

MAGKS Peer-review Workshop



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Dates. Workshop: October 11-12, 2019; Follow-up meeting: to be scheduled.

Objective. The objective is to provide and to receive feedback on papers that the author(s) consider almost ready for the submission to a journal (at least 80% complete). Each participant can submit one paper. Every participant reads all the papers and provides feedback on all the papers. Hence, each paper receives feedback from all participants. 90 minutes are assigned for the discussion of each paper. In addition, topics of joint interest can be discussed, e.g., how to provide feedback? how to deal with feedback? how to pick an outlet for my work? etc.

The workshop addresses first and foremost students in the MAGKS program. It is open for broader participation on the inherent reciprocal basis of the intended benefits.

Organizational issues. The workshop takes place at Marburg as an intensive workshop on Friday and Saturday. The workshop will take place if at least five papers are submitted. The maximum number of participants is ten. Please register via the [MAGKS-website](#).

Credits. In addition to reading and commenting on all the papers, those who participate for credits write a fully-fledged referee report on one of the papers. The reports are due at the end of the workshop and will be discussed at the follow-up meeting. The number of credits awarded depends on the workload, hence on the number of participants (3-6 ECTS).

Schedule.

- Please register for participation latest by **August 31**.
- Deadline for the submission of a paper is **August 31**. All papers will be made available to all participants.
- Those who take the course for credit (please indicate upon registration!) can state preferences on which paper they want to write a referee report (first-come-first-serve!). Assignments will be made in the first week of September.
- The Follow-up meeting is obligatory for participants who take the course for credit.

More details on the process.

The aim of the workshop is to help the authors of the submitted papers to improve their papers, and to increase the chances of getting it published at a peer-reviewed journal. There are two groups of readers for each paper: *Read-through-readers* concentrate their feedback on the crucial first impressions. *Read-thoroughly-readers* provide in-depth feedback on the details of the arguments.

Preparing your paper:

- You benefit most from the workshop, if your paper is as advanced as possible. At least, it should be readable and contain 80% of the analysis. The more advanced your paper is, the more beneficial feedback the other participants can give. If your paper is not yet complete, please sketch the intended line of reasoning in the parts that are still missing.
- Anticipate the editor's & referees' information processing behavior. They will economize on their time. Provide (only) the necessary information at the suitable places.
- Follow John Cochrane's Writing tips.
- Recognize (and take advantage of) the valuable opportunity that the workshop offers to you! You do not have to try to sell the paper to the reader. Instead, you can make your readers help you sell the paper.
- Though free-of-charge (and, hopefully, priceless), handle the workshop participants' time economically! If your paper contains more than 30 pages (1.5 linespace), indicate which parts of the paper can be skipped (even by the read-thoroughly-readers). Think about your own enthusiasm to read 50+ pages that are only remotely related to your own work. . .
- Use the commenting/highlighting-tools to directly address the workshop participants with questions (Do you know a micro-foundation for this assumption?, Can you come up with a better expression for this?, etc.), and to provide additional comments (As an alternative, I was thinking about..., We tried to do xyz, but we did not succeed due to..., I am looking for references that use similar specifications).
- Please state the JEL codes for your paper to facilitate the matching for me. If you don't mind to share: To which journal do you intend to submit the paper?

Reading guide:

- Try to take the perspective of the decision makers in the publication process. When deciding about the allocation of valuable refereeing services to a paper, the editor will scan the paper for its relevance for the journal, the significance of the contribution and its novelty. Try to do the same.

- Start with reading the abstract. Take notes on: (i) What is the research question? (ii) How is it addressed, and what is the answer? (iii) Why do you think that the paper is (not) interesting enough to continue reading? (iv) Which papers come to your mind that address similar/related questions?
- Next, check the list of references. (v) Do you find the papers that came to your mind in (iv)? (vi) Which of the references in the list do you know? In which context? (vii) Does the list of references reflect the targeted outlet?
- Read the introduction. Repeat (i)-(iv). Take notes of any discrepancies between your expectations and how the introduction unfolds. After having read the introduction, referees usually know whether they are inclined to reject the paper. If so, they will concentrate the effort they spent on the remainder of the paper on looking for arguments supporting the recommendation to reject. Any frictions up to this point have to be eliminated.
- Scan the paper for the central elements. Can you follow the argument? Do the elements appear in a logical order? Read-through-readers can stop here. Read-thoroughly-readers read the paper thoroughly (hence, the name).
- Related literature: Are the related pieces of work put into perspective correctly and suitably, and in a respectful manner? Their authors are very likely referees. It is not such a smart idea to be offensive or to oversell the contribution in relation to other researchers' work.
- Analysis: Is it correct? Is it complete? Is it convincing? Once more, please take notes of deviations of the line of reasoning from your expectations. Is there scope for shortening the paper?
- Are some of the results oversold? Do certain aspects require more emphasis?

Commenting guide:

- In your opinion, what is the main strength of the paper? What is the easiest-to-deal-with weakness? Would dealing with any particular shortcoming considerably improve the paper?
- Some criticisms that you may have can probably not be addressed by the author(s). Try to anticipate the difficulty of taking your point into consideration. Try to anticipate the potential benefit. Avoid commenting on issues that score high on the first and low on the second dimension. Avoid value judgements (I just don't like it).
- Take notes of the typos that you spot in the manuscript, and give them to the author(s). The author(s) will appreciate a lot, but the discussion does probably not benefit much from pointing out typos during the workshop.

- In general, it would be nice if you shared your notes that I asked you to take with the author(s).
- Read-thoroughly-readers: Try to anticipate the points a rejection-inclined referee may want to bring up. The idea is to polish the paper in a way that such a referee can only bring up arguments that reflect his/her value judgements. Make it easy for the editor to consolidate contradicting opinions by his/her referees in the author's favor!