Ethical Standards for Publication of Aeronautics and Astronautics Research

Preface

The American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) serves the engineering and scientific aerospace communities and society at large in several ways, including the publication of journals that present the results of scientific and engineering research. The Editor-in-Chief of a journal of the AIAA has the responsibility to maintain the AIAA ethical standards for reviewing and accepting papers submitted to that journal. In the main, these ethical standards derive from the AIAA definition of the scope of the journal and from the community perception of standards of quality for scientific and engineering work and its presentation. The following ethical standards reflect the conviction that the observance of high ethical standards is so vital to the whole engineering and scientific enterprise that a definition of those standards should be brought to the attention of all concerned.

Ethical Standards

A. Obligations of Editors-in-Chief and Associate Editors*

1. The Editor-in-Chief has complete responsibility and authority to accept a submitted paper for publication or to reject it. The Editor-in-Chief may delegate this responsibility to Associate Editors, who may confer with reviewers for an evaluation to use in making this decision.
2. The Editor will give unbiased and impartial consideration to all manuscripts offered for publication, judging each on its scientific and engineering merits without regard to race, gender, religious belief, ethnic origin, citizenship, or political philosophy of the author(s).
3. The Editor should process manuscripts promptly.
4. The Editor and the editorial staff will not disclose any information about a manuscript under consideration or its disposition to anyone other than those from whom professional advice is sought. The names of reviewers will not be released without the reviewers' permission.
5. The Editor will respect the intellectual independence of authors.
6. Editorial responsibility and authority for any manuscript authored by an Editor-in-Chief and submitted to the journal must be delegated to some other qualified person, such as an Associate Editor of that journal. When it is an Associate Editor participating in the debate, the Editor-in-Chief should either assume the responsibility or delegate it to another Associate Editor. Editors should avoid situations of real or perceived conflicts of interest. If an Editor chooses to participate in an ongoing scientific debate within the journal, the Editor should arrange for some other qualified person to take editorial responsibility.
7. Unpublished information, arguments, or interpretations disclosed in a submitted manuscript must not be used in the research of an Editor-in-Chief, Associate Editor, or reviewer except with the consent of the author.
8. If an Editor is presented with convincing evidence that the main substance or conclusions of a paper published in the journal are erroneous, the Editor must facilitate publication of an appropriate paper or technical comment pointing out the error and, if possible, correcting it.

B. Obligations of Authors

1. An author's central obligation is to present a concise, accurate account of the research performed as well as an objective discussion of its significance.
2. A paper should contain sufficient detail and reference to public sources of information such that the author's peers could repeat the work.
3. An author should cite those publications that have been influential in determining the nature of the reported work and that will guide the reader quickly to the earlier work that is essential for understanding the present investigation. Information obtained privately, as in conversation, correspondence, or discussion with third parties, should not be used or reported in the author's work without explicit permission from the investigator with whom the information originated. Information obtained in the course of confidential services, such as refereeing manuscripts or grant applications, should be treated similarly.
4. Fragmentation of research papers should be avoided. A scientist who has done extensive work on a system or group of related systems should organize publication so that each paper gives a complete account of a particular aspect of the general study.
5. It is inappropriate for an author to submit manuscripts describing essentially the same research to more than one journal of primary publication.
6. An accurate, nontrivial criticism of the content of a published paper is justified; however, in no case is personal criticism considered to be appropriate.
7. To protect the integrity of authorship, only persons who have significantly contributed to the research and paper preparation should be listed as authors. The corresponding author attests to the fact that any others named as authors have seen the final version of the paper and have agreed to its submission for publication. Deceased persons who meet the criterion for co-authorship should be included, with a footnote reporting date of death. No fictitious name should be listed as an author or co-author. The author who submits a manuscript for publication accepts the responsibility of having included as co-authors all persons appropriate and none inappropriate.
8. It is inappropriate to submit manuscripts with an obvious marketing orientation.

C. Obligations of Reviewers of Manuscripts

1. Inasmuch as the reviewing of manuscripts is an essential step in the publication process, every publishing engineer and scientist has an obligation to do a fair share of reviewing. On the average, an author should expect to review twice as many papers as an author writes.
2. A chosen reviewer who feels inadequately qualified or lacks the time to judge the research reported in a manuscript should return it *promptly* to the Editor.
3. A reviewer of a manuscript should judge the quality of the manuscript objectively and respect the intellectual independence of the authors. In no case is personal criticism appropriate.
4. A reviewer should be sensitive even to the appearance of a conflict of interest. If in doubt, the reviewer should return the manuscript promptly without review, advising the Editor of the conflict of interest or bias.
5. A reviewer should not evaluate a manuscript authored or co-authored by a person with whom the reviewer has a personal or professional connection if the relationship would bias judgment of the manuscript.
6. A reviewer should treat a manuscript sent for review as a confidential document. Its contents, as well as the reviewers' recommendations, should neither be shown to nor discussed with others except, in special cases, to persons from whom specific advice may be sought; in that event, the identities of those consulted should be disclosed to the Editor.
7. A reviewer should explain and support judgments adequately so that Editors and authors may understand the basis of the comments. Any statement that an observation, derivation, or argument had been previously reported should be accompanied by the relevant citation.
8. A reviewer should be alert to failure of authors to cite relevant work by other scientists. A reviewer should call to the Editor's attention any substantial similarity between the manuscript under consideration and any published paper or any manuscript submitted concurrently to another journal.
9. A reviewer should not use or disclose unpublished information, arguments, or interpretations contained in a manuscript under consideration, except with the consent of the author.

D. Obligations of Engineers and Scientists Making Statements to Society at Large

1. A scientist or engineer publishing in the popular literature has the same basic obligation to be accurate in reporting observations and to be unbiased in interpreting them as when publishing in a technical journal.
2. A scientist or engineer should strive to keep public writing, remarks, and interviews as accurate as possible.
3. A scientist or engineer should not proclaim a discovery to the public unless the support for it is of strength sufficient to warrant publication in the technical literature. An account of the work and results that support a public pronouncement should be submitted as quickly as possible for publication in a technical journal.

Acknowledgments

The ethical standards embodied in this document were adopted by the Publications Committee of AIAA on August 16, 1989, and are endorsed by the Editors-in-Chief. With minor changes, these standards are adapted from those published by the American Geophysical Union and are used with their permission.

*Throughout this document, the term "Editor," when used alone, applies to *both* Editor-in-Chief and Associate Editor. When one or the other bears the specific responsibility, the full title is used.