

Guidelines for Associate Editors

As Associate Editor (AE), you are responsible for reading the submission, assigning reviewers, evaluating the reviews, and ultimately making a recommendation for the acceptance or rejection of the paper. The details of these processes are described below.

Quality and efficiency in reviewing is essential to the success of TOIT. To publish papers in a timely fashion we ask you to respond to all requests to assign reviewers and make recommendations as quickly as possible. Our standard invitation letter to reviewers asks them to return their reviews within **six (6) weeks**.

Desk (or Bench) Reject Policy

ACM permits both desk (or bench) rejects and "assisted" desk rejects. Assisted desk rejects are rejections based on the judgment of the EiC or an AE that a paper is either out of scope or so far from acceptable as to make external reviews unnecessary. Assisted desk rejects may involve obtaining one outside review to corroborate an AE's judgment.

Articles may be desk-rejected for the following reasons:

- Topic is clearly out of scope, irrelevant, or outdated.
- The work clearly does not meet sufficient standards of novelty or quality of presentation.
- There is plagiarism, self-plagiarism, or simultaneous submission.
- The manuscript is incomplete, over the page limit, or incorrectly formatted.

All refereed articles submitted to TOIT for consideration of publication need to have three qualified reviews. A recommendation with fewer than three reviews is only acceptable for clear reject cases, but not sufficient for articles that are recommended for acceptance. In all cases, the final decision is within the discretion of the Editor-in-Chief.

Authors have the right to appeal such decisions.

Plagiarism Checking

When you view a paper, you will see a tab titled 'Manuscript Details.' Click on the tab to find more information on the paper. Scroll down to 'Plagiarism Check – iThenticate' to find the results of similarity check to see whether the paper has a large overlap with any published work. By ACM policy, conference papers must have sufficiently new material and original contributions, see <http://www.acm.org/publications/policies/simultaneous-submissions>. If you find the paper has too much similarity with an existing published work, contact the Editor-in-Chief for discussion.

Review Procedures

An AE is responsible for finding at least three (3) appropriate reviewers with the necessary knowledge and experience for a manuscript, and for supervising the review process until a decision is reached. Reviewers should be expert on the topic and have the appropriate seniority to assess the paper: notably, AEs should refrain from inviting Ph.D. students or junior postdocs as reviewers. PhD students and junior postdocs, however, can serve as external co-reviewer under the management of a qualified senior reviewer. The senior reviewer should take the full responsibility. TOIT will acknowledge all reviewers and co-reviewers annually.

There are three steps for an AE to the invitation process:

- Select
- Assign
- Invite

Assigning reviewers:

1. Log in to Manuscript Central.
2. Via the Associate Editor Dashboard, click on the “Awaiting Referee Selection” queue.
3. Click on “View Submission” to view the paper.
4. Click on “Take Action.”
5. Scroll down to see the results returned from **Referee Locator*** or to search for an existing reviewer in the system or to create a new reviewer account. **NOTE:** Before creating a new account for a reviewer, use the reviewer search option to see if there is an account already in the system. This will allow you to choose an existing Manuscript Central account. Please also check whether the email address of the reviewer is still valid.
6. Click on “Add/Grant REF Role” to assign the selected reviewer.
7. Click on the “Invite” button to view the draft invitation letter, then send it out.

A reviewer should be able to accept or decline the task automatically. However, in some cases, a separate step must be taken to mark the reviewer as agreed or otherwise, in the system. - When an invited reviewer does not respond within a maximum of 2 weeks, it is the responsibility of the AE to invite a new reviewer.

To make an immediate decision, such as in the case of a desk reject, change the value of the "reviews required to make decision" box from the default value of 3 to 2, 1, or even zero (for instance, in case of minor corrections to be verified by you only). In either case, the responsible AE should provide an elaboration on the recommendation in the message to EIC and also in the comments to the authors.

**Referee Locator:*

When a paper is submitted, the Manuscript Central Referee Locator tool automatically finds a pool of potential reviewers using an algorithm that looks at the article title, abstracts, keywords, and other metadata contained in the submission. It then compares that information with published papers in the Web of Science from the last five years.

A pool of potential reviewers is then auto-suggested. A list of up to 30 reviewers is provided in order of relevancy, providing e-mail addresses as well as links into the Web of Science to view information about their published papers. This feature is not intended to replace your AE experience, knowledge, or judgment in selecting reviewers. However, it is one additional tool you will have access to in your search for reviewers.

Review Supervision:

The system automatically sends out reminder emails to the referees. However, automated reminders are easy to ignore, so you, as AE, should check your Associate Editor Center every few weeks at least, to maintain a reasonable turn-around time for the reviews.

Review Deadline:

To grant an extension to a reviewer:

1. Go to the Associate Editor Dashboard.
2. Search for the paper (via Manuscript ID or via Manuscript Title).
3. Click on "Take Action."
4. Click on “Grant an extension” underneath the referee’s name.
5. Set the new due date.

You may also ask the journal admin to grant such extensions.

Making a preliminary decision:

For each review you will receive an e-mail notification; when all the reviews are completed, you may make your preliminary recommendation that will be sent to the Editors-in-Chief for approval (this decision should take into consideration your own opinion of the paper, as well as the general consensus of the referees).

1. Find a paper in the AE Dashboard, “Awaiting AE Recommendation” queue.
2. Select the paper, then click on “Take Action.”
3. Select a recommendation, then write in your comments to the EiC and Author.
4. Click on “Save as Draft” or “Submit.”

For most journals, there are four decision options:

- **Accept** a paper when a submission is excellent, and there are no suggestions for improvement.
- Choose **Minor Revision** when you feel the paper should be accepted after slight revisions. In general, a paper is recommended for minor revision when all reviews are either accept or minor revision. If AE would like to recommend for a minor revision when a manuscript still has a major revision review, AE needs to elaborate on the recommendation and discuss this with EIC.
- Choose **Major Revision** if a paper has real potential, but a large component should be redone and re-reviewed. In general, if AE recommends a revised manuscript for another major revision, AE should elaborate this recommendation in the message to EIC or discuss this with EIC directly.
- Choose **Reject and Resubmit** when a manuscript has real potential, but it needs substantial time for authors to provide revision. For example, when a revised manuscript received another major revision, and AE agrees with the reviews that additional major revision is required.
- **Reject** a paper when the submission does not meet publication standards.

Handling a revised paper:

When a revision is submitted, it should be automatically reassigned to you as AE.

- For a resubmission of a paper with **minor revisions**, check that the authors have completed the necessary corrections and send out for re-review or make your decision as described above.
- For a resubmission with **major revisions**, the original reviewers will be automatically selected.
However, you must take action to invite some or all of them to review the revised paper.

Accessing Previous Versions of a Revision:

You have access to all versions of a manuscript. Revisions are indicated by a revision number appended to the manuscript ID (e.g., R1 or R2). **To view decision-related correspondence regarding a previous version, scroll down to “Version History” and click on the “Switch Details” button.**

Revised and resubmitted files will also include a link to the Author’s response on the header.

When you are on a task-related tab, such as “Invite Reviewers,” the version history will appear on the right side of the screen. Clicking on the “View Review Details” for the previous version will give you the Author’s Response, Decision Letter, and Reviews.

TOIT AE term of service:

AE is invited by EIC and usually with a term of two years and renewable automatically. However, AE may terminate his/her volunteer service at the end of each term due to other commitments which prevent your ability to handling the average AE workload. AE needs to complete all submissions that you have handled prior to the termination date of your AE service.

For further instructions:

Refer to the [ScholarOne tutorial for editors](#) or contact the ACM Journals Manager at lander@hq.acm.org.