



GÖTEBORGS
UNIVERSITET

THE REVIEW PROCESS: RESPONDING TO REVIEWS

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- Reject /major revise / minor revise /(conditional) accept
- You received an r'n'r – great but stressful!
- Some journals allow one shot, many for 2 (+) rounds
- The **response letter** is essential to take you there



The challenges of revising

- Self-doubt (1 kind word and 99 that are not)
- Structural change (harmony and space constraints)
- Biased reviews (challenges your intent/ own voice)

Mindset when revising

- Be open to improvements from academic exchange
- Help reviewers understand why this is novel + rigorous
- Huge tasks consist of small steps



The response – general thoughts

- Don't despair over many comments
 - it *could* mean the reviewer/editor think this is good enough
- Pay special attention to what the editor(s) says,
 - if they weigh in – will stake direction

The letter

- Can be (very) long - Some journals restrict its size, but most do not



I suggest you “write the letter while revising”

- Create a master “to do” list
 1. I use a table and paste distilled versions of the comments to left and my **own thoughts** to the right
 2. Turn those thoughts in to **action points** when revising
 3. Turn revised points to a “bullet-description” of **your response** to be used in the letter
 - The “to do” list is soon a “have done” list
- Use your “have done” list in the response letter to save time
- Make sure you **responded to everything**, one way or another



How should it look like? (still anonymous)

1. Thank the editors and the reviewers for their time
2. Give a **general level response** to the main concern of the paper and describe more briefly how you altered the MS in relation to it
 - My preferences: outline all changes in the letter
3. Then, **the details**: thematic or reviewer-by-reviewer (see next slide)
4. Many letters will also include supporting code or tables if this is information not included in appendices in the MS
5. Ensure you follow word limit etc. and **end politely**



Three different ways of responding

- The “cut and paste of comment” – where the full comment is met by a response
– (lengthy letters)
- The “point by point summary” and your reply
– (reviewers might feel your summary is. inaccurate)
- The “editor-only” style, referring broadly to points from reviewers and your response to this



Last thoughts

- Civil responses – as you would like to be addressed
- Take reviewers seriously
- Help reviewers understand why this is novel and rigorous
- If you disagree, say so but explain why and how
- Explain which changes you did not do and why



Recommended readings

- Harris, M. 2015. “The 'Revise and Resubmit'.” See <https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2015/08/03/essay-how-academics-should-approach-revise-and-resubmit-responses-journals>
- Mikal, J. 2021. “How to Revise and Resubmit Without Losing Your Voice.” See <https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2021/01/12/advice-remaining-true-your-intent-when-revising-and-resubmitting-manuscripts>
- “Rebuttal letters: A good rebuttal speeds time to publish” from <https://peerj.com/benefits/academic-rebuttal-letters/>
- Suggested video (almost 2 hours). “Responding to Reviewers and Writing Response Letters” by Professor Davide Ravasi (UCL)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lOsW-EnQqbl>