

Guide to Authors

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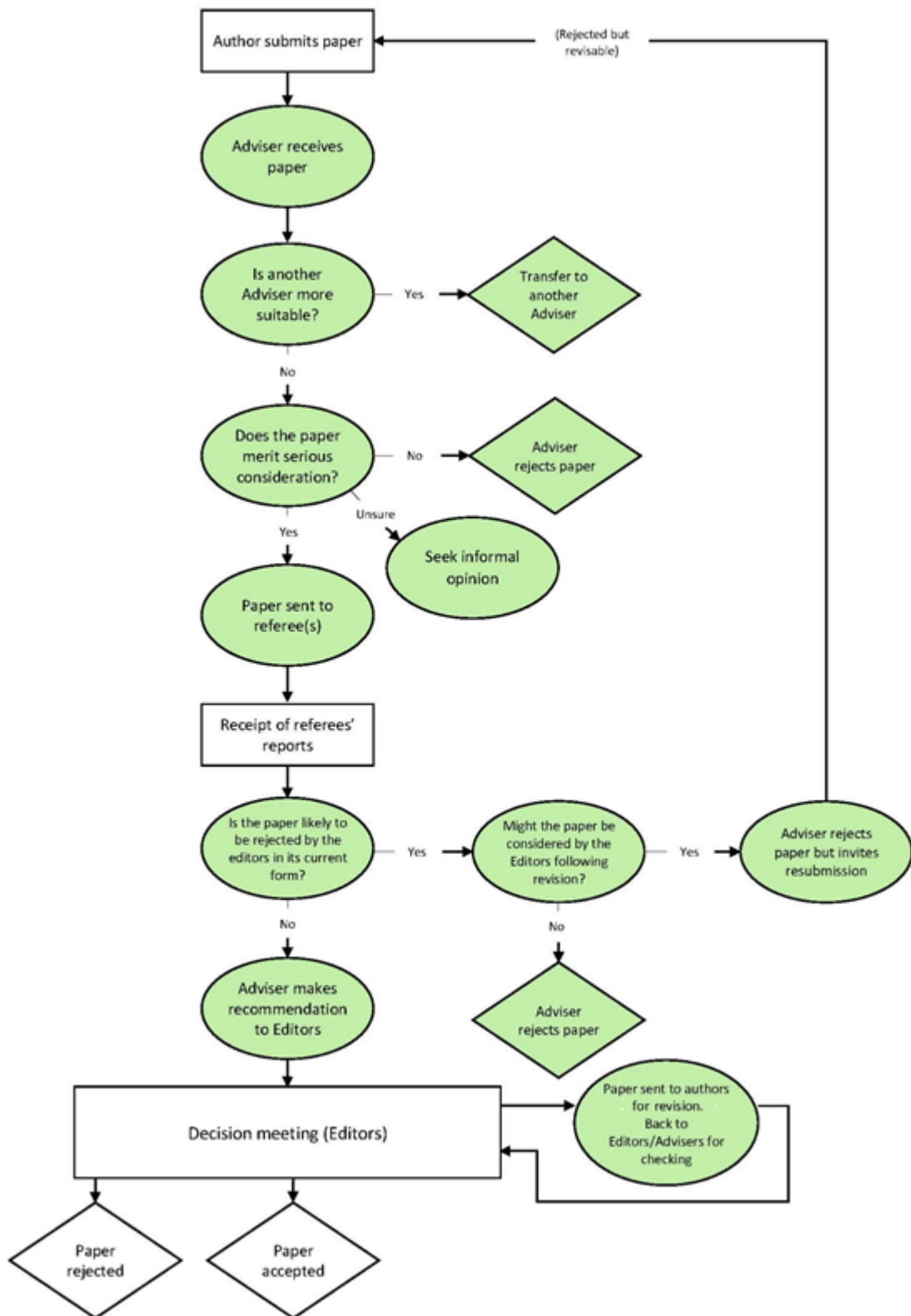
Introduction

This guide is designed to provide an overview of the process of submitting a paper to the London Mathematical Society, covering both common practice in peer review and the specific procedures that apply to the Bulletin, Journal, Proceedings and Transactions of the London Mathematical Society. First, we provide a brief summary of the peer review process as it applies to the four journals. This is followed by a guide to preparing and submitting a paper. Next, we provide a behind-the-scenes view of the ways in which a new paper might be approached by the LMS's Advisers and Editors (including typical actions and decisions taken during the review process) and the factors that influence what happens to the paper thereafter. We also list some common causes of delay during the review process. Finally, we offer an overview of post-acceptance processes and procedures.

Summary of review process

All papers submitted to the Bulletin, Journal, Proceedings and Transactions of the LMS are assessed initially by an Editorial Adviser who judges whether the paper is likely to meet the mathematical and editorial standards of the journal. Papers may be rejected early by the Adviser if they are judged not meet these criteria. Those papers that pass initial scrutiny are sent out to referees who are carefully selected on the basis of their expertise in the themes of the paper. Once in receipt of a referee's report, the Editorial Adviser may reject the paper or make a recommendation to the Editors. On the basis of the Adviser's and referee reports, the Editors then reach a decision which is relayed to the author.

The process is illustrated in the following flow chart:



Ethical policy

The London Mathematical Society has recently adopted an ethical policy for its journals, including guidance on the expected behaviour of authors, referees and editors. The full policy can be found at <https://www.lms.ac.uk/sites/lms.ac.uk/files/Publications/EthicalPolicy.pdf>. When submitting a new paper, the main points to bear in mind are as follows:

Authorship and author disclosure

Prior to submission the corresponding/submitting author should check that the names of all those who contributed to the paper and who can legitimately claim authorship to the paper are so listed. They should also ensure that all authors have read the submitted paper and approve its submission. The primary affiliation for each author should be the institution where the majority of their work was carried out. If an author has subsequently moved, the current address may also be included.

Duplicate submission, plagiarism and originality

Any paper found to be submitted and still under consideration by another journal, or published elsewhere will be rejected automatically, and may prejudice acceptance of future submissions. If an article replicates or is very similar to previous work, the author should include with it references to other papers - published or submitted for consideration elsewhere - that relate in whole or in part to the same data. With self-plagiarism becoming an increasingly problematic issue, submissions that replicate or are derivative of existing work are likely to be rejected unless authors provide adequate justification.

Paper preparation

General guidelines

The LMS uses the journal management software *EditFlow*, built by Mathematical Sciences Publishers. Papers are submitted via the LMS's website at <https://www.lms.ac.uk/publications/submit-paper>. Prior to upload, here are some general guidelines for authors to consider:

- Papers should be submitted in English or French.
- Care should be taken to preserve the .tex file that precisely corresponds to the PDF version that is being submitted. If the paper is accepted, the LMS will require that particular version of the .tex file.
- Each paper must be submitted exclusively to *one* journal.
- No paper that has been previously published, or which is being considered for publication elsewhere, should be submitted to the London Mathematical Society.
- Nor may a paper that is under consideration by the London Mathematical Society be submitted elsewhere.
- Authors should take care to keep a copy of all emails sent to the journal Editors, Advisers and LMS Publications. General enquiries should be sent to lmsjournals@lms.ac.uk.

Preprints

The LMS will consider papers that have been deposited in preprint servers such as the [arXiv](#) or published in a thesis, provided that the author is willing to grant an exclusive licence for distribution of the paper by the LMS.

LMS class file

Authors may prepare their papers in the 'LMS' document class for LaTeX. The class file and its accompanying concise author guide can be downloaded from the LMS Publications web page. Only the PDF file should be submitted electronically in the first instance.

Paper submission

Journal selection

Authors must first decide to which of the four main journals they would like to submit their paper. Longer papers are considered by the Proceedings, those of medium length by the Journal, while the Bulletin publishes short research papers, occasional surveys and obituaries. The Transactions offers an Open Access option, and covers the same subject areas as the other three journals. The current guidelines are as follows: BLMS 1 - 20pp, JLMS 18 - 30pp, PLMS over 25pp. TLMS covers any number of pages. Papers are submitted directly to the journals as a single PDF via a web form on the LMS website.

Adviser selection

Next, authors should look at the list of Editorial Advisers provided on the website, and be prepared to select one whose mathematical interests are closest to the subject of the paper. All four general journals share a common Editorial Advisory Board, currently made up of over 40 Editorial Advisers, each with his/her own specialist area. The scope of all four journals ranges widely within mathematics, and is defined mainly by the subject areas covered by the Advisory Board, which can be found here: <http://www.lms.ac.uk/publications/editorial-advisers>. Authors should note that the LMS journals are general mathematics publications and look to publish only work in any given area that is of broad appeal and of major significance to that field of study. Papers which are too specialised or which represent incremental advance within a narrow area should be submitted instead to a more specialist journal as they will most probably be rejected by the LMS.

Having decided on the relevant journal and Adviser, the author must click on the image or name the relevant journal and follow the link through to the relevant submission guidelines.

Information on data storage

To make a submission, authors must first agree to allow the LMS to store their data. If they have not used the LMS's system before, they will be asked to comply with the LMS's data protection policy. This is because, under UK law, the LMS is required to obtain the author's permission to store their data on its system, and their agreement to what it may subsequently do with that data. Should the author accept the policy, the LMS can store that data in the future and not ask for agreement again. The LMS's privacy policy can be found here:

<http://edf.lms.ac.uk/ef/docs/DPA.html>

Completing the Webform

The corresponding author will be asked to provide the following information:

- The number of authors
- The title of the paper
- MSC subject codes
- Full names and addresses of all authors, listed in the order they should appear in the article.
- Their choice of Adviser
- A brief covering letter (which may include messages or explanatory notes to advisers, referees, or editors)
- A copy of the paper in PDF format
- Confirmation of abstract*

* All articles submitted to this journal must have an abstract that can stand on its own. The abstract helps potential readers decide whether the article is what they need; this is especially important for readers who may have to pay to access the full text. Also, an article without an abstract is likely not to be properly indexed, affecting its visibility.

When the form is complete, the paper can be uploaded together with the covering letter. Assuming the submission is successful, the author will receive an email confirming receipt together with a link to a manuscript tracking page. This page includes a mail log, a record of all submission files and the paper's current status. It can also be used by authors to withdraw the current submission or upload a revision (see the screenshot on the following page).

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Submission Files

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	Article, ver. 1	20 Mar 2015 1 page	1.1 Kb

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From: <lmsjournals@lms.ac.uk>
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What happens next?

Early rejection

The Adviser must first determine that the length of the paper is within the guidelines for length stated above. If not, the paper will be rejected and the author asked to resubmit to the appropriate journal. Next, the Adviser will decide whether the paper reaches the standard required by the LMS. If not, the paper will probably be rejected without recourse to a referee. In both cases the Adviser's decision is final, and the author may not resubmit unless expressly stated otherwise.

Rejection with option to revise and resubmit

From time to time Editorial Advisers judge that a paper is likely to be rejected by the Editors in its present form, but may have a chance of being accepted if certain changes are made. In such cases the Adviser may reject the paper but offer the authors the chance to revise the manuscript. This is especially true of papers that are deemed to be of sufficient interest and originality, but which do not reach the required standard of written English. In such cases, the Adviser may return the paper to the authors with a request that they send the paper on for correction by somebody more expert in written English.

Should the author decide to submit a revised version, he/she should inform the LMS staff by writing to lmsjournals@lms.ac.uk. The staff will "resurrect" the paper (i.e. take it out of the "rejected" directory in Editflow and return it to the Adviser); the new version will then be considered on its own merits. However, only the Editors can make a positive decision to publish a paper, so at this stage there is no commitment in favour of publication.

Unless the Adviser of a rejected paper makes it clear to the author that the LMS is willing to consider a revision, he/she should take it as read that resubmission is not an option.

Transferral and quick opinions

Should an Adviser feel insufficiently expert to judge a paper's significance or to suggest appropriate referees, he/she will either (a) reassign it to a more appropriate Adviser, or (b) request a quick opinion from someone who is more expert in the paper's subject area. A quick opinion can help the Adviser to decide whether the paper should be rejected or (if the expert advised that the paper be considered further) who might make a suitable referee.

Referee selection and referee's report

Having decided that a paper merits serious consideration, the Adviser will seek a referee. The referee will be asked to assess the originality, correctness, importance and interest of the paper, and provide views on matters such as the balance between achievement and length, how a paper compares with other work on related subjects published in leading journals, and the quality of exposition. On receipt of the referee's report, the Adviser will consider whether he/she has enough information to reach a decision, or should seek further opinions.

Recommendation to Editors

If the referee's report is sufficient to allow the Adviser to judge the merits of the paper, he/she may make a recommendation to the Main Editors of the journal to which the paper was assigned. Alternatively, the Adviser may reject the paper outright at this stage, or reject and invite resubmission. Again, the Adviser's decision is final. The purpose of the Adviser's report to the Editors is to provide them with both an informed and comprehensive view on the referee's report, and a clear indication as to whether the paper should be accepted, accepted after revisions (minor or major) or rejected.

The Editors assess the quality of a paper on the basis of both the referee's report and the adviser's commentary, so the more information they have, the better able they are to make a decision.

Editor decision

On the basis of the information available to them, as well as their own judgement, the Editors will accept or reject the paper, or ask the author to revise the paper. For further information, see “**Editors’ decision**” (below).

Length of review process

While Editors and Editorial Advisers aim to review papers with minimum delay, there are a number of factors that influence the length of time between submission and decision, which include the following:

Seeking a referee

Referee selection is critical to the review process, and it can take time to find referees who are both suitable and willing to review papers. Waiting times can vary depending on the length of the paper and the subject area. Advisers base their selection on such factors as expertise, specific recommendations and previous experience, but from time to time are unable to secure their first choice (who may be busy refereeing other papers in similar fields). It may sometimes be necessary to approach several experts over a number of weeks before a commitment to act as referee is made. On rare occasions a referee may agree to referee a paper but fail to provide a report, despite regular automated reminders.

Soliciting a report

Delays will inevitably occur when referees are busy with other commitments. The LMS’s referees are volunteers, so there is a limit on the pressure that can be brought to bear by Advisers on referees who are unable to report within the agreed time period. However, the LMS’s manuscript tracking system has built-in automated reminders to help keep delays to a minimum.

Equivocal referee reports

Sometimes reports from referees support the paper in principle but are equivocal because of a potential mathematical problem or because the author’s English is poor. If the Adviser thinks that a paper is not suitable for sending to the Editors in its present form but that it would be strong if fixed, he/she will send the referee’s report directly to the author and try to obtain a revised version and a supplementary report. The Adviser will then reject the paper with an invitation to revise, advising the author on how to improve the paper whilst emphasizing that no commitment to publication has been made by the Editors. If a suitable revision is submitted, the paper can be “resurrected” by the LMS staff.

Competition for space

The LMS receive high levels of submissions throughout the year, and even papers that are recommended highly may be rejected or held over by the Editors from one meeting to the next.

Withdrawal

Very occasionally Advisers are unable to find suitable referees, or are unable to obtain a report from a referee long after the agreed deadline has passed. Both scenarios can lead to long delays, unacceptable to authors and Advisers alike. In such circumstances, and as a last resort, the Adviser may offer the author the option to withdraw his paper and submit elsewhere.

It should be mentioned that authors can withdraw the current version of their paper from the LMS' review process at any time. However, it should also be mentioned that the Editors prefer not to consider multiple versions of the same paper before a decision on the first version has been relayed to the author, particularly if the changes are minor.

Editors' decision.

Only the Editors can make a positive decision to publish a paper, even if the paper is recommended by the Editorial Adviser. As outlined below, Editors may make one of four decisions:

- Reject outright
- Request a major revision
- Request a minor revision
- Acceptance

Reject outright.

The chief reasons for rejection of a paper are (a) it contains serious flaws of analysis and interpretation; (b) the paper is outside the area of coverage of the journal or is too narrow to warrant publication in a general interest journal; (c) pressure on publication space leading to the return to authors of papers that might have been considered in the past.

Request a major revision

The authors are asked to make significant changes to their paper, although there is no guarantee of acceptance once the changes have been carried out. Typically, the revised paper will be put through the review process again, and the authors may be asked to undertake additional work.

Request a minor revision

The paper is accepted provisionally, subject to specific concerns that need to be addressed in preparing a final version of the paper.

Acceptance

The paper is formally accepted for publication (the Editors being satisfied that all requested changes have been carried out and any other editorial issues resolved) and is moved into the Production phase of publication. Having uploaded source files of the paper, authors will be asked to sign a Copyright Assignment form. The source files will then be passed on to the typesetter.

Submitting a revision

If the authors have been offered the opportunity by the Editors to make specific changes to a paper and return it for further consideration, this is considered a "revision." The paper will have the same reference number and may be sent out to the same or different reviewers, depending on the extent of the revision. A request for revision does not imply that the paper will be accepted. Papers that are revised and returned may still be rejected.

Should the Editors accept a paper provisionally, or request that significant changes be made, the paper will be returned to the author for revision. The Editors' decision message will include suggestions from the referee which should be considered carefully. Authors should also proofread their paper for minor

misprints. When all changes and corrections have been made, the revision should be uploaded via a link contained in the decision message – *not* via the link used for initial submission. If this link cannot be found, LMS Publications should be contacted at ljournals@lms.ac.uk. Editors expect revisions to be made within a reasonable time frame, and any delay longer than a few months may lead them to reconsider.

As mentioned before, Editors prefer not to consider multiple versions of the same paper before a decision on the first version is made. Authors who have received a letter that firmly rejects their paper and does not mention that a resubmission would be considered, would be advised to submit any future version of the paper to another journal.

Conditions for acceptance

- Upon acceptance, authors must agree to assign copyright to the Society.
- Authors of papers accepted by the Bulletin, Journal and Proceedings have the option (by paying a charge) to have their article published under 'Open Access'. Authors of papers accepted by the Transactions must pay an Article Processing Charge (via their funding institution) before their article can appear. If published under the open access model, the paper will be distributed under the terms of *either*
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For further information regarding the conditions of acceptance – including a sample copyright form and a summary of open access, archiving policies and publishing rights for the journals – please see the submission guidelines on our website at

<https://www.lms.ac.uk/publications/plms-submit>.