Editorial Board Manual

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Introduction.

This guide is for use by the Associate Editors (AEs) in managing the peer review of manuscripts submitted to the IEEE Sensors Reviews. IEEE Sensors Reviews publishes authoritative, critical, and forward-looking review articles.

The main role of the AEs in a scholarly publication is to manage the peer review of manuscripts by members of the peer community. IEEE requires peer review of all papers and correspondence published in its journals, including ours.

Quality and timeliness of published material are our paramount goals. By selecting appropriate, well-qualified, and responsible reviewers who can identify high-quality manuscripts and efficiently manage the peer-review process, the AEs ensure the quality and value of a publication.

The Publications Office uses the Scholar One Manuscripts (S1M) electronic management system, previously known as Manuscript Central. It is a tool for online electronic submission of manuscripts, their review, and monitoring.

To comply with the guidelines established by the IEEE Technical Activities Board, special procedures have been implemented to reduce the time from submission to publication. Reading this entire Guide through is essential to gaining a sense of the process and understanding the interactions involved in discharging AE duties.

1. Aims and Scope.

The IEEE Sensors Reviews publishes reviews, tutorials and perspectives papers in all areas of the field of interest of the IEEE Sensors Council, i.e., the theory, design, simulation, fabrication, manufacturing, and application of devices for sensing and transducing physical, chemical, and biological phenomena, with emphasis on the electronics, physics and reliability aspects of sensors and integrated sensor-actuators. The Journal is built exclusively from original papers that deliver accurate and rigorous research, provide thorough and critical analysis of key topics, and offer high-impact contributions to the sensors community across a broad range of applications.

2. Work on the Editorial Board.

2.1. Membership Status.

The Journal's AEs are required to be Members of the IEEE. There is no such requirement for reviewers, however.

2.2. Appointments.

New appointments are made by the Editor-in-Chief (EiC) of the Journal. At the end of the 1-year term, the AE may be reappointed for additional terms.

2.3. Duties.

The AE is responsible for ensuring that the publication maintains the highest quality while adhering to the publication rules and procedures of both the Council and the IEEE. AEs are expected to act as active drivers of the review process rather than passive coordinators. The AE role carries scholarly responsibility for maintaining the technical rigor and reputation of IEEE Sensors Reviews. The AEs do not decline a review invitation from the EiC unless there is a justifiable reason, such as (1) having already reviewed more than 12 original submissions in the past year, (2) being temporarily overloaded, (3) a conflict of interest with authors, or (4) a complete lack of expertise in the subject. Justify your reason to the EiC by email. Delegating reviews to students or colleagues is acceptable.

2.4. Summary of the editorial process and tips.

Upon assignment, the AE must conduct an initial screening to assess, 1) Fit to the IEEE Sensors Reviews scope, 2) Whether the manuscript is a review (not a survey or literature dump), 3) Presence of critical analysis, mechanisms, comparison, and future outlook, and 4) Indicators of AI-generated or low-quality content, including i) Sequential "X et al. did Y" paragraph patterns, ii) Vague or repetitive technical descriptions, and iii) Inconsistent terminology or abrupt stylistic shifts. When suspected, AEs should flag concerns to the EiC or request supporting justification from the authors. Manuscripts that clearly fail the above criteria should be recommended for editorial rejection without full review.

The AEs must invite additional experts with known records (including the fellow AEs with relevant expertise) to review the manuscripts. A "major revision" recommendation must be justified by clearly identifiable deficiencies that are realistically addressable within one revision cycle: Manuscripts requiring fundamental restructuring should be rejected rather than revised. If essential issues remain unresolved after a major revision, the manuscript should be rejected rather than repeatedly revised. AEs are responsible for assessing the quality of reviewer reports: If reviews are poor (superficial or lacking expertise), AEs can rescind the review and replace it with additional reviews. If all reviewer invitations have been rejected and the AE cannot secure reviewers, 1) assign yourself as a reviewer, 2) invite other AEs with relevant expertise, and 3) contact the authors to provide reviewer suggestions outside the authors' institution, country, and origin.

2.5. Responsibilities

2.5.1 Identifying and Securing Reviewers.

One of the most important functions of the AE is the identification of appropriate reviewers for each manuscript and securing from each an agreement to conduct the review in the allotted time. This is central to the peer-review process; it triggers activities in the Publications Office that set the peer-review flow for a manuscript in motion. It is extremely important that the reviewers

(a) agree to reviewing a requested article within 3 days of invitation by the AE. (b) understand that the time frame set forth for review is 10 days from their receipt of the manuscript, upon

agreement,
(c) agree to this schedule or suggest a modification acceptable to the AE, and
(d) keep their S1M user record up to date with complete, accurate contact information (mail address, phone number, fax number, and e-mail address).

Reviewers are identified via such means as peer contact, professional lists maintained by societies and other organizations, references listed at the end of the manuscript, AE's own contacts, various web-based searches, etc. Our S1M website has an extensive database of potential reviewers that can be searched by EDICS specialization codes. Our authors are required to suggest up to 2 reviewers when submitting their manuscripts. Some of these may prove useful; however, caution is warranted to avoid conflicts of interest, as authors sometimes list friends or colleagues who may be too close to the reported work to be objective and unbiased.

A more experienced senior reviewer can be balanced by eager junior reviewers. Good reviewers are like diamonds — they may be sturdy, but one must be careful not to overload them.

2.5.2 Number of Reviewers.

Manuscripts will normally receive two or three peer reviews in addition to the AE's assessment. We typically invite at least five reviewers, expecting at least two to submit their reviews on time. IEEE policy requires at least 2 peer reviews, one of which can be the AE under circumstances described in section 2.5.4.

2.5.3 Communicating with Reviewers.

Sometimes reviewers need help. S1M access problems or questions should be directed to the Publications Office (msmith@conferencecatalysts.com) for troubleshooting and resolution. When problems arise regarding the technical aspects of the review process, the first point of contact is the AE. The AE must be available for such communication, likely via email or phone, and responsive to such requests.

2.5.4 Protocol for Unresponsive Reviewers.

In cases where an assigned manuscript experiences excessive delays due to unresponsive reviewers, an editor may, as a last resort, act as a reviewer by assigning the manuscript to themselves in the S1M system and providing a detailed review. This step may be taken after a minimum of 30 days have passed without receiving the required reviews, despite follow-up efforts, and only if at least one qualified external reviewer has already submitted a review.

To maintain ethical standards and safeguard the integrity of the peer review process, the AEs conducting the review must meet the following conditions: (1) there is **no conflict of interest** with the manuscript or its authors, (2) the manuscript is **not authored or co-authored by the editor**, and (3) the editor **does not hold final decision-making authority** over the manuscript.

2.5.5 Communicating with Authors.

We request that the AEs reply to authors directly through the S1M system. This creates a communications record in the online database that helps track review progress, diagnose problems, address author inquiries and deal with the occasional author who protests a decision. Once the AE determines the manuscript's disposition based on the reviewers' comments and their own assessment, the decision is conveyed to the author via S1M.

2.5.6 Communicating with the Publications Office.

Communication between the AE and the EiC is extremely important. Normally, this is done via e-mail automatically through the S1M system. In correspondence with an author outside S1M, it must be copied to the EiC to help build a complete file. However, we encourage all communications to go through S1M. For example, if an author sends you a question by email about her/his manuscript, log into S1M and click the author's name to generate a message back with your answer. Cut and paste the author's original message at the end of the reply generated by S1M. The reply is archived in the S1M database, giving you, the EiC, a complete record of all correspondence on this specific manuscript. Authors frequently send routine status inquiries to the EiC. If all your correspondence is documented in the S1M database, the EiC can reply directly without forwarding such requests to you or to the Publications Office.

2.5.6 "Blind" Reviews.

Reviews of manuscripts submitted to the Journal are "blind" reviews — the identity of the reviewers is never revealed to the author or others. In the Reviewers' assessment form, there are two clearly marked kinds of boxes for free comments – one is to be forwarded to the Authors with the aim to improve the manuscript, and the other is confidential to the AE and therefore may contain information revealing the identity of the Reviewer. The AE must ensure that reviewers' identities are kept confidential at all times.

2.6 Workload.

An AE will be assigned tasks based on the submission flow, so each AE may not receive the average number of assignments. Variations will depend on the balance between EDICS categories. Any difficulties with workload (e.g., periods of absence, employment-related or personal circumstances) that might affect the peer review schedule should be reported *immediately* to the Publications Office. If an AE fails to assign reviewers promptly, the EiC may transfer that manuscript to another AE to avoid unwarranted publication delay.

3. Publication of Original Material.

The Sensors Reviews publishes original material. The corresponding author submitting material to the Council's publications is required to complete a Copyright Form confirming the originality of the manuscript and the fact that it has not been submitted for consideration elsewhere.

Copyright of material appearing in an IEEE publication is granted for the purposes of

- enhancing the accessibility, distribution, and use of information
- enabling the IEEE to control the use of its name
- serving and protecting the interests of its authors and their employers.

Copyright policies are consistently applied throughout the IEEE for all publications bearing the IEEE name and identity.

Copyright is held by the IEEE, not by any of its entities. In return for the transfer of authors' rights, the IEEE grants authors and their employers' permission to make copies and otherwise reuse the material under terms established by the IEEE.

To ensure that the IEEE and the Council's rules regarding the submission of original material are

followed, the Council has developed sanctions to discourage the fraudulent submission of material that is already under copyright protection and has already been submitted elsewhere (See the section on "Sanctions"). The IEEE may choose to impose additional sanctions on the author(s) for double submission of manuscripts.

4. Publication of Timely Material.

At the time of publication of a manuscript, two dates are listed along with the manuscript: 1) the formal date of submission of the manuscript (the date the manuscript is received by S1M); and 2) the date of our e-mail to the AE finally approving the manuscript for publication (the Accept status date). These two dates are used to calculate a metric for the Journal's successful operation.

5. Peer Review Process and Schedule.

5.1. Manuscript Submission.

Information for Authors is posted at information-for-authors.

5.1.1 New Submissions.

All new manuscripts and their revisions are submitted electronically, via S1M.

The manuscript should include an abstract stating the scope of the paper and summarizing the author's conclusions so that the abstract itself, together with an informative title, may be useful in information retrieval. In addition, sensor letters require the submission of a graphical abstract. More information can be found at information-for-authors.

5.1.2 Manuscript Tracking.

Upon receipt by S1M, the manuscript is issued a Manuscript Tracking Number and other pertinent information necessary to track the manuscript through the peer-review process. This number should always be in the subject line of email messages regarding a specific manuscript.

5.1.3 Manuscript Length and Format

The required manuscript submission format for IEEE Sensors Reviews complies with the general IEEE rules as outlined in the published Information for Authors (see 6.1). There are four manuscript types, as detailed below.

Perspective Paper (3-5 pages)

A perspective paper presents new ideas, emerging trends, or a unique viewpoint on a specific research topic. It provides insights, challenges existing approaches, and suggests future directions without extensive experimental validation.

Tutorial Paper (no page limit)

A tutorial paper provides an in-depth explanation of a technical concept, method, or technology. It is structured to educate readers, including beginners, with clear explanations, examples, and possible applications. It should be well-organized and accessible to a broad audience.

Mini-Review Paper (5-8 pages)

A mini-review provides a concise overview of recent developments in a specific research area. It focuses on summarizing key findings, trends, and challenges without the extensive depth of a full review paper. Mini-reviews should be well-structured and highlight the most relevant studies within a limited timeframe.

Review Paper (no page limit)

A review paper summarizes and critically analyzes existing research on a specific topic. It should highlight key advancements, compare methodologies, and identify knowledge gaps. A strong review paper provides a clear synthesis of the literature and suggests future research directions.

5.2. Peer Review Schedule.

After the manuscript has been received in S1M and qualified by the EiC's technical checks as a valid submission, an AE is selected to match its technical area, as indicated by the EDICS. The AE assumes responsibility for further managing the peer review. To maintain the efficiency of the peer review process, the EiC and/or AEs may implement "immediate rejects" without involving Reviewers, based on content and presentation that are unsuitable for the Journal. The AE can suggest such a course of action for an already-assigned manuscript before appointing Reviewers by contacting the EiC.

The IEEE Sensors Reviews will follow the following standard schedules, and every effort will be made to keep all peer-review parties to this schedule.

Editor Assignment.

Step A: within 1 day:

The manuscript is assigned a number and undergoes technical checks. The selection of AE is made according to EDICS, and the EiC assigns it to a suitable AE based on the expertise grid and workload distribution. The EiC will strive for a uniform distribution of load among AEs.

Reviewers appointment.

Step B: (Invitations up to 3 days; Acceptance to review up to 4 days):

The AE reviews the manuscript and invites at least five reviewers. This step requires the AE to contact the reviewers using S1M, where the process of attaching relevant material to the emails, etc., is automated. The invited Reviewer is asked to agree to complete the review within 10 days. If, by accident, the Reviewer replies to the AE outside S1M, the AE must manually register the Reviewer's agreement in the system; this gives "agreed" Reviewers permission to access the manuscript.

Delivery of Reviews.

Step C: Return of reviews up to 10 days:

Reviewers access the manuscript files and report their evaluations through S1M. Each reviewer completes the review and fills the Reviewers' form online. Three days prior to the expiry of the 10-day period, S1M will begin sending automated reminders to the reviewer, with a copy to the AE, setting a new deadline for the review to be returned. The maximum extension allowed will not exceed 2 weeks for the entire review period allowed to a reviewer. If a reviewer is considered to have stopped responding, the AE must review the paper and provide a second review. Thus, inviting more than 5 reviewers may increase the AE's likelihood of obtaining two independent

reviews in a timely manner.

Editorial Decision.

Step D: Decision within 3 working days:

The AE should monitor the reviewers' progress and help keep them on schedule. Once the required number of completed reviews has been received, the AE makes a manuscript decision based on their own review and the Reviewers' reports. Reminders are sent to the AE in cases of delays for more than three days, with copies to the EiC.

The decision is the AE's responsibility, and it does not need to be the "average" of the Reviewers' recommendations. The decision should account for the expertise of the individual reviewers, their professional experience and other relevant factors. For a particular decision, it can be entered in S1M as an accompanying note. This should be helpful in case of an appeal by the Author.

The AE's decision is communicated to the author through S1M and includes the reviewer's comments. Any information about the reviewers' identities is automatically redacted. The types of decisions available to the AE are as follows:

Acceptance.

In this decision category, the Author(s) are informed that their manuscript is accepted for publication, with two options:

Publish Unaltered (sometimes referred to as A)

- Accept the paper as is, with no changes.

Publish in Minor, Required Changes (also referred to as AQ)

- Accept the paper with minor required changes that the AE can usually adjudicate directly. This requires a clear list of required changes to be passed to the Author. The resubmitted AQ manuscript should be evaluated by the AE with no further peer review process. However, when the authors' compliance with the recommendations is in question, the manuscript may be either rejected or accepted based on the authors' arguments. In all cases, the manuscript will have to be adjudicated by the AE at this stage.

AQ is a conditional acceptance, and manuscripts can be rejected after an AQ decision only for non-compliance with the mandatory changes.

Rejection.

In this decision category, the Author(s) are informed that the submitted manuscript will not be published in the IEEE Sensors Reviews, with two options:

Reject and Resubmit (also known as R1: Reject and Resubmit)

- The paper is not acceptable in its current form, but it has merit. A major rewrite is required. The Author should be encouraged to resubmit a rewritten version after the changes

suggested in the Comments section have been completed. However, the authors will have to resubmit the rewritten manuscript as a new submission. This allows the reviewing clock to be reset and the process to begin anew. During the revision of the manuscript for submission, the authors must reference the original manuscript and clearly outline the changes made in response to the comments. The EiC will endeavor to assign it to the same AE who, if appropriate, may use the same reviewers as before. This is possible only if the Reviewers have not stated explicitly that they do not wish to review the paper again.
It is essential to avoid over-reviewing manuscripts, however, without compromising quality. The AE may work on the premise that quality Reviewers who have reported that the paper is ready to be published should not be asked to review again if the changes in the manuscript are unlikely to alter their view; in such cases, new reviews can be requested only from the rejecting Reviewers. If a new Reviewer needs to be brought in, it is appropriate that they be made aware of the case's history and the existing discussion, including what issues were identified. This may prevent the introduction of entirely new views (which could contradict those already addressed), thereby avoiding frustration among the Authors and often resulting in solid grievance cases.

Reject, do not resubmit (also known as R2: Paper is seriously flawed)

- The paper is seriously flawed and is not acceptable to Sensors Reviews.

The EiC will exercise discretion in associating newly submitted manuscripts with previously rejected ones. Often, this is in the Authors' interest, and such information will be provided by them. However, repeated re-submission of the same work may become ultimately inefficient and the AE should use additional judgment after a second resubmission (usually indicated by the manuscript's label ending in *.R2).