

Guide for Associate Editors

(Handling Manuscripts via an On-Line Peer-Review System – Manuscript Central)

An Electronic Peer-Review System

The IEEE Ultrasonics, Ferroelectrics, and Frequency Control (UFFC) Society use an electronic peer-review system called Manuscript Central (MC) provided by ScholarOne. While MC provides the mechanics for the review process, the Associate Editors provide the substance of the technical review process. The professional assessment of a technical journal is tightly coupled to the quality of the technical review process for the journal. The increasing scrutiny of publications for promotions, awards and financial grants puts increasing importance to the role of Associate Editor. See *Information for Contributors* (<http://www.ieee-uffc.org/tr/contrib.pdf>) for detail discussion of the goals of a technical review.

Responsibilities of Associate Editors (AEs)

General Responsibilities: Associate Editors (AEs) have total responsibility for the complete review and decision-making processes of unsolicited contributed PAPERS, CORRESPONDENCES and LETTERS as well as invited and review PAPERS that can be solicited by AEs in their assigned technical area. The distinction between the three manuscript forms is outlined in the “Information for Contributors” (<http://www.ieee-uffc.org/tr/contrib.pdf>). AEs need to be familiar with the “Information for Contributors” contents. SPECIAL ISSUES are often initiated by suggestions from AEs. Guest Editors are appointed by the Editor-in-Chief (EIC).

Invited Papers: AEs have authority and are encouraged to solicit invited and review manuscripts (usually Papers) which are deemed of benefit to readers of the IEEE Transactions on Ultrasonics, Ferroelectrics, and Frequency Control (TUFFC). It would be a reasonable goal for each AE to have one solicited manuscript published in the UFFC Transactions on an annual basis. AEs can also contact the authors and forward the author information to the EIC who will then invite the authors via the MC system.

Special Issue Papers: AEs are encouraged to suggest topics for Special Issues of the UFFC Transactions. The AE may wish to serve as the sole Guest Editor, serve as Guest Editor along with other qualified individuals, or recommend qualified individuals to serve as Guest Editor (see the section “Guidelines and Timing for Special Issues”). Special Issue topics need to have the concurrence of the EIC and the Vice President of Publications.

Review Procedure: Manuscripts submitted for publication consideration shall be reviewed by a **minimum of TWO** independent experts who the AE selects for this purpose. The AE can assign himself/herself as a reviewer after the condition of minimum two independent reviewers is met. The AE shall emphasize to the reviewers that they are expected to be critical and thereby help to maintain the high quality of the UFFC Transactions. It is absolutely necessary that all constructive criticism should be clearly detailed. The procedural steps (see Sections “Procedural Steps in MC when Manuscript is assigned to you (First-Review

Procedure)”) and “Procedural Steps in MC when Revised Manuscript is submitted from Contact Author”) are only recommendations. AEs may use them exactly as stated or modify them to suit his or her style of conducting this activity. **Most important:** The manuscripts must be **critically** reviewed in a **timely** and **thorough** manner by at least two independent reviewers!

Adding Potential Reviewers and Updating Reviewer

Emails: AEs are responsible for adding potential reviewers in his/her areas into the MC system and updating their email addresses whenever needed. Adding reviewers or updating reviewer information in MC is easy and takes about one minute for each reviewer if you have the reviewer’s name, email address, and areas of expertise (these must match the TIPS listings (<http://www.ieee-uffc.org/tr/contrib.pdf>)). You can add reviewers at your leisure or whenever you need to assign a manuscript. If authors suggest reviewers in the MC system, you could also use this information. Before you add a new reviewer, please search to see if a reviewer you would like to add is already in the MC system. This is important because duplicate accounts for a reviewer may prevent the reviewer from accessing the manuscripts you assigned them for review. To make sure you will not miss a duplicate in the search, please type in only partial first or last name of the reviewer and let MC system provide you with a list of correct choices. If you type in the full name of the reviewer in a way that is not exactly the same as registered in MC, you may miss your search.

Assignment of Manuscript from EIC or AEIC

EIC or AEIC will assign manuscripts to AEs via MC. If AEs are assigned manuscripts that they do not believe that they are qualified to handle, please contact respective EIC or AEIC via the fastest form of communication, e.g., e-mail. The EIC or AEIC can then reassign them to a different AE.

Procedural Steps in MC When Manuscript is Assigned to You (First-Review Procedure)

Conducting Peer-Review Process: The AE conducts the review process according to the following recommended procedure:

Select a **minimum of TWO** appropriate reviewers by sending invitations via MC. It is suggested that you invite more than the minimum. This increases the possibility of getting the minimum of two in the least amount of time and also it is beneficial to have more than the minimum. This is especially valuable when two reviewers present conflicting review recommendations.

If a review has not been received by the AE within a reasonable period of time designated in the “Review of Manuscript” letter, please call the reviewer. Speed is essential. When all reviews are received, AE critically evaluates the manuscript relative to the reviewers’

comments. It is not required to accept any or all of the reviewers' comments but remember that you selected the reviewers based on their expertise. If you take exception with any of the reviews' comments, you must advise the author(s) so that they are properly guided to revise the manuscript according to your judgments. It is a professional courtesy, to advise a reviewer directly when you disagree with their recommendations.

Decision Making: AE notifies author(s) about manuscript decision following first review. For a manuscript submitted to be published as a LETTER, the only decision choices are Accept or Reject. No revisions are permitted. If the reviewers or the Associate Editor has suggestions, the authors will have to resubmit a new manuscript for considerations. For all other manuscript types, the decisions choices are:

- **Accept:** When a manuscript is accepted for publication, it means there are no revisions required before publication.
- **Minor Revision:** When a manuscript is returned for minor revisions, those changes should not require additional theoretical or experimental work. The substance (depth and breadth) of the technical content is deemed sufficient for publication, but there are some necessary changes require for quality and/or accuracy of the manuscript. The manuscript is basically acceptable for publication with some minor changes or additions or deletions. It does not require further assessment by the reviewers. It is expected that the changes will be accomplished in less than three weeks.
- **Reject with Recommendation for resubmission:** When a manuscript is returned with "reject with recommendation for resubmission", it means it is not acceptable in its current form for publication. Minor changes will not render the manuscript acceptable. The authors should be presented with review remarks that indicate errors in presentation, omissions in theoretical and /or experimental data and discussions, omissions in background information in the technical area, unacceptable technical English. The key point in this decision is that in the AE's best judgment the authors can revise the manuscript consistent with the reviewers' assessments and be acceptable for publication. But because of the breadth and depth of the changes, the revised manuscript should be treated as a new manuscript. It is expected that the amount of time required to consider and respond to the reviewers' recommendations will exceed three weeks.
- **Reject:** When a manuscript is returned with "reject" as a decision, it is the AE's decision that no revisions would make the manuscript acceptable for publications.
- **Withdrawn:** When a manuscript is returned with a withdrawn decision, it is usually at the request of the authors after the review process has started or because of an administrative issue.
- **Resubmit as a Correspondence:** When a manuscript is returned with the "resubmit as a correspondence" decision, it means that the Associate Editor has decided that the content of the manuscript is of significance but limited in scope or impact and a shorter manuscript is acceptable for publication. (Note: A correspondence should be no longer than four pages.)
- **Submit to Another Journal:** When a manuscript is returned with "submit to another journal" decision, the AE has determined that the field of content of the manuscript is not appropriate to our journal and not of interest to our readers.

Procedural Steps in MC When Revised Manuscript is Submitted from Contact Author

The AE obtains the following via MC:

- Revised manuscript that the authors uploaded in the MC.
- Author's reply to the reviewers and to AEs discussing the means by which the revised manuscript addressed the reviewers' comments.
- Original revised word processing file of the manuscript.
- High quality art work for journal production.
- See "Information for Contributors" at <http://www.ieee-uffc.org/tr/contrib.pdf> for details.

Review Procedure for Revised Manuscripts: The AE conducts the review process of the revised manuscript according to the following recommended procedures: When revised manuscript is received, AE critically evaluates the manuscript, taking into account how the author(s) responded to the reviewers' comments. Authors do not necessarily accept all of the reviewers' comments but they should discuss why they did not. The AE must decide whether the revision is adequate to accept the manuscript or requires an additional review cycle. The AE should look at the records of the first review in order to determine if any of the original reviewers requested to see the revised manuscript. (This is noted on the original review form.)

Decision Making: AE notifies contact author about revised manuscript decision. The choices are the same as with the initial review. Having the manuscript "**Accepted**" for publication is the common outcome of a Paper or Correspondence. Having the manuscript not yet accepted for publication and in need of an additional review is not the common outcome of a Paper or Correspondence. This is because the changes were minor. It is always possible that there are extenuating circumstances and the manuscript could be deemed "**Reject with recommendation for**

resubmission” or simply “Reject”. Because manuscripts with major revisions are rejected with a recommendation for resubmission, it is expected that most revised manuscripts (minor revision) are accepted the second time submitted.

If the English of a Manuscript Is Inadequate

If the English is inadequate for a potentially accepted manuscript, be firm with the contact author and encourage that the manuscript be evaluated by a native English speaker. Neither the EIC and AEIC nor journal production department will edit the English. Minor English grammar changes can be handled with a decision, “Minor Revision”. However, significant English grammar, word usage, sentence structure, should result in a decision, “Reject with recommendation of resubmission”. It is acceptable to make this decision prior to a formal review. If you make such a decision, the decision, “Withdrawn” can be used. Please make modifications to the decision letter clearly stating that it is the quality of the English that has necessitated the decision and not an evaluation of technical content.

Guidelines and Timing for Special Issues

General Guidance: Special Issues are often initiated by suggestions from the Associate Editor in Chiefs or Associate Editors. Guest Editors are appointed by the EIC. The initiation of a Special Issue requires considerable planning by the Guest Editor in consultation with the EIC and or AEIC. The purpose of these guidelines is to provide general information for the Guest Editor(s) for planning a Special Issue of the UFFC Transactions.

- Allow **6** months for advertising the Special Issue and for manuscript preparation. The Guest Editor(s) should set a firm date for the receipt of the original manuscript and may wish to impose a requirement of a brief abstract of the manuscripts content and have that due at an earlier date. The exception to this is when after a technical meeting the Guest Editors and AEIC invite specific persons to submit to a special issue.
- Allow **6** months for the complete review of all manuscripts. This should include sufficient time for the original manuscripts to be reviewed and revised. Here it will be extremely important for Guest Editor(s) to choose reviewers who can focus on the timely completion of the reviews. Also, when the reviewed manuscript is returned to the author for revision, Guest Editor(s) should assign a specific and firm date by when the revision must be received.
- The review process of all the manuscripts must be completed at least **four** months prior to the issue date. For example, if the issue date is the October 10, 2005, decision has to be made for all the manuscripts that will go into the Special Issue before June 10, 2005. The three months prior to the issue date is absolutely firm. Any manuscripts accepted after that date will not be included in the Special Issue but rather in a later issue.

Timetable of Specific Events: The following timetable is typical for Special Issues. The times are relative to the publication date of the Special Issue.

Preparations:

- **18 months:** Completion of all the mailings to advertise the Special Issue. The EIC will work with the Guest Editor(s) to prepare an announcement that will be published in the UFFC Transactions.
- **18 months:** Completion of all the solicitations for invited papers for the Special Issue.
- **15 months:** Receipt of a “letter of intent” and a brief abstract by prospective contributors if needed. This date will be advertised as firm although the Guest Editor(s) may have some flexibility. This information assists the Guest Editors in identifying the work scope such as how many reviewers will be required.
- **15 months:** If applicable, notification to the EIC regarding the estimated number of contributions expected for the Special Issue.
- **13 months:** Reminder letter from the Guest Editor(s) to all authors about the manuscript submission deadline.

Peer-Review:

- **12 months:** Manuscript submission deadline for both invited and contributed papers. This date shall be advertised as firm.
- **9 months:** Time by which all manuscripts should have been reviewed and returned to author(s) for revision.

Decision Made:

- **4 months:** Absolute deadline for the Guest Editor(s) to make decisions for all manuscripts.

Errata

ERRATA are corrections of papers published previously in the Transactions. Errata submitted by authors will be reviewed by respective Associate Editors for appropriateness. Errata will be reviewed for acceptance or rejection only.

Front Cover Images

Front Cover Images are reviewed and selected according to the procedure described in the “Information for Contributors” (<http://www.ieee-uffc.org/tr/contrib.pdf>). Front Cover Images are managed by the AEICs and the EIC. Associate Editors are not involved in the review and selection of these manuscripts.

Using Manuscript Central for Conducting the Peer-Review Process

Once an Associate Editor has logged into the MC system, they have access to the standard guide for the Peer-Review process as presented by MC that meets the guidelines for an IEEE journal. **Figure 1** presents the MC page that come up after logging into the system.

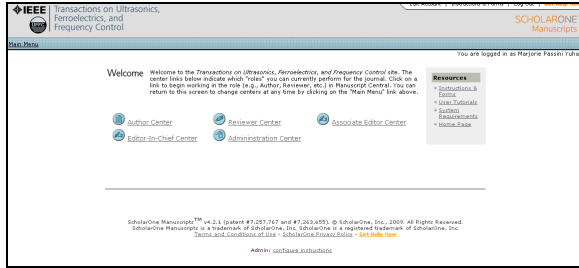


Figure 1

The grey box on the right labeled, “Resources”, contains the icon for the tutorials. See Figure 2. Figure 3 is the front page for the User Tutorials. Figure 4 is the front page for the Editor Guide. (This includes some instructions for the EIC.)

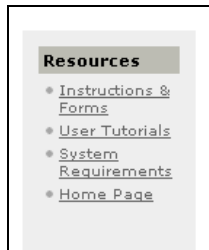


Figure 2

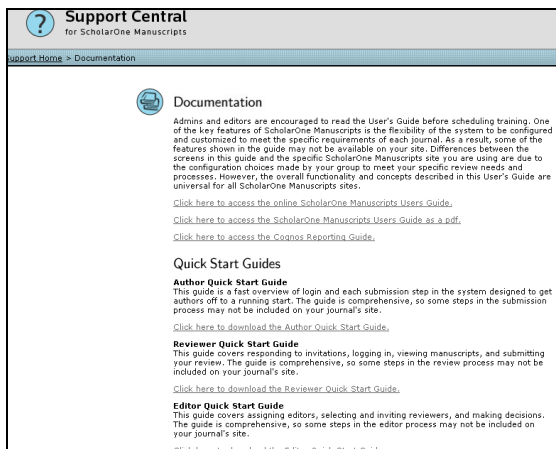


Figure 3

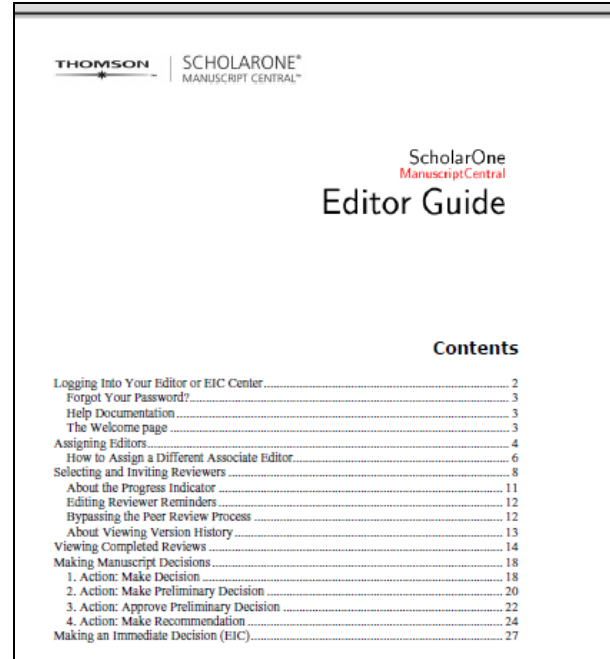


Figure 4

A step-by-step guide for an AE to conduct the peer-review process of a manuscript in MC is presented in the ScholarOne Editor Guide. The TUFFC MC site is at <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/tuffc-ieee>.

Figure 5 presents the home page for Associate Editors. All the manuscripts assigned to an AE’s account will be presented here.

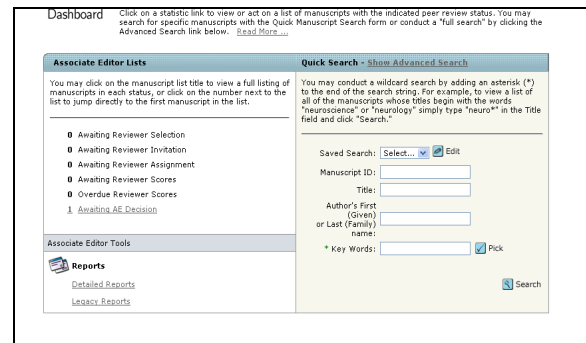


Figure 5

Manuscripts for the AE are listed in the following categories:

- Awaiting Reviewer Selection
- Awaiting Reviewer Invitation
- Awaiting Reviewer Assignment
- Awaiting Reviewer Scores
- Overdue Reviewer Scores
- Awaiting AE Decision

Clicking on any of these categories will bring up for the AE all the manuscripts in that category. For each manuscript clicking on the icon, “Take Action”, will lead the AE to the tasks to be executed. (Details in the Editor Guide (<http://mchelp.manuscriptcentral.com/tutorials/Editor.pdf>))

When a manuscript has received all the invited reviews, the manuscript is located in the “Awaiting AE Decision” category. **Figure 6** shows the working area for this screen. (The detail decisions are being change. New figure will be added by 03/31/2010)

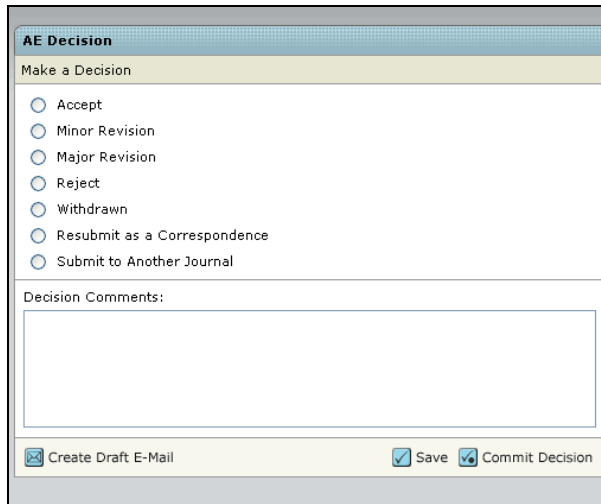


Figure 6

After selecting your decision from the list “Make a Decision”, you can add some comments in the “Decision Comments” box. You may want to do this to remind yourself of specifics that lead you to your decision. These comments will not be shared and would be viewed only by you or the EIC or Administrator. Once you are ready to commit to your decision, click on the icon labeled “Commit Decision”. This is brings up for you the template for the decision letter to the author. (**Figure 7**). At this point you can modify the decision letter to meet the needs of the specific paper. The decision letter will be customized by the system to fit the decision you have chosen.

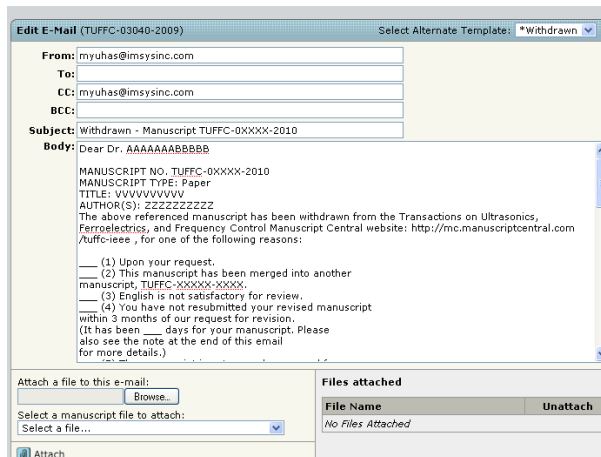


Figure 7

If your decision is to accept the manuscript for publication, the email letter will also be sent to the EIC and the FASS journal production department and thus the manuscript can be edited for publication. At this point, your task as an Associate Editor is completed.

If you need further help, please click on “Get Help Now” icon at the upper right corner of MC at any time. You can contact the EIC, Dr. Marjorie Passini Yuhas, (myuhas@imsysinc.com) at any time with any question or need for clarification.

Note: This document was modified from one provided by Dr. William D. O’Brien dated in 1995. The Manuscript Central related tasks were added by Dr. Jian-yu Lu in 2002.