Requiring authors of submitted papers to review

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Summary: A potential author for CVPR2026 has preemptively refused to review for that conference on the grounds they object to the policy of requiring authors to review. CVPR 2026 policy will desk-reject papers whose authors are highly irresponsible reviewers. CVPR 2026 PCs asked the ombud for an opinion as to the fairness and appropriateness of applying the policy in the case of those who are asked to review, but do not provide reviews because they object to the policy. The ombud advises that

- The policy of requiring that paper authors review papers is fair
- The policy of desk rejecting papers with a highly irresponsible reviewer in the author list is fair
- PCs should entertain appeals against being compelled to review. In judging an appeal, PCs should balance the benefit to the submitting author against the costs imposed by reviewing. Reasonable grounds for a successful appeal are within the PCs discretion, but should include:
    1. Stressful family events, for example births, deaths or serious illnesses
    2. Stressful work events, for example loss of employment, or unexpected postings overseas
    3. Extreme current service commitments, for example being a PC for another large conference

Context: A version of this dispute has been seen by the ombud before. A variety of appeals were raised against ICCV 2025 PCs policy of requiring that paper authors review papers and desk-rejecting certain papers on the basis of irresponsible reviewing by one of the paper authors. Appeals either (a) queried the appropriateness of the policy or (b) queried the application in a particular case.

Actions: I chaired discussion of a policy of this form at CVPR 2024 AC meeting. I checked the policy was properly described on the ICCV 2025 web page. I listened at ICCV PC meetings to PC discussions of whether to allow particular authors to not review. I raised the ICCV 2025 and the CVPR 2025 policy at the CVPR 2025 AC meeting for discussion. I checked other conference policies.

The policy of requiring that paper authors review papers is fair.

The policy:

- is within the discretion of PCs;
- is similar to those adopted by other conferences;
- is properly publicized;
- is not disproportionate to the challenges that conferences face;
- is not arbitrary in conception;
- is not oppressive;
- has not been arbitrary in application.

is within the discretion of PCs. PCs are required to apply this policy by a PAMI-TC motion. While it is in the discretion of PCs to ignore PAMI-TC motions (by another PAMI-TC motion), doing so is not required.

is similar to those adopted by other conferences. Examples below:

> A PAMI-TC motion in 2022 requires all authors to be willing to serve as reviewers if asked to do so.
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> (Neurips 2025): Because of the rapid growth of NeurIPS, we request that all authors help with reviewing papers, if asked to do so.
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> (CVPR 2024, 2025): Given the growth of the number of paper submissions, and per the motion passed in the CVPR 2022 PAMI-TC meeting, we expect all authors to be willing to serve as reviewers if asked to do so.

is properly publicized. On the CVPR 2026 Website one finds:

> We expect all authors to be willing to serve as reviewers if asked to do so.

is not disproportionate. The number of paper submissions is growing very fast. Each submission represents a cost on a set of volunteer reviewers. Accepted submissions represent a quite significant benefit to their authors. It is fair to expect that authors who anticipate this benefit should help defray the costs involved.

is not arbitrary in conception. A PAMI-TC motion requires all authors to be willing to serve as reviewers if asked to do so, meaning that there was extensive discussion of this policy at the time. I have personal knowledge of supportive discussions at CVPR 2024 and 2025 AC meetings, where ACs were generally supportive of the policy and of its implementation at both CVPR 2025 and ICCV 2025.

is not oppressive. At least one opponent of the policy asserts that it represents “academic forced labor”. I do not find this assertion convincing. Authors are not entitled to the services of referees, who are volunteers. Further, the policy could be overturned by a motion of the PAMI-TC.

application. There are no grounds to question the application of the policy in advance.

The policy of desk rejecting papers with a highly irresponsible reviewer in the author list is fair

The policy of desk-rejecting certain papers on the basis of irresponsible reviewing by one of the paper authors is fair. The policy

- is supported by prospective and retrospective discussions at AC meetings;
- is within the discretion of PCs;
- is properly publicized;
- is not disproportionate to the challenges that conferences face;
- is not arbitrary in conception;
- and it is not arbitrary in application.

supported by discussions. At the CVPR2024 AC meeting, numerous experienced ACs saw irresponsible reviewing (careless reviews; LLM reviews; reviews not submitted) as a serious threat to the quality of CVPR. Retrospective discussion occurred at the CVPR 2025 AC meeting, particularly on the extent and number of desk-rejected papers; discussion was entirely supportive.

within the discretion of PCs. Generally, PCs discretion as to what papers to accept or reject is broad. PCs are responsible to, at least, act to: ensure that each paper is properly reviewed; ensure that recommendations to PCs are the result of informed discussion by competent ACs, and are based on judgement of accuracy and suitability for the community; ensure that decisions are not affected by financial or career interests of the deciding parties; use resources efficiently in doing so; and act as transparently as possible given the confidential nature of much of the matters they deal with. PCs have always been able to desk-reject papers for cause. Causes accepted to date include: dual submission, out of scope, and format error. Transparency requires that PCs announce a policy in advance, and they have done so in this case as in others.

properly publicized. No concerns could have been raised if the policy had not been publicized.

not disproportionate. Reviewers who are assigned to review a paper, whether required to do so as an author or doing so as a volunteer, acquire responsibilities to the author and the community. These responsibilities are, at least: to quickly identify any conflict of interest; to read and understand the paper; to prepare a review and recommendations based on that reading and understanding; and to explain those recommendations in a form that a reasonable author should understand. Reviewers who fail in these responsibilities create costs for individual authors (whose papers might be arbitrarily rejected) and to the community (by undermining the credibility of the conference).

not arbitrary in conception. I have personal knowledge of supportive discussions at CVPR 2024 and 2025 AC meetings, where ACs were generally supportive of the policy and of its implementation at both CVPR 2025 and ICCV 2025.

application. There are no grounds to question the application of the policy in advance. Historically, the number of reviewers designated as highly irresponsible has been relatively small, as has been the number of associated desk rejections. Historically, PCs have considered circumstances that justified revoking the designation.

PCs should entertain appeals against being compelled to review.

Natural justice requires that PCs should entertain appeals. Fairness requires that PCs should balance the expected benefit to authors of a submission against the cost imposed by reviewing papers.

The expected benefit to an author of a submission is large. Evidence for this proposition includes:

- CVPR is now by citation measures one of the most important publication venues in science, meaning a successful submission becomes visible to a very large and influential audience
- Some authors are troubling to contest the policy, rather than simply submitting to other venues
- CVPR publication is commonly a factor in judging promotion in both academic and industrial circles

These benefits manifest mostly for accepted papers, but the expectation is still large. In contrast, the cost of reviewing a paper is small on average, running to hours or less per paper, depending on the details of the paper and reviewer.

Reasonable grounds for a successful appeal should include:

1. Stressful family events, for example births, deaths or serious illnesses, because these events will likely mean that a reviewer cannot properly prepare a review (as opposed to will find doing so inconvenient).
2. Stressful work events, for example loss of employment, or unexpected postings overseas because these events will likely mean that a reviewer cannot properly prepare a review (as opposed to will find doing so inconvenient).
3. Extreme current service commitments, for example being a PC for another large conference because these events will likely mean that a reviewer cannot properly prepare a review (as opposed to will find doing so inconvenient). Past PCs have not found AC service in another conference a sufficient ground. Past PCs have not found PC service in the past a sufficient ground.