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**V4 Seminars for Young Scientists on Publishing Techniques
in the Field of Engineering Science**

About reviews in a nutshell
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Literature


Table of contents:

- What is a review?
- Review of conference abstracts and papers.
- Plagiarism check and its considerations.
- Review of a journal paper manuscript.
- Answer letters and rebuttals.
- Review from the „other side” of the paper.
- Summary.

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What is a review?


Review: a process by which something proposed (as for research or publication) is evaluated by a group of experts in the appropriate field
(Source: Merriam-Webster)

The review is usually focused on ethically criticizing your work to ensure the highest quality of publication or presentation.

Publications peer review can point to:

- Abstracts on a conference;
- Papers on a conference;
- Manuscript for a journal.



Most scientists regarded the new streamlined peer-review process as 'quite an improvement.'

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ON A CONFERENCE


Review on a conference (abstract): after sending your abstract to the conference, the scientific committee reviews the abstract.

Points of review:

- Is it fitting to the topic?
- What is the **scientific merit**?
- What are the main comments, what are the main problems with the abstract?
- Is it fitting for the conference's publication possibilities (e.g. IEEE Xplore, aim for special issue of a journal?)



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ON A CONFERENCE


The scientific committee can pick the outstanding and the worst quality papers at this point.

The outcome:

- **Accept** (gives you the possibility to send in the paper for the conference);
- **Revision** (Accept after corrections);
- **Accept with the omission from publishing in the associated publication possibility (IEEE papers, special journal issue);**
- **Reject** (no possibility for accept);
 - Due to plagiarism.
 - Due to the low quality of the research, communication, or the results. (rare)




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PLAGIARISM


Plagiarism check: Online service, which checks your submission and compares with available data on the internet and online databases, libraries (papers).

Example: **iThenticate**  See video (3 mins) <https://vimeo.com/210865038>

- Scans the aforementioned sources;
- Most scholarly journals and publishers use iThenticate (or Cross Check).
- 49,000,000 - Scholarly articles, books, and conferences proceedings from
 - 115,000 scientific, technical, and medical journals;
 - 105,000,000 - Published works from journals, periodicals, magazines, encyclopedias, and abstracts;
 - 60,000,000,000 - Current and archived web pages (web crawler!).



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PLAGIARISM


With manual check, the reviewer can distinguish self- and general plagiarism.

- Not all publishers allow self plagiarism (it is added to overall percentage)
- Highlighted "citation quotes" also counts to the percentage!
- Biography, Acknowledgement, References ...



Usual outcome of Plagiarism check:

- 0-5% source can be found on other sources (good result)
- 5-15% source is copied (not so good result, can be questionable)
- 20% and above (can result in rejection of paper)

The rule can be (but not necessarily) different for conferences and journal papers:
 CONFERENCE: lower plagiarism percentage can result in rejection.
 JOURNAL PAPERS: allow higher percentage due to deeper discussion of the topics.

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PLAGIARISM


How can the automated plagiarism check be refined? What if it overshoots?
 Usually the editor (or the publication chief of a conference) uses **manual refinements** on the check. Manual **exclusions** can be performed.

The exclusions can be according to:

- Acknowledgement, biography, etc... (can be the same in different papers).
- Small matches (below and around 1% similarity... can be randomly found on the internet!)
- Quotes (if a part is properly quoted, it might be omitted)
- Materials and methods part (still not very common)
- References (they can be found anywhere on the web).



20% overall plagiarism is still a permissive value! Do not argue or get upset with the editor, while she/he works on his best to evaluate your work!

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ON A CONFERENCE


Review on a conference (paper): after seeding your paper to the conference, the peer-review scientific committee checks the paper.

Points of review:

- Similar to journal paper reviews;
- Sometimes leads to publication in journals.
- Journal special issues; if the paper is recommended for publication there, then the review is going along to the rules of the journal paper.
- Sometimes these reviews are less rigorous than a direct submission to a journal.



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Review in a journal paper: after seeding your manuscript to the given editor, two or three assigned reviewers oppose your material.

The editor chooses according to the following points:

- Experts of the field, or known authors by the editor;
- Most reviewers are well experienced reviewers while editors like to ask a reliable person for the work.
- Sometimes you can suggest persons who you not want to review your work (due to conflicts of interest, personal problems, etc.)
- Sometimes you can suggest persons who you do want to review your work (e.g.. Professors who know the topic well)

The review should go along the unwritten/written laws of science ethics.

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Review in a journal paper: different levels are available for journal reviews.

The outcomes:

- **Accept** (direct accept -> you are good to go!);
- **Minor revision** (still a decent decision, while the paper has only minimal problems, which can be corrected in a few hours);
- **Major revision** (request for a bigger overhaul on the article; sometimes re-measuring or recalculating results);
- **Reject** (No chance of getting into the paper);

Out of the paper's scope. → Due to plagiarism or overall low quality.

If the paper is accepted, there is a step of spell-check, proofreading, and format revision, if requested by the editor of the journal.

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State of reject: can also be a decision due to some „commercial aspects“ and publication risks from the side of the publisher. The editor’s decision is still „out of scope“ in this matter, but it is not exactly the case.

Your first paper will be extra difficult, while you have „no name“ in the field. The editor takes a risk with your work: *“Will it bring enough citations to carry on the high level of the journal metrics?”* (e.g.: IF, and other rankings)

What to do in this case?

- **Do not panic!** Try elsewhere, shoot for a journal with more moderate quality aspects! Someone will appreciate your work!
- **Add authors with names!** Your boss might have a name in the field, why not put him in the front row? Or ask his help in writing a motivational cover letter?

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IN JOURNAL PAPERS

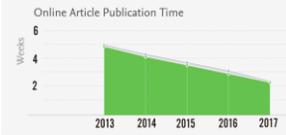

Review in a journal paper: The time of reviewing is a crucial aspect for your progress in PhD studies, application for grants, etc.
 The journals are striving for better and better review times, to make publication more efficient, however there are still some bad practices.

Best cases: a few weeks after first submission → ADDS TO 2-3 months!
Worst cases: 6-12 months after first submission → ADDS TO 1-2 years!

Better journals strive for better publication times. → Journal Metrics (Elsevier)

Journal insights:
International Journal of Heat and Mass Transfer

Check for these!



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After review


Response letter: a letter of reply to the editor after decision. Like the first cover letter sent in during the first submission.

It must be a short letter accepting the decision, or debating it to the editor, if there is a logical space for debate. (Some reasons were might omitted during decision.)

Tips for rebuttal cover letter:

- Be very straightforward and short.
- Long cover letters can be distracting.
- Do not be offended by a result, please try to be understanding.
- Describe and highlight the system of formats to the editor which you will use in your rebuttal.



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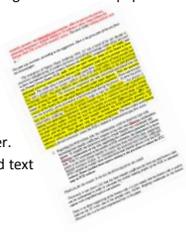

After review


Rebuttal: a letter for replying to the reviewer's comment.

It is suggested to systematically answer point by point, also including exact reply for the given questions, or even highlighting changes made in the paper.

Tips for rebuttal:

- Point out answers to all problems. Do not be tricky with avoiding cardinal questions.
- Be polite, but not OVERLY polite!
(Yes sir, thank you my good sir, sir, yes!)
- Show the highlighted changes in the rebuttal letter.
- Distinguish your answers from questions and cited text with formatting in the rebuttal letter.
- Share your formatting system with the reviewer.



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Your first review from the other side


After a few papers you might get recognized by editors in the field. This means you will be assigned to your first review as a reviewer. (For free, ofc.)

The opportunity can come from your boss or a colleague (after recommendation); or it can come after the editor finds your works in a field.

Tips for being an efficient and good reviewer:

- Stick to the written and unwritten laws of **ethics** and **scientific demands**.
- Try to figure out **conceptual problems** or **logical pitfalls**.
- Try to show that you read the paper in details -> **point to small problems** as well, not just throwing in criticism about the big picture.
- It is hard to pinpoint problems in mathematical models -> search for unit problems. They might reveal failures in the presented equations, etc.
- Give appreciation to the **good points** as well. Criticism has two sides.
- **Be on time** -> the editor might appreciate your reliable and fast help!

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Appreciation of an outstanding reviewer


You might get awarded! This fact can help you in later challenges (better rank at the department, habilitation, DSc preparations, CV, publication in the journal, etc.)



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Summary


Reviews in a nutshell -> from conferences to journal papers!

- Do not panic: with every criticism, there is a message which can help you achieve the publication!
- Prepare time to have a proper review, do not haste this step of the publication process.
- Ask for help from more experienced colleagues, when in doubt!

Every review round will make you more experienced in publication - > it is for your own good!

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