

# IEEE ENGINEERING IN MEDICINE AND BIOLOGY SOCIETY

## GUIDE FOR ASSOCIATE EDITORS AND THE PEER REVIEW PROCESS

Preliminary Version, December 2000

### Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to be an Associate Editor for publications of the IEEE Engineering in Medicine and Biology Society (EMBS). The role of the Associate Editor in scholarly publishing is the very important management of the peer review of manuscripts by members of the technical community. Peer review of all papers that appear in transactions is required by IEEE, and papers are selected for publication only on the basis of merit and appropriateness. The Associate Editors are responsible for the consistently high marks our transactions receive from the peer community. By assuring the selection of appropriate reviewers to identify quality manuscripts, and by efficiently managing the peer review process, the quality--and therefore the value--of a publication is increased.

Since 1996, the EMBS has been taking steps to improve the time from manuscript submission to publication. One of the hallmarks of quality scholarly publishing lies in rapid publication. These efforts will culminate with the introduction in 2001 of the Manuscript Central, a full electronic submission and review system. A set of procedures was devised to significantly shrink the submission-to-publication window from 2+ years to under one year, in keeping with the guidelines established by the IEEE Technical Activities Board (the body that facilitates the activities of the IEEE Societies). The new procedures under which you will perform your duties as an Associate Editor are expected to become "standard operating procedure" on January 2001 for the Transactions of Neural Systems and Rehabilitation Engineering, on February 2001 for the Transactions in Biomedical Engineering, an on March 2001 for the Transactions in Information technologies, and in April 2001 for the EMBS Magazine.

While the manuscripts will be directly submitted to Manuscript Central, and all communication will be electronic, there are interactions that can only be performed by the Associate Editor to foster communication between the Associate Editor and the reviewer, and between the Associate Editor and the author. These communications are the very essence of the Associate Editor function, and represent the value added by each Associate Editor.

Although you may currently be serving as an Associate Editor or reviewer for one or more publications of other IEEE Societies, the procedures set out for the transactions of the IEEE EMBS Society probably will be different. Therefore, we request that you read this entire guide through at least once, to get a sense of the flow, and to understand how

you will interact with the staff Publications Office, the reviewers, and the authors in fulfilling the important role of Associate Editor.

## 1.0. 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 Institute's members; and to promote the constructive use of technology for the public welfare.

(IEEE Policy and Procedures, 6.1, 1999)

As an organization of IEEE, the IEEE EMBS Society is responsible for assisting this mission. More specifically, the Society has established the goal of publishing original, high quality manuscripts pertaining to its fields of endeavor, as established in the Society's Field of Interest.

### 1.2. IEEE EMBS Field of Interest

The field of interest of the IEEE Engineering in Medicine and Biology Society is the application of the concepts and methods of the physical and engineering sciences in biology and medicine. This covers a very broad spectrum ranging from formalized mathematical theory through experimental science and technological development to practical clinical applications. It includes support of scientific, technological, and educational activities.

### 1.3. Publications of the IEEE EMBS Society

The IEEE EMBS Society fully sponsors publication of the following transactions:

IEEE Transactions on Biomedical Engineering (publication begun 1953)

IEEE Transactions on Information Technologies in Biomedicine (publication begun 1996)

IEEE Transactions on Neural Systems and Rehabilitation Engineering (publication begun 1994).

IEEE EMBS Magazine (publication begun 1982).

## 2.0. Amendments to This Guide

Amendments to this Guide will occur following amendments to procedures by the IEEE EMBS Society Publications Board, or in response to changes in policy by the Society's Board of Governors, or by the IEEE Publications Board or Board of Directors. The Guide will be reprinted at least annually, to record changes to IEEE or Society policy and/or procedures, affecting the Society's publications. Amendments in procedure may be recommended to the Society's Publications Board by emailing the Society's Publications Office at [emb-publications@ieee.org](mailto:emb-publications@ieee.org) (or by fax to 732 465 6435).

## 3.0. Membership Status, Term of Service, Duties, Responsibilities, and Workload.

3.1. Membership Status. An Associate Editor is required to be a Member of the IEEE. There is no such requirement for reviewers or authors, however.

3.2. Term. The formal term of appointment of an Associate Editor is two years, renewable once. The appointment is made by the Editor-in-Chief of the transactions. During the formal term, the Associate Editor functions as a member of the Editorial Board for the publication. However, although the formal (voting) term of an Associate Editor may end according to the calendar, the informal term continues until all manuscripts assigned to that Associate Editor have been peer reviewed and a final disposition has been made.

3.3. Duties. The Associate Editor, as a member of the Editorial Board of the publication, is responsible for insuring that the publication maintains the highest quality while adhering to the publication rules and procedures of both the Society and of the IEEE.

3.4. Responsibilities.

3.4.1. *Identifying and Securing Reviewers*.

The most important role of the Associate Editor is the identification of appropriate reviewers for each manuscript, and for securing the agreement of the reviewers to conduct the review in the allotted time. This is central to the peer review process and triggers activities in Manuscript Central ( Publications Office in the interim) that set the peer review of a manuscript in motion. It is extremely important that reviewers understand that the time frame established for conduct of the peer review is FOUR weeks from receipt of the manuscript by the reviewer, that the reviewers agree to this schedule, and that full, accurate contact information (including street address, phone number, fax number, and e-mail address) for each reviewer be supplied to Manuscript Central (Publications Office in the interim) by you.

Reviewers are principally identified through peer contact or references listed at the end of the manuscript. In rare circumstances, it may be necessary for the author to suggest possible expert reviewers, when a field is extremely narrow; this is an exception and the resulting reviewers may not be completely unbiased. The Society's Publications Office is populating a database of reviewers in Manuscript Central, which will be referenced by the TIPS (Technical Interest Profiles) for easy match with the declared TIPS of the manuscript.

Select reviewers across a range of ability. The more experienced, senior reviewer is balanced by eager, more junior reviewers. Good reviewers are like diamonds--although they are sturdy, one must be careful to not overwear them. It is extremely important that the schedule for conducting the review be met; one way to insure timely reviews, and that a reviewer not feel overwhelmed, is to request one, but certainly no more than two, reviews from a single individual at any given time.

3.4.2. *Numbers of Reviewers*.

Manuscripts submitted to the transactions of the IEEE EMBS Society normally receive three peer reviews. IEEE policy requires that no fewer than two peer reviews be conducted. Sometimes, in a very narrow field, due to workload or other factors, it is extremely difficult to secure a third reviewer. In that event, it is permissible to have two

peer reviews plus the review of the Associate Editor. Three reviews should be the norm, however.

#### 3.4.3. *Communicating with Reviewers.*

Sometimes reviewers need help. The first line of communication, when problems arise concerning the review itself, is the Associate Editor. The Associate Editor must be available for such communication, probably by e-mail or phone, and be responsive to such requests.

#### 3.4.4. *Communicating with Authors.*

Associate Editors likely will communicate with the author(s) more than once during the peer review process:

- (a) The Associate Editor will determine the disposition of the manuscript, based on the remarks of the reviewers, and his/her own assessment of the manuscript. The decision for a major or minor revision must be conveyed to the author by the Associate Editor.
- (b) The author may contact the Associate Editor if instructions regarding required amendments to the manuscript are not clear.

#### 3.4.5. *Communicating with the Manuscript Central (Publications Office in the interim).*

As you will see in the Schedule of review activities, set out in detail below, an extremely important communications interface is the one between the Associate Editor and Manuscript Central (Publications Office in the interim). Manuscript Central is a web based database that contains the paper and the repository of information regarding the paper status. It is accessed through a web browser (NetScape or Microsoft Explorer). Papers change status by actions of the Reviewers (acceptance to review, completion of review), of the Associate Editor (major revision, minor revision, acceptance, rejection) and of the Editor in Chief. In the interim this communication should be via e-mail with the Publications Office, which provides fast movement of critical information. Manuscript Central (Publication Office in the interim) centralizes all of your correspondence because it assists in building a complete file on a manuscript, obviating the retention of large amounts of paper by Associate Editors (Manuscript Central or the Publications Office retains a master file for six months following publication), and because it triggers "next steps" in the manuscript handling process.

Communication with Manuscript Central (Publications Office in the interim) is critical to the success of the peer review process as established by the Society and described in this guide. You will be emailed monthly with the status reports of active manuscripts. This report will be sent to you with the information in the Manuscript Central database, and will list all of the manuscripts assigned to you, and their current status. You will need to carefully review this report, indicate on the report any deficiencies in manuscript status according to your own records, and email back (or fax) the form back to the Publications Office (732 465 6435).

**IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT**, when an Associate Editor is contemplating being away from "home base" for two weeks or more, that the Publications Office (with copy to the Editor in Chief) be notified of the absence and provided with at least one means of emergency contact (e-mail, phone or fax).

Because an Associate Editor is advised prior to acceptance of the term of service and responsibilities of the post, he/she IS NOT RELIEVED of such duties during any protracted absences from home base, or during sabbatical. In the case that a long absence is necessary, the Associate Editor must establish a means for his/her work as an associate editor to continue efficiently, and the Publications Office as well as the Editor in Chief must be provided, and updated, on full contact information as the Associate Editor moves from one location to another.

#### 3.4.6. "Blind" Reviews.

Reviews of manuscripts submitted to Society publications are "blind" reviews--the identity of the reviewers is never revealed to the author or others. The Associate Editor must assure that the identities of the reviewers are kept confidential.

#### 3.5. Workload.

An Associate Editor shall not be assigned more than three manuscripts per month during his/her term of service. This does not mean that each Associate Editor WILL receive three manuscripts each month, since Associate Editors covering popular TIPS categories may be more active than those covering more esoteric TIPS. Any difficulties with workload should be reported IMMEDIATELY to the Publications Office. Temporary relief can be provided to assure that workloads do not fall behind.

#### 4.0. Publication of Original Material & Copyright.

The Society publishes original material. An author(s) submitting material to the Society's publications is required to complete, and forward with the manuscript at submission, 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 IEEE publications is done for 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 applied consistently throughout the Institute for all publications bearing the name and identity of IEEE. Copyright is held by the Institute 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 assure that the Institute's and the Society's rules regarding submission of original material are followed, the Society 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.

#### 5.0. Timely Publication

As mentioned in the introduction, the IEEE has established as a strategic goal the publication of manuscripts within six months of submission. The IEEE Technical Activities Board, in support of this goal, has established a guideline for publication in less than one year from date of submission. The IEEE EMBS Society has been addressing

means of speeding the time from submission to publication for manuscripts submitted to its transactions. 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: the formal date of submission of the manuscript (the date the manuscript is received by Manuscript Central (or Publications Office)); and, the date of final approval of the manuscript for publication (the A status date only).

## 6.0. Peer Review Process and Calendar

### 6.1. *Manuscript Submission*

All of the transactions of the IEEE EMBS Society publish, in each issue, Information for Authors that guide the submission process.

#### 6.1.1. *New Submissions*

Starting January 1, 2001, manuscripts will ONLY be accepted in electronic format through a new system called Manuscript Central. Please go to the Manuscript Central website at

<http://embs-ieee.manuscriptcentral.com/>

In the EMBS website

<http://www.embs.org>

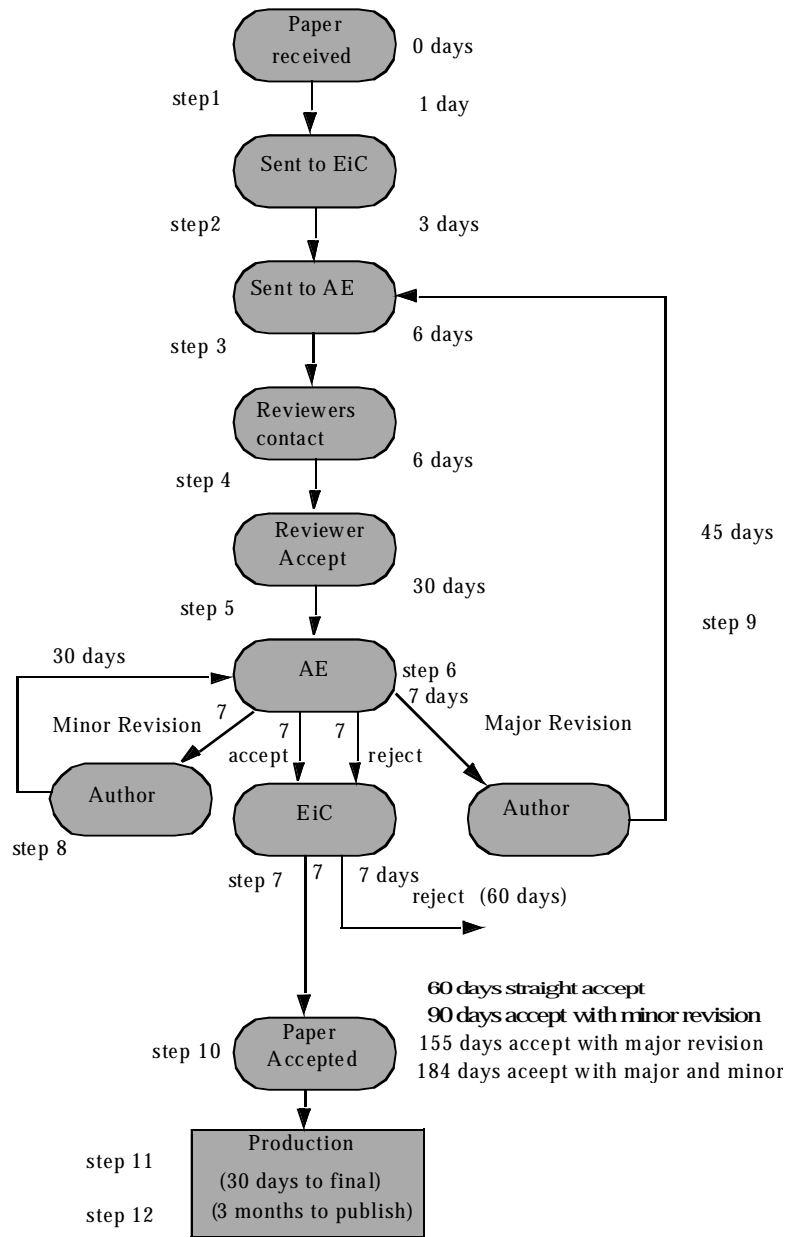
there are instructions to create an account and electronically submit manuscripts, to login in as a reviewer or as Associate Editor. If the authors are unable to submit their contribution electronically, the manuscript can be mailed to:

EMBS Publications  
IEEE  
445 Hoes Lane  
Piscataway, NJ 08855-1331 USA

During a transition period of three months our staff will be scanning the paper contributions that could not be electronically submitted, but thereafter scanning will only be performed under unusual circumstances that must be approved by the Editor-in-Chief. We strongly encourage Reviewers and Associate Editors to login at Manuscript Central as soon as possible to become familiar with the software (web address above).

Below we present the flowchart for manuscript review with the duration for each review step in days. Notice that these time intervals will be monitored by computer and the person in charge at each step will be notified automatically by email when the deadline has expired. This flowchart with time intervals will be made available to the full EMBS community. Associate Editors very often perform these duties for more than one periodical, and may even serve as Associate Editor for more than one IEEE publication at the same time. IEEE publications have differences in manuscript management and peer review processes and schedules. The transactions published by the IEEE EMBS Society will function according to the following, standard timeline, and every effort will be made to keep all parties to the peer review to this schedule.

We request comments from the authors, reviewers and associate editors regarding the duration of each step in the flowchart. These comments should be sent to the EMBS Publications Office. The current flowchart should be interpreted as the ultimate goal, and we cannot expect that we will achieve these goals instantly from the present 1+ year. In his/her yearly editorial, the Editor in Chief will present statistics regarding progress and timelines with electronic manuscript review.



6.1.2. Manuscript Submission and Tracking

Upon submitting the manuscript to Manuscript Central (or upon receipt by the Publication Office), the manuscript is issued a Manuscript Tracking Number, and the author(s) and their contact information, the title of the manuscript, and other pertinent information necessary to track the manuscript through the peer review process is then available in the Database. The Publications Office staff reviews the submitted materials to determine that the manuscript meets submission requirements:

- ✓ Manuscript formatted double-spaced, single-column and of no more than 30 pages;
- ✓ Names of ALL authors (including identification of the Corresponding Author), their complete contact information, affiliation;
- ✓ An Engineering TIPS (Technical Interest Profile) identifier, which will allow in the future automated selection of the next available Associate Editor to manage peer review of the manuscript;
- ✓ An abstract of no more than 200 words for a regular paper, and no more than 50 words for correspondence, that states the scope of the paper and summarizes the author's conclusions so that the abstract itself may be useful in information retrieval.

This concludes *step zero* and the manuscript is considered under review.

## 6.2. Peer Review Schedule

### *Step 1* New Manuscript Received ---- 1 day

After the manuscript has been received and qualified as to appropriate submission criteria, an email is automatically issued to the Editor in Chief to acknowledge receipt of a new manuscript. In due time we expect to automate this procedure with the TIPS and work load of each Associate Editor and attribute directly an Associate Editor to each manuscript.

### *Step 2* Selection of Associate Editor---up to 3 days

The Editor in Chief assigns the manuscript to an Associate Editor according to TIPS and assures that no AE receives more than three manuscripts per month. The Associate Editor is directly contacted via email from Manuscript Central with the tracking number of the manuscript such that the AE can have access to the abstract and paper, and download of the manuscript if he/she so wishes. Manuscript Central acknowledges receipt of the manuscript via correspondence with the "Corresponding" Author, and advises the author of the name and contact information of the Associate Editor assigned to manage the manuscript. Here the "Corresponding" Author is the author him/herself, or the author designated by all authors of the paper to act as interface for the paper with the Associate Editor and the transactions.

### *Step 3* Reviewer Contacts --- up to 6 days

The Associate Editor reviews the manuscript, and selects reviewers. The reviewers can be selected from the reviewer database available in Manuscript Central or by personal contacts. In the case that the reviewer is not in the database, the AE will have to enter the pertinent information in the database, focusing on name and e-mail contact. This reviewer can then login and complete his/her MC personal information to allow the electronic



review system to proceed. Manuscript Central contacts automatically the reviewer through email with the title, and abstract of the manuscript. However, we recommend that the Associate Editor also contact the reviewers to obtain their agreement to complete the review within four (4) weeks from receipt of the manuscript. This new procedure for gaining agreement from reviewers assures that personal contact is established between the Associate Editor and the reviewers and that the reviewers agree to the four weeks review period. Once the reviewer accepts or declines to review the manuscript by responding to the MC request, the AE will be automatically advised by Manuscript Central. In order to minimize delays, we suggest that four reviewers be initially contacted.

*Step 4. Reviewer Accepts the review ---- up to 6 days.*

The Associate Editor will be informed by Manuscript Central when the 6 days period for reviewer acceptance has elapsed. When a reviewer accepts the review, the system automatically sends the manuscript tracking number such that the reviewer will have access to the full paper (for download or for review in the computer). A link to the review guidelines will also be emailed to the reviewer.

*Step 5. Paper Revision ---- up to 30 days.*

The Reviewer completes the review and electronically enters the review in the forms available in Manuscript Central. At sixty-one days, Manuscript Central will begin to send reminders to the reviewer, with a copy to the Associate Editor. Manuscript Central will also email the AE to inform him that the review was completed by that particular reviewer. If the reviewer appends marked up portions of the manuscript, courier delivery may be required (or an e-mail attachment may be sent to the AE)

*Step 6. Associate Editor Decision ----- up to 7 days*

The Associate Editor, based on the reviews of the manuscript, determines whether or not, and under what circumstances, the manuscript can be published. The AE must make sure that the reviewer remains anonymous, i.e. he/she must check if the information stored in MC does not carry any information about the reviewer such as author tags in Microsoft software.

There are two courses of action: If the paper requires a major or minor revision, the associate editor contacts directly the corresponding author and copies the EiC with the decision. If the paper is accepted or rejected, the AE forwards the decision to the EiC, who then contacts the authors with this final decision.

An Associate Editor may decide:

R - to reject the paper.

A - to accept the paper with no changes.

MiR - to accept the paper with minor but required changes which the Associate Editor can adjudicate directly. Manuscripts receiving a MiR status will not be returned to the reviewers. The author will return the amended manuscript to Manuscript Central, where it will be re-logged and then forward to the Associate Editor.

MaR - to accept the paper with major, required revisions that will require a second full review cycle by the original and/or additional reviewers. The author will return the amended manuscript to Manuscript Central and then forwarded to the Associate Editor and reviewers.

WD - manuscript is considered withdrawn (this will affect manuscripts requiring amendment (MiR or MaR)) which have not been returned to Manuscript Central at the end of the 30 or 60 days amendment period, respectively, and the author(s) has not set a new return date, or has not responded to two reminders from the EMBS Publications Office. This status may also be self-selected by the author at any time during the process.

Due to the fact that MaR adds practically 60 days to the review cycle, AE should ponder carefully when to attribute a MaR instead of a Reject. Anyway, a manuscript cannot receive two major reviews. At most, a manuscript can have a MaR and a MiR. Another aspect is the normal “downgrading” of a paper to a communication article. If the paper does not meet the criteria for publication under the category it is submitted, it should be Rejected.

*Step 7. Editor in Chief Decision---- 7 days*

The EiC makes the final decision of acceptance or rejection of a manuscript upon the information received from the AE. The reviews and the AE opinion is in the database, so it will be invoked in the letter to the authors. For rejected papers no further action is required.

*Step 8. Accepted paper.*

In the final letter to the author the EiC requests a formatted version of the accepted manuscript (paper version) that should be mailed to the EiC office with a signature acknowledging the (press) length of the paper and agreement to pay mandatory overlength page charges.

*Step 9. Minor Revision (MiR) of the Manuscript ---- 30 days.*

The author is informed by the AE of the revisions and has 30 days to complete the review and resubmit electronically the manuscript to Manuscript Central with explanations of the modifications in the comment to editor panel. The review then continues from step 6 above, i.e. the AE will perform the minor review without sending the manuscript back to the reviewers. The possible results of this review is acceptance of the manuscript, and the AE communicates the decision to the EiC for action.

*Step 10. Major Revision (MaR) of the Manuscript ---- 45 days.*

Due to the more extensive nature of revisions required, we give 45 days for the author to complete a major revision. After completion, the author resubmits the manuscript to Manuscript Central and explains the modifications in the comment to editor panel. The review will continue from step 2 above. The only difference is that the manuscript can have only three reviews thereafter: A, MiR, R.

*Step 11. Preparation of Final Version ----- 30 days.*

Author(s) has 30 days to provide the final manuscript in proper format to the Publications Office. The first reminder, requesting a revised final submission will be sent at 30 plus one day.

*Step 12. Assembly of the Issue and Publication ----- 120 days.*

The Editor-in-Chief Office assembles the table of contents of the transactions. Recall that the EiC Office works on issues three months in advance of their actual publication. So, in May, the staff will be working on the August issue. The publication date of a finalized manuscript is affected by the backlog. While there is some backlog at this point, owing to protracted peer reviews, this backlog will eventually be cleared out and the queue should be practically nonexistent. IEEE's Transactions/Journals Department produces the final transactions issue, which then goes to press and mails two weeks prior to the cover date of the transactions.

Following the above steps, a manuscript with a decision of A should reach the production step within approximately 60 days; a manuscript that is MiR should reach production in about 90 days, and a manuscript that is MaR may require twice that long to reach production.

## 7.0. Quality Publication

### 7.1. *Novelty, Quality and Appropriateness*

The three most important scores a manuscript will receive are:

Novelty--Does the manuscript disclose new science, or contain fresh new approaches to established science?

Quality of technical content-- Is the manuscript methodologically correct? Does it present the information well? Is the data analysis adequate? Is the writing appropriate? Is the manuscript "complete," not requiring propping up by other work to permit understanding of the disclosure.

Appropriateness--Is the manuscript a good "fit" for the publication, appealing to the publication's "audience?"

These criteria must be affirmative for the manuscript to be accepted.

### 7.2. *Disclosure*

The transactions are published in English. The manner of disclosure of the author's findings must be sufficiently literate in English to convey the author's ideas. 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 science), such considerations are not necessary to the selection of a manuscript for publication. However, manuscripts that are loosely written and repetitious, and that restate established scientific principles, instead of merely providing the appropriate reference to such science, will require reworking. It will be up to the reviewers and the Associate Editor to determine whether this is an easy fix (accomplished in one more round of reviews), or a major undertaking (in which case the author probably should be advised to withdraw the manuscript and resubmit it after major revamping has occurred).

### 7.3. *Appropriate Publication Length*

A manuscript needs to be long enough to meet the burden of disclosure; but every effort must be exercised to eliminate "waste" of space. The Society has established seven (7) pages as the "standard" length of a final manuscript in all its publications, except for TNSRE where the manuscript length is temporarily set to 10 pages. It is recognized that some manuscripts may not be able to meet the burden of disclosure in only seven pages; however, the authors will be required to meet the expense of publishing every page over seven (or 10 in TNSRE). Quite often, disclosure can occur quite nicely in less than seven pages, in which case the Associate Editor, with advice from the reviewers, should require the author to alter the manuscript to a suggested, appropriate length by providing clues for material to be edited out of the manuscript.

## 8.0. Reviews by the Letters

### 8.1. *Status of A*

This manuscript requires no additional reviews, although there may be some small fixes-- typos, etc.--which the Associate Editor indicates must be corrected. This manuscript will, essentially, be published "as is," with no additional action by the reviewers or Associate Editor.

### 8.2. *Status of MiR*

This manuscript, although meeting the criteria of novelty and appropriateness, requires a few fixes, usually of the technical variety (more than typos or grammatical corrections), which are considered to be quite minor, but which the Associate Editor has determined he/she should review one last time prior to approving the manuscript for publication.

### 8.3. *Status of MaR*

This manuscript, although meeting the criteria of novelty and appropriateness, is seriously flawed as to disclosure (either technical, or literary, or both), and requires a major rework by the author. Manuscripts accorded a status of MaR will require a second round of reviews by the original reviewers (and possibly an additional reviewer). No manuscript will be accorded the status of MaR more than once. That is, no manuscript will receive more than two full rounds of peer review. If the manuscript cannot be upgraded to a status of A or MiR by the Associate Editor at the end of the second round, it must be rejected.

### 8.4. *Status of R*

This manuscript has been rejected for one or more reasons. Manuscripts that fall into this category fail to meet the criteria of novelty and appropriateness; may be poorly written or targeted for a different audience; or require such significant editing that the edit cannot reasonably occur in the six weeks the author is allotted prior to the next review round.

### 8.5. *Status of WD*

An author may, at any point of the peer review, choose to withdraw a manuscript from consideration. Authors who do not return their materials to the Publications Office on schedule and do not respond to attempts to contact them regarding the material may have their manuscripts withdrawn as a matter of process.

## 9.0. "Communication"

9.1. *Short communication papers* disclosing new ideas and preliminary results and manuscripts commenting critically and substantively on papers published in the TRANSACTIONS are also encouraged. Such items are peer reviewed according to the same criteria and timeline as full manuscripts. Communications may not exceed seven double-spaced pages at time of submission, and must meet the same criteria for submission as a manuscript.

9.2. *Notifying the Authors.* In the event that a communication is accepted for publication, the authors of the original manuscript being critiqued will receive a copy of the communication, and be permitted to rebut it. Such rebuttal will be peer reviewed by the original reviewers of the communication. In the event that the communication and rebuttal are recommended for publication, the Associate Editor shall so notify the Editor-in-Chief of the transactions. The Editor-in-Chief will review both the correspondence and the rebuttal and make the final decision regarding publication of both items.

9.3. *Point of Publication.* In the event the decision is to publish the communication and the rebuttal, the author of the communication will receive a copy of the rebuttal. However, at this point, the author of the communication will be permitted no further comment until after both the communication and the rebuttal have been published, together, in the transactions.

9.4. *"Automatic" Change in Status.* The correspondence author, on reviewing the rebuttal, may choose to request that his/her communication be withdrawn. In the event the communication is withdrawn, the rebuttal shall also automatically be withdrawn, and neither will be published in the transactions.

## 10.0. Sanctions

Authors are expected to submit ORIGINAL manuscripts that have not been submitted to any other publication for consideration. On submission of the manuscript, the author must sign a Copyright Form which is the author's oath that the manuscript he/she has submitted meets these criteria. Unfortunately, it seems that lately there are more instances of submissions of material that is not original, and may even be plagiarized, and that has been submitted to other publications, despite the signed "oath" that no other submissions have been undertaken. When such instances arise, and it has been established that the author(s) acted knowingly, the Society will apply sanctions.

In some cases, because the peer community for a certain portion of biomedical engineering is small, it has occurred that the same individual may be called on by both publications to review the duplicate papers. In such instances, plagiarism and/or duplicate submission are easily established. In other cases, the misdeed is not caught, and in one rare instance, the same manuscript was published in two different publications (although not of the same Society). Reviewers and AEs must be vigilant and report suspicions.

Sanctions regarding plagiarism shall be adjudicated by IEEE when discovered and documented. Such behavior not only constitutes a publishing misdeed, but may be actionable by IEEE under the rules of Member Conduct. When it occurs that an entire

manuscript or large parts (more than 25%) of a manuscript exactly mirrors a second manuscript, this must be reported immediately to the transactions Editor-in-Chief.

The EMBS Society is prepared to exert the following sanctions regarding duplicate submissions. When duplicate submissions (the same manuscript submitted to two different publications for consideration) are discovered and found to be deliberate:

- (1) the manuscript submitted to the Society's transactions will be immediately rejected;
- (2) all authors [that is, any single, paired, or group of the authors to the duplicate manuscript] of that manuscript will be prevented from submitting new manuscripts to any of the Society's publications for one calendar year; and,
- (3) any manuscripts under review by any of the authors of the duplicate submission will have their manuscripts returned to them immediately, regardless of the stage of peer review.

Note that this sanction will not harm innocent co-authors on manuscripts other than the duplicate submission.

Once again, thanks for your participation as an Associate Editor for the transactions of the IEEE EMBS Society. The combination of your hard work and dedication, along with the Society's investment in the timeliness of publication, will not only further increase the quality of the Society's journals, but will make them a model for all of IEEE.