

Preparing Manuscripts for MICCAI: Avoiding Desk Rejects

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Abstract. As a submission platform manager for the Medical Image Computing and Computer Assisted Intervention (MICCAI) society, I have observed a lot of formatting, anonymity, and other issues in the submitted manuscripts. I hope this document can help authors to better prepare their manuscripts in order to avoid disappointment in the form of desk reject.

1 Introduction

When managing the submission platform for previous MICCAI conferences, the majority of the email inquires received were about how to anonymize the manuscript. The remaining emails were mostly concerned with whether or not the template can be modified in a certain way to gain extra writing space. Despite our best effort, a large number of manuscripts failed to adhere to the submission guidelines, and in particular, many were not anonymized properly and some were desk-rejected due to format violation. This document addresses most of the issues observed and hopefully can help authors better prepare their manuscripts for MICCAI.

2 Formatting Issues

2.1 The template

The purpose of having a template is to enforce overall consistency. All accepted MICCAI manuscripts will be published in a proceedings. To maintain overall consistency in terms of structure and layout, it is paramount that each paper adhere to the provided template. Any modification to the template is strictly prohibited.

2.2 What is considered as a modification to the template?

- Any modification to margins, font size, line spacing and to change the general layout of the document is not allowed.

- One of the frequent format violations is the manipulation of vertical spacing in order to gain extra writing space. This includes, but is not limited to, changing the vertical spacing between the end of a section to a new section or sub-section and reducing the vertical spacing between a figure or a table to text. Using commands like `\vspace` and `\hspace` in LaTeX is strictly prohibited.
- Wrapping text around a figure or a table is not allowed. This violation was mostly observed in users of the MS-WORD template.
- Changing the font size, style and spacing in the reference section to reduce the space occupied by the said section is not allowed.
- Papers exceeding the number of allowable pages will also be rejected. The allowable number of pages for MICCAI 2021 is 8 pages of content (including text, figures, and tables) plus up-to 2 pages of references. Any manuscript exceeding either of these two will be rejected. If you are converting your manuscript to PDF from Microsoft Word, it is your responsibility to make sure the converted file does not exceed the page limit.

3 Preserving anonymity

The reviewing process of MICCAI 2021 is double-blind, in that authors do not know the names of the area chair/reviewers of their papers, and area chairs/reviewers do not know the names of the authors. Authors must avoid providing information in their manuscripts that may identify them. Authors can re-insert such information in the camera-ready manuscript after it is accepted for publication.

3.1 Author information

For review purposes, do not include any author information in the author section below the title. This includes names, email addresses, affiliations and URL. Use asterisks (i.e. ***) or “anonymous”. DO NOT remove the author section to gain extra writing space. See Fig. 1 as an example of what your submission should look like. Some manuscripts failed to anonymize the author information appearing in the header section of each page.

3.2 Acknowledgement section and grant information

Remove all identifying texts from the Acknowledgement section. This includes funding agency, the name of the grant, hospital information and any other information that can be used to identify the authors and their affiliations. Don't forget to add blank lines as a placeholder for this information if you want to add it to the camera-ready copy.

My MICCAI2020 Submission

Anonymous
Anonymous Organization
@***.***

Fig. 1. Anonymizing author information section below the title

3.3 Data-set

Any information that can reveal author information, such as information on a data-set, including specific data-set name that can be used to identify other publications by the same authors, location of data collections, links to data in Github or Dropbox, must be removed. If your data-set is publicly available then you should reference it in the third person, e.g. “we used the publicly available BRATS data-set (website, ref)”.

3.4 Images or tables

Remove all identifying information associated with images or tables as well as any identifying information visible by hovering the cursor over images in PDFs.

3.5 Citing your own previous work

If authors need to refer to their own previous work, do so in third person, e.g. “in [2] the authors showed that ...”. If this is impractical, replace the reference with asterisks, i.e. “*****”. Any journal title, volume and page number that can be used to identify authors must be removed. See [1] as an example.

3.6 Supplementary material

Do not include any identifying information in the supplementary material. Even though reviewers are not obliged to review such material, anonymity must still be preserved.

4 Full disclosure of authorship and domain conflicts

Full authorship and domain conflicts must be disclosed in CMT, the manuscript submission system, in order to avoid conflict of interest between authors and reviewers of a paper. 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, the paper will be rejected.

4.1 Conflict of interest

When assigning a manuscript to a reviewer for peer review, it is important to avoid conflict 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 Elsevier¹, 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

In order for the submission platform to properly detect conflicts of interest, an author must disclose all co-author information and a 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 the email domains of institutions or organizations with which the authors have had close relationships, within the past 3 years. 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 email domain InstituteA.edu and is also collaborating with a research group in hospital B with email domain hospitalB.com. Author 1 has also worked for company C with email domain CompanyC.com 2 years ago. Author 2 is currently working for Institute D with email domain InstituteD.edu and have close relationship with OrganizationE.org.

The list of domain conflicts of this paper: InstituteA.edu; hospitalB.com; CompanyC.com; InstituteD.edu; OrganizationE.org

¹ <https://www.journals.elsevier.com/journal-of-systems-and-software/policies/conflict-of-interest-guidelines-for-reviewers>

5 Final thoughts

Authors whose manuscripts were desk-rejected for the above reasons, often felt the decision to be unfair and unkind. In fact, to accept such papers in spite of submission guidelines not taken seriously would be unfair and unkind to those authors who have carefully revised their manuscripts to ensure all requirements were met. Good luck with your submissions!

References

1. *****, Journal *****, vol. **, No. **, pp.**-**.