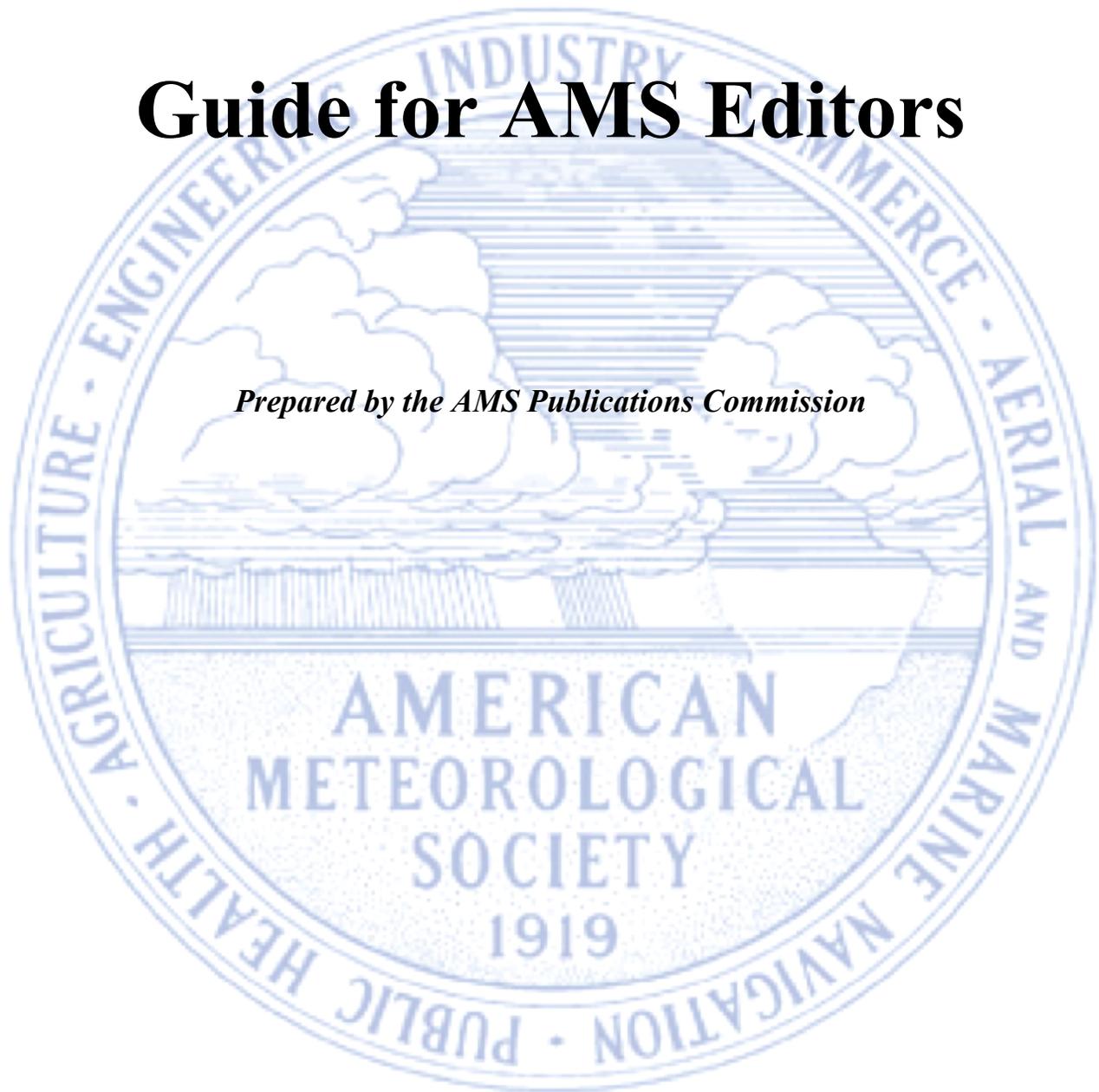


Guide for AMS Editors

Prepared by the AMS Publications Commission



April 8, 2008

1. Introduction

The journals of the American Meteorological Society (AMS), excluding BAMS and EI, received nearly 2300 submissions in 2006. To shepherd these submissions to publication decisions, the AMS depends on the volunteer work of 51 Editors spread across the 8 journals. These scholarly journals (i.e., those contributions that are peer-reviewed) fall under the auspices of the Publications Commission. The Commission sets policies, best practices, and guidelines to be followed by Editors who make decisions regarding what is acceptable work to be published by their journal. This Guide serves as a “job description” for Editors and documents the important publications policies and best practices for Editors and their Editorial Assistants to follow.

2. Roles and Responsibilities of Editors

AMS Editors contribute, on a voluntary basis, to a critically important function of the Society, namely ensuring that the integrity and professional standards of the scholarly publications of the AMS are of the highest caliber. As such, Editors have responsibilities to authors, reviewers, and readers of AMS journals. Some of these responsibilities include:

- Providing general guidelines to authors for preparing, formatting, and submitting manuscripts. The AMS *Author's Guide* is the ultimate arbiter.
- Treating all authors with fairness, courtesy, objectivity, and honesty.
- Protecting the confidentiality of every author's work during the review process.
- Protecting reviewer anonymity unless reviewers reveal their identity to the author.
- Establishing a system for effective and rapid peer review following the guidelines established by the Publications Commission.
- Making editorial decisions with reasonable speed and, when the manuscript is potentially appropriate for the journal with opinions of peer reviewers who have adequate expertise to judge the manuscript, communicate these decisions to authors in a constructive and helpful manner.
- Establishing a system for handling ethical issues and allegations or findings of misconduct by authors following guidelines established by the Publications Commission.
- Communicating clearly all editorial policies and standards to authors, reviewers, and readers.
- Informing authors of solicited manuscripts (e.g., review articles, special collection articles, etc.) that their submissions will be evaluated according to the journal's usual procedures or outlining the decision-making process if it differs from those procedures.
- Judging revealed conflicts of interest of authors and reviewers, using guidelines provided by the Publications Commission.

a. Responsibilities to Authors

Editors are responsible for monitoring and ensuring the fairness, timeliness, thoroughness, and civility of the peer-review editorial process. The following are examples of editorial policies and standards that Editors require of submitting authors:

- Adherence to the length guideline of 7,500 words (roughly 26 double-spaced pages from abstract through acknowledgments) unless the author requests in writing, an exception to the guideline and the Editor grants such a request.
- Reveal any potential conflicts of interest of each author either in the cover letter or manuscript, in accordance with the guidelines provided by the Publications Commission.
- Reveal if substantial portions of the submission has ever been, or is currently, under consideration for publication by any peer-reviewed journal.
- Provide copies of cited manuscripts that are currently submitted or in press to assist reviewers.
- Addressing authorship disputes when informed of them, such as "honorary" listing of a person who does not meet authorship criteria, submission of a manuscript without the knowledge or consent of an author/contributor, misrepresentation of a contribution, and an ordering of the byline that indicates a greater level of participation in the research than is warranted. Authorship abuses may be driven by some factors that are beyond the role of the Editor (tenure decisions, funding, awards). Editors, however, should collaborate with research institutions and other organizations to determine why these improprieties exist and to work toward solutions.
- Addressing allegations of author misconduct. When allegations and/or findings of misconduct are presented, the Editor, working with the Chief Editor and Publications Commissioner, has responsibility for investigating, judging, and/or penalizing the author for these lapses. In addition, the Editor and the AMS have a responsibility to inform readers of work formally proven to be plagiarized, fabricated, or falsified. Such publications may be subjected to being removed from the online archive.

b. Responsibilities to Reviewers

The Editors choose reviewers to offer candid opinions about the submitted work. To encourage honest and frank reviewer input, the AMS follows the practice of keeping reviewer identities anonymous to the authors (single blind system), but the reviewers have the option to reveal their names to the authors. The AMS recognizes peer review as a gift of uncompensated time from scientists to whom time is a precious commodity. It is therefore important for Editors to clearly define the responsibilities of these individuals and to implement processes that streamline the peer review as much as possible. Some of these Editor responsibilities include:

- Assigning papers for review appropriate to the reviewers' areas of interest and expertise.

- Establishing a process for reviewers to ensure that they treat the manuscript as a confidential document and complete the review promptly.
- Informing reviewers that they are not allowed to make any use of the work described in the manuscript or take advantage of the knowledge they gained by reviewing it until it is published.
- Providing reviewers with written, explicit instructions on the journal's expectations for the scope, content, quality, and timeliness of their reviews to promote thoughtful, fair, constructive, and informative critique of the submitted work.
- Requesting that reviewers identify any potential conflicts of interest and asking that they recuse themselves if they cannot provide an unbiased review.
- Allowing reviewers appropriate time to complete their reviews, including giving extensions to deadlines previously agreed upon, if appropriate.
- Requesting reviews at a frequency that does not overtax any one reviewer. General guidelines are no more than three reviews per year from each journal. Associate Editors are expected to review no more than 12 manuscripts per year.
- Finding ways to recognize the contribution of reviewers, for example, by publicly thanking them in the journal, providing letters that might be used in applications for academic promotion, allowing them free downloads of “pay-per-view” journal content, nominating them for AMS Editors Awards, or inviting them to serve on the editorial board of the journal.

c. Responsibilities to Readers

Editors have the responsibility to inform and educate readers. Making clear and rational editorial decisions will ensure the best selection of content that contributes to the body of scientific knowledge.

- Evaluating all manuscripts considered for publication to make certain that each manuscript provides the evidence readers need to evaluate the authors' conclusions and that those conclusions reflect the evidence provided in the manuscript.
- Disclosing all relevant potential conflicts of interest of those involved in considering a manuscript or affirming that none exist.
- Maintaining the journal's internal integrity.
- Accepting papers within the journal's terms of reference and transferring mismatched submissions to other appropriate AMS journals.

3. Editor's Role in The Peer-Review Process¹

a. Articles and Notes

¹ Many of these responsibilities are outlined in the “Authors Bill of Rights” Editorial (Schubert, W.H., 1999: EDITORIAL. *Mon. Wea. Rev.*, **127**, 3.

The typical steps editors follow in making editorial decisions can best be seen in the manuscript flowchart shown in Fig. 1. Authors begin by submitting native file format versions of their papers to the AMS upload web site (http://www.ametsoc.org/au_upload/index.cfm). The AMS system will prepare a PDF from the native file that the author must verify before it is sent to the AMS headquarters for qualification. Authors can upload their own PDFs (or even hard copies) but eventual layout of the accepted manuscript could be delayed if native files are not uploaded. There could be additional charges to authors who submit hard-copy manuscripts to pay for keystroking their manuscripts into an electronic version. Final, high-quality figures are **NOT**

AMS Publications Flowchart

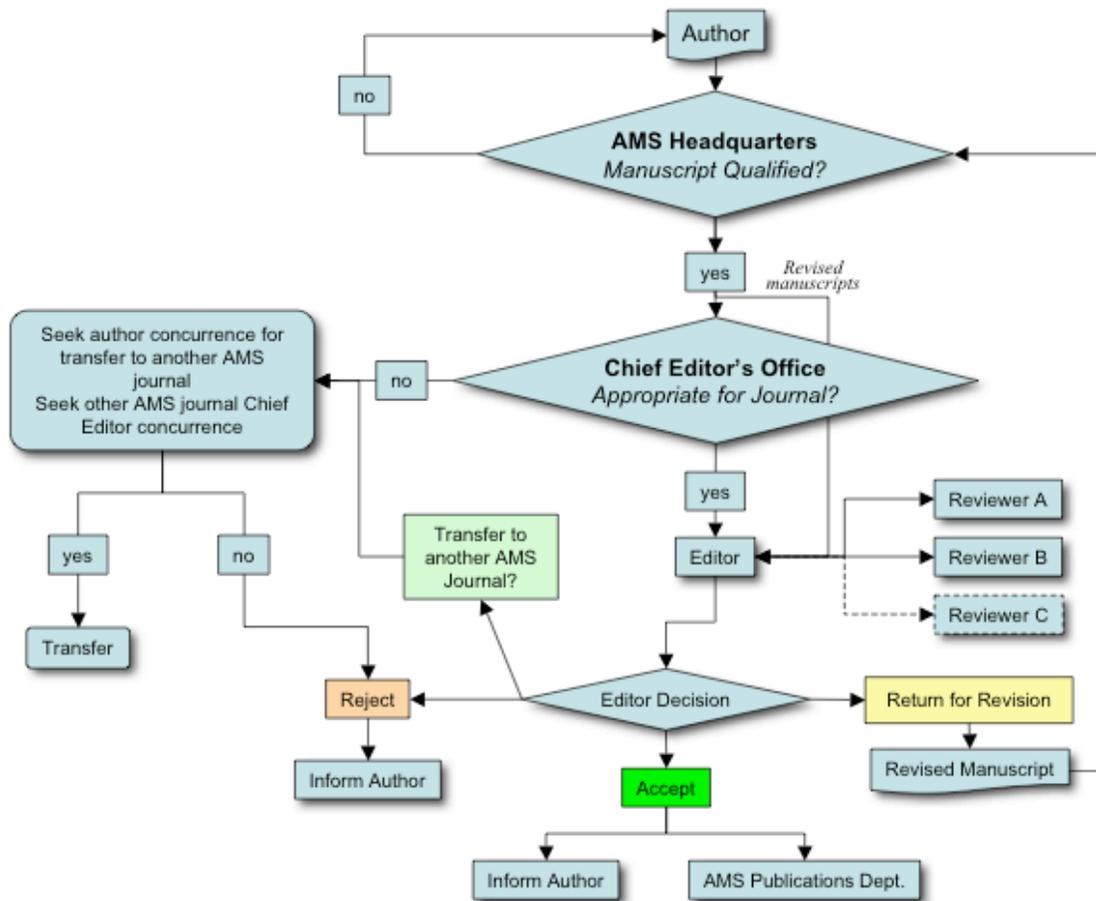


Fig. 1. Flowchart showing the general procedures editors follow to make decisions.

required at this stage and, in fact, authors should be encouraged to keep the size of the PDF files small to assist reviewers and Editors in downloading. Putting figures in JPEG or GIF image format with a 120 × 120 dpi resolution is usually sufficient for reviewers. Final high quality TIFF or EPS figures may be uploaded at any point in the review process, including upon acceptance. AMS production assistants determine if the submission meets formatting standards

(which are uniform across all journals), if a properly signed *Transfer of Copyright* form² has been transmitted to AMS headquarters, and if the contribution meets the length guidelines. Once qualified the Chief Editor's office of the desired journal is notified that a new submission has arrived. The journal's Chief Editor examines the paper to gauge if it is appropriate for the journal, and if not, can summarily reject blatantly inappropriate contributions or seek transfer to a more appropriate AMS journal. Author and the target journal Chief Editor concurrence must be obtained before a transfer is initiated. Once satisfied that the submission is appropriate the Chief Editor assigns the paper to the most appropriate Editor based on expertise, including him/herself.

In general, Commission guidelines specify that Editors should be assigned no more than 50 manuscripts per year. Chief Editors should monitor the subject matter of submissions to insure that Editor expertise is matched to the types of submissions so that Editors are not overworked (or underutilized). The Publication Commission annually evaluates the editorial makeup of each journals board, and, based on submission and subject matter trends, can add editors (with Council concurrence) to match submission growth or recruit new editors with different subject matter expertise to replace retiring editors.

Editors seek out appropriate subject matter reviewers to give informed opinions about the submitted work. **Guidelines call for at least two reviewers (minimum) for each submission.** Frequently the Editor will choose to use a third reviewer in case of failure of one reviewer to return a timely review or if the contribution appears fairly complex, controversial, or multi-disciplinary. Publication Commission guidelines also call for:

- The Editor will make every effort to contact via phone or e-mail all potential reviewers in advance to ensure that they have the interest and the available time to review the manuscript in a timely manner.
- Reviewers will be asked to return the completed review within **four (4)** weeks unless special circumstances warrant a different schedule. (In the case of multiple-part papers sent to reviewers, this time may, at the discretion of the Editor, be increased to no more than eight weeks. For short contributions, this time may, at the discretion of the Editor, be decreased to less than four weeks if the reviewer agrees when contacted by the Editor.)
- To save further mail transit time in the review process, Editors will encourage the reviewers to use e-mail or fax to send in their reviews. If appropriate, for time-critical reviews, Editors will employ express mail service to send manuscripts to reviewers.
- A friendly reminder email is often useful to remind all reviewers and authors ahead of time of any approaching deadlines. The Editor or the Editorial Assistant may send this email.
- If the review has not been received by the Editor's office within 30 days from the time it was mailed to the reviewer, a reminder will be sent (by phone or e-mail) to the

² Authors should be informed that a scanned PDF or faxed *Transfer of Copyright* form is now acceptable as the "official" form, i.e., there is no longer any requirement to mail a signed hard copy to AMS headquarters.

reviewer stating that the review is now due at the editorial office. The reviewer will be informed that the review must be received within two weeks to be used in the editorial decision.

- If the review is not received within two weeks after the reminder, the Editor will either make a decision based on the other reviews received or secure an additional review from a reviewer who agrees in advance to provide the review within two weeks. Journal Associate Editors are good candidates for these emergency reviews.
- Late reviews received after an editorial decision has been made may, at the discretion of the Editor, be forwarded to the author as additional input for revisions, but will not be used to change the editorial decision.

At a minimum, reviewers should be instructed to address their comments to the following items:

- Is the study an original contribution in its field?
- Did the author make errors in inference, interpretation, or mathematical analysis?
- Does the material lend itself to application in its field?
- Is the author's presentation clear, concise, and well organized?
- Is the abstract informative, giving the essence of the research in clear terms?
- Does the paper follow the AMS policy on the use of SI units as stated in the *Authors' Guide*?

Reviewers can also be instructed to provide a summary rating to the Editor along the following lines:

- **ACCEPT:** Publish this manuscript in its present form (no revisions necessary).
- **RETURN FOR MINOR REVISION:** As long as the Editor believes the author's revisions have accommodated the reviewer's criticisms, the manuscript may be accepted. The revisions may necessitate rewording for clarity, reducing overall paper length, or other factors. The reviewer does **not** wish to see a revision of the paper.
- **RETURN FOR MAJOR REVISION:** The reviewer believes the revision must incorporate critical points that should be verified before making a final recommendation to accept. The reviewer asks to see the revised version for a second evaluation. Usually an Editor will provide it, although it is within the Editor's discretion to make a decision at any point in the review process.
- **REJECT:** This paper cannot be satisfactorily corrected without such a major undertaking that it would be considered a new submission. Grounds for rejection include such flaws as lack of originality, poor technical quality, treatment of a problem distinctly unimportant or trivial, scientific incompetence, or exposition and approach at a level below the standards of the AMS. Poorly written manuscripts can be rejected on

that basis alone if the poor grammar or text mistakes distracts sufficiently from the presentation that the reviewer cannot understand the technical points, interpretations, and conclusions.

- **TRANSFER TO ANOTHER JOURNAL:** The reviewer believes that the paper has merit but is inappropriate for this journal and recommends that it be submitted elsewhere. Any advice to the Editors as to the appropriate journal is welcome.

Based on the reviews and reviewer recommendations, the Editor can make one of four decisions

- *Accept “as is”.* Very few manuscripts achieve such a lofty distinction the first time through the editorial cycle—in fact, fewer than 1%.
- *Return for minor revisions.* These manuscripts typically need editorial-type changes or relatively minor changes in content and figures (e.g., reduction in length, improvement of references, improvements in clarity). In this case, the Editor intends to decide whether the manuscript, once revised by the author, is acceptable for publication without returning it to the original reviewers. Usually, about 30% of all manuscripts fall into this category.
- *Return for major revisions.* These manuscripts typically require more extensive or substantial work on the text and/or figures, which might include further measurements, numerical model runs, or computations, additional analysis, or substantial reorganization of manuscript. In addition, the Editor intends to return the revised manuscript (plus point-by-point responses to all reviewer comments) to some or all of the reviewers for their further comments and recommendations. Note the Editor is not bound by this decision. If the author satisfactorily responds to each reviewer comment the Editor can decide to accept the paper without another look by the reviewer(s). Roughly 30%–40% of all manuscripts typically fall into this category.
- *Reject.* Generally about 30% of all manuscripts submitted to AMS journals are rejected or withdrawn by the author as unsuitable for publication by the AMS.
- *Transfer the manuscript to another AMS journal.* Although, as noted previously, the chief or co-chief Editor screens manuscripts for this possibility, Editors and reviewers may still suggest that the subject matter of a manuscript is better suited to another AMS journal. About 3%–5% of the manuscripts received are recommended for transfer to other journals, either by the Chief Editor or a regular Editor.

How the Editor arrives at a decision varies. Simpleminded approaches such as picking the most severe review (e.g., two return for major revisions and one reject would result in a reject) or majority rules (e.g., major revisions in the previous example) are not recommended. Instead, the Editor should be familiar with all the reviews, the manuscript, the reviewers and their relationship to the author(s), and quality of the reviewers and author(s). Reviews are like forecast guidance for the Editor, data to consult in making a decision, but the decision is ultimately that of the Editor. Sometimes Editor decisions can deviate from all reviews, although this is rare, especially if the Editor has chosen high-quality reviewers who provide high-quality

reviews. Reviewers should review the paper in front of them, not the one that they wished had been written.

The initial decision letter to the author should use the term “*return the paper for revision*” and **not** “*conditional acceptance*”. The term “accept” should **only** be used in an author communication when the paper is indeed ready to be sent to the AMS Publications Department for production. *The manuscript is not in acceptable form as long as revisions are required.* Authors should not be misled by use of the word “accept” in any decision letter other than the last one, since a manuscript can still be rejected during the revision process.

Authors should be instructed to return their revised manuscripts and point-by-point responses within two (2) months or their paper may be considered withdrawn and require a new submission. In the case of extenuating circumstance, the time limit may be extended at the discretion of the Editor. The author, however, should request any such extension before the revision deadline lapses.

Revised papers are submitted through the same AMS web site as the original submission and go through a similar formatting “qualification” before being sent to the Editor. Authors should also be instructed to prepare a point-by-point response to each reviewers’ comments. Authors are not required to do everything a reviewer requests, but the author must respond to each comment and describe the action taken, if any.

Note that there is no limit to the number of rounds of review. In practice, however, the vast majority of papers reach a decision after at most two trips to the reviewers.

Sometimes authors and reviewers may not reach agreement on important issues. Failure to reach agreement may, if not properly handled by the Editor, cause the peer-review process to drag on for many months. In this situation, the Editor has several options. The Editor may reject the manuscript, asking the author to resubmit to a new journal, same journal but new Editor, or same journal same Editor but different reviewers. The Editor may accept the manuscript, asking the reviewer and author to carry on the debate in the Correspondence section of the journal by submitting a Comment and Reply, once the paper is published. The Editor may also mandate changes in the manuscript before acceptance is offered.

Editors should realize that statistics are kept on the time to initial editorial decision. **The Publication Commission has set a goal of having all papers reach an initial decision in 10 weeks (70 days).** Editors need to be mindful of this time and strive to make timely decisions.

After a manuscript has been accepted, it is forwarded to AMS Headquarters for processing by publication staff (copy and technical editors).

b. Comments and Replies

Comments (and replies) on articles or notes are handled differently than regular submissions. The Chief Editor usually handles comments/replies, but they can be delegated to Editors. **Generally, comments should be submitted within two (2) years of the publication date of the original paper,** although the Editor can waive this time limit based on extenuating circumstances. Instead of being peer-reviewed as with a regular submission, the comment is examined by the Editor (or his/her delegate, typically an Associate Editor, but a well-versed

colleague can also be used) for “appropriateness”. Appropriate comments are sent to the corresponding author of the paper being commented upon for a reply, if the original author so chooses to prepare a reply. Generally **the corresponding author of the original paper is given two (2) months to prepare a reply**. The Editor can extend the deadline if appropriate, but Editors should keep in mind the importance of timeliness of comments.

The reply, once received, will be sent to the author of the comment, who may then withdraw the comment (in which case, neither the comment nor the reply would be published), revise the correspondence (within **one (1) month** of receiving the reply), or leave the correspondence unchanged. If the correspondence is revised, it is sent to the original author of the paper, who then has the opportunity to amend the reply. Although it is theoretically possible for the commenter and original author to get into an “infinite” loop on revisions, the vast majority of comments and replies are agreed upon within two cycles. On rare occasions, the Editor will need to step in if the two authors cannot agree on a mutually acceptable stopping point for revisions and help mediate a conclusion. That conclusion may be rejection of the comment (no reply is then needed) or publication of the comment without a reply. The Editor needs to monitor the tone of the comment/reply to insure civil discourse is maintained.

The Editor may decide to have the correspondence and reply reviewed at any stage of this process. A second correspondence from the same person on the same original paper will not, in general, be accepted. If two or more comments from different persons are submitted on a single paper, they may each be considered for publication. If their contents are judged by the Editor to be quite similar, however, the comment received first may be accepted and the later correspondence rejected or possibly combined into one comment by the first commenter with the concurrence of the other commenter(s). The author of the original paper will be encouraged to combine his or her replies to all comments into a single reply.

If the corresponding author of the original paper cannot or does not wish to meet the two-month deadline, the comment can be published alone. If a reply is submitted by the original author after the two-month deadline, it may, if found appropriate, appear in a later issue of the journal. In such cases, the author of the comment will be given the opportunity to publish a response along with the reply following a procedure equivalent to that followed using the guidelines for the usual correspondence and reply cycle given above. Nevertheless, no reply to a comment is considered for publication if it is submitted more than one year after the comment has appeared in the journal.

c. Special Collections

Special Collections are papers grouped by theme. In the past, dedicated issues of printed journals were used to group papers under a common theme (termed “Special Issues”). With the advent of electronic publishing we now have the capability to publish special collection papers as they are accepted rather than waiting for the all papers to finish the review and technical editing processes so they can be printed together. In this case papers grouped by common theme are referred to as “Special Collections”. In the printed journal, special collection articles will have a graphic logo on their title page that identifies them with a particular collection, and they will also be tagged as a special-collection paper in the table of contents with the logo. In the AMS Journals Online Web site maintained by Allen Press, all of the articles composing a special collection will be gathered and presented together. When all of the special collection papers have

been published, the editors will have the option to print a limited number of hard-copy versions of all of the papers in a dedicated bound volume (assuming the necessary funding is provided), making it truly a “special” issue.

Note that special collection papers can span AMS journals. The special collection organizer should contact each Chief Editor to let them know how many papers to expect. The Chief Editors can then decide to assign a regular editor to handle the special collection papers. Special collection organizers can be identified as “Advisors” to the assigned Editor to provide advise on reviewers. The term “Special Editor” or “Guest Editor” is being discouraged. When organizing a special collection it is important to contact the AMS Journals Production Manager and AMS Publications Coordinator very early in the process so the manuscript tracking system can be adjusted to allow for pull-down menus allowing manuscripts to be tagged as part of the collection.

It maybe appropriate to provide an Editorial explaining the special collection. Such an Editorial can be authored by the “Advisor” or one of the AMS Editors handling the bulk of the manuscripts. This explanatory statement could appear in the first issue to contain one of the special collection papers and as part of the online collection as well as the dedicated bound volume.

4. Special Role of Chief Editors

Chief Editors have a special responsibility overseeing the conduct of operations for their Journal. Chief Editors are also voting members of the Publication Commission. In addition to the regular Editor duties outlined above, they also:

- Assign manuscripts to their Journal’s Editors according to the specialty of each Editor, being mindful of current workloads and the guidelines for maximum manuscripts per year.
- For periods of extended absence (e.g., vacations, field program travel, etc.) the Chief Editor must arrange for another Editor to cover the assignment of manuscripts to Editors so submission do not accumulate and cause unnecessary delays.
- Develop a process of choosing Associate Editors for their Journal.
- Prepare annual reports for their journal which include the editorial statistics produced by the MTS, a report on trends in submission, and a written justification for their Journal’s Editor’s Award nominee. The journal annual report is due about May 15th each year so it can be made available for the annual Publication Commission meeting in Boston which is typically held the last week of May.
- Suggest new Editors for ones stepping down and for new ones due to submission growth based on expertise in fields for which the Journal receives submissions.
- Provide mentoring and instructions to new Editors as to “Best Editorial Practices”.
- Handle author complaints about their Journal’s Editors with respect to bias, conflicts of interest, and unfair or biased practices.

- Develop a fair process for determining the annual Editor's Award nominee for their Journal.
- Organize special issues or special collections by working with the community at large or recruiting specialists in the field to assist with the solicitation of submissions.
- Provide input to the AMS on annual performance ratings of their Editorial Assistant (EA).

5. Role of Associate Editors

Associate Editors are selected by the Chief Editor of the journal (often with the input of Editors) to contribute to the smooth functioning of the journal.

The duties of Associate Editors include:

- Provide greater quantity and higher quality reviews than most reviewers.
- Provide special assistance to Editors who require an expedited review (review needed in 1 day to two weeks), e.g., in case of a delinquent reviewer.
- Assist in the adjudication of decisions where reviewer guidance is diverse (e.g., two reviews recommending minor revisions and one review recommending rejection).
- Assist the Chief Editor determine the suitability of Comment/Reply exchanges for publication.

Although each Chief Editor will decide on his/her own method for selecting Associate Editors, experience has shown that other Editors benefit from participating in that selection process, as they will personally want to choose colleagues they can rely on in specialty areas of interest to them. The team of Associate Editors should have collective experience that covers a wide variety of topics that the journal is likely to receive submissions in and should be balanced in several respects (e.g., university/laboratory, domestic/foreign, gender).

Effective Associate Editors often have the following tendencies: dedication to the editorial process, promptness, always returning thorough and critical reviews, and lack of bias. Previous reviews (quantity, quality, and timeliness) can be useful in picking Associate Editors. Older scientists or those with lots of responsibilities might actually be less effective than younger scientists who have more time, although a certain amount of variability with this antidotal assumption will be inevitable. Thus, the best or most experienced scientist may not always make the best Associate Editor.

6. Role of Editorial Assistants

The AMS, to assist Editors with their duties, provides editorial assistance. Historically this help has been a one-quarter-time EA for each field Editor and one-half-time EA for Chief Editors (usually termed CEA). With the recent advent of electronic communications (i.e., email and the MTS) the AMS has tried to consolidate EA support into the CEA's office to make more efficient use of their EAs.

EAs duties include:

- Keeping the MTS updated with all editorial decisions and reviewer due dates.
- Maintaining files of correspondence with each author.
- Notifying their Editors when a decision is needed (e.g., when a manuscript or revised manuscript arrives).
- Sending correspondence and instructions to authors and reviewers noting expectations and deadlines for their input.
- Alerting reviewers and authors of upcoming or past deadlines
- Helping answer author questions about the editorial process
- Uploading “correspondence” to the MTS associated with a particular manuscript. Correspondence can consist of sanitized reviews (i.e., reviews stripped of all identification to protect reviewer anonymity), letters, point-by-point responses, and any other material needed by the Editor for making an editorial decision.
- Offering suggestions for improvements to the MTS and working with the AMS staff in testing MTS enhancements.

7. Other Resources Available to Editors

The workflow of scientific publication of the AMS has undergone tremendous change in the last 5 years, as the electronic revolution has transformed the process from hardcopy and mail-driven to all-electronic processing. The AMS Journals (excluding BAMS and EI) received nearly 2300 submission in 2006. A critical component in tracking these submissions through the peer-review process is the Manuscript Tracking System (MTS). Although Editors are not expected to master all aspects of MTS data entry, they are expected to use it to track manuscript status. The URL of the MTS is <http://www.ametsoc.org/mts/index.cfm>.

Other resources that Editors are expected to be familiar with are the Author's Resource Center (<http://www.ametsoc.org/pubs/arcjrnl.html>), the journal description page (<http://www.ametsoc.org/pubs/journals/index.html>) and the Author's Guide (http://www.ametsoc.org/PUBS/authorsguide/pdf_vs/authguide.pdf).

Appendix A: Sample Letters

1. Reviewer Inquiry

Dear Dr. xxxxx:

In view of your expertise in this area, I wonder if you would consider reviewing the following manuscript that was recently submitted to Monthly Weather Review:

Title: Reliable Probabilistic Quantitative Precipitation Forecasts from a Short-Range Ensemble Forecasting System During the 2005-2006 Cool Season

Author(s): Nusrat Yussouf & David J. Stensrud

Manuscript Number: MWR-2314

Manuscript Type: ARTICLE

Manuscript Length: 17 text pages & 16 figures.

ABSTRACT

A simple binning technique developed to produce reliable probabilistic quantitative precipitation forecasts (PQPFs) from a multimodel short-range ensemble forecasting system is evaluated during the cool season of 2005-2006. The technique uses forecasts and observations of 3-h accumulated precipitation amounts from the past 12 days to adjust today's 3-h quantitative precipitation forecasts from each ensemble member and for each 3-h forecast period. Results indicate that the PQPFs obtained from this simple binning technique are significantly more reliable than the raw (original) ensemble forecast probabilities.

Brier skill scores and areas under the relative operating characteristic curve also reveal that this technique yields skillful probabilistic forecasts of rainfall amounts during the cool season. This holds true for accumulation periods of up to 48 h. The results obtained from this wintertime experiment parallel those obtained during the summer of 2004. In an attempt to reduce the effects of a small sample size on two-dimensional probability maps, the simple binning technique is modified by implementing 5- and 9-point smoothing schemes on the adjusted precipitation forecasts. Results indicate that the smoothed ensemble probabilities remain an improvement over the raw (original) ensemble forecast probabilities, although the smoothed probabilities are not as reliable as the unsmoothed adjusted probabilities. The skill of the PQPFs also is increased as the ensemble is expanded from 16 to 22 members during the period of study. These results highlight that simple post-processing techniques have the potential to provide greatly improved probabilistic guidance of rainfall events for all seasons of the year.

The review would be due in about a month after you receive it. If you are unable to do the review perhaps you could suggest one or two alternative reviewers.

Best Regards,

Dave Jorgensen
Co-Chief Editor, Monthly Weather Review

2. Author Return for MAJOR or MINOR Revisions. Editor supplied comments are indicated in italics.

Monthly Weather Review

Office of the Co-Chief Editors

Dear Dr. xxxx:

Attached to this email, please find the review(s) of your above-referenced manuscript.

After carefully reviewing your manuscript and all reviews, I believe this paper may be acceptable for publication if revisions are performed.

The reviews of this paper are somewhat mixed. Reviewers A and D thought the science was sound and there was value in your two new skill scores, but felt the presentation could be improved. These reviewers provide a wealth of suggestions for this improvement. However, Reviewers B and C had major issues with the rationale of the work. Specifically, Reviewer C felt you didn't make a strong enough case for why these new scores are necessary (i.e., what new information is presented by them?), and Reviewer B found the paper difficult to understand and suggested a major revamp of Sections 1, 2 and 3. I intend to send your revised manuscript and point by point response back to Revs. B and C, so please pay particular attention to their criticisms.

Please note that the AMS requires that your revised manuscript be submitted within **TWO (2) MONTHS** of the date of this email. With your resubmission, please respond carefully to each reviewer's comment, stating what was done or why you believe the recommended change is unnecessary.

Please upload your revised manuscript (with captions on figures and including any requested formatting revisions) to the AMS system (instructions at http://www.ametsoc.org/au_upload/index.cfm).

Also, send your cover letter and responses to reviewers as an email attachment to mgolden@ucar.edu.

Thank you for submitting your manuscript to the Monthly Weather Review. We look forward to receiving your revised manuscript.

Sincerely,

David Jorgensen
Research Meteorologist and Co-Chief Editor, Monthly Weather Review
Chief, NOAA/NSSL/Warning R&D Division

3. Author Return for REJECTION

Monthly Weather Review Office of the Co-Chief Editors

Dear Dr, xxxx:

I am serving as the Editor of your manuscript that was recently submitted to *Monthly Weather Review*, entitled:

"xxxx xxxxx xxxxx xxxxx xxxxx xxxxx xxxxx xxx"

I read your manuscript today, and I am sorry to inform you that I am rejecting this manuscript for publication.

Your manuscript has numerous grammatical mistakes and nonexistent words that inhibit the ability of a reader to understand your arguments. According to page 23 of the AMS Authors' Guide (available online at <http://www.ametsoc.org/PUBS/journals/index.html>):

"All manuscripts must be written in the English language. Neither AMS editors nor staff have the time available to edit manuscripts that require extensive grammatical changes, as can sometimes be the case with authors from non-English-speaking countries. While the AMS wishes to encourage the international exchange of scientific results through its journals, it requests that such authors make their own arrangements to ensure that submitted manuscripts are already in correct English. If not, their submissions may be returned unreviewed."

The magnitude and extent to which correct English is not employed in your paper is such that I am returning your manuscript unreviewed, as per the AMS guidelines. Only if your manuscript undergoes significant revision, may it be resubmitted as a new article to *Monthly Weather Review*.

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Sincerely,

Dr. David Schultz
Editor, *Monthly Weather Review*
Professor, Experimental Meteorology
Division of Atmospheric Sciences, Department of Physical Sciences, University of Helsinki and Finnish Meteorological Institute