

Journal of Robotics and Mechatronics

Review Rules

1. Purpose of Review

The Journal of Robotics and Mechatronics (JRM) reviews all submitted manuscripts to maintain a high academic journal standard. Excluded are articles such as editorial notes and requested articles.

2. Review Procedure

In principle, two referees review an article considered to meet JRM's editorial standards. For manuscripts other than academic papers, the review may be conducted by one referee. The editor-in-chief appoints a review commissioner for a submitted regular paper and may act concurrently as the review commissioner. The review commissioner appoints two reviewers and gives an evaluation to a manuscript based on the four categories in Section 5.1 based on recommendations by the reviewers. A submitted paper is generally accepted for publication in JRM when both reviewers judge the paper to be acceptable. If reviewers' evaluations differ greatly, the review commissioner makes the final decision. The review commissioner may, if necessary, appoint a third reviewer for an opinion. For a paper submitted to a special issue, the editorial member in charge of the special issue and a guest editor take the roles of review commissioners.

3. Reviewer Selection Criteria

Reviewers are selected based on the criteria such as:

- i) expertise in the field of the article's subject
- ii) reputation
- iii) recommendation by others
- iv) actual performance in previous reviews for JRM.

Co-authors of a submitted article or persons with a potential conflict of interest with the author are not appointed as reviewers. Reviewers need not belong to the JRM editorial committee.

4. Review Process

4.1 Selecting and appointing reviewers

When an article is submitted, a JRM editorial member or a guest editor with expertise in the article's subject is appointed as the review commissioner. The review commissioner is fully responsible for the article's review. Based on the selection criteria

in Section 3, the review commissioner selects two candidate reviewers and judges whether the article is acceptable based on review results. The review process is reported to the editorial committee through the editor-in-chief. The review commissioner must be careful not to appoint certain reviewers too often. As with reviewer selection, co-authors of the submitted article or persons with a potential conflict of interest with the author are not appointed as review commissioners.

4.2 Timing for review and rewriting

Reviewers are appointed within one week of when an article is submitted. Reviewers must finish the first review within four weeks. For an article that is “Conditionally Accepted,” a second review must be finished within one week. An article evaluated for “Revise and Resubmit” is reviewed a second within two weeks. Authors are given about two weeks to rewrite “Conditionally Accepted” articles and four weeks for “Revise and Resubmit” articles. Reviewers and authors must meet the above deadlines unless a prior agreement is made with the review commissioner. Reviewers and/or authors must inform the review commissioner of any anticipated delays. If an author does not contact the review commissioner within three months after a rewriting request, submission is treated to be withdrawn.

4.3 Completing review forms

Reviewers must complete review forms sent with requests by the review commissioner, including the reviewer’s name, affiliation, address, contact information, article title, and author’s name. Reviewers check one of the following review result categories on the review form: “Accepted,” “Conditionally Accepted,” “Revise and Resubmit,” or “Rejected.” In the “Comments to Authors” section, reviewers write comments on changes necessary to make the manuscript acceptable and questions to be answered by the author. Other views – comments that the reviewer does not wish to show to the author, comments for reference only, and opinions to be discussed by the JRM editorial committee – should be written in the “Confidential Comments” section. The reviewer must fill out the form in English, unless the author is Japanese, in which case Japanese may be used. The completed form must be emailed or faxed to the review commissioner. Review results must be communicated through the review commissioner because authors and reviewers are not allowed to contact each other directly. If necessary, the review commissioner may delete or change inappropriate expressions, typing errors, and omissions on the review form.

4.4 Reporting review results

After an overall review result is determined based on two referees' recommendations, the review commissioner immediately informs the author of the result and referees' comments, and if necessary, requests changes in the manuscript. Information identifying reviewers – names, contact information, etc. – and confidential comments are deleted from review forms. The review commissioner carefully manages the review form and information on reviewers so that such information cannot be accessed by others. For an “Accepted” article, the editor-in-chief or the editorial member in charge of the special issue sends the author a notice of acceptance.

4.5 Requesting for second reviews

If a second review is needed, the review commissioner requests this of referees by sending the rewritten draft and author's replies to review comments. The reviewer does not receive an author's replies to another reviewer's comments. For an article evaluated for “Revise and Resubmit” in the first review, the result of the second review is either “Accepted” or “Rejected.” If the reviewer requests minor changes that do not require further review, however, results may be “Conditionally Accepted.”

5. Review Criteria

5.1 Evaluation

Review criteria differ with the type of submitted manuscript, as defined in Section 4 of Instructions for Authors. A reviewer chooses from one of the following four evaluation categories:

i) Accepted

No change or only minor corrections such as spelling mistakes are needed to meet publication criteria. The author is responsible for making such changes. No second review is necessary.

ii) Conditionally Accepted

Publication criteria are met except for changes and questions by reviewers that must be cleared. If necessary, the rewritten draft is reviewed a second time. If only simple changes are required, the review commissioner checks changes and no second review is needed. The review commissioner judges whether a second review is necessary.

iii) Revise and Resubmit

Major revision(s) must be made to meet publication criteria. The author must revise and improve the manuscript, which will then be reviewed a second time.

iv) Rejected

The manuscript does not meet publication criteria. Reviewers must clarify specific reasons why a submission is not accepted. Rewritten drafts returned by authors are treated as new submissions.

5.2 Review elements

Referees review the elements below. Required elements differ with the type of manuscript based on publication criteria prescribed in Instructions for Authors. If reviewers deem it necessary, advice and suggestions other than those below are welcomed.

i) Originality and novelty

An academic paper is evaluated for novelty and originality added to the field of research. Reviewers judge whether the paper provides valuable conclusions or facts and whether the paper's discussion shows originality.

ii) Usefulness

The objective of JRM is to introduce technologies useful to scholastic work and to industry. Referees therefore review an article's conclusions, arguments, considerations, and suggestions for their contribution to technological development, their potential and possible applications, and whether they include implications for social usefulness.

iii) Academic value

JRM accepts only academic articles. This means that references to business advertising or religious or political beliefs or claims are not acceptable. Except for legitimate criticism, ethically questionable comments such as slander are not acceptable. Because JRM introduces technologies closely related to industry, so a minimum explanation of corporations and products may be acceptable.

iv) Overall quality

An article's overall quality – data, figure and table quality, investigation, writing, and citations – is evaluated comprehensively.

6. Confidentiality

Reviewers maintain strict confidentiality regarding the content of articles and reviews. When reviewers must ask a third party for an opinion in the review process, the third party also maintains strict confidentiality. Reviewers are responsible for protecting third-party confidentiality. The review commissioner and the editorial office maintain the same strict confidentiality. Reviews inevitably give reviewers access to unpublished manuscripts, so reviewers must take utmost care in preventing information leaks. Manuscripts and data are destroyed once a review is completed.

7. Anonymity

In JRM's review process, names and affiliations of reviewers remain anonymous to enable reviewers to present review results to authors without influence by others and to ensure legitimate, objective judgment. The editorial committee and the editor-in-chief do not answer inquiries by authors about reviewers.

8. Responsibility

The editorial committee is exclusively responsible for review content. For authors with inquiries about review content, the JRM editorial committee discusses and responds to such inquiries as sincerely as possible. In the review process, the editor-in-chief or the editorial member in charge of the special issue is responsible for ensuring that the process proceeds smoothly.

9. Notes

Reviewers' contributions assume a great role in JRM publication. Due to the anonymity in Section 7, we cannot express our appreciation to reviewers of individual articles, so the editorial committee and the editorial office would like to express their appreciation of reviewers' contributions by printing the names of reviewers supporting the JRM in final annual issues.

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