

Preparing Manuscripts for MICCAI: Avoiding Desk Rejection¹

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Abstract. As the submission platform manager for the Medical Image Computing and Computer Assisted Intervention (MICCAI) Society, I have observed recurring formatting, anonymity, and ethical issues in the submitted manuscripts. This document highlights the most common problems that lead to desk rejection and guides authors in preparing compliant, high-quality manuscripts.

1 Introduction

While managing the submission platform for past MICCAI conferences, the majority of inquiries I received concerned proper manuscript anonymization, with many others related to whether the official template could be altered to gain additional writing space. Despite repeated clarifications of the submission guidelines, many manuscripts still failed to adhere to them, particularly with respect to anonymization and formatting. Some manuscripts are consequently desk-rejected. In recent years, an increasing number of manuscripts were investigated for potential violations of MICCAI's dual submission policy. This document summarizes the most frequently encountered issues and aims to help authors prepare their manuscripts correctly for MICCAI.

2 Scientific Code of Ethics, (Self-)Plagiarism, Dual Submissions, Multiple Submissions

All MICCAI Authors must abide by the MICCAI Scientific Code of Ethics and Springer's Author Code of Conduct. Particular attention should be given to the *Figures and Illustrations* and the *Ethical Approval and Informed Consent* sections of Springer's guidelines. Authors must disclose the origin and license of any dataset used, state ethics application number when applicable, and acknowledge required citations and authorship as required by dataset license.

Plagiarism, including self-plagiarism, and double submission are serious offenses. These practices are unethical, waste the conference's resources and may harm an author's professional standing. All authors should carefully read the *Plagiarism* and the

¹ Revised on November 28, 2025, to reflect changes made to the submission guidelines and recent issues

Dual/Double Submissions sections of the submission guidelines before submitting. Violations, if detected, are referred to the MICCAI Society Board for a formal investigation. Authors may be barred from future MICCAI submissions or from serving leadership roles within the community.

In 2025, many papers were flagged for undisclosed concurrent submissions on similar topics. Most of these papers were withdrawn from the review process while others underwent a special parallel review process to evaluate the degree of overlap.

Key points from the guidelines:

All MICCAI submissions must be original and cannot be published or under review elsewhere.

- No substantially similar paper may be submitted to another venue during the MICCAI review period.
- If authors have a related paper under review elsewhere, an anonymized version must be submitted as supplementary material.
- If multiple submissions on a related topics are submitted to the same MICCAI conference, the concurrent papers must be included as supplementary materials and along with a clear explanation of their non-trivial differences.
- Proper credit must be given when using the results or text from any publication, including the author's own prior work.
- Authors should cite their own related publications; concerns about anonymity do not justify omitting references.

3 Formatting Issues

3.1 The template

The MICCAI template ensures consistency and fairness across all submissions. All accepted manuscripts will be published in the MICCAI proceedings; therefore, **modification to the template is strictly prohibited**.

3.2 What is considered a modification to the template?

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

1. Modifying the General Layout

Adjusting the margins, fonts, line spacing, or any part of the general layout is not allowed. Author must ensure that additional LaTeX packages do not unintentionally alter the template. Figures and tables must remain within the margins. Some LaTeX packages and commands can unintentionally change spacing or margins and should be avoided.

2. White Space Tampering

Manipulating vertical spacing to gain extra writing space is a common violation. The use of commands such as `\vspace` and `\hspace` in LaTeX to reduce default spacing is strictly prohibited. Examples of violations include:

- Reducing spacing before and after sections/sub-sections
- Reducing spacing around figures, tables, or captions
- Wrapping text around figures or tables
- Shrinking tables by embedding them as tiny figures.

These violations result in immediate desk rejection.

3. Modifying the Title Page

Do not remove the author block, abstract, and keywords to gain writing space. Beginning in MICCAI 2025, the author section is already anonymized in the provided template. Removing or altering it is a format violation. Removing the keyword or abstract section is also a format violation.

4. Inline Figures and Tables

Wrapping text around figures or tables (an inline layout) is prohibited. This violation was mostly observed in users of the Word template.

5. Changing the Reference Section Formatting

Adjusting the font size, style, or layout of the reference section to save space is not allowed. Citations with more than three authors may be shortened using *et al.*

6. Tiny Tables

Tables must use a minimum of 8-pt font. Tables must not be inserted as images.

7. Exceeding the Page Limit

The allowable length is eight pages of content plus up-to two pages of references. Content refers to all texts, including the paper title, author section, abstract, keywords, main body, conclusions, acknowledgments and disclaimer. Any manuscript exceeding either of these two will be rejected.

Authors converting their manuscript to PDF format from Microsoft Word or other word processors must verify the final PDF does not exceed the these limits.

4 Preserving anonymity

MICCAI uses a double-blind review process. Authors must not include any information in the paper that could reveal their identity. Author information is submitted on the submission form instead. Authors must re-insert such information in the camera-ready manuscript after it is accepted for publication.

- **Author Section**
Do not add author names, affiliations, email addresses, and URLs. The provided template already contains an anonymized block; only the paper ID may be added.
- **Running Author**
Ensure the running header at the top of each even-numbered page is anonymized.
- **Abstract Section**
Many authors often forget to anonymize their abstract section.

- **External URLs**
Links (e.g. GitHub, project pages) must be anonymized. This was often overlooked by authors
- **Dataset**
Any dataset details that could reveal identity (e.g., institution names, collection sites, private repositories) must be masked. Public datasets should be cited in 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 has not yet been 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 Acknowledgments 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. Starting in MICCAI 2025, authors are not required to include the Acknowledgments 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. Many document-to-PDF conversion software programs add the author information to the metadata by default.
- **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.

5 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 on the submission form 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 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.

5.1 Conflict of interest

When assigning a manuscript to a reviewer for peer review, it is important to avoid conflicts 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 Elsevier², 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 on the submission form 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 also the email domains of institutions or organizations with which the authors have had close relationships, within the past 3 years. Authors should also disclose personal conflicts, such as someone who has mentored/supervised the author(s), on the submission form.

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

² <https://www.journals.elsevier.com/journal-of-systems-and-software/policies/conflict-of-interest-guidelines-for-reviewers>

6 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. Beginning in 2025, only multimedia content (videos) as warranted by technical application (e.g. robotics, surgery...) is 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.

7 Final thoughts

Authors whose manuscripts were desk-rejected often felt the decision to be unfair and unkind. However, allowing non-compliant manuscripts would be unfair to authors who took care to follow all submission guidelines. Adhering to the requirement is essential for maintaining a fair and professional review process. 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. Paper Title. This paper is accepted by XXX but is not yet available to the public. An anonymized version of this work has been submitted as supplementary material.