

JASA/TAS Book Review Process for AEs

1 Overview

Thank you for agreeing to serve as an Associate Review Editor for the Journal of the American Statistical Association (JASA) and The American Statistician (TAS). The JASA/TAS reviews editorial board is responsible for the Reviews Section of JASA and the book reviews in TAS. The Reviews Section of JASA has three separate products: review papers, full book reviews, and telegraphic book reviews.

Review Papers. You may be asked to serve as the Associate Editor for a reviews paper. This involves evaluating the paper and if necessary soliciting external referees. Papers submitted to the JASA Reviews Section are managed using the Scholar One online system. I also encourage you to suggest topics and/or authors for review papers, and to keep an eye out for book reviews that could potentially generate a JASA review paper.

Book Reviews. The document is concerned with the procedure for handling book reviews. About six times a year, a list of books that are up for review in either JASA or TAS will be posted on JASA/TAS Book Reviews Online System. You will be asked to register your preferences for books that you would like to handle, either through soliciting a review or through reviewing the book yourself. Taking your requests into consideration, I will assign books to the several AEs. Books assigned to you will be mailed to you by Jamie Hutchens, our Editorial Coordinator.

Once you receive your book(s), you should decide whether they should be reviewed, and if so, what type of review is appropriate (a full review or a telegraphic review). I will have made a preliminary determination about both the journal and the length of review that I will share with you. Telegraphic reviews are short one- or two-paragraph reviews, and are often appropriate for proceedings volumes, second and later editions, etc. Telegraphic Reviews are almost always written by AEs. If a full review is necessary, you should contact an appropriate reviewer, and after s/he agrees to write a review, send the book to the reviewer, issue encouragements and reminders as needed, receive the review, suggest changes and/or edit it, and submit it upon completion. Of course, you also have the option of reviewing the book yourself. The reviewer gets to keep the book. If you decide a book should not be reviewed, you may keep it or give it away. When publishers send a second copy of the book, it will be sent to the AE once the review is submitted.

Once every few months, a list of books that will not be reviewed will be posted on the online system. You are welcome to request any of these books, either for yourself or for a colleague. (In fairness to the other AEs, however, please let me know if the books that you request are for you or for your colleagues.)

I want to emphasize the importance of taking responsibility for the books that you are sent. It is unfair to an author when a book sits on an AE's desk for months. I am sympathetic to variations in work load, so please do tell me if you are particularly overwhelmed at any given time. And if you find that your schedule consistently prevents you from performing this service, please discuss your situation with me.

2 Detailed Guidelines for Book Reviews

1. When you receive a book skim it and decide which of the following is appropriate:

- (a) No Review. In this case, keep the book or pass it on.
- (b) A Telegraphic Review. This is a very short review; see a recent issue of JASA for examples. Because of their length, telegraphic reviews are usually very easy to write, and are almost always written by the AE.
- (c) A Regular (Full) Review. Using the L^AT_EX Review Template, full reviews are categorized by length: short (1–2 pages), medium (3–4 pages), and long (5–6 pages).

The reviews section does have a page limit, so very few books receive long reviews. New editions of previously published books typically receive only telegraphic reviews.

2. Check the Editor’s recommendation for the publication venue: JASA or TAS. If you disagree, please let me know! Generally TAS is appropriate for undergraduate text books, core graduate text books, how-to books on computing, books on basic statistical methods for researchers in other disciplines, and popular science books. Reviews of more technical books, research monographs, and advanced graduate text books belong in JASA.
3. When soliciting a full review, you should:

- (a) Identify an appropriate reviewer. For inspiration, you may consult the book’s bibliography or search the Current Index to Statistics, Google Scholar, JSTOR, etc.

You have substantial leeway in soliciting reviewers. If you match the reviewer and book’s subject too closely, conflicts over minor issues often arise. The reverse scenario can yield an uninformative review.

Be aware of potential conflicts of interest (e.g., an undergraduate textbook in time-series analysis should not be reviewed by an author of such a text if it is still in print and being used).

- (b) Send an e-mail or call your potential reviewer. Remind the person that while reviews do not “count” the same as research articles, they are read and are a valuable service to the profession, and, the reviewer gets to keep the book! Occasionally the reviewer will ask to see the book first. In this event, insist on a deadline (e.g., two weeks) so that there is time to identify an alternative reviewer if needed.
- (c) Send the book along with a letter of instructions and the “Guidelines for JASA/TAS Reviewers.” Be sure to state your suggested length in the letter to avoid any possible misunderstanding later on. Give a clear deadline (typically 6 – 8 weeks). Be realistic here. It takes time to evaluate a book, but a book review loses its value if it significantly lags the book’s publication. We do want reviewers to read books carefully; however, it is not always necessary to read every word. If the reviewer is dragging with the review, remind them that waiting a short while for an informative review is not overly problematic, whereas waiting six months for an uninformative review is.

Encourage the reviewer to submit the review to you electronically and to use the L^AT_EX Review Template. If the reviewer does not want to use L^AT_EX, the next best choice is plain ASCII text or Word.

- (d) Send an email reminder shortly before the review is due. While no one likes to be “nagged”; it is the squeaky wheel that gets the grease!
- (e) Read the review to ensure that the reviewer has followed recommended guidelines. **You have license to edit without contacting me.** If the review is superficial, crass,

poorly written, or there are parts that are unclear, contact the reviewer to correct the problem.

(f) Upload the review to the website.

(g) Send the reviewer a thank-you note for their services. This is important.

3 JASA/TAS Book Reviews Online System

1. Our online system for book reviews can be found at <http://magazine.amstat.org/bookreviews/>.
2. The first time you log on, please click on the **People** icon and complete your contact information and change your password. Be sure to click **Save** at the bottom of the page.
3. You can also use the **People** icon to search for people (and contact information) by name.
4. You can use the **Books** icon to search for details of a particular book. Clicking on the **Load Reviews** button at the bottom will bring up the current information on the review and reviewer.
5. When there is a distribution list available, click on the **Distribution** icon to choose books. You will rank your selections using the radio button next to the books. Selections are saved automatically. You may select up to ten books, but don't worry, I won't assign them all to you!! Click on **details** to bring up a short description of the book.
6. Click on **Book Reviews** to search for a book and bring up information on the review. This is the same information you can reach using the **Load Reviews** button after searching for a book.
7. Under **Book Reviews**, there is a selection for **My Reviews**. It lists all of all of the books that have ever been assigned to you and the status of the reviews. Click on an item to get to the reviews information for the book.
8. At the bottom of the reviews information for a book, you can upload a review once you have received it. Click **Choose File** to select a file. Please upload both the \LaTeX and the pdf of a review. You can also upload Word and text files.
9. The **Forms** icon will pull up the same forms that are available on the login page.