

# Peer Review Cycle of *Neural Networks* in EM

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The mission of the review cycle of *Neural Networks* is to provide its authors **prompt and quality** reviews. Please keep this mission in mind when you conduct reviews.

In Editorial Manager (EM), a manuscript (MS) is first submitted to an Editor-in-Chief (EIC) office. Each submission is assigned an MS number that uniquely identifies the submission. If the MS passes the initial assessment by the EIC, i.e. not rejected by the EIC right away, the EIC assigns the MS to an Action Editor (AE). This assignment is primarily based on the match with the areas of expertise stated by the AEs (posted on the journal website), also taking into account the workload of each AE.

The following description is for the submission of a regular article or review, which accounts for the vast majority of submissions to *Neural Networks*. Other types of submissions are briefly discussed towards the end.

## **Step 1: AE Assignment: One Week**

As stated in the assignment letter, the AE is expected to respond to the assignment within a week. If the AE has the conflict of interest, such as being a recent collaborator or colleague in the same institution with the author, please decline the assignment and alert the EIC office of the conflict.

If the AE declines the assignment, the MS goes back to the EIC office and will be assigned to a different AE.

## **Step 2: Assignment of Reviewers: One Week**

- See the AE Guide for information regarding how to identify appropriate and sufficient reviewers for the MS.
- As stated in the default reviewer invitation email, each reviewer is asked to respond to the invitation within one week and complete the review within 4 weeks.
- Once a reviewer has agreed to review the paper in EM, a thank-you email to the reviewer is generated that states the review due date formally. A reviewer, of course, has the option of declining the invitation.
- A non-responding reviewer will be automatically uninvited after two reminders (see AE Guide for details.)
- The AE is notified via email when a reviewer either accepts or declines the invitation. The AE should secure at least three reviewers, and this means to invite new reviewers if not enough acceptances are obtained.
- See the AE Guide on how automatic reviewer reminders work within EM.

## **Step 3: Monitoring the Peer Review Process: Four Weeks**

- See the AE Guide on how automatic reviewer reminders work. Note that automatic reviewer reminders are not copied to the AE. If a reviewer does not submit the review 7 days passing the 4-week window, the AE should contact him/her directly. If the reviewer still does not provide the review promptly, it is essential that the AE look for a replacement reviewer and request an early review if not enough reviews exist. Note that the active involvement of the AE is critical as most significant delays occur at this point.
- Once two review reports are submitted, both the AE and the EIC receive an email stating “Required number of reviews are complete”. If more review reports are expected, simply ignore the email. You will receive this email every time a new report is received.
- Out of the courtesy to your invited reviewers, **do not** make a recommendation until all agreed reviewers have submitted their reports within their given time, as this step will terminate those reviewers who have not submitted their reviews. On the other hand, you may terminate a reviewer if he/she fails to deliver the report within the given time and you have enough reports to make a justified recommendation.

#### **Step 4: AE Recommendation: One Week**

- At the point where all reviews are available, the AE should make a recommendation as soon as possible.
- With at least two reviews available and the review deadline passed, the AE should look at the available reviews and decide whether to render a recommendation. If yes, the AE has to terminate the remaining reviewers who have not submitted a report, with the option of generating a polite message informing them that the decision has been made. We strongly recommend that you **take this option** of informing the remaining reviewers so as to save them the time to prepare a useless review.
- The AE, based on the reviews of the manuscript, makes an editorial recommendation to the EIC. The AE may recommend **Accept, Revise and Accept, Revise and Reconsider, and Reject**. These recommendations should be self-explanatory with the following note:
  - In the case of “Accept”, the MS goes to the production stage without asking the author to submit the final version. So if there are minor changes for the author to consider, the recommendation should be “Revise and Accept”, not “Accept”.
- As noted in the AE Guide, enter some justification for your recommendation. The decision on the MS rests with the EIC, who by default will agree with the AE recommendation.
- The EIC decision email is copied to the AE and the reviewers as a default, and the decision letter should be viewable to the reviewers from their accounts as well.

#### **Step 5: Revised Manuscript**

The author is given 2 months to upload the first revision, and 6 weeks for the second revision and beyond. If the author requires more time, an extension request has to be made to the EIC.

##### **Step 5.1: Review of “Revised and Reconsider” Manuscript: Four Weeks**

- The review process for such a revised MS is similar to that for a new MS except for the following differences/simplifications:

- As the revised MS contains a point-to-point reply to each review comment, AE should invite the reviewers who previously reviewed the MS. EM is set up to facilitate this.
- Although not explicitly mentioned in the assignment/invitation letters, for a revised MS, you should refrain from recommending “Revise and Resubmit” again. This is to expedite the review cycle, and avoid trapping an MS endlessly.

### **Step 5.2: Review of “Revised and Accept” Manuscript: One Week**

- In this case, depending the number of revisions and the total review time so far, the EIC office may decide not to engage the AE when a revised version is deemed to have sufficiently addressed minor concerns. Regardless whether the AE is asked to look over the revision, such a revised MS should not be returned to the reviewers for another round of review. The revised MS should be checked and decided within one week either by the AE or the EIC.

## **OTHER TYPES OF SUBMISSIONS**

In addition to articles and reviews, *Neural Networks* considers the following types of submission:

- Letters
- Letters to the Editor

The Letters type is intended for short contributions aiming for rapid publication, and review times are shortened accordingly (from 4 weeks to 3 weeks). In addition, a submission that requires substantial revision should be rejected, and its authors should be encouraged to submit a revised version as a regular article. Hence, do not recommend the “Revise and Reconsider”, which is explicitly stated on the recommendation dropdown list.