The success of the American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education (AJPE) relies on the peer review process, which facilitates the advancement of pharmacy education literature. This process depends on the willingness of qualified reviewers to share their time and expertise with contributing authors and Journal editors. Many in the Academy consider serving as a reviewer a professional responsibility of being a faculty member. The peer review is primarily a reciprocal endeavor; therefore, faculty should carry out their fair share in a timely manner.

In addition to providing service to the Academy, reviewers benefit from participation in the peer review process. Serving as a reviewer aids in becoming a stronger researcher and author through the identification of common manuscript problems and discovery of writing strategies. The review process may be particularly enlightening and constructive for residents and junior faculty. As reviewers become recognized for their quality reviews, there is a greater likelihood of being named to an editorial board, a prestigious position that is viewed as a sign of scholarly reputation.

Authors contribute significant time and effort preparing their manuscripts. They deserve an objective, honest, and constructive review, one that assists the author to improve the manuscript. Assuming that writing style is clear, always remember that it is the author’s paper; the role of the reviewer is not to rewrite it in their preferred style. As a reviewer, make clear which suggestions are essential to support findings in the manuscript, and which are just offered to strengthen the work. Be specific in criticisms by providing evidence to substantiate general statements.

Authors also deserve peer reviews to be completed without delay. Significant delays are created by a lack of response to review requests, large numbers of potential reviewers declining requests, and late review submissions. When a request to review is received, respond in a reasonable time frame as to your availability and interest in reviewing an article, either in the affirmative or negative. The number of potential reviewers who either do not bother to respond to a request to review or who deny the request continues to frustrate authors and editors. It is not uncommon for as many as 16 potential reviewers to ignore or deny a request to review an article before two can be identified. Given that potential reviewers are provided 7 days to respond to an AJPE request to review, authors’ wait-time can be extended months by this in-action. Additionally, despite being provided with 21 days to complete reviews, many are not completed on time. Please contact the Journal if circumstances arise that will prevent a timely review, and provide an estimate of the time needed to complete the review.

Not sure how to be a reviewer? Editors are looking for reviewers to serve as subject experts to provide an assessment of strengths and weaknesses of a manuscript. Reviews should not focus solely on correcting grammatical errors. As a reviewer, the following dimensions should be considered:

Originality: A review should determine if the manuscript addresses innovative practices, approaches, or techniques, rather than represent a “me too” approach;

Significance: A review should evaluate if the manuscript provides substantially impactful findings or approaches, rather than just providing interesting information. Reviewers are looking for how a manuscript will provide value, importance, and worth beyond being interesting or able to be replicated;

Practical utility: With the goal of improving pharmacy education, a review should discuss the relevance of the findings to the Academy and practical application for pharmacy education enhancement;

Generalizability: Given the broad goals and varied audience of the Journal, a review should consider if the findings allow for generalizability across a range of disciplines and student populations beyond those utilized in the study;

Methodologic approach: A review should evaluate if the manuscript is free from flaws in research methodology or interpretation. In the case of innovations in teaching, the review should ensure that methodology
includes assessment of achievement of predeter-
mined learning outcomes;
Theoretical basis: A review should evaluate if the man-
uscript is grounded in relevant theoretical concepts
and evidence; and
Clarity: A review should address if the manuscript is
structured in a manner that promotes a cohesive
understanding of the information; it also should
address if the manuscript is written in a clear, pro-
fessional manner free from stylistic concerns and
grammatical errors.
Reviews must be based on the merits of the work and
not influenced – either positively or negatively – by any
personal, financial or intellectual conflicts or biases. The
Journal encourages international submissions; therefore,
reviewers must be aware of the sensitivities surrounding
potential language issues.
The Journal provides reviewers the ability to submit
comments and recommendations to the author, and confi-
dential ones to the editor. Comments and recommendations
to the editor should be consistent with those to the author.
Most feedback should be provided directly to the authors.
Providing conflicting comments to the author and editor
leads to confusion and frustration, particularly if the editor
decides to reject a manuscript based on comments only
seen by the editor, but the author receives comments from
the reviewer stating “this was the best article I have ever
read.”
If assistance is needed during a review, editors are
available to address questions or concerns. Some journals
provide the final editorial decision and reviews by the
other reviewers back to the reviewers. If provided, use
this information to improve your understanding of the
topic, the decision reached, and how to be a good
reviewer.
Without reviewers, there is no peer review process.
Without peer review, there is no scholarship. For faculty
who serve as reviewers, thank you for assisting in the
advancement of pharmacy education literature by sup-
porting the peer review process.