

MANUAL FOR JOURNAL EDITORS

This Manual has been prepared to acquaint editors and associate editors of primary research journals published by the American Mathematical Society with their official duties and standard procedures to be followed when handling manuscripts.

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WEBSITES OF INTEREST

- AMS Journals Home Page: <http://www.ams.org/journals/>
- AMS Journal Author Resources: <http://www.ams.org/authors/journals/journal-list>
- Journal Author Packages: <http://www.ams.org/authors/journals/journalpackages>
- Author-Related Frequently Asked Questions: <http://www.ams.org/authors/author-faq.html>
- Guidelines for Journal Editors: <http://www.ams.org/secretary/guidelines-irl-editors.html>
- EditFlow Login Page: <http://www.ams.org/editflow>
- Benefits of LaTeX: <http://www.ams.org/jourhtml/latexbenefits.html>
- TeX Resources Home Page: <http://www.ams.org/tex/>
- AMS Style Guide for Journals: <http://www.ams.org/publications/authors/AMS-StyleGuide-online.pdf>

Standard Procedures for Handling Manuscripts

A. Scientific Aspects

Editors are primarily responsible for accepting or rejecting manuscripts (or for recommending acceptance or rejection to the Chief Editor, depending on each journal's set up). In carrying out this responsibility, editors are encouraged to adopt a critical attitude, accepting only those papers that contain new research results and good exposition, are clearly written, and will be of interest to an appreciable number of readers. Although referees make recommendations for acceptance or rejection of papers, the final decision rests with the editor. Furthermore, as the ones who choose the referees, editors hold the final responsibility for the quality of accepted papers. By acting as liaisons between authors and the Society, editors assist the Society in maintaining respectful relations with authors. Please refer to the "[Guidelines for Journal Editors: To guide the decision making process](#)", which were endorsed by the [Council](#) of the American Mathematical Society in January 2005 to ensure that all authors feel respected and that the Society's journals maintain a high reputation.

1. Criteria for Recommending Publication. Although each journal should have its own statement of editorial policy for acceptance of papers, the set of criteria listed below may be taken as a standard.

- a. Papers must be correct. While this is basically the author's responsibility, the referee must be reasonably convinced of the accuracy of the paper.
- b. Papers must be new in a nontrivial sense; e.g., a collection of new definitions and deductions therefrom is not publishable unless the author shows that (or unless it is clear that) it simplifies or solves some existing problem(s) of reasonable importance. Similarly, a new theorem with an old proof may not be publishable. The editorial committee should collectively strive to seek out papers that will enable the journal to meaningfully represent contemporary mathematical research in its many dynamic facets. There should be a consensus of the committee as to the standards of excellence which will ensure this objective, and the quality of a paper should be judged on this basis.
- c. Papers must be of interest to an appreciable number of readers, not just to the author's students and select colleagues.
- d. Papers must be written clearly; at least, the referee should be able to understand them without undue difficulty. In a paper which is otherwise marginal, failure in this respect could be cause for rejection.

2. Functions Performed by the Editor in Evaluating Manuscripts. The three main functions performed by editors in handling manuscripts are: **preliminary evaluation**, **selection of referees**, and **final evaluation**. The scientific aspects of these procedures are described below. The first step upon receipt of a manuscript, however, is to decide whether or not it has arrived at the appropriate editor. If a manuscript must be forwarded to another editor, the author should be notified of this action when receipt of the manuscript is acknowledged. Most manuscripts can be reassigned through EditFlow, the Society's web-based peer-review workflow tool for journal editors (see Section B, 2. [Tracking Manuscripts in peer review](#)).

- a. **Preliminary evaluation.** The editor should scan the paper for content to determine whether it should be assigned to a referee. Occasionally, it will be immediately apparent that the results of a paper have already been published or that the paper itself is nonsense. In such cases, the editor may reject or recommend rejection of the paper in EditFlow with a tactful letter explaining the

reason for rejection (see Section B, 2. [Tracking Manuscripts in Peer Review](#)). Most papers, however, will be bona fide and will require refereeing.

- b. **Selection of a referee.** By experience, an editor acquires a list of conscientious referees as well as a list of individuals who have been unsatisfactory referees because they failed to read a paper, they kept it too long, or they rejected it without giving a reason. In fact, one of the most useful resources an editor can give to a successor is a list of unsatisfactory referees along with a list of suggested referees.

A referee is asked to recommend acceptance, rejection, or revision of papers; the final decision rests with the editor.

- **Referee's report:** A referee's report should be based on a thorough reading of the paper, and recommendations for rejection or revision should be clear and well founded. Because the referee must remain anonymous, the report should be submitted without revealing the identity of the referee. The referee's report can then be included in the editor's report to the author.
- **Refereeing time:** Each referee who agrees to review a manuscript will be asked to agree to a target date for completion of a report. An editor should send a reminder to the referee if the referee has not supplied the report by the target date (target dates are automatically tracked in EditFlow and a reminder letter is also available).

- c. **Final evaluation.**

Acceptance: If the referee has recommended acceptance of a paper without comment or substantial criticism and the editor agrees, the editor should accept or recommend acceptance of the paper in EditFlow. Information for authors about final preparation of the paper and file submission is included in the acceptance letter from EditFlow, except for *Proceedings* and *Transactions*. (The acceptance letter for these journals informs the author about the option to publish in the gold open access *Proceedings, Series B, or Transactions, Series B*, journals. Final preparation and file submission information is sent to the author after this decision.) This action will automatically inform the AMS Production Department of the acceptance of the paper (see Section B, 4. [Final Correspondence](#)). Editors should make sure the final accepted version of the paper has been uploaded before confirming acceptance in EditFlow.

Rejection: If the referee has recommended that a paper be rejected and the editor agrees, the editor should reject or recommend rejection of the paper in EditFlow. This action will automatically inform the AMS Production Department of the rejection. The referee's report will be available for attachment in the rejection letter from EditFlow. If the referee's reasons for rejection of a paper are unsatisfactory or appear to be biased in some way, the editor should seek a second opinion on the paper.

Revision: If the referee has suggested that the paper be revised, the editor should make sure that the reasons are clear and the suggestions are reasonable. The report can then be forwarded directly to the author or Chief Editor in EditFlow. Revisions should be made and the **final accepted version** should be uploaded to EditFlow before the editor confirms acceptance.

B. Nonscientific Aspects

This section describes the procedural aspects of handling a manuscript after initial submission to the AMS.

1. **Centralized Manuscript Submission.** Submission of articles to AMS journals is centralized in the Providence Production office. Articles are submitted to the Providence office by the author in one of two formats: PDF file or paper. Electronic (PDF) files are submitted through a web-based interface individualized for each journal, which moves submissions automatically into EditFlow, AMS's web-based

peer-review tracking tool for editors (<http://www.ams.org/editflow>). Paper submissions are mailed to the Providence office. Manuscripts received in paper format are scanned by staff to create PDF files which are entered into EditFlow. Providence staff evaluates the submission for completeness, informs the author of receipt, and releases the article to the appropriate editor in EditFlow.

- 2. Tracking Manuscripts in Peer Review.** EditFlow allows editors to record the various steps that take place during the peer-review process, maintain the most recent PDF file of the manuscript, reassign papers to another editor (an option for some journals), manage the refereeing process, and notify the author and the AMS when a paper has been accepted or rejected. For help using EditFlow, go to <http://www.ams.org/editflow/editflow-manual.pdf> or contact editflow-support@ams.org. Editors can also arrange for their support staff to gain access to EditFlow by contacting editflow-support@ams.org.
- 3. Recording the Refereeing Process.** Use EditFlow to track manuscripts during the refereeing process to make it easy to follow up on outstanding manuscripts.
- 4. Final Correspondence.** It is the responsibility of the editor (or Chief Editor) to notify authors of acceptance or rejection of a paper using EditFlow.
 - a. If the referee has recommended acceptance, and the editor agrees, the editor should accept or recommend acceptance of the paper in EditFlow. EditFlow will provide an acceptance letter that includes instructions to the author for sending the final version of the electronic source files for the manuscript to the Providence office immediately after acceptance (except for *Proceedings* and *Transactions*). (The acceptance letter for these journals informs the author about the option to publish in the gold open access *Proceedings, Series B*, or *Transactions, Series B*, journals. Final file submission information is sent to the author after decision.) The file submitted should **exactly** match the final accepted version of the paper.
See <http://www.ams.org/jourhtml/submitms.html> (*Submitting Your Accepted Article*) for detailed information on accepted article submission.
 - b. If the referee has recommended revision of the paper, request a revision from the author in EditFlow. The referee's report can be attached automatically to the request. Instructions for final preparation of the paper and a link for uploading the revised file are supplied in the request letter (see Section A, 2.c. [Final evaluation](#)). If the manuscript still does not contain an abstract, subject classification numbers, or proper graphics at this point, remind the author of this fact and send the appropriate instructions (see [Appendix A](#)).
 - c. If the referee has recommended rejection, and the editor agrees, the editor should reject or recommend rejection of the paper in EditFlow. The referee's report will be available for attachment in the rejection letter from EditFlow (see Section A, 2.c. [Final evaluation](#)).
- 5. Miscellaneous.** Authors or keyboarders who are preparing articles for submission to the AMS, including electronic and non-electronic manuscripts, may retrieve an author package from the AMS website through the URL <http://www.ams.org/publications/journals/journalpackages>.

The publication [Mathematics Into Type: Updated Edition](#) may be useful for answering general questions about publishing and has suggestions for authors submitting a manuscript. It is mainly concerned with composition and proofs. Such knowledge is useful in assisting authors to provide a good manuscript. This publication is freely available at <http://www.ams.org/publications/authors/mit-2.pdf>. Authors can also use the [AMS Style Guide for Journals](#) for information on AMS journal style.

Appendix A

Information for Authors of Accepted Papers for AMS Publications

AMS-LaTeX Author Packages

The AMS offers an AMS-LaTeX style file collection, which provides an easy way to code manuscripts containing mathematical expressions. The AMS has developed AMS-LaTeX author packages that include documentation and instructions, publication-specific style files, and examples.

To download an author package, go to: <http://www.ams.org/authors/journalpackages.html>.

Descriptive Title

Each article submitted for publication in an AMS journal must be accompanied by a descriptive title. Make your title as informative as possible, clearly identifying both the general field of the paper and the particular branch of it under consideration. The title should not be more than 10 or 12 words and fewer words are better. Note that titles may be used in information retrieval; therefore, every word counts. Avoid words and phrases that convey nothing and waste space, such as “concerning”, “a remark about”, or “some contributions to the theory of”. Proper names should be avoided unless mathematical usage associates them with the work. An example of a non-descriptive title: “Concerning some applications of a theorem of John Doe”.

Abstract

Papers for AMS journals must be accompanied by an abstract. The main purpose of the abstract is to enable readers to take in the nature and results of the article quickly and to enable them to decide whether they wish to read further. Most abstracts will be printed right below the title in a different type size to separate it from the rest of the paper. Abstracts for the *Journal of the AMS*, however, do not appear in print; they appear only in the online version. [Zentralblatt](#) publishes authors’ abstracts instead of reviews, so the abstract may also appear there. Of course, the abstract will also aid in retrieving information about your paper.

Length. For *Proceedings* and *Proceedings, Series B*, an abstract should be at least one sentence and at most 150 words; for the *Journal of the AMS*, *Transactions*, *Transactions, Series B*, *Memoirs*, *Conformal Geometry*, and *Representation Theory*, at least one sentence and at most 300 words; for *Mathematics of Computation* and *Bulletin*, the abstract should be brief and reasonably self-contained. The length will depend primarily on the length of the paper itself, so that the upper limits placed on abstracts for *Proceedings*, *Proceedings, Series B*, *Journal of the AMS*, *Transactions*, *Transactions, Series B*, and *Memoirs* are meant for long papers only. To some extent, the difficulty of summarizing the material also determines the length.

Content. State the object of the work, summarize the results, and give the principal conclusions as briefly as possible.

Style. Use full sentences. Avoid technicalities, since the abstract should be readable by anyone in the general field (analysis, algebra, etc.). Formulas are not desirable, but they may be included if it seems best to do so. Do not cite bibliographic references, since the abstract must be able to stand alone. Similarly, do not refer by number to a theorem or formula in the body of the article. Incorporate the statements of theorems into complete sentences. “We prove that all hyperloops are quasiregular” is preferable to “Theorem. All hyperloops are quasiregular.” For information on AMS journal style, see the [AMS Style Guide for Journals](#) at <http://www.ams.org/publications/authors/AMS-StyleGuide-online.pdf>.

Relation to introduction. Occasionally, an abstract will make an introduction unnecessary. More typically, however, the abstract will be too brief, and the introduction should expand upon it, provide more background, and describe earlier work.

Example. The following abstract is from Guillaume Chèze, *A recombination algorithm for the decomposition of multivariate rational functions*, *Math. Comp.* **82** (2013), 1793-1812.

Abstract. In this paper we show how we can compute in a deterministic way the decomposition of a multivariate rational function with a recombination strategy. The key point of our recombination strategy is the use of Darboux polynomials. We study the complexity of this strategy and we show that this method improves the previous ones. In the appendix, we explain how the strategy proposed recently by J. Berthomieu and G. Lecerf for the sparse factorization can be used in the decomposition setting. Then we deduce a decomposition algorithm in the sparse bivariate case and we give its complexity.

2010 Mathematics Subject Classification

Each article submitted for publication in an AMS journal must be accompanied by 2010 Mathematics Subject Classification (MSC) numbers. These numbers classify the paper by field. They are used for information retrieval; by assigning these numbers properly, you ensure that people interested in your work will see it. Depending on the journal, the numbers will be printed in a footnote on the first page of your article and will appear on the online abstract page for all AMS journals. See the [2010 Mathematics Subject Classification](#) webpage for a complete list of 2010 MSCs. Authors should designate primary subject fields as well as secondary fields, if they are applicable. Keep in mind that several primary (and secondary) numbers should be assigned, but try not to choose more than ten total primary or secondary numbers.

Key Words and Phrases

For the sake of non-specialists (such as librarians), as well as to aid in future information retrieval, a list of key words and phrases is very helpful. The list should be generous; however, it should not include words that would appear in almost any paper in the general field. Thus, “cohomology group” would be appropriate for a paper in Lie algebras but not for a paper in algebraic topology.

Style. List phrases in the natural groupings in which they occur in the paper (e.g., differential form, locally compact groups, deformations of algebras). Proper adjectives are especially useful in pinpointing the subject matter (e.g., Sobolev space). Reduce compounds to their components so that “convergence in mean or measure” becomes “convergence in mean, convergence in measure”. The phrases and words should be taken from the body of the paper, the title, and the abstract. Avoid long phrases. In general, an item should have four words or less. Use as many items as you need to distinguish the field of the paper clearly and specifically.

For example:

Key words and phrases. Analytically unramified ring, semilocal ring, Dedekind domain, altitude formula, Jacobson radical, Rees ring, analytically irreducible domain, unmixed domain.

Preparation and Submission of Graphics

Instructions for preparing graphics are supplied in "Creating Graphics for Use in Books and Journals" found at: <http://www.ams.org/pub/author-info/documentation/creating-graphics.pdf>

Submitting Accepted Articles

Instructions for submitting accepted articles can be found online at: <http://www.ams.org/jourhtml/submitms.html>.

Files that are bundled may be submitted by any acceptable method. The preferred method is via the AMS web server; other acceptable methods are email (bundled and source files only), FTP, or on CD.

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