MICCAI 2026
Area Chair Orientation

March 2026:

Program Chairs: Guang Yang, Imperial College London
Ehsan Adeli, Stanford University
Marleen de Bruijne, Erasmus MC Rotterdam
Bartek Papiez, Oxford Big Data Institute
Stefanie Speidel, National Center for Tumor Diseases (NCT) Dresden
Pallavi Tiwari, University of Wisconsin–Madison
Guoyan Zheng, Shanghai Jiao Tong University

Submission Platform Manager: Kitty Wong, The MICCAI Society

Thanks for Your Service for MICCAI 2026!

Goals

- Orientation of process, timelines, and expectations

- Collection of feedback

- Q & A

MICCAI 2026 STATISTICS

- **~6406** intent to submit, **~4601** full paper submissions (about **25**% increase vs **3677** on 2025)

- Papers are currently being screened for anonymity, page length, template issues. Currently, ~160 papers did not pass the screening.

- **245** ACs

- ~**4400** reviewers

Key Responsibilities for Area Chairs

- **Primary AC for ~20-25 papers**:

  - Check paper formatting, suggest reviewers, shepherd review process, monitor review quality, complete meta-reviews & make initial recommendations
  - **Changed:** Initial decisions are not automated!! ACs will make them.
  - ~~**LAST YEAR:** Justifications are only required for **REJECT RECOMMENDATIONS**~~
  - **Changed:** Justifications are required for **ALL RECOMMENDATIONS (Accepts + Rejects)**

- **Secondary AC for an additional ~15 papers**

  - *Encourage reviewers to participate in discussions & finalize their decision after rebuttal*
  - Make final recommendations
  - ~~**LAST YEAR:** Justifications are only required for **REJECT RECOMMENDATIONS**~~
  - **Changed:** Justifications are required for **ALL RECOMMENDATIONS (Accepts + Rejects)**

- Recommend Oral papers and award candidates
- Identify papers suitable for sessions on clinical translation
- Rate the quality of each review

Key Responsibilities for Area Chairs

- **Upholding Scholarly Quality and Accountability (including AI generated paper / reviews)**
  - Focus on content integrity, whether it is written by AI or other tools/human.
    - AC will flag these contents (e.g., potentially AI generated)
  - Flag unsupported, fabricated, or inconsistent content (hallucinated references, unverifiable claims, logical inconsistencies, or superficial reviews lacking substantive engagement).
  - Distinguish between language assistance and intellectual contribution
    - Language polishing or stylistic improvements (e.g., grammar, phrasing, punctuation) are acceptable.
    - Fabricated citations, incorrect technical claims, or generic and non-specific reviews are not.
  - Hold authors and reviewers accountable:
    - Authors are responsible for the accuracy and integrity of their submissions.
    - Reviewers are responsible for providing thoughtful, evidence-based, and field-informed evaluations.
  - Reviewers will also be asked to comment explicitly on the soundness and grounding of claims (e.g., potential AI-generated content & unsubstantiated material).
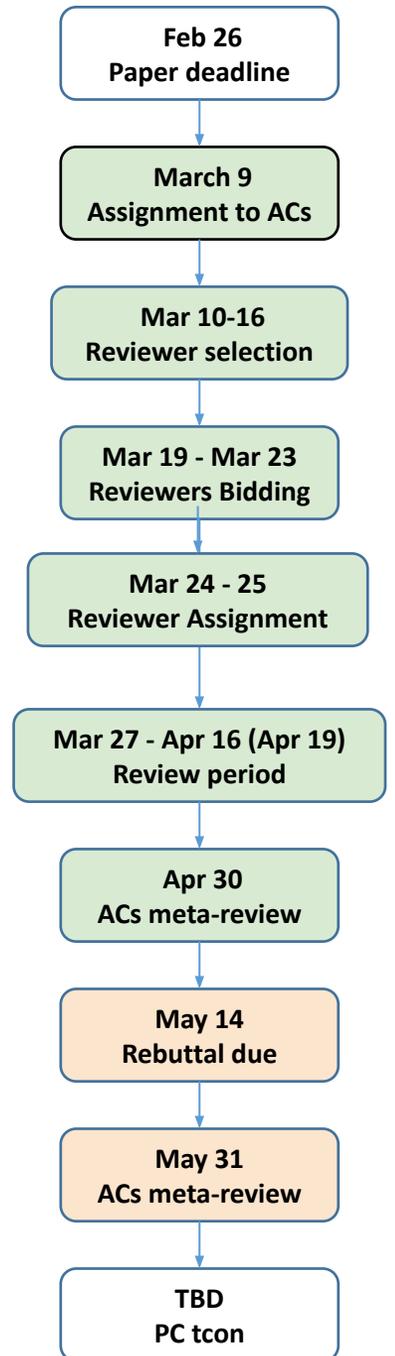
Past Statistics of interests

Year	2025	2024*	2023	2022
# full submissions	3677	2876	2365	1865
# paper reviewed	3477	2781	2250	1831
# Desk Rejections	162 + 60 PC requested withdrawn	91	109	28* sent warnings instead
# Early Accepts	310 (9%)	286 (10%)	308 (14%)	249 (14%)
# Early Reject	1663 (48%)	956 (34%)	1196 (53%)	901 (49%)
# Rebuttals	1474 (43%)	1526 (55%)	746 (33%)	675 (37%)
# Accepts after Rebuttal	717 (49% of rebuttals)	570 (37% of rebuttals)	422 (57% of rebuttals)	325 (48% of rebuttals)
Total Acceptance	1027 (30%)	856 (31%)	730 (32%)	574 (31%)
# Area Chairs	186	152	133	107
# papers per AC	~19 primary ~16 secondary	~19 primary ~11 secondary ~5 ternary for handful of senior ACs	~18 primary ~12 secondary	~18 primary ~13 secondary
# Reviewers	2417	2039	1602	1242

Process Overview

Phase I: Primary AC on all papers (~20-25 papers per AC)

Phase II: Secondary AC on rebuttal papers (~15 papers per AC)

Feb 26
Paper deadline

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March 9
Assignment to ACs

↓

Mar 10-16
Reviewer selection

↓

Mar 19 - Mar 23
Reviewers Bidding

↓

Mar 24 - 25
Reviewer Assignment

↓

Mar 27 - Apr 16 (Apr 19)
Review period

↓

Apr 30
ACs meta-review

↓

May 14
Rebuttal due

↓

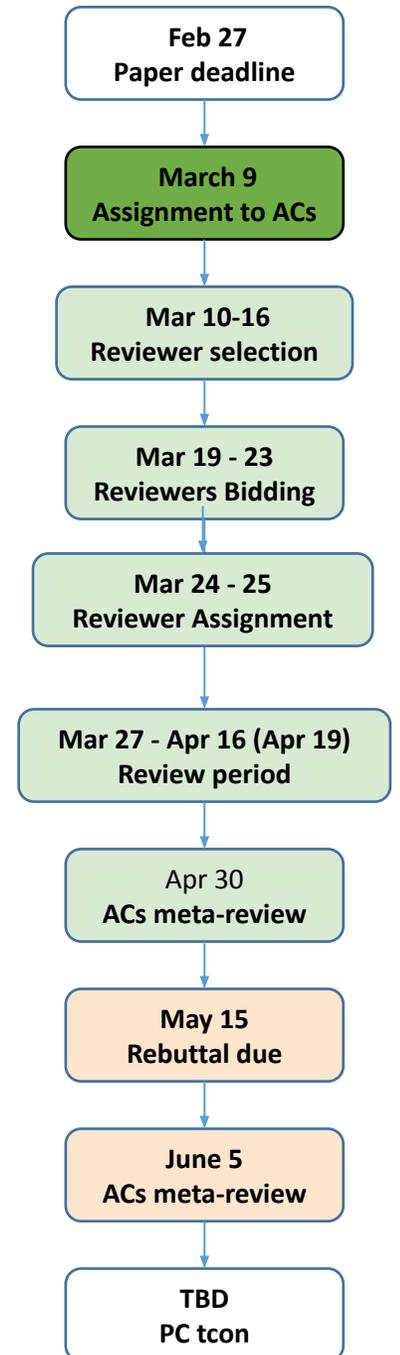May 31
ACs meta-review

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Primary AC Assignments

- Receive primary assignments on March 9
  - Based on TPMS match score, subject areas (keywords), & conflicts of interest

- Screen paper for the following issues & notify PCs
  - Anonymization
  - Overlength
  - **Formatting**
  - **Overlapping submissions**
  - CHANGED: **Only multimedia files* and unpublished manuscripts** are allowed as supplementary materials**
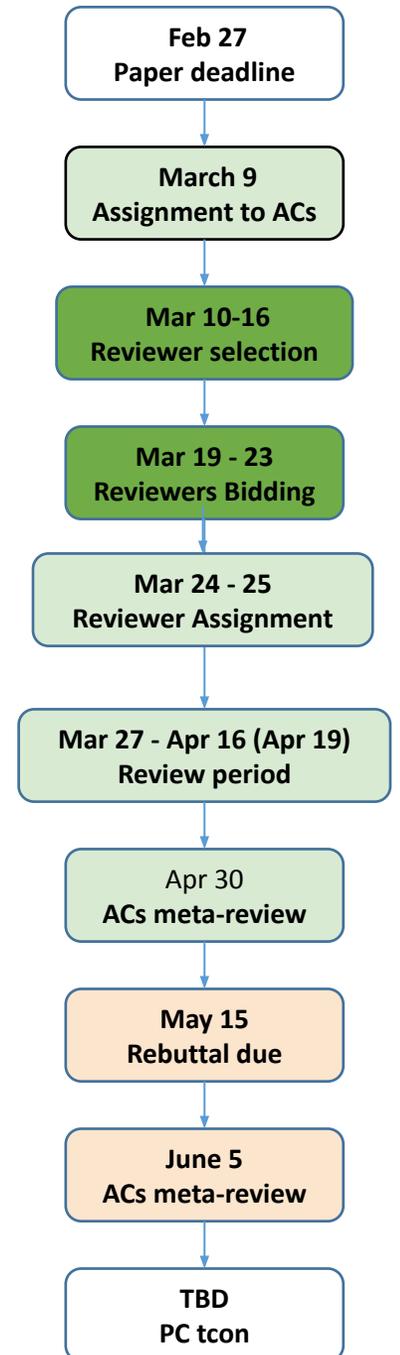
* For example just video to facilitate CAI papers

** Used for the proof of related but different manuscripts

***Authors are also allowed to put their MICCAI submission on ArXiv

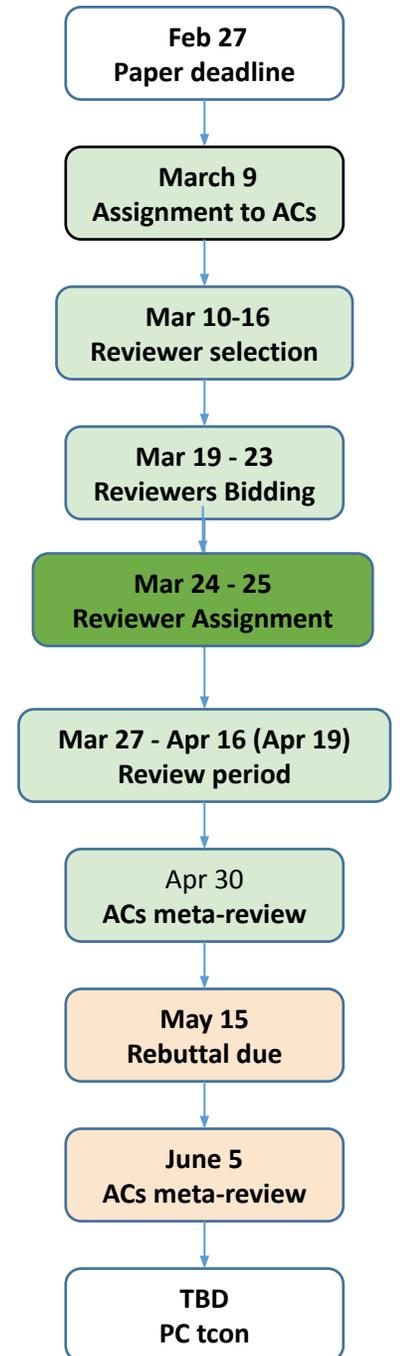| Feb 27 Paper deadline |
| March 9 Assignment to ACs |
| Mar 10-16 Reviewer selection |
| Mar 19 - 23 Reviewers Bidding |
| Mar 24 - 25 Reviewer Assignment |
| Mar 27 - Apr 16 (Apr 19) Review period |
| Apr 30 ACs meta-review |
| May 15 Rebuttal due |
| June 5 ACs meta-review |
| TBD PC tcon |

Reviewer Suggestions

- Suggest 10-15 reviewers for each paper in ranked order, considering

    - **TPMS** (↓) *important, this is NOT the only factor
    - **Reviewer profile** (expertise, publications, etc)
    - Subject areas (↕),
        - **CHANGED:** Primary subject area is "MIC" or "CAI". Secondary subject area should include a body part (e.g., brain, heart) and modality (e.g., MRI)
    - Reviewer load
        - Avoid reviewers already with >20 suggestions
    - Paper difficulty
        - Suggest more reviewers for "difficult" papers (difficult to secure a reviewer!)
    - Do not only suggest reviewers in your personal network!!

- Detailed instructions will be sent later

- Final reviewer assignment considers a combination of automatic TPMS, keyword matching, AC suggestions, and reviewer bidding

- ACs will be asked to step in and review if we cannot match the paper!

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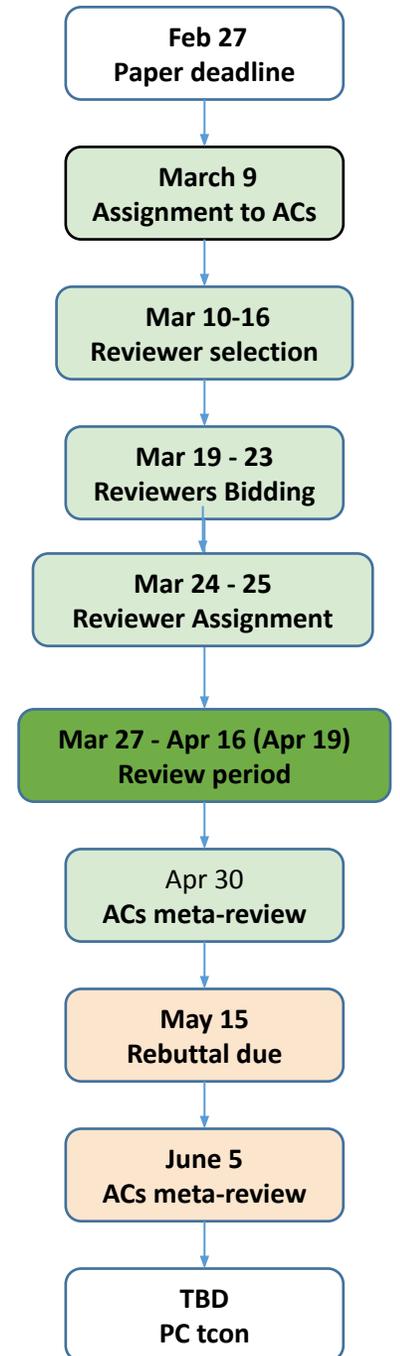ACs meta-review

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Assignment to reviewers

- March 24
  - Automated paper assignment to reviewers
  - General quality checking by Kitty
- March 25
  - ACs check for issues in reviewer assignment and reassignment (*e.g.,* COIs, reviewers from the same institute)

- March 27
  - Paper release to reviewers.
  - ACs handle all reviewer reassignment requests. To be handled within 24h of request
  - When assigning a paper to a new reviewer, must email new reviewer to ensure they are willing to take on an additional paper.
  - DO NOT add a reviewer to a paper without asking.
  - DO NOT abuse this by adding additional reviewers to your batch!!!

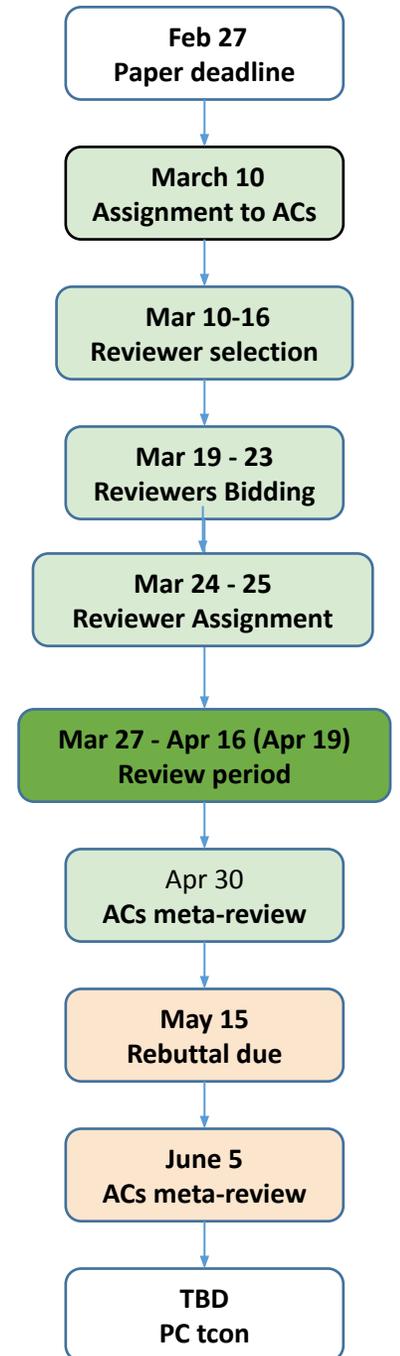| |
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Review Period

- Review Period (Officially March 27 - April 16)
  - Shepherd review process
  - Monitor review quality as they come in.
  - Communicate with the reviewers if review quality is low (email through CMT)

- Deadlines
  - Official review deadline: Thursday, April 16
  - Unofficial internal deadline: Sunday, April 19
  - Emergency review period: April 20 - 27
  - Reminders of deadline will be sent centrally by Kitty

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Monitor Review Quality

- **Reviews of accepted papers will be made public.**

- Communicate with reviewers to improve review quality when..
    - The review is short and uninformative
    - There is no justification of the score
    - The review has only positive comments but recommends reject
    - The review has only negative comments but recommends accept
    - The reviewer states that the work is not novel without providing evidence (eg citations to prior work)
    - The reviewer asks to cite their own paper(s) without good reason
    - The language is inappropriate
    - …..
- Rate review quality
    - Exceeded expectations / Met expectations / Failed to meet expectations
    - Important to assess ACs and reviewer applications next year
- Reviewers should not ask for more experiments in the rebuttal!

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Application *vs.* Methodological Studies

- See [MICCAI 2026 submission guidelines](#)
- **Methodological studies**
  - Demonstrate clear innovations and contributions over the state of the art methodologies.
  - Evaluation and performance assessment is potentially limited to proof of concepts or small-size validation studies.
- **Application studies**
  - Demonstrate clear clinical value of existing techniques, or adoption of state-of-the-art methods to a new problem or context, with appropriate and rigorous evaluation design
  - Do not necessarily need to involve fundamental methodological innovations
- *Examine how authors and reviewers have considered, argued, and justified paper contributions according to its categories.*
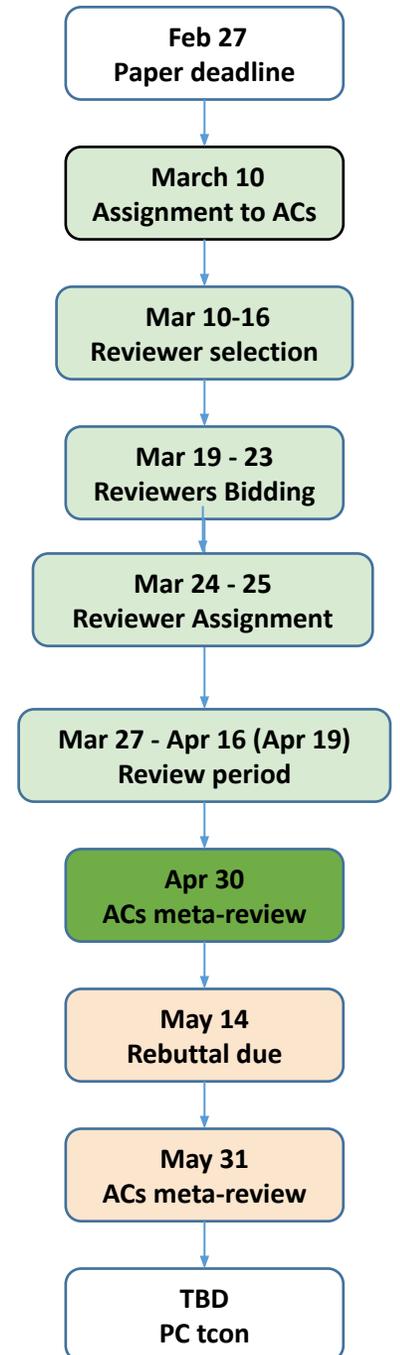
CAI vs. MIC Papers

- **Significance/Innovation** of CAI works can include:
  - Novel clinical applications
  - Demonstration of clinical feasibility even on a single subject/animal/phantom
  - Novel MIC approach to solving a CAI need
  - Proposal of a cost-effective approach
- **Experimental evaluations** of CAI works are typically much more challenging (than MIC studies) in
  - Clinical evaluation on patients
  - Achieving a large sample size
  - Comparison with existing systems
- **Clinical papers** -
  - Translation of methodology with impact on clinical workflow and evaluation
  - Novel insights into clinical challenges

What to do if you encountered a "problematic" paper

- **During the reviewer suggestion phase**
  - Flag the issue (format, violation of supplementary material policies, AI hallucinated references/contents) to Kitty (submissions@miccai.org) but continue to suggest reviewers to the paper

- **During the review period**
  - The reviewer suspects the author submitted work that was already published (double submission/self-plagiarism)
    - Instruct the reviewer to continue to review the paper. The reviewer can give a low score citing the lack of contribution w.r.t the already published paper.
    - Reviewer should include their suspicion in the "confidential comments to PCs and ACs" field on the review form.
    - If the AC agrees with the reviewer's finding, flag this to the program chair for an investigation.

  - Formatting issues (white space, wrapped around figures) and potential breaches of anonymity
    - Instruct reviewers to continue to review the paper based on the scientific content of the paper
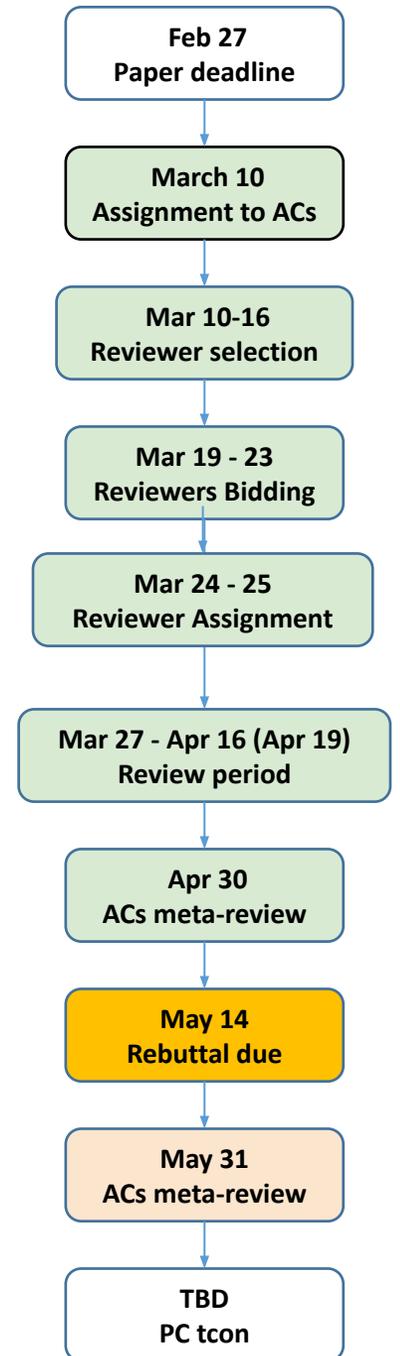   - Flag the issue to PCs if the AC deem the issue to be severe

AC Initial Meta-Reviews

- ACs will make an initial decisions for each paper
  - Early accept, early reject & invite for rebuttal

- PC will provide detailed guidelines and target statistics
  - Historical: ~15% accept, ~50% reject, ~35% rebuttal

- Base your decisions on the reviews (including quality) and your domain knowledge. *Do NOT simply take the average reviewer scores!*

- You may factor in reproducibility into the decision, as appropriate.

- You will be asked to complete a meta-review form for each paper:
  - **CHANGED:** Justifications are required for **ALL RECOMMENDATIONS** (*please be detailed, especially if your recommendation deviates from the reviewers*)
  - For accept recommendations, you will be asked to indicate whether a paper is suitable for special recognition (oral presentation, award, etc.) and justify why you recommend a paper.

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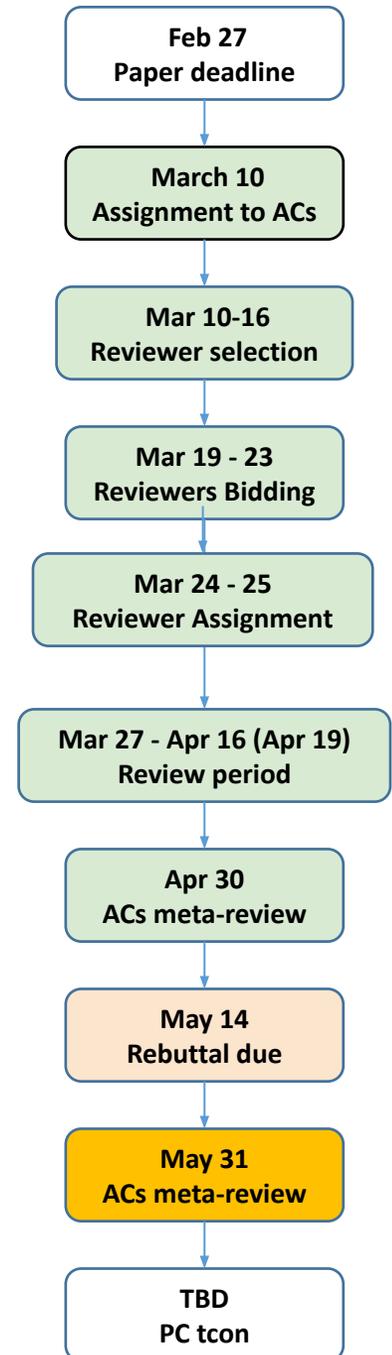
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TBD
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Secondary AC Assignments

- Each rebuttal paper will be assigned 2 secondary ACs

- Each AC will receive ~15 secondary paper assignments

- **CHANGED:** after rebuttals are in
  - Reviewers will be asked to revise their reviews and make a decision (Accept vs Reject) (by May 31)
  - There is no reviewer discussion period!

- Primary and secondary ACs can still discuss via CMT email.

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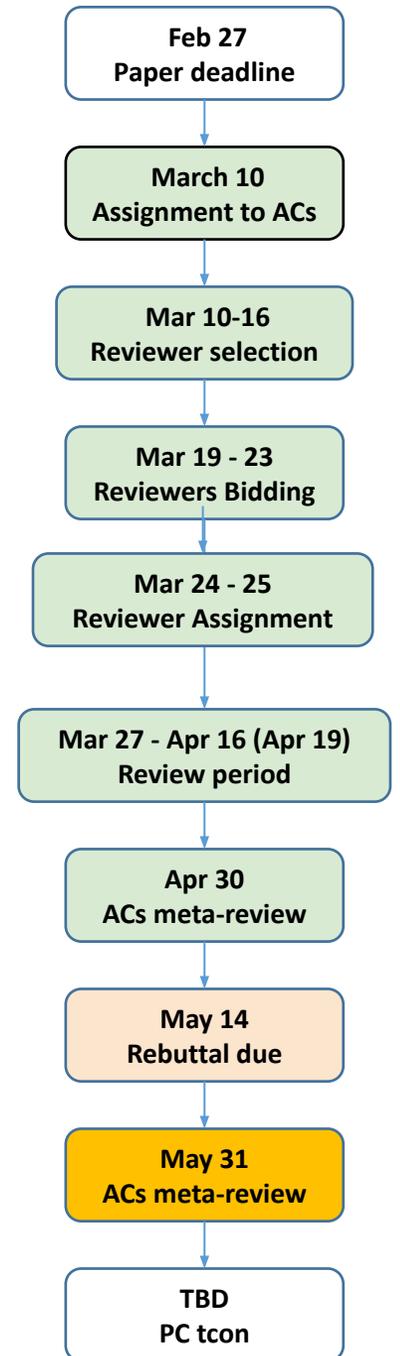
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TBD
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AC Final Meta-Reviews

- Meta-reviews must be completed for *all primary & secondary assignments*
  - **CHANGED:** Detailed justifications are required for **ALL RECOMMENDATIONS**
  - Consider the reviews and how well the authors' rebuttal addressed the reviewer critiques
  - *Avoid raising new critiques unless they can be justified to be fatal flaws overlooked*
  - You must make an ACCEPT or REJECT decision for all rebuttal papers - no borderline rankings

- Recommendations:
  - Accept vs. Reject
  - Suitability for special recognition (oral presentation, award, special issue invitation, …)
  - Categorize the papers to help with program construction
  - Rate the reviews

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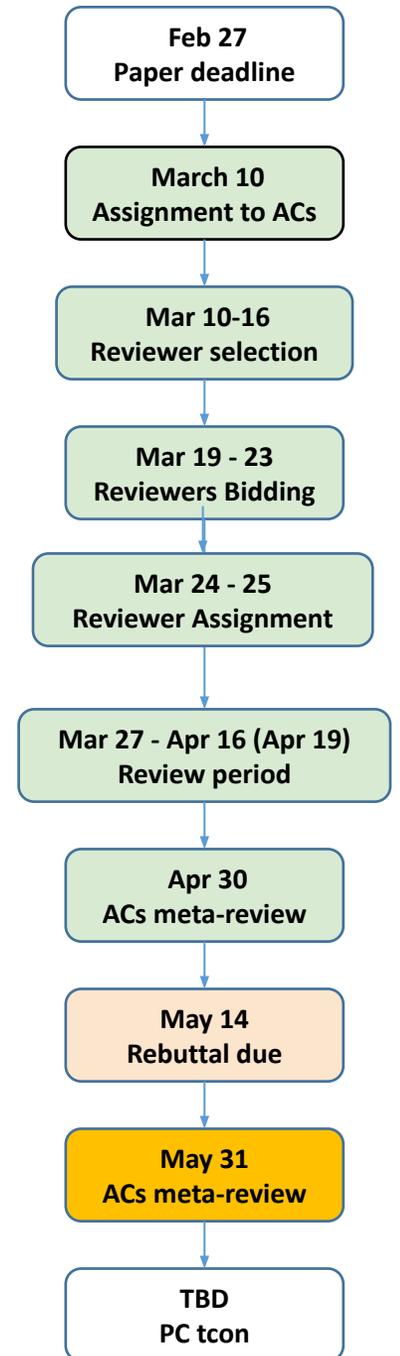
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TBD
PC tcon

AC Final Meta-Reviews

- **Detailed justifications are required for all papers**

  - You should provide concrete rationale for your decision - *do not simply cite the review scores!*

  - If your decision differs from the reviewer opinions, then you must provide reasons why

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Final AC Meeting

- Report summary of paper statistics
- Discuss oral programs
- Gather feedback and suggestions for next year

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General remarks

- **Reviews and meta-reviews of accepted papers will be public**

- **Reviewers will be back in the loop after rebuttal**

- Reserve time for the two phases: **Mar 10 – April 30** and **May 15 - 31**

- CMT emails can be flagged as spam. Check the AC information here: https://conferences.miccai.org/2026/en/IMPORTANT-DATES-FOR-THE-REVIEW-PROCESS-AND-INSTRUCTION-FILES.html and keep an eye on unresponsive reviewers

- Throughout the process
  - Please check the MICCAI Review Process and AC guidelines (website)
  - For questions on CMT, ask Kitty Wong submissions@miccai.org
  - Contact Program Chairs at program_chairs@miccai2026.org (or via CMT)

Q&A

Key Responsibilities for Area Chairs

- **AI generated paper / reviews**:
  - AC flags potential AI generated contents, e.g., for the submitted paper and for the reviewer's comments
  - AC should focus on AI generated contents, not language polishing using AI. For example, "em dash (—)" usage is OK, but AI hallucinated references are not
  - AC should notice that we will also ask our reviewers to comment on AI generated paper contents directly