

Considerate Reviewing

Don't be unreasonable in your expectations

If you recommend rejection, it will be for big reasons, not little reasons. Be sure not mix reasons for rejection with picky details for possible improvement.

Try to also comment on positive points, even when the paper is bad.

Always be polite and not over-critical.

Remember the material is a manuscript, and should be viewed as what it could be just as much as what it is (assuming opportunity for revision)

The information is given to you in trust, so don't abuse that trust.

Reviewing and Your Reputation

Reviewing takes time. Is it worth it?

- You see things earlier
- You become better tuned to your peer community
- You can influence the field
- Possible editorship or involvement in planning boards

You will establish a reputation (for good or bad) through your reviewing

- Conscientious? Reliable?
- Nasty or nice?

Writing a Thesis

What's the big deal?

- Its long: Psychological factors
- Its long: Document management issues
- Its long: Project management issues
- Its unstructured: Decisions must be made

Structure

- Introduction: Lay out the problem
- Literature Review: How do you fit in?
- Content Sections
- Analysis (if appropriate)
- Conclusions and Future Work
- Reference List

Begin earlier rather than later

- Might do initial literature review while gearing up for doing work
- If the work naturally falls into project parts, can write parts as they are completed
- Ideally, you will already have submitted papers for publication well before completing the thesis. Depends on the scope of the work.

Thesis Defense

In our department, its primarily a presentation of the thesis work.

- Like a (long) talk at a (small) conference
- But there are likely to be lots of questions

Purposes

- Make sure you did it
- Make sure you understand what you did
- Make sure you understand the significance/context of what you did
- Probe your general understanding of the field of the thesis
- Make sure the committee understands what you did
- Test your ability to present

Mechanics

Generally about 2 hours long (shorter for MS, longer for PhD)

Presentation is typically preceded by a private discussion among the committee on student's record, groundrules, and problems

Presentation section is officially open, though it might or might not have been advertised

Private discussion among committee follows presentation, during which a decision is (usually) reached

Last step is communicating the decision to the student, including any requirements for modification to the thesis