# IACR Guidelines for Reviewers

May 2011*

Dear Reviewer,

The purpose of this document is to clarify your role as a reviewer for an IACR publication. You become a reviewer when you accept the invitation to review a paper submitted to a scientific publication of the IACR (such as submitted to a conference or to the Journal of Cryptology). Alternatively, you are also a reviewer as a member of a Program Committee (PC) for an event sponsored by the IACR.

Peer review is essential to the scientific publication process, and the IACR depends on the altruism and wisdom of volunteer reviewers to uphold standards and to encourage research. Your primary responsibility is to evaluate one or more submission(s) to a scientific publication with respect to scientific criteria, without bias for or against the authors or their affiliations.

**Confidentiality.** In your role as a reviewer you must hold the assigned submission(s) in confidence. You cannot disclose information about the authors, the content of submissions, other reviews, or discussions in a PC to anyone else not in this role.

If you are a member of a PC and use a web-review system, do not forward your access credentials to a subreviewer. The web-review system contains very sensitive information. The PC discussions are confidential within the PC. In order to obtain independent opinions about a submission, do not discuss the submission with other reviewers before writing your review. This applies when you are reviewer for a journal as well as when you are a PC member during the initial individual reviewing phase.

**Conflicts of interest.** You should not review a submission if you have a *conflict of interest* with at least one author of the submission. The IACR does not impose a detailed policy on conflicts of interest. The editor or Program Chair decides on what constitutes a conflict according to high standards in terms of scientific integrity — at least colleagues from the same research group, people in a current or very recent student-advisor relationship, close friends, and family members have a conflict.

**Anonymity.** In conferences with anonymous submissions, no author names appear on a submission. Naturally you may be aware of the authors through other means; but you should not take any extra action just for discovering the authors of a submission.

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**Review content.**   You should judge a submission foremost on its overall quality and merit as a scientific publication. You should give a clear justification for your recommendation. You should not use rude, derogatory, or unhelpful language in a review.

The editor, PC member, or Program Chair that assigned the submission to you should provide further instructions on the format, on deadlines, and about the criteria for the evaluation in your review. Once you have agreed to do a review, stick to this and honor your commitment.

**Irregular submissions.**   You should be aware of the IACR policy on irregular submissions. Irregular submissions typically fall in two categories:

- *Parallel submissions:* A parallel submission occurs when authors submit essentially the same material to one or more other publication venues with overlapping reviewing periods.

- *Plagiarism:* Plagiarism arises when substantial parts of existing publications are copied and submitted, virtually unchanged, without the addition of new material, and without proper attribution of the source, by other "author(s)."

If you believe that you have identified an irregular submission, contact the editor, PC member, or Program Chair that assigned the submission to you. Do not take any action on your own.

**Further information.**   The following documents of the IACR give further information on procedures specific to the IACR:

- the Rules and Guidelines for Program Chairs;

- the Policy on Irregular Submissions;

- the Policy for the Ethics Committee.

These are available from `http://www.iacr.org/docs/`.

The policies of the ACM regarding publishing and research in computer science contain more information that mostly applies also to IACR; see the ACM website under `http://www.acm.org/publications/policies/`.