

How to respond to reviewer's comments – Instruction for authors

Your paper has undergone Major review. Now we require from you:

1. Cover letter
2. Article with the corrections implemented according to our instruction

You need to send us the corrected document within 7 days from receiving the reviews.

To simplify the process of implementing reviewer's remarks and avoid delays **we ask to follow our instruction.**

Below you will find descriptions of consequent stages of reviewing and other tips, we strongly suggest reading this part.

We also describe the general academic practice of how to respond to reviews. This will be useful to you not only for publishing in ICAR but also in other professional journals.

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1. Major review – you are here now! <7 days for implementing the changes>

Your paper has undergone first reviews. You received two reviews from two independent reviewers who don't know your identity. Their remarks are impartial, focused on the merit and academic quality of your paper. They are renowned professionals with huge experience in publishing and reviewing papers in your field of study. You may disagree with some of their remarks but keep in mind that the reviewers are experts in your chosen topic and they will help you improve your paper. It is normal even for experienced conservators and researchers to receive huge numbers of remarks from reviewers.

The authors are obliged by the publishing agreement to carry out all the changes advised by reviewers within a deadline set by the editor. Refusal or not providing the amended document on time will result in rejecting your paper for publication.

a. How to prepare the revised paper

Before you start editing the document, make sure Tracking changes is enabled! In MS Word go to Review menu and enable 'Track changes'.

You have to address every comment from both reviewers.

Mark your every change by adding a comment, excluding typos or similar minor editorial errors.

The comments should include a justification of the change (or lack of change!). In other words, answers to two questions:

- Why I made this change?
- What is the result?

If you decide to explain or justify why you believe your change (or lack of it) adds to the paper, always make sure to clearly indicate parts of paper you refer to (e.g. I mentioned this fact already in the Introduction, p. 1 paragraph 2. I believe bringing up this information there clarifies the issue from the very beginning).

Don't add comments with questions. Bear in mind that:

- ICAR's editors won't answer them;
- There will be only two stages of corrections – after major and minor review. There is no space for discussions with the reviewers.

If you remove something, ~~don't mark it like this~~. Instead, mark the whole paragraph by adding a comment with explanations of what you did and how it helps to improve the paper.

Summary: Track changes + put a comment with justification on every change you make

b. Cover letter

It is a good academic practice to attach a cover letter to submissions of new and revised papers to journals. Cover letter sent with the paper after major review usually includes:

- Courteous thanks to the editor, etc.
- General confirmation on carrying out all minor editorial corrections (typos etc.)
- Confirmation of implementing the requested changes. Explanations on general character of changes. You may mention 1-3 fundamental changes you made and explain how you dealt with it.
- A list of tasks given by the reviewer with precise indication where in the document you included the changes.
- Other comments that are important to the editor.

2. Minor review <5 days for implementing the changes>

Your revised paper including all your comments is sent to the reviewers again. They check if you amended the paper according to their advice and make sure it's improved.

They still might have some final remarks to help you perfect your article. This means that you will have to carry out another round of corrections and mark all your changes in the manner described above.

The authors are obliged by the publishing agreement to carry out all the changes advised by reviewers within a deadline set by the editor. Refusal or not providing the amended document on time will result in rejecting your paper for publication.

3. Final acceptance

The reviewers check your paper again and decide if it's suitable for publication. If the reviewers and ICAR's Editorial Board give it the green light – you will receive an e-mail with final acceptance of your paper to be published in ICAR.

4. Tips on how to organise your work

You receive a number of comments from two reviewers. Some of the remarks might overlap one another, some may be seemingly declining each other. To avoid chaotically editing the document, we advise you to:

Print the review forms you received and highlight the most important points, write down your own notes and thoughts on how to sort each issue next to each of reviewers' comments.

Print your paper, highlight the parts that require amendments. Consider widening the margin space to the right, setting line spacing to 1,5. Next to each marked section write down your comments, e.g. what needs to be done with the given section.

When you start editing the document add the comments immediately after implementing each change (Track changes!). You need to keep them precise. Remember – why I changed this? How is it helpful? Where in the paper is the information requested?

During emending the document, mark with a tick each comment you address on the printed review forms. Write down also where in the document the change is implemented. This you will use in the cover letter!

Final word – you have to find the method of answering to reviewers' remarks that works the best for you. Remember to be organised and precise. Keep in mind that the reviewers have no information about your situation or what you know about the topic. All they have are your comments, so make sure they are on point and elaborate enough to convince the reviewers.