研究课题、正确阐明研究范围和结论有举足轻重的影响。此外，这会将您的知识传播给最有可能阅读及引用它的人、拓展新的研究合作机会。如果你并不认识许多相关领域的研究人员，现在正是建立联系的好时机。

对于这种方法，最好选择与您的著作直接相关的作者，而不是在你提供一般背景信息时所引用的那些作者，专注于那些你提及很多次或者其研究发现对你的论文很有帮助的作者。

如果你刚刚接触这个领域或者感觉你所推荐的作者不会公正地评审你的论文（例如，也许你对其研究发现不满），另一个不错的选择是浏览近几年的目标期刊，选择相关领域最近发表过论文的作者或合著者。编辑委员会已经对这些作者很熟悉，作者也可能很乐意担任发表过他们文章的同一期刊的同行评审员。

第 3 步：选择能够批判性和建设性地审查论文的评审员

更全面的考虑论文的目的，你只想发表论文？在简历或个人网站上的添加出版物列表？或者想让你的论文反映出强有力的研究，其成果会被众多读者尊重和引用？

事实是，没有一个研究者或实验室对研究课题有唯一的理解：通过结合同行的意见，您的研究更有可能反映研究课题背后的真实性并“经受时间的考验”，例如：即便十年后您的研究仍会在此领域具有相关性。在这方面，如果您的研究课题具有广泛的国际兴趣，选择来自不同国家的审稿人会有助于修改论文，使其具有全球性吸引力。

然而，之前你可能有受到某个期刊副主编或主题专家评审员偏见的经历。副主编可能最关注的是期刊合适性和范围，而主题专家评审员可能正在竞争资金或日理万机。如果您认为存在偏见，您还可以在另一个列表中指定非优选评审员，在这种情况下，一定要解释为什么（见下文第 5 步）。

第 4 步. 选择一些初级研究员

相关领域里最出名和最受好评的研究人员通常很忙。高级研究人员收到的同行评审工作应接不暇，可

能会不自觉地仓促完成同行评审以便优先考虑其他项目。此外，只推荐知名的研究人员可能反映出你对该领域不是很熟悉，期刊编辑可能会认为你仅具备基本知识。

另一方面，初级研究人员不太可能收到太多的评审工作让他们应接不暇，这样他们更有可能接受你的论文评审工作，而且他们可能会投入更多的时间来批判性地审查你的研究，因为他们有更多的时间，他们想了解更多关于该领域的信息，并且他们希望给目标期刊留下同行评审技能很强的良好印象。

第 5 步. 提供推荐评审员的理由和联系信息

告知编辑委员会您选择的原因：期刊编辑会根据您提供的原因，比较每个评审员的资料和背景，做出他们的决定。原因不必很长，一两句话通常就足够了。原因类型包括：

- 领域相关：“推荐此评审员因为我们大量引用他的关于斑马鱼中 CRISPR 基因编辑的研究著作。”
- 技术专长：“推荐此评审员因为她研发了本文中使用的特定微生物培养技术。”
- 熟悉研究：“推荐此评审员因为我们过去在同一课题的研究中密切合作过。”

如果您决定列出任何非优选评审员（即您推测会有负面评价的审核人），这也需要一个理由。例如，“我们要求编辑委员会不要将之前评审我们论文的审稿人 #2 分配给我们（提交编号 1234 号，2014 年 3 月 5 日），原因是该审稿人之前的评审具有非建设性的评论并且似乎不熟悉我们的方法论。”

至于联系信息，每个评审员的电子邮箱和机构通常就足够了，此信息可从其机构的网站获取。

论文发表后

最后一点：在论文发表时，一些期刊会同原论文一起还发表其同行评审报告。他们认为，这是对评审员的努力工作进行赞赏，而且这样可以有助于提高同行评审过程的透明度，这对作者来说是个好消息：优选评审员写出的建设性和全面性的报告将吸引读者，帮助他们了解你的研究在文献中的地位，并给他们（和你）未来研究一个新的方向。

END OF TIP

Uni-edit English Writing Tip 012

Why should I nominate peer reviewers?

Difficulty: Easy

One of our customers asked us about a specific request from their target journal to nominate peer reviewers for their manuscript when submitting it to a journal.

My target journal asked me to nominate a list of peer reviewers they could ask to review my paper. This seems unusual to me. Shouldn't the journal choose my peer reviewers, so the review is objective? It seems to me I could choose only friendly reviewers to ensure a positive review, regardless of the scientific merit of my study.

Our customer is referring to the practice of some journals of requesting submitting authors to provide a list of recommended peer reviewers in their cover letter. Some journals do not explicitly ask for such a list, but will consider one if the author provides one.

Our customer's concerns seem valid at first glance. Shouldn't the publication decision be based on a paper's scientific merit alone, rather than on who the author knows? However, the rationale for this practice is not favoritism at all, and its practical consequences help to improve the quality of your paper and ensure a fair publication decision.

Why nominate peer reviewers?

The goal of this practice is not to give authors preferential treatment, but rather to ensure they are given fair treatment. The main reason is that compared with a journal's Editors, who must assign peer reviewers to a wide range of papers across various subfields, the author of a paper probably knows better which experts are most qualified to evaluate research in their specific subfield.

This is why this practice is especially common in generalist journals: the narrower a journal's scope, the more likely its Editorial Board is to already be in contact with the leading experts in the subfield (these experts might even serve on the Editorial Board!)

Remember, your list is just a recommendation: reviewers can decline to review, and the Editorial Board can decline to ask them. In this way, the journal can avoid obvious cases where they would suspect favoritism or negative bias. In addition, peer review is blinded: you will likely never know the name/identity of any of your peer reviewers.

Step 1. Choose 7-10 preferred reviewers.

Choose 7-10 published authors or notable experts in your specific subfield. The closer their research topics are to yours, the more strongly you should consider listing their names. These can be authors you know, or authors you've never met; speakers at conferences, or industry experts. It is not essential to contact a person before recommending them as a reviewer, but doing so may make them more likely to agree if and when they get the official request.

You might ask, why should I nominate 7-10 reviewers, if my paper is only going to be reviewed by 2 or 3? Again, your list is just a recommendation: not everyone you suggest will be asked, and not everyone asked will agree to the request.

It's fine to choose researchers you know and have collaborated with before. Do not, however, choose reviewers with a conflict of interest. This obviously includes researchers from your institution or from your co-authors' institutions. A less obvious example is someone with a patent on a technology, process, chemical compound, etc., that you are testing.

Step 2. Choose authors you cite, or authors the journal knows of already.

Authors you cite have a clear interest in ensuring your paper correctly describes your research topic, and that it correctly states the scope and conclusions of their research where you cite it. Moreover, it spreads knowledge of your work to the people most likely to read it and cite it, opening up new research collaborations with you. If you don't personally know many researchers in your subfield, now is the chance to make those connections!

For this strategy, it is best to choose authors whose work is directly relevant to your own, rather than just those authors you cite when providing general background information. Focus on those you refer to a lot, or whose findings are instrumental to your own work.

If you're new to the field, or feel that authors you cite would not fairly review your paper (for example, maybe you're critical of their findings), another good option is to read through the last few years of your target journal, and select recently published authors or co-authors in similar subfields. The Editorial Board will already be familiar with the authors, and the authors may be happy to serve as a peer reviewer for the same journal that published them.

Step 3. Choose reviewers who can review your paper critically and constructively.

Think more broadly about your goal for your paper. Do you merely want to publish the paper, to add a title to your list of publications on your resume or personal website? Or do you want your

paper to reflect strong research, whose results will be respected and cited by a broad range of readers?

The truth is, no single researcher or laboratory has the only understanding of a research topic: by incorporating the opinions of your peers, your research is more likely to reflect the truth behind a research topic, and to ‘stand the test of time’: i.e., to have relevance in the field even ten years from now. In that regard, if your research topic has broad, international interest, choosing reviewers from a variety of countries will help you to revise your paper to have global appeal.

However, you might have experience with bias from particular associate editors or subject-matter-expert reviewers in a journal before. Associate editors may be most concerned about journal fit and scope, while subject-matter-expert reviewers may be competing for funding, or have personal agendas. If you feel the bias is unfair, you can also designate non-preferred reviewers in another list. In this case, be sure to explain why! (See Rule 5 below.)

Step 4. Choose some junior researchers.

The most famous and well-regarded researchers in your field are usually very busy. Senior researchers receive more peer-review requests than they have time to handle, and may unconsciously rush through a peer review in order to give priority to other projects. In addition, recommending only well-known researchers can reflect poorly on your familiarity with the field, suggesting you have only a generalist knowledge of it.

Junior researchers, on the other hand, are less likely to receive more requests than they can handle, making them more likely to accept yours. In addition, they will probably devote extra time to critically examining your research, because they have more time, because they want to learn more about the field, and because they want to build a good reputation with the target journal for having strong peer-review skills.

Step 5. Provide a justification and contact information for each reviewer.

Providing a justification gives the Editorial Board context for your choices: as they research each candidate, they will compare your reason with the facts and background of each person to make their decision. Justifications need not be long: one or two sentences usually suffices. Types of justifications include:

- Field relevance: “Recommended because we heavily cite his research lab’s work on CRISPR gene editing in the zebrafish.”
- Technical expertise: “Recommended because she developed the specific microbial cultivation technique we used in this paper.”

- Familiarity with research: “Recommended because we have collaborated closely in past research on the same topic.”

If you decide to list any non-preferred reviewers (i.e., reviewers you expect to be negatively biased), this requires a justification too. E.g., “We request the Editorial Board not to assign Reviewer #2 from our previously submitted paper (Submission No. 1234, 5 Mar 2014), due to unconstructive commentary and seeming unfamiliarity with our methodology in that review.”

As for contact information, an email address and institution for each reviewer is usually sufficient; this information can be obtained from their institution’s website.

Post Publication and Posterity

One final note: following publication, some journals also publish peer review reports with the original paper. They believe it gives credit to the reviewers for the hard work they have done and also it can contribute to the greater transparency of the peer review process. This is good news for you, the author: preferred reviewers who will write constructive and comprehensive reports will engage your readership, helping them to understand your study’s place in the literature and giving them (and you!) new directions for further research.

END OF TIP