RO-MAN Guidelines for External Reviewers

The growth and advancement of the *human-robot interactive communication* community and the rigor and quality of our work very much depend on your help as an external reviewer. We prepared this guide to establish a high-quality, equitable, and transparent peer-review process and hope that you find it useful. If you have any questions or comment on the process of the document, please contact your AE or the program chair.

Deadline for External Reviews: XXXX XX, 20XX

Review Process Basics

External Reviewer Responsibilities

External reviewers are responsible for evaluating the scientific merit of submissions that they are asked to review, including reading the papers that are assigned to them, writing a detailed review, and engaging in discussion that the Associate Editor (AE) may initiate in a timely manner. To prevent reviewer burnout and achieve equity in professional service, external reviewers should not be asked to review more than 3 submissions. Reviewers should feel free to decline any requests for help if they have already agreed to help with 3 submissions.

Conflicts of Interest

Reviewers should not be in a position to affect the evaluation of papers with which they have a conflict of interest (CoI). Relationships that cause a CoI include the following:

- Paper(s) you co-authored
- Employment at the same institution or company
- Co-authorship with authors in the last 24 months
- Active collaboration on a project or serving as co-investigators on a grant
- Graduate advisee/advisor relationship

Reviewers who identify a potential CoI when they are invited to review or later in the review process must immediately alert the AE for the paper.

Review Blinding & Confidentiality

RO-MAN follows a single-blinded peer-review process, i.e., the author identities are not blinded to the reviewers, but reviewer identities are blinded to the authors. However, author submissions and reviews are both considered *confidential*, and reviewers should not share or disclose

information about papers to third parties, and authors should not share or disclose external reviewer comments.

Plagiarism

RO-MAN will adapt IEEE's guidelines for plagiarism. Below is the paragraph on author responsibilities regarding plagiarism from the IEEE PSPB Operations Manual:

> IEEE defines plagiarism as *the use of someone else's prior ideas, processes, results, or words without explicitly acknowledging the original author and source*. Plagiarism in any form is unacceptable and is considered a serious breach of professional conduct, with potentially severe ethical and legal consequences.

If reviewers suspect a case of plagiarism, they should notify the AE handling the paper ASAP using the "Confidential Comments" field of the review form or by contacting them via email.

Double Submissions

RO-MAN will follow a strict double-submission policy, desk-rejecting any submissions that appear identical to submissions that are currently under consideration at another peer-reviewed, archived venue. A reviewer may identify such cases through their involvement in the peer-review process of another venue. In such cases, the reviewers should alert AEs. Submissions that are identical will be immediately rejected, and submissions with partial overlap with another submission to RO-MAN or another venue will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The program chairs and the AE will work together to resolve these cases.

Guidelines for External Review

How to evaluate submissions

The authors are asked to declare the most closed keyword(s) listed in CFP when they are making their submissions. Based on the declared keywords, the associate editor asks you to review this paper. Since you are a specialist in the filed of the keywords, please evaluate the paper by your field's value system.

Please take a look at the category to which each paper you are reviewing was submitted and apply the category-specific criteria described above.

How to prepare your review

External reviewers are asked to complete their evaluations of the papers and submit their reviews into PaperCept by the review deadline. AEs may initiate discussion among reviewers during the review phase or immediately after when they are writing their meta-reviews. AEs will be in touch with the reviewers with reminders, pointers to resources, and information on next steps at each step of the process.

The two most important aspects of reviews are (1) the numerical overall assessment of the quality of the submission and (2) comments provided for the authors. The numeric evaluation involves a scale from five ("Definitely accept") to one ("Reject (with explanation)") with half-point increments as shown below.

Grade	Quality assessment	Recommended action
A/5.0	Award candidate	Definitely accept
B+/4.5	Journal material	Accept
B/4.0	Solid conference paper	Accept
B−/3.5	Fair conference paper	Accept if possible
C/3.0	Controversial/amendable	Accept with discretion
C−/2.5	Marginal	Last resort
D/2.0	Substandard	Unacceptable
U/1.0	Unsuitable: previously published, no audience, etc.	Reject with explanation

The textual comments should focus on evaluating the technical quality of the submission and the significance of its contributions to the field of human-robot interactive communication and provide concrete and informative comments for the AE and constructive and actionable for the authors. Below is a suggested structure for a "good" review.

Summary — The review should start with a brief summary of the work presented in the paper and outline its main findings and potential contributions to human-robot interactive communication.

Strengths and Weaknesses — The review should list the strengths and weaknesses of the paper in brief paragraphs or a bulleted list form. Most reviews list three key strengths and three key weaknesses.

Detailed Comments — This section is the main part of the review. It will expand on the strengths

and weaknesses that that are listed in the previous section. The reviewers should use this section to discuss the intellectual contributions of the paper, make detailed recommendations on design, implementation, and evaluation, provide pointers to relevant work that the paper does not mention, and point to future directions that might benefit the authors' research program.

Reviewers should strive to be as constructive as possible in their comments and provide authors with actionable suggestions. For instance, if the presented work or the presentation of the work could be improved in any way, a breakdown of what improvements could be made would be most helpful to the authors. If the reviewer thinks that key related work is missing in the paper, the review should include pointers to this work (e.g., links or citation information). If the presentation of the work lacks clarity, the review should posit specific questions that the authors should seek to answer in the paper.

A key point that the reviewers should consider is whether the weaknesses they are highlighting are addressable in a short timeframe (i.e., until camera-ready papers are due). If the work has weaknesses that require significant new data collection and analysis or major restructuring of the paper, the reviewer should not consider these issues addressable. Weaknesses that require improvements in the clarity of the paper or reframing of aspects of the paper should be considered addressable.

Suggestions for Improvement — The review should provide authors with a forward-looking summary of the changes they can make in future iterations of the work or future revision of their paper, including changes that should be made to the camera-ready version of the paper, if the paper is accepted. This section could be made up of a bulleted list or short paragraphs that list the changes the reviewers thinks are important to improve the work.

Recommendation — The review should conclude with a brief qualitative statement of whether or not the reviewer recommends including the paper in this year's technical program. This recommendation is extremely important in interpreting the numeric evaluation, particularly for borderline cases. Recommendations such as "I believe that this paper makes a significant contribution to human-robot interactive communication and should be included in this year's technical program," "While the paper has some weaknesses, it could be included in the technical program, as it makes the following contributions: ...," “Although the paper has some weaknesses, they can be addressed by making the following improvements: ...,” "While the work presented in the paper is promising, it does not seem to be ready for publication due to major weaknesses in ...," or "The paper does not seem to be appropriate for the topics and goals of the conference and the authors should be encouraged to submit their work elsewhere such as ...." are appropriate.