

AAAI 2020 Reviewing Guidelines

(Please email us with suggestions for additions)

Last updated: August 30, 2019

Executive Summary

- The deadline for completion of reviews is October 11.
- All AAAI papers should be solid scientific papers, regardless of their specific area. AAAI should not be considered a “second tier” conference in any area; papers should be held to at least the same standard as at any top conference in the area. Your review should be constructive, thorough, and polite.
- Please answer all review form questions following the review criteria and numeric scoring guide provided below at (4).
- Please let us know if you identify papers that are very similar to each other, or papers that you believe to be under review elsewhere, or if you notice anything else that seems wrong or unusual. The policy concerning dual submissions to other conferences or journals is outlined in the call for papers.
- An excellent summary of “best practices” for reviewing can be found here: <https://sites.umiacs.umd.edu/elm/2016/02/01/mistakes-reviewers-make/>

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1) Reviewing Timeline

- September 7: SPC Bids on Papers Due
- September 8: SPC Paper Assignments
- September 8-11: SPC summary rejection & request for specific PC members
- September 10: PC Bids on Papers Due
- September 14: PC Paper Assignments
- October 11: PC Reviews Due
- October 21-26: Post Feedback Discussion Period
- October 27: Deadline for Updates to PC Reviews

2) Useful URLs

- AAI-20 PC FAQ: <https://aaai.org/Conferences/AAAI-20/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/AAAI-20-FAQ.pdf>
- CMT Login: <https://cmt3.research.microsoft.com/AAAI2020/>
- Reviewing Best Practices: <https://sites.umiacs.umd.edu/elm/2016/02/01/mistakes-reviewers-make/>

3) Overview for Reviewers and SPC

Introduction

Thank you for reviewing for AAI-20. Your contributions are vital to the quality and success of the conference: the technical content of the program is largely determined by the efforts and comments of the reviewers. Below are instructions and guidelines that will help you write reviews efficiently and effectively.

General Information

An overview of the program committee structure and roles of Area Chairs (AC), Senior Program Committee members (SPC) and Program Committee reviewers (PC); CMT login information; and definition of conflicts of interest can be found at the AAI-20 PC FAQ [1].

Conference system access

All reviews must be entered electronically into the CMT3 system.

Reviewers may visit this site multiple times and revise their reviews as often as necessary before the reviewing deadline. When you were invited to serve as a reviewer, you should have been sent an email with instructions on how to login to the system. Use your email address (the one to which the invitation was sent) as the login id; you can change your password using the forgotten password feature.

During the review period, you will probably get many emails sent from CMT (e.g., those telling you about paper assignments). Please make sure emails from CMT are not snagged by your spam filter!

Confidentiality

By viewing the papers, you agree that the AAAI review process is confidential. Specifically, you agree not to use ideas and results from submitted papers in your work, research or grant proposals, unless and until that material appears in other publicly available formats, such as a technical report or as a published work. You also agree not to distribute submitted papers or the ideas in them to anyone unless approved by the program chairs. You also agree to not reveal the identity of any reviewers, PC members, SPC members, or Area Chairs to any outside parties, including the authors.

Double blind reviewing

This year, we will continue to use double blind reviewing. The authors do not know the identity of the reviewers; this also holds for authors who are on the program committee. In addition, the reviewers do not know the identity of the authors.

Of course, double blind reviewing is not perfect: by searching the internet, a reviewer may discover (or think he/she may have discovered) the identity of an author. You should not actively attempt to discover the identities of the authors. If you have good reason to suspect that a paper has been published in the past, you can go and search on the Internet, but we ask that you first completely read the paper. Also, based on the experience of other double-blind conferences, we caution reviewers that the assumed authors may not be the actual authors; multiple independent invention is common and different groups build on each other's work.

If you believe that you have discovered the identity of the author, please let us know in the "Confidential comments to SPC, AC and Program Chairs" in your review (see below).

Supplementary material

Some papers include supplementary material. Supplementary files are allowed to be submitted with up to 10M.

Your responsibility as a reviewer is to read and judge the main paper. Reading the supplementary material is optional and should be used solely to corroborate claims in the paper, not to introduce additional results. AAAI papers are limited in the space they provide. Consequently, you may want to consider looking at the supplementary material before complaining that the authors did not provide a fully rigorous proof of their theorems, or only demonstrated qualitative results on a small number of examples. Supplementary material may also include responses to earlier reviews of the paper. For accepted papers, when deciding whether to accept the paper as a talk or as a poster, it is advised to quickly check the beginning of the supplementary material to see if the authors included nice examples, etc., that would suggest a nice talk.

Resubmissions

Some papers are re-submissions from IJCAI-19, NeurIPS-19, or other conferences. We allow the authors to include prior reviews (in the supplementary materials) and cover pages explaining how they have addressed issues raised in these reviews. Please take this into

consideration at your own discretion.

Formatting issues

We ask that you double-check that your papers have followed the submission guidelines with respect to length (i.e. they are at most 8 pages, where the 8th page must contain ****only**** references), format, and anonymity, and that they are not joke papers! Please notify the Area Chair (AC) and SPC responsible for the paper if you find serious formatting issues or anonymity problems with a submitted paper.

Previously published work and dual submissions

Where possible, reviewers should identify submissions that are very similar (or identical) to versions that have been previously published, or that have been submitted in parallel to other conferences. A clarification of the “Policy Concerning Submissions to Other Conferences or Journals” can be found in the AAAI-20 Call for Papers. If you detect violations of this policy please note this in the “Confidential comments to SPC, AC and Program Chairs” section of the review form.

4) Review Criteria & Numeric Scoring Guide (to accompany review form)

All AAAI papers should be solid scientific papers, regardless of their specific area. AAAI should not be considered a “second tier” conference in any area; papers should be held to at least the same standard as at any top conference in the area. Your review should be constructive, thorough, and polite. Please take the time to fully assess your papers. Short superficial reviews that venture uninformed opinions about a paper are damaging. They may result in the rejection of a high quality paper that the reviewer simply failed to understand.

We judge the merit of a paper based on six criteria: Relevance; Significance; Technical Soundness; Novelty; Quality of Evaluation; and Clarity. For each criterion you have to register an assessment which corresponds to a numeric score, as outlined below. You should also provide detailed comments justifying your evaluation along with suggestions for improving the paper. Furthermore, please provide specific information on which issues you would like the authors to address in their author response.

Below we provide a detailed explanation of the different criteria and corresponding scores. While all criteria are important, we want to encourage highly original and novel papers, and therefore would like you to pay special attention to the "Novelty" criterion. We would prefer to see solid, technical papers that explore new territories or point out new directions for research, as opposed to ones that may advance the state of the art, but only incrementally. A solid paper that heads in a new and interesting direction is taking a risk that we want to reward.

Here is some guidance on the meaning of the criteria and their numerical scores.

Summary

In your own words, please summarize the main claims/contributions of the paper, relating the ideas to previous published work. While this part of the review may not provide much new information to authors, it is invaluable to members of the program committee, and it

demonstrates to the authors that you understand their paper.

Relevance

What is the relevance of this paper to an AI audience?

- 1) Not relevant
- 2) Of limited interest to an AI audience
- 3) Relevant to researchers in subarea only
- 4) Likely to be of interest to a large proportion of the community

Significance

Are the results important? Are other people (practitioners or researchers) likely to use these ideas or build on them? Does the paper address a difficult problem in a better way than previous research? Does it advance the state of the art in a demonstrable way? Does it provide unique data, unique conclusions on existing data, or a unique theoretical or pragmatic approach?

- 1) Not significant
- 2) Moderately significant
- 3) Significant
- 4) Highly significant

Novelty

Are the problems or approaches novel? Is this a novel combination of familiar techniques? Is it clear how this work differs from previous contributions? Is related work adequately referenced?

- 1) Not novel
- 2) Moderately novel
- 3) Novel
- 4) Very novel

Soundness

Is the paper technically sound? Are the concepts correct and accurate?

- 1) Has major errors
- 2) Has minor errors
- 3) Technically sound

Evaluation

Are claims well-supported by theoretical analysis or experimental results? How convincing is the evidence in support of the conclusions? Are the authors careful (and honest) about evaluating both the strengths and weaknesses of the work?

- 1) Not convincing
- 2) Somewhat weak
- 3) Sufficient
- 4) Very convincing

Clarity

Is the paper clearly written? Is it well-organized? (If not, feel free to make suggestions to

improve the manuscript.) Does it adequately inform the reader? (A superbly written paper provides enough information for the expert reader to reproduce its results.)

- 1) Poor
- 2) Satisfactory
- 3) Good
- 4) Excellent

Detailed Comments

Please use this area to provide rationale for the above criteria ratings. Also use this area for other comments, questions, and suggestions for how to improve the paper. Consider trying to articulate the strengths and weaknesses of the paper in advance of forming your overall assessment.

QUESTIONS FOR THE AUTHORS

Please provide questions for the authors to address during the author feedback period. If there are things you think are incorrect or unclear, this is your opportunity to have them addressed.

OVERALL SCORE

1. Trivial or wrong or known.
Clearly below AAAI threshold, I assume no further discussion is needed.
2. A strong rejection.
I will strongly argue for rejection.
3. A clear rejection.
I vote and argue for rejection.
4. An OK paper, but not good enough. A rejection.
I vote for rejecting it, although would not be upset if it were accepted.
5. Marginally below the acceptance threshold.
I tend to vote for rejecting it, but having it in the program would not be that bad.
6. Marginally above the acceptance threshold.
I tend to vote for accepting it, but leaving it out of the program would be no great loss.
7. Good paper, accept.
I vote for acceptance, although would not be upset if it were rejected.
8. Top 50% of accepted AAAI papers, a very good paper, a clear accept.
I vote and argue for acceptance.
9. Top 15% of accepted AAAI papers, an excellent paper, a strong accept.
I will fight for acceptance.
10. Top 5% of accepted AAAI papers, a seminal paper for the ages.
Clearly an outstanding paper. I assume no further discussion is needed.

CONFIDENCE

1: The reviewer's evaluation is an educated guess and it is quite likely that the reviewer did not understand central parts of the paper. Either the paper is not in the reviewer's area, or it was extremely difficult to understand

2: The reviewer is knowledgeable but the topic of the paper is outside their primary area of research. They are fairly confident that the evaluation is correct. It is possible that the reviewer did not understand certain parts of the paper, or that the reviewer was unfamiliar with a piece of relevant literature. Mathematics and other details were not carefully checked.

3: The reviewer is knowledgeable in the area of research of the paper and is confident but not absolutely certain that the evaluation is correct. It is unlikely but conceivable that the reviewer did not understand certain parts of the paper, or that the reviewer was unfamiliar with a piece of relevant literature.

4: The reviewer is an expert in the area of research and is absolutely certain that the evaluation is correct and very familiar with the relevant literature.

How Many Years Have You Worked in Artificial Intelligence?

Please specify how many years you have worked in this area. AC, SPC and other reviewers will see this information during the discussion phase.

- 1) 1 year
- 2) 2 years
- 3) 3 years
- 4) 4 years
- 5) 5 years
- 6) 6-10 years
- 7) 11-15 years
- 8) More than 15 years

Award

AAAI-20 sponsors outstanding papers awards, including an outstanding student paper award. If you have a truly outstanding paper, please consider nominating it.

5) Who to contact if you have a problem with your paper?

If you have a problem or concern with a paper, please contact the SPC and AC in charge. You can do this by following the steps detailed below. (If possible refrain from emailing the program chairs, Vince and Fei, directly.)

Contacting SPC/AC of a paper from within CMT3

CMT3 instructions on emailing the SPC of the paper:

- Make sure CMT3 is set to the “Reviewer” Console (i.e. you see “Reviewer” next to “Your Role” on the top)
- Click on “Action-Email Meta-Reviewers” (This will go to the SPC and AC on your paper.)

Contacting people in charge of the workflows

aaai20workflowchairs@aaai.org Haoming Li and Yury Zemlyanskiy (workflow chairs), and hamilton@aaai.org Carol Hamilton (executive director).

Contacting the program co-chairs

If you need to reach the program chairs, Vincent Conitzer and Fei Sha, please send email to:
aaai20chairs@aaai.org