

Appealing Journal of Applied Psychology Editorial Decisions

In rare cases, decisions made by the Action Editor can be appealed, which includes decisions made at various stages of the manuscript's progress (e.g., desk rejection, rejection after initial review, rejection after a revision). If authors wish to appeal a decision, they must write an appeal letter to the originally assigned Action Editor, copying the Editor (leby@uga.edu) and editorial office (japplied@msu.edu). The letter should detail in full the reason for the appeal, and be written in the same collegial tone as one would submit a cover letter on an initial submission or a response letter during the revision process.

The Action Editor can decide to (1) reject the appeal; (2) grant the appeal, initiating a rebuttal and a continuation of the peer review process; or (3) decide that the manuscript can be submitted as a new submission because it is substantively different from the previously rejected paper (see "Submitting Previously Rejected Manuscripts" below for more information).

Except in rare situations, appeal decisions are made by the originally assigned Action Editor. In the event that the appeal is rejected, authors can appeal to the Editor, who will then render one of the decisions noted above. In the event this appeal is rejected by the Editor and the authors have evidence that the review process and/or decision process did not follow the standard editorial policies and procedures set forth by the American Psychological Association (APA), a final appeal can be made to APA. Regardless of the outcome, a history is kept by the editorial team documenting each appeal made, with all manuscript authors listed.

Appeals require a great deal of additional time and effort by all parties involved and should be used sparingly and only be undertaken in very specific circumstances. Although appeal decisions are made on a case-by-case basis, successful appeals typically involve one of the following reasons:

1. *Misinterpretation/misunderstanding of the methods and/or analytic decisions in the paper.* This can involve evidence that the editorial team—including the Action Editor and/or the reviewers—did not understand a methodological or analytic procedure that was used, and clarifying this misunderstanding would change their evaluation.
2. *Ability to successfully address all concerns raised in the editorial review.* Although a rare event, sometimes the author(s) may be able to address all issues raised by the reviewers and Action Editor through the addition of materials not included in the initial submission and/or collection of new data. An important consideration here is that the appealed manuscript not deviate substantially, either theoretically or empirically, from the original submission (if it does, the author(s) may seek permission to resubmit the manuscript as a new submission to the journal). Additional exploratory analyses, supplementary analyses, and robustness checks are acceptable as long as these analyses are clearly indicated as such.
3. *Concerns over editorial team bias.* This can involve incontrovertible evidence that a member of the editorial team (i.e., Action Editor, reviewer) was biased against the topic of the manuscript (e.g., providing comments signaling they are blatantly opposed to a

topic, the population of interest being studied, or do not believe in the existence of a phenomenon). It can also involve evidence of a clear conflict of interest on the part of the Action Editor (see section 1.20 in the 7th edition of the APA Publication Manual). As a critical caveat, differences of scientific or political opinion on the part of reviewers and Action Editors do not necessarily constitute a conflict of interest (again, see section 1.20).

4. *Procedural error in how the decision process unfolded.* As a publication of APA, we adhere to the editorial publication guidelines outlined in the APA manual (see section 12.5-12.8 in the 7th edition of the APA Publication Manual). If there are deviations from these guidelines (e.g., masked review), it may be grounds for an appeal.

Further, appeals made for the following reasons tend to be unsuccessful:

1. The authors disagree with the editorial team's (i.e., Action Editor, reviewer) assessment of the magnitude of the theoretical contribution being made by the manuscript (unless this assessment of contribution is tied to one of the issues stated above).
2. The authors appeal solely on their basis of having a history of publishing in the journal on the topic, or other concerns that are reputation-based or based on seniority in the field.
3. The authors identify other published papers in the journal that have a similar topic, sample, method, and so forth to those that were used in the rejected manuscript.
4. The authors believe that they have the ability to address all comments, but in doing so the manuscript would result in a completely different paper (e.g., new theory, hypotheses, and data). Instead, this requires the author(s) contacting the Action Editor not to appeal the original decision, but to ask to resubmit the manuscript as a new submission to the journal.

Submitting Previously Rejected Manuscripts

When an Action Editor renders a rejection decision at any stage in the editorial process (i.e., desk reject, reject after review, reject after revision), the author is informed that the manuscript should not be resubmitted to the journal. In rare situations, an author may request that a previously rejected manuscript be considered as a new submission. In this situation, the originally assigned Action Editor will determine if the proposed new submission is substantively different from the previously rejected manuscript. A determination to allow a new submission of a previously rejected manuscript typically requires entirely different theoretical framing, new hypotheses, and the collection of new data. If the Action Editor allows the author to submit as a new manuscript, it will be assigned to a different Action Editor and new reviewers.

Questions regarding the appeal process should be sent to the Editor (leby@uga.edu) and editorial office (japplied@msu.edu).