Preparing Manuscripts for MICCAI: Avoiding Desk Rejection⋆

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Abstract. As the submission platform manager for the Medical Image Computing and Computer Assisted Intervention (MICCAI) Society, I have observed various formatting, anonymity, and other issues in the submitted manuscripts. I hope this document will assist authors in better preparing their manuscripts to avoid disappointment in the form of desk rejection.

1 Introduction

When managing the submission platform for previous MICCAI conferences, most of the emails received were about how to anonymize their manuscripts. The remaining emails were mostly concerned with whether or not the template could be modified in a certain way to gain extra writing space. Despite our best efforts, many manuscripts failed to adhere to the submission guidelines; in particular, many were not appropriately anonymized, and some were desk-rejected due to format violations. This document addresses most of the observed issues, and we hope it can help authors better prepare their manuscripts for MICCAI.

2 Formatting Issues

2.1 The template

The purpose of having a template is to enforce overall consistency. All accepted MICCAI manuscripts will be published in a proceedings. Each paper must adhere to the provided template to maintain overall consistency in structure and layout. Any modification to the template is strictly prohibited.

2.2 What is considered as a modification to the template?

Template tampering includes, but is not limited to, the following list:

⋆ Modified on December 18, 2024 to reflect changes made to the MICCAI 2025 submission guidelines

- Modification of margins, font size, line spacing, and general layout of the document is not allowed.
- One commonly observed format violation is the manipulation of vertical spacing to gain extra writing space, to fit content within the allowable page limit, or to fit a table or a figure within a page. This includes, but is not limited to, changing the vertical spacing between the end of a section to a new section or sub-section and reducing the vertical spacing between a figure or a table to text. Using commands such as \vspace and \hspace in LaTeX is strictly prohibited.
- Do not remove the author section, abstract, and keywords on the title page to gain writing space. New for MICCAI 2025, the author section is already anonymized in the provided templates. Editing the anonymized author section to save space will be considered a format violation.
- Wrapping text around a figure or a table (inline figure or table) is prohibited. This violation was mostly observed in users of the MS-WORD template.
- Changing the font size, style, and spacing in the reference section to reduce the space occupied by the said section is not allowed.
- Papers exceeding the number of allowable pages will also be rejected. The allowable number of pages is eight pages of content (text (including title, author section, abstract, keywords), figures and tables, conclusions and acknowledgments) plus up-to two pages of references. Any manuscript exceeding either of these two will be rejected.
- If the author is converting their manuscript to PDF format from Microsoft Word or other word processors, it is the author's responsibility to ensure the converted file does not exceed the page limit.

3   Preserving anonymity

The MICCAI reviewing process is double-blind in that authors do not know the names of the area chairs/reviewers of their papers, and area chairs/reviewers do not know the names of the authors. Authors must avoid providing information in their manuscripts that may identify them. Authors must re-insert such information in the camera-ready manuscript after it is accepted for publication.

- **Author Section**
  For review purposes, do not include any author information in the author section below the title. This includes names, email addresses, affiliations, and URLs. New for MICCAI 2025, the author section is already anonymized in the provided templates. DO NOT remove the author section to gain extra writing space.
- **Running Author**
  Make sure the running author appearing on the top of each even-numbered page is anonymized.
- **Abstract Section**
  Many authors have forgotten to anonymize their abstract section.

- **External URLs**
  If authors include links to any external site, it is the author's responsibility to ensure that the external site is anonymized.
- **Dataset**
  Any information that can reveal author information, such as information on a dataset, including specific dataset names that can be used to identify other publications by the same authors, location of data collections, and links to data in Github or Dropbox, must be masked. If your dataset is publicly available, then you should reference it in the third person, e.g. "we used the publicly available BRATS data-set (website, ref)". Otherwise, use asterisks to mask revealing information. For example, "...patient data collected at **** hospital...".
- **Images or tables**
  Remove all identifying information associated with images or tables and any identifying information visible by hovering the cursor over images in PDFs.
- **Citing your published work**
  If authors need to refer to their own previous work, do so in the third person, e.g. " in [2] the authors showed that ...".
- **Citing your unpublished work**
  If authors need to refer to their own paper that is not yet published, i.e., a paper currently under review by another venue or a concurrent submission to MICCAI, they should include an anonymized version of the paper as supplementary material. See [1] and [2] as examples.
- **The Acknowledgment section and grant information**
  Use asterisks to mask all identifying texts from the Acknowledgment section. This includes the funding agency, the name of the grant, hospital information, and any other information that can be used to identify the authors and their affiliations. New for MICCAI 2025, authors are not required to include the Acknowledgment and Disclosure of Interest sections at the initial submission stage.
- **Meta-data of the PDF file**
  Make sure the author's name is not included in the meta-data (Document properties) of your PDF file.
- **Supplementary material**
  Do not include any identifying information in the supplementary material. Although reviewers are not obliged to review such material, anonymity must still be maintained. Make sure that your name or your affiliation is not part of the filename.

4   Full disclosure of authorship and domain conflicts

To ensure a fair and unbiased review process, it is essential for authors to provide the full list of co-authors and a comprehensive domain conflict list when submitting their papers. This information is critical for identifying and avoiding potential conflicts of interest between reviewers and any of the co-authors. Without this data, there is a risk of assigning your paper to a reviewer who may have

personal, professional, or domain-related conflicts with one or more co-authors, which could compromise the integrity of the review. If a reviewer or area chair assigned to your paper is found to have a conflict of interest with the authors due to incomplete or inaccurate information on the submission form, the paper will be rejected.

4.1   Conflict of interest

When assigning a manuscript to a reviewer for peer review, it is important to avoid conflict of interest between the authors of the manuscript and the reviewer as this may compromise a reviewer's professional judgment in evaluating the manuscript. Adapted from the "Conflict of Interest Guidelines for Reviewers" from Elsevier[1], the following situations are considered conflicts and should be avoided:

- Co-authoring publications with at least one of the authors in the past 3 years
- having collaborations (e.g. joint granted projects) in the past 3 years
- Being colleagues within the same section/department or similar organisational unit in the past 3 years
- Supervising/having supervised the doctoral work of the author (s) or being supervised/having been supervised by the author(s)
- Receiving professional or personal benefit resulting from the review
- Having a personal relationship (e.g. family, close friend) with the author(s)
- Having a direct or indirect financial interest in the paper being reviewed

For the submission platform to properly detect conflicts of interest, an author must disclose all co-author information and a comprehensive list of domain conflicts of all authors of the paper. The list of domain conflicts should include not only the authors' current institutional email domains but the email domains of institutions or organizations with which the authors have had close relationships, within the past 3 years. Below is an example of correct domain conflicts:

Scenario: Author 1 and Author 2 are co-authors of the same paper. Author 1 is currently working for Institute A with the email domain InstituteA.edu and is also collaborating with a research group in Hospital B with the email domain hospitalB.com. Author 1 also worked for company C with the email domain CompanyC.com 2 years ago. Author 2 is currently working for Institute D with the email domain InstituteD.edu and has a close relationship with OrganizationE.org.

The list of domain conflicts of this paper: InstituteA.edu; hospitalB.com; CompanyC.com; InstituteD.edu; OrganizationE.org

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[1] `https://www.journals.elsevier.com/journal-of-systems-and-software/policies/conflict-of-interest-guidelines-for-reviewers`

5   Supplementary Material

The purpose of supplementary material is not to present additional results but rather to serve as a platform for authors to provide supporting materials. New in 2025, only multimedia content (videos) as warranted by technical application (e.g. robotics, surgery...) are allowed. It's important to note that reviewers are not obligated to review supplementary material. Your main paper should be self-contained; reviewers should not need to refer to the supplementary material to assess your paper.

6   Final thoughts

Authors whose manuscripts were desk-rejected for the above reasons often felt the decision to be unfair and unkind. To accept such papers despite submission guidelines not being taken seriously would be unfair and unkind to those authors who have carefully revised their manuscripts to ensure all requirements were met. We wish you the best of luck with your submissions!

References

1. Anonymized Author: Paper Title. This paper is currently under review. An anonymized version of this work has been submitted as supplementary material.
2. Anonymized Author: Paper Title. This paper is accepted by XXX but not yet available to the public. An anonymized version of this work has been submitted as supplementary material.