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Introduction.

This guide is for use by the Guest Editors (GE) in managing the peer review of manuscripts submitted to the IEEE Journal of Selected Areas in Sensors (JSAS).

The main role of the Guest Editor in a scholarly publication is the management of the peer review of manuscripts by members of the peer community. IEEE requires peer review of all papers and correspondence that appear in IEEE journals such as ours.

Quality and timeliness of published material are our paramount goal. This is achieved through the excellent contributions of our reviewers. By assuring selection of appropriate, well-qualified and responsible reviewers who can identify quality manuscripts, and by efficiently managing the peer-review process, the Guest Editors assures the quality and value of a publication. To help speed up the review process and to let the Journal's Editor-in-Chief, Associate Editor-in-Chief and Guest Editors concentrate on the professional side of their duties, much of the related work in managing the manuscript flow is handled by our Publications Office:

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The Publications Office uses the Scholar One Manuscripts (S1M) electronic management system, previously called Manuscript Central. It is a tool for online electronic submission of manuscripts, their review, and monitoring (see <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/jsas>).

Left to the Guest Editors are the communications with reviewers, with authors, and with the Publications Office. In keeping up with the guidelines established by the IEEE Technical Activities Board (the body that facilitates activities of all IEEE Technical Societies), special procedures have been devised to reduce the submission-to-publication time window. The current procedures in use by the Guest Editors have been approved by the Council's Publications Board. Reading this entire Guide through is essential to get a sense of the process and to understand the interactions involved in discharging Guest Editor's duties.

1. Background.

1.1. Publication Mission.

Publications play a major role in implementing the purpose of the IEEE as defined in its constitution and in its vision and mission. Throughout the world IEEE publications serve to advance the theory and practice of electrical and electronic engineering and allied arts and sciences; to enhance the professional standing of the IEEE members; and to promote the constructive use of technology for the public welfare. As part of IEEE, the IEEE Sensors Council is responsible for carrying out this mission. This is done in part through the Council's

IEEE JSAS, whose goal is to publish original high quality manuscripts pertaining to the Council's Field of Interest.

1.2. IEEE JSAS Field of Interest.

The Journal's Field of Interest is 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 papers on selected topics of current interest to the Sensors community.

1.3. Publications of the IEEE Sensors Council.

The IEEE Sensors Council fully sponsors the publication of the IEEE Sensors Journal (started in June 2000) and IEEE Sensors Letters (started in January 2017), and IEEE JSAS (started in November 2023). Other publications the Council (co)sponsors are listed on the [Council's website](#). Details of the IEEE JSAS manuscript submission process and requirements appear in Information for Authors on the [Journal's website](#).

1.4. IEEE Sensors Journal Editorial Board Structure.

The Editorial Board of IEEE JSAS consists of an Advisory Board including the Editor-in-Chief (EiC), Associate EiC (AEiC) and several Senior Editors. The overall organization of the journal editorial board is shown in the figure below.



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2. Amendments to This Guide.

Amendments to this Guide will be made by action of the IEEE Sensors Council Publications Board, the Council's AdCom, the IEEE Publications Board, and/or IEEE Board of Directors. The most recent version of the Guide will be posted on the Journal website.

Amendments to the procedure may be recommended to the Council's Publications Board or to the Journal's Editor-in-Chief.

3. Work on the Editorial Board.

3.1. Membership Status.

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

3.2. Appointments.

New appointments are made by the Editor-in-Chief (EIC) of the Journal. At the end of the term, the Guest Editor continues on an informal basis until all manuscripts assigned to him/her have been peer-reviewed and final dispositions made.

3.3. Duties.

As a member of the Journal's Editorial Board, the Guest Editor contributes to the advancement of the Journal and 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.

3.4. Responsibilities.

3.4.1. Identifying and Securing Reviewers.

One of the most important functions of the Guest Editors 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 of 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 Guest Editors.
- (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 Guest Editors, and

(d) keep their S1M user record current with full, accurate contact information (mail address, phone 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, Guest Editors'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 two reviewers when they submit their manuscripts. Some of these may prove useful; however, caution should be used 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.

Reviewers should be selected across a range of abilities. 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. It is extremely important that the schedule for conducting the review be met. One way to ensure this, and for reviewers to not feel overwhelmed, is to request one, and certainly no more than two, reviews at a time from a single individual.

3.4.2. Numbers of Reviewers.

Manuscripts submitted to JSAS will normally receive two or three peer reviews in addition to the assessment by the Guest Editors. It is our common practice to appoint four or five reviewers, in the hope that at least two reviews will be submitted on time. IEEE policy requires that no fewer than two peer reviews be conducted.

3.4.3. Communicating with Reviewers.

Sometimes reviewers need help. S1M access problems or questions should be directed to the Publications Office for troubleshooting and resolution. When problems arise concerning the technical aspects review process, the first line of communication is the Guest Editor. The Guest Editor must be available for such communication, probably by email or phone, and be responsive to such requests.

3.4.4 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 within the S1M system and providing a detailed review of the manuscript. This step may only be taken after a minimum of 60 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 editor 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 (e.g., is not the Editor-in-Chief or acting in that capacity for the

submission in question). Editors are encouraged to document the rationale for this action within the system to maintain transparency.

3.4.5. Communicating with Authors.

The Guest Editors will likely communicate with the author(s), more than once if needed, as the status of the manuscript changes during the peer review process. The Guest Editors will help the authors clarify the instructions from reviewers and/or recommended changes in the manuscript. We request that the Guest Editor replies 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 Guest Editor determines the disposition of the manuscript

based on the reviewer comments and own assessment of the manuscript, the decision is conveyed to the author using S1M.

3.4.6. Communicating with the Publications Office.

Communication between the Guest Editors and the Publications Office is extremely important. Normally this is done via email automatically through the S1M system. In case of a correspondence with an author occurring outside S1M, this correspondence must be copied to the Publications Office, to assist in building 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 Publications Office, and the EiC, AEiC a complete record of all correspondence on this specific manuscript. You will find this extremely helpful as you manage various papers assigned to you over your current appointment. Authors frequently send routine status inquiries to the EiC/AEiC. If all your correspondence is documented in the S1M database, the EiC/AEiC can reply directly without forwarding such requests to you or to the Publications Office.

The S1M system is web-browser based and access is available worldwide. Guest Editors can thus attend to their duties while traveling and on temporary assignments away from their home base. If a GE is contemplating being away from "home base" without Internet access for one week or more, it is extremely important that the Publications Office be notified of this and provided with at least one means of emergency contact (*e-mail or phone*).

If a situation is urgent and requires an immediate response, please mark your email URGENT REQUEST in the Subject line. The Office receives hundreds of inquiries every day, and this will help to prompt a quick response.

3.4.7. "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 Reviewer's 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 Guest Editor and therefore may contain information revealing the identity of the Reviewer. The Guest Editor must assure at all times that the identities of the reviewers are kept confidential.

3.5. Workload.

Guest Editors will be assigned tasks depending on the submission flow, thus each Guest Editor 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) which might affect the peer review schedule should be reported *immediately* to the Publications Office. Temporary relief can be administered to ensure that the editorial flow is not affected. If a GE fails to assign reviewers promptly, the Publications Office in consultation with the EiC/AEiC may transfer that manuscript to another GE to avoid unwarranted publication delay. If this happens occasionally, the Publications Office will continue to assign new manuscripts to the said GE assuming that the scheduling problems have been of short-term character. If this happens multiple times, then the said GE will be asked to discuss with the EiC/AEiC adjusting his/her manuscript workload appropriately.

4. Publication of Original Material.

The JSAS 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 done for the purposes of the following:

- 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 applied consistently throughout the IEEE for all publications bearing the name and identity of IEEE.

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

The IEEE Journal of Selected Areas in Sensors runs automatic checks on all submitted manuscripts for overlap with existing publications. This is necessary in order to avoid the trap of plagiarism and/or self-plagiarism, which may result in serious consequences for the Author and Publisher. When the calculated overlap score exceeds the norm set for JSAS, the manuscript is taken into a different flow and is not assigned to a Guest Editor. The score for the manuscripts that pass this test is available to the Guest Editors via the manuscript's main page and shows details of the overlapping sources.

5. Publication of Timely Material.

JSAS subscribes to the goal to deliver with utmost care a decision on a submitted manuscript and in the shortest time possible. The following is a step-by-step description of that process.

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 GE finally approving the manuscript for publication (the Accept status date). These two dates are used for the calculation of a metric for the successful operation of the Journal.

6. Peer Review Process and Schedule.

6.1. Manuscript Submission.

Information for Authors is posted at [information-for-authors](#).

6.1.1. New Submissions.

All new manuscripts and their revisions are submitted electronically, [via the IEEE Author Portal](#).

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, JSAS requires the submission of a graphical abstract. More information can be found at [information-for-authors](#).

6.1.2. 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.

6.1.3. Manuscript Length and Format.

The required manuscript submission format IEEE JSAS complies with the general IEEE rules as per the published Information for Authors (see 6.1). There are two manuscript types, as detailed below.

Regular Papers: The Council's Publications Board has established eight pages as the appropriate length for the final published manuscript. Although some papers may not be able to reveal the findings of the authors in eight pages, it is believed that most will be able to do so. In any case, the length of the manuscript is subject to peer assessment and judgment by the Associate Editor.

If your assigned manuscript is of type "Expanded paper...", there are additional requirements on the submission format and the peer review. Please refer to the 'Guide for expanding conference papers' from the Journal's website. In this case, the Associate Editor should use additional judgment on whether the guidance for expansion has been followed.

Perspectives Article: Perspectives articles are review articles also limited to 8 pages; written mostly by invited authors or the editorial board members. These articles provide a concise overview of the field with review of the recent developments and the possible future directions in the field. These articles provide a comprehensive list of references including seminal articles in the field with the corresponding milestones.

6.2. Peer Review Schedule.

After the manuscript has been received in S1M and qualified by the Publications Office's technical checks as a valid submission, a Guest Editor is selected to match its technical area, as indicated by the EDICS. The GE assumes the responsibility for managing further the peer review. To guard the efficiency of the peer review process, the EiC, Associate EiC and/or GEs can implement "immediate rejects", without involving Reviewers, on the basis of contents and presentation unsuitable for the Journal. The Guest Editors can suggest such course of action for an already assigned manuscript, before appointing Reviewers, by contacting the most appropriate member of the Senior Editorial Team.

It is recognized that the Guest Editors often perform such duties for more than one periodical at a time. Different publications may have distinct rules for manuscript management, peer review, and scheduling. IEEE JSAS will function according to the following standard schedules, and every effort will be made to keep all parties of the peer review to this schedule.

Multi-Level Peer Review Process

Final Decisions by EiC/A-EiC



6.2.1. Lead Guest Editor Assignment.

Step A: (Within 1 day)

The manuscript is assigned a manuscript number and technical checks are implemented. The EiC/AEiC assigns a suitable LGE according to the Special Issue topic, the Editorial Board expertise grid, and workload distribution. The EiC/AEiC will strive for a uniform distribution of load among LGEs.

At this point, the manuscript is preliminarily reviewed and immediately rejected if it falls within the following criteria:

- **Immediate Reject** - The manuscript is not formatted using the JSAS manuscript template, the manuscript is too lengthy, or the manuscript does not meet other basic requirements of submission to IEEE JSAS.
- **Immediate Reject (Out of Scope)** - The manuscript does not meet the Special Issue topic criteria under which it was submitted.

6.2.2. Guest Editor appointment.

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

The Lead Guest Editor reviews the manuscript and assigns it to the Guest Editor.

6.2.3 Reviewers Appointment.

Step C: (Appointment up to 3 days)

The Guest Editor reviews the manuscript and invites three to five Reviewers. This step requires the Guest Editors 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 completing the review within 10 days. If by accident the Reviewer replies back to the Guest Editor outside S1M, the Guest Editor must register in the system manually the act of the Reviewers agreement; this gives “agreed” Reviewers permission to access the manuscript.

6.2.4. Delivery of Reviews.

Step D: (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 days period, S1M will begin sending automated reminders to the reviewer, with a copy to the Guest Editor, setting a new deadline for returning the review. 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 Guest Editor may have to review the paper and provide the second review. Thus inviting more than 3 reviewers may provide the GE with a greater probability of achieving two independent reviews in a timely fashion.

6.2.5. Editorial Decision.

Step E: (Decision up to 3 days)

The GE should monitor the reviewers’ progress and help keep them on schedule. Once the required number of completed reviews have been received, the Guest Editor makes a manuscript recommendation to the LGE based on their own review and reports from Reviewers. Reminders are sent to the GE in cases of delays for more than three days, with copies to the EiC/AEiC. The LGE then makes their recommendation. The final decision is made by the Editor-in-Chief and the Associate Editor-in-Chief.

The decision is fully owned by the EiC and the AEiC and it does not need to be the “average” of what the Reviewers recommend. The decision should account for the expertise of the individual reviewers, their professional experience and other relevant factors. In case of a decision diverging substantially from the recommendations of the Reviewers, the arguments for a particular decision can be entered in S1M as an accompanying note. This should be helpful in case of an appeal by the Author.

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

6.2.4.1. *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 which usually the Guest Editors can 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 Guest Editor with no further peer review process. However, in cases where the authors' compliance with the recommendations is in question, the manuscript can be either rejected or accepted based upon the argument provided by the authors. In all cases, the manuscript will have to be adjudicated by the GE at this stage.

AQ is conditional acceptance and manuscripts can be rejected after an AQ decision only on the basis of non-compliance with the mandatory changes.

6.2.4.2. *Rejection.*

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

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

- The paper is not acceptable in its current form, but 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 begin the process anew. During the revised manuscript submission, the authors must reference it to the original manuscript and clearly outline the changes that have been made in response to the comments on the original manuscript. The EiC/AEiC will endeavor to assign it to the same Guest Editors 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 Guest Editor may work from the premises 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 not likely to change their view; in such cases new reviews can be requested only from the rejecting Reviewers. If a new Reviewer needs to be drawn in, it is appropriate that they are made aware of the history of the case and the existing discussion – what were the identified issues? This may prevent the involvement of totally new views (sometimes potentially contradicting with those already addressed), to avoid frustration by the Authors, 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 JSAS.

The Publication Office will use discretion to associate newly submitted manuscripts with already 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 Guest Editor should use additional judgment after a second re-submission (usually indicated by the manuscript's label ending in *.R2).

As previously mentioned, the last two rejection options are as follows:

- **Immediate Reject** - The manuscript is not formatted using the JSAS manuscript template, the manuscript is too lengthy, or the manuscript does not meet other basic requirements of submission to IEEE JSAS.
- **Immediate Reject (Out of Scope)** - The manuscript does not meet the Special Issue topic criteria under which it was submitted.

7. Quality of Publication.

7.1. Main Criteria.

To be accepted, a manuscript must satisfy three important criteria: Novelty, Appropriateness, and Long-Term Impact. This can be judged from the answers to the two questions formulated in 7.1.1. to 7.1.3. below.

7.1.1. Novelty.

Does the manuscript disclose new science/engineering or contain fresh new approaches to established science/engineering?

This criterion is relaxed in the case of Perspective papers, where the emphasis is not on reporting original work. Such an article will be titled so at the top of the manuscript.

7.1.2. Appropriateness.

Is the manuscript a good “fit” for JSAS, appealing to the publication’s readership? Is the manuscript “complete,” allowing to understand the disclosure not requiring excessive supplementation by other work?

7.1.3. Long-Term Impact.

Does the manuscript advance our understanding and knowledge of sensors and contribute to their capacity to yield enduring positive outcomes, impact and/or viable solutions over an extended period of time?

7.2. Presentation.

The Journal is published in English. The manner of presentation of the author’s findings must be sufficiently literate to convey the author’s ideas in reasonable quality technical English. Manuscripts which do not meet this requirement should be referred back to the Senior Editorial Board, prior to peer review, with a brief justification for suggesting an “immediate reject”. While current trends in academic writing show a preference for “active voice” (making the author an active player, rather than a passive observer, in the text), such considerations won’t play a role in selection of a manuscript for publication. However, manuscripts that are loosely written and repetitious, or restate established scientific principles instead of merely providing the appropriate reference to such science, will require reworking. It is up to the Guest Editors to determine whether to accept the paper with minor changes or recommend a reject and resubmit.

7.3. Suitable Publication Length.

As already briefly mentioned in 6.1.3., the manuscript cannot exceed 4 pages in length while meeting the burden of disclosure. Thus, authors must exercise every effort to eliminate “waste” of space. It is recognized that some manuscripts may not be able to meet the burden of disclosure in only four pages. In such cases, the paper will be transferred to IEEE Sensors Journal. In such cases, authors are intimated of the transfer of their paper to Sensors Journal and given the option to continue with the review process or withdraw the paper.

8. Other Formal Correspondence.

The only type of “correspondence” that will be published in JSAS is that in which the commenter(s) provide comments on a manuscript previously published in that Journal. Such items are peer reviewed according to the same criteria and timeline as full manuscripts. In all cases the length cannot exceed 4 pages. Correspondence is submitted through S1M and

processed according to the published procedure “Guidelines for Comments and Reply” on the Journal’s website.

9. Award-Quality Manuscripts.

At this time no awards paper such as best papers will be identified for JSAS. However, in the future this could be an area of discussion and coordination with the Sensors Journal best paper selection.

Summary.

Timely publication is one of the IEEE Sensors Council’s important goals. In today’s review process, the role of the Guest Editors is to solicit reliable, knowledgeable reviewers who will commit to a speedy review cycle, and to make timely publishing decisions for their assigned manuscripts. It has been the IEEE experience that reviewers will respond when they are informed clearly of the time schedule established for the review.

The Council is keenly aware of the value of good reviewers, as well as the difficulty in locating good reviewers in sufficient numbers. There is sensitivity not to overburden popular reviewers with too many review requests. With the online tools available through S1M, there is a broadening reviewer database that can help GEs identify candidate reviewers. Guest Editors are also reminded that when forwarding information to the authors, the anonymity of the reviewers must be preserved.

Last, but not least, we endeavor not just to pass judgment, but also work with our Authors towards writing and publishing better papers, to benefit the whole Sensors community.