

Acceptance Procedure for Archive Journals of AIAA

THE Institute publishes three archive journals—*Journal of Aircraft*, *Journal of Spacecraft and Rockets*, and *AIAA Journal*. The latter is a unified journal of research and exploratory development in the broad field of aeronautics and astronautics; the first two are journals of engineering focused on their respective technologies. The following paragraphs explain the acceptance procedure for submitted material:

Evaluation of Manuscripts and Preprints

1. Papers presently are received by the Managing Editor as submitted papers or in the form of AIAA preprints. At this point the first screening occurs. Those papers that are clearly intended for journal publication—i.e., prepared in AIAA journal format and of a technical nature—are assigned immediately by the Editors to one of the three journals according to the subject matter. When the author indicates a preference among the journals which is not in serious conflict with the scope of that journal, his preference normally will be honored. Papers that vary widely from the prescribed scholarly style are returned to the authors immediately. Such papers include those written as speeches, company reports, ill-defined progress reports or news releases, or any paper strongly flavored with advertising or sales nuances.

2. The next step is an examination by the Editor-in-Chief of papers logged to his journal. He first tests the manuscript according to the several criteria of subject scope, apparent technical validity, topical importance, timeliness, advance over prior publication, conciseness of reporting, completeness of references, editorial style, and length. If the subject scope makes it more suitable to one of the other journals, he may refer it there immediately. If, in his judgment, the paper obviously fails in the areas of technical validity and/or advance over prior publication, he will reject it, giving the author the reasons for rejection. If it survives the tests at this point, which 80% to 90% do, it will be assigned to the Associate Editor for that journal who has most direct knowledge of the subject matter. The Associate Editor then evaluates the paper according to the same criteria and either a) has the paper sent to one or more experts in the field (usually two) for confidential review, or b) decides to accept the paper or reject it for explicit cause without further review.

3. Great significance is attached to the review reports since the reviewers are selected for their expert knowledge of the particular field of the paper. Each reviewer is asked to judge its technical validity and the extent of its advance over work previously published; he is asked also for advice as to whether the paper merits publication in an archive journal. However, the *decision* to publish, to require major revision before publication, or to reject for reasons cited lies first with the Associate Editor and ultimately with the Editor-in-Chief. Reviewers often disagree with each other in their advice, and some reviewers tend to be too lenient in the light of the technical faults they have found in a paper.

The Editorial Decision to Accept or Reject

4. It will require approximately three months after receipt of the manuscript or preprint to accomplish the evaluation and review steps discussed above. (When several AIAA meetings are closely spaced, it may take a little longer.) The Editors will inform the author of their decision (acceptance, conditional acceptance, or rejection) as soon as possible. In the case of rejection, the author will be given *specific reasons* related to the criteria enumerated above. In the case of conditional acceptance, the required revisions are clearly indicated. On

rare occasions, the Editors may anticipate a need for further reviews after revision; if so, the author will be notified.

5. The next step is up to the author. If his paper has been rejected or if extensive revisions have been requested which he believes will degrade his paper seriously, he is entitled to submit a point-by-point rebuttal to the Editor's statement of reasons, which are usually based on reviewers' comments. The rebuttal then is analyzed fairly by the Editors, and a final decision is made promptly. This shall be the rule, and an author who does not receive a prompt reply is welcome to inquire about the reasons and/or request an immediate decision. In rare cases of a complex point of dispute, there may be a need for additional reviewing time if the author agrees to it. In no case shall a paper go through more than two reviewing periods before a decision is given.

6. Although it is the responsibility of the Editors to maintain high technical standards for the archive journals of the Institute, it is their policy also to make sure that no unconventional hypothesis or original idea is throttled if there is a chance that such a paper might stimulate either progress or constructive controversy on a technical point. Moreover, it is a basic principle of the publication program of the Institute, as of any membership organization, that its members shall have a fair opportunity and the right to see their papers published, as long as they can meet certain objectively defined standards. For these reasons, the following working policy has been adopted by the Editors:

Fair Procedure for Rebuttal by Author

a) In the confrontation between the rejection statement and the rebuttal statement, the decision goes in favor of the author if the critic's case is not clearly convincing.

b) Since promptness is the essence of fairness, an author who has received no decision within three months is welcome to request an immediate explanation and status report on his paper. If the forthcoming report is unsatisfactory to him, he may request a prompt decision regarding either rejection or conditional acceptance. If he receives no decision within three weeks, following this request, his paper will be regarded as accepted.

c) By the same token, authors who are requested by the Editors to revise their papers must make an effort to accomplish the requested revisions within the stated period, which normally is three weeks. If the author does not respond to our subsequent inquiry, his paper will be regarded as withdrawn. Normally, an author who has good reason to request a time extension will be granted such an extension without undue loss of place in the waiting list for publication.

d) A reviewer who feels strongly that a particular paper should not be published may be given the opportunity, if the Editor decides nevertheless to accept it, to write his criticism as a Technical Comment, and the author then is allowed to write a closing response for publication.

e) With respect to publication following final acceptance, the rule is first come, first served, conditioned by only two factors: 1) when two papers reach final acceptance at nearly the same time, the one with the lower log number normally will be used first, and 2) when two or more papers on a given subject strongly warrant publication together, a third paper with similar rank in the log list may be held for the next issue. No paper shall be held over more than once unless the number of accepted papers exceeds a two-issue supply.

This policy was approved on October 16, 1964 by the Editors-in-Chief of the archive journals and by the Vice-President—Publications.