

# Information for Reviewers

## The role of the reviewer

The role of the HERDSA reviewer is threefold: (i) to ensure that papers recommended for publication meet DEST standards of research; (ii) to provide formative feedback to the author/s; and (iii) to be objective in rating papers. In brief, the DEST standards for research include pure basic research, strategic basic research, applied research and experimental development. They require that the paper be original and have the potential to produce results that are sufficiently general for theoretical and/or practical knowledge to be recognisably increased. Most higher education research work would qualify as research.

## Double blind reviewing

HERDSA conferences use a double blind review process that meets DEST requirements for peer review of research publications. Reviewers will receive a paper devoid of the authors' names and institutions in order to ensure objectivity and anonymity. If you think your objectivity has been compromised by inadvertently identifying an author, please email [HERDSA2006@uwa.edu.au](mailto:HERDSA2006@uwa.edu.au), and the paper will be reassigned.

## Becoming a reviewer

To become a reviewer, please apply online using the application form accessed at <http://conference.herdsa.org.au/2006/reviewer.cfm> Papers will be made available mid-February. All reviews must be completed by 24<sup>th</sup> March 2006. Please ensure your availability at this time if you are nominating to review. All reviewers must respect the confidentiality of the process.

## Appointment and acknowledgement of reviewers

Reviewers are appointed on the basis of their expertise and experience in areas relevant to the conference. All reviewers will be acknowledged in the published proceedings.

## The review process

The review process is managed through the HERDSA conference website. Once papers have been allocated based on reviewers' expertise and preferences, you will receive an email letting you know that papers are ready for review. This email will include a personalised login to access the papers for downloading.

In reviewing the papers you will be required to rate them on the basis of

- Suitability for conference publication
- Academic merit
- Implications for practice and/or theory
- Standard of writing

You will also be required to provide global formative comments on the paper for the authors. If you wish, you may also provide comments for the editors alone.

On the basis of your ratings, you will need to make a decision whether to

- Accept the paper as is
- Accept the paper with minor revisions; or
- Reject for publication

Please note that any papers rejected for publication will still be considered for presentation at the conference. You may wish to advise the editors whether or not a paper rejected for publication would still be suitable for presentation.

All this information needs to be entered into the online form also available through your login. The ratings are entered through the use of radio buttons. The comments to the authors and the editors, however, need to be typed in. You may choose to type your comments in directly, or to cut and paste them across. Please note that if you type them in directly, the window scrolls. Note, if you print your completed review form, you will not be able print anything outside the window frame.

## Rating the papers

When rating the papers as poor, fair, good or very good, it is important that you use the full rating scale so that papers can be discriminated on the basis of consistently agreed measures of quality across reviewers. The following is a guide to assigning a rating under each of the criteria:

### 1. Suitability for conference publication

In this criterion you need to be aware of the conference themes and the target audience. The descriptors to aid you in assigning ratings are as follows.

Very Good	High contemporary relevance to one or more of the conference themes. Relevant to several audience groups.
Good	Relevant to one or more conference themes and relevant to at least one audience group.
Fair	Relevant to at least one conference theme and relevant to at least some audience members.
Poor	Lacks sufficient relevance to any of the conference themes, or to any of the audience groups.

The conference themes are:

- *Critical Reflections* on learning, thinking and research; how they inform our current practice and what can be learnt from past experience, successes and mistakes.
- *Critical Perspectives* of the many different stakeholders who experience, inform, guide and implement policy, theory and practice.
- *Critical Directions* for international higher education to enable its continued relevance and effectiveness.

The target audience is academics, researchers, students, organisational and academic developers, professionals, technical staff, university managers, policy makers and members of the wider national and international higher education community,

### 2. Academic Merit

This criterion relates to how the paper is situated in the literature and / or policy. The descriptors to aid you in assigning ratings are as follows.

Very Good	Well situated in current literature and/or policy. Adopts an appropriate research methodology for the purpose of the paper with insightful critical analysis.
Good	Situated in the literature and/or policy. Adopts an appropriate research methodology for the purpose of the paper with evidence of critical analysis.
Fair	Situated in the university context with limited but relevant connection to teaching and learning literature and/or policy. Appropriate methodology with elementary analysis.
Poor	Knowledge of literature and /or policy context is not demonstrated or integrated into the paper. Methodology lacks academic rigour, or paper lacks appropriate analysis and insight.

### 3. Implications for practice and/or theory

The descriptors to aid you in assigning ratings for this criterion are as follows.

Very Good	The paper identifies wide and insightful implications for theory and/or policy through the inferences and conclusions it draws.
Good	The paper provides clear implications for practice, policy and /or further research.
Fair	The paper draws basic implications for other practitioners.
Poor	The paper does not extend beyond the immediate context.

### 4. Standard of writing

The descriptors to aid you in assigning ratings for this criterion are as follows.

Very Good	All aspects of the written work conform to a high academic standard. The paper is highly readable and logical. Guidelines for formatting and referencing are adhered to.
Good	Most aspects of the written work conform to a high academic standard. Overall, the paper is logical and easy to read.
Fair	Most aspects of the written work conform to an acceptable academic standard. While the paper may be difficult to read at times, overall it retains logic.
Poor	This paper is difficult to read and/or the argument or logic is difficult to follow at times.

## Making recommendations for publication

The following is a guide for making recommendations for publication. You may need to use your discretion in applying this guide.

In general, we suggest the following:

1. Accept paper as is where all descriptors have ratings of either “good or “very good” and the paper does not exceed the word limit of 3000 words. Do not worry about the odd minor spelling, grammatical or formatting errors. All accepted authors will be required to ensure that their

final submitted paper adheres to all these requirements in order to be published.

2. Accept the paper with minor revisions where you feel less than 20% of the paper needs re-working and / or where the paper needs to be reduced to fit the work limit. A paper for minor revision may attract one or two “fair” ratings in addition to “good” and/or “very good” ratings.
3. Reject for publication any paper in which more than 20% of the paper needs reworking. Any “poor” ratings should result in rejection.

### **Proving feedback to the authors**

Please provide global feedback to the author/s that relates to the recommendation that you gave.

1. Papers accepted as is should be given feedback on the positive qualities of the paper. Please let them know if they will need to attend to spelling, grammar or formatting.
2. Papers accepted with minor revisions should be given feedback on the positive qualities and the areas for improvement. Also please let them know if, in addition, they will need to attend to spelling, grammar or formatting.
3. Papers rejected for publication should be given feedback on the positive qualities and the areas for improvement for (i) presentation and (ii) publication at a later date.

Updated 17<sup>th</sup> Feb 2006