

# CCT Reviewer Guidelines

## CONFERENCE REVIEWS: A GIFT TO THE CCT COMMUNITY

Members of the CCT community come together at conferences to build and reinforce those bonds in part by engaging each other's scholarship. Reviewing is indispensable to that engagement. Thus, every review is a gift, and we have been grateful for it. But we have not always been clear about the responsibilities of the conference reviewer role.

In the following paragraphs, we make those responsibilities explicit and offer some basic guidance in carrying them out.

### Reviewer Responsibilities

When a person accepts the responsibility of reviewing for a CCT-sponsored conference, we expect them to bear in mind as they read conference submissions that they are expected to generate engaged discussion. Certainly, in their remarks to authors, reviewers should demand evidence of high-quality work, but not to the same standard of completeness or level of contribution that they might hold a journal manuscript.

Additionally, we ask that reviewer remarks to authors conform to the following standards:

#### **Respect Anonymity and Confidentiality**

The Conference uses a double-anonymous review process, meaning authors and reviewers are never informed of the other's identities. Avoid alluding to your identity in your reviews. You might be aware of an author's identity, for instance, because of prior presentations of the research. While such knowledge is unavoidable and not in itself a reason to dismiss a reviewer, please reach out to the track chairs if you feel that any preconceptions or personal inclinations might affect your ability to impartially evaluate the work (i.e., you perceive a conflict of interest). Reviewers must not actively seek the author's identity (e.g., via a Google search).

#### **Provide Rigorous, Thorough, and Prompt Remarks**

Take the time to do a proper review. We suggest reading the entire document under review, taking a little time to digest the paper, and then writing the review.

Consider the entire submission (including the title, contribution statement, and abstract) in detail. If you feel qualified to evaluate only a particular aspect of a submission, indicate this in your confidential comments to the track chairs and note the limits of your expertise in comments to the authors. Please pay close attention to assumptions, assertions, constructs, methods, analyses, and implications. Always note the strengths and weaknesses of the submission in sufficient detail to support your recommendation to the track/conference chair(s). Always provide complete citations when referencing published research, especially if you are concerned that the manuscript is not citing relevant literature. Please keep comments focused and constructive, and use a professional tone in all communications. Remember to adjust your expectations of rigor and thoroughness to the type of submission, i.e., working papers should not be expected to have the same level of elaboration as competitive papers. Finally, we ask that reviewers devote sufficient time to provide a high-quality review by the deadline. Authors entrust us to assess their work on a timely basis.

## Guidance to Reviewers

We offer the following guidance to reviewers on creating feedback to authors that fulfills these responsibilities:

1. **Prioritize Comments** – Reviewers should distinguish between major and minor concerns and identify what is essential for authors to address and what is less important.
2. **Be Open-Minded and Never Hijack a Submission** – As a basic condition of providing a thorough and rigorous review, we expect reviewers to separate their evaluation of a submission from their personal views on any theory, method, philosophy, research context, or the authorial team. They should avoid “hijacking” (taking control of) submissions by:
  - *Evaluating them using alternative standards* when those standards run counter to what is given in the submission. We strongly encourage reviewers to confront the implications of the authors’ theoretical, methodological, and other choices. But they should not evaluate a submission based on choices they would have preferred. If a paper is based on a certain theoretical framework or methodology, a reviewer should not judge it against a different theoretical framework or methodology that they personally prefer.
  - *Hyper-focusing on alternative explanations* when they do not substantially change the submission’s main contributions. Certainly, reviewers should present alternative explanations for empirical claims. But when thinking about how to assign priority to them, the highest priority should go to alternatives that provide a more compelling and complete account of the full set of empirical claims (or at least the primary ones).
  - *Striving to be impartial* - Impartiality is not always feasible. Someone advocating for a particular view of a theory might be unlikely to see their view as problematic and withdraw themselves, as they might believe their view represents the most rigorous and appropriate lens. Understand that this might happen and keep an open mind. There is a fine line between suggesting an alternative theoretical lens (which can be very helpful and constructive) and being an unconditional advocate for one particular theory.
3. **Be polite, diplomatic, and discerning** – Language matters. Consider rephrasing loaded, accusatory phrases like "fatal flaws" and "serious mistakes" to something that more appropriately and precisely highlights the impressions the submission left on the reader, like "substantial concerns." This increases the likelihood that the authors will understand, appreciate, and use the suggestions.
4. **Try to write at least two paragraphs of feedback** – One paragraph can focus on the strengths and contributions of the paper, while the other can address areas for improvement, concerns, or suggestions. This structure helps ensure that the feedback is balanced and comprehensive.
5. **Remember that many authors speak English as a second language, reflecting our global and diverse community** – Language standards can differ, so if the submission's language is clear enough for comprehension, it should be considered acceptable. Authors who are non-native English speakers often invest significantly more time and resources, including financial, in preparing their manuscripts than native speakers. Keep this in mind during your review, and if possible, go the extra mile to be helpful. An extra dose of kindness and support can be very helpful in displaying our community as a supportive and inclusive environment.
6. **If your PhD student is new to writing reviews**, it's important to guide them through the process and review their work before submission. Writing good reviews is part of their training.

<b>Reviewer Do's</b>	<b>Reviewer Don'ts</b>
Please consider providing at least two paragraphs in a review (This is not a journal review but provide enough for authors to understand how to advance their work.)	Please, do not exceed three pages of feedback.
Please be forthright while using constructive/helpful/supportive language to foster a collegial environment for all scholars	Please do not hijack the paper (see Guidance to Reviewers #2)
Please ask for clarification where needed, and whenever possible, offer feasible solutions	Please do not point to problems without at least suggesting a general approach to remediation, Alternatively, be transparent about not knowing how to solve the problem you detected either.
In critique, please prioritize comments that highlight logical inconsistencies and inconsistencies between arguments and data	Please avoid rejecting a submission solely because of its general approach, preferred paradigms, or because it aligns with areas outside your specific expertise or subjective preferences
Use focused and structured writing	Please ensure your remarks are clear and structured, avoiding stream-of-consciousness writing. Also, refrain from any condescending comments (i.e. showing an attitude of superiority or a lack of respect for the authors).
Aim to be a satisficer by striving for a 'good enough' standard that assists the authors in advancing their work, rather than seeking perfection	Please stay away from suggesting radical pivots for a conference submission, especially if they involve collecting substantially new data (though it can be appropriate to suggest these things for future exploration).
Please approach the evaluation of the manuscript with curiosity and an open mind, focusing on engaging thoroughly with the debate and understanding the logic of the argument presented.	Please avoid dismissing a submission due to its imperfect English language proficiency.
When in doubt, please err on the side of “how can I help this work advance?” rather than “how can I keep this out?”	
Please be specific in comments, referring to the exact place in the text where a weakness is located and how it can be strengthened	
Please make sure reviews align with your accept/reject decision and explain it.	

## [Responsibility of Conference and Track Chairs](#)

Any non-reviewer role involved in the editorial process (e.g., conference chair, track chair) is crucial work. We expect those who take on such roles to consider the power and responsibility that comes with them. You are the liaison between reviewers and authors. So, please take care to ensure all reviewer feedback complies with the code of conduct as outlined and to take any concerns to the conference organizers as needed.