

ACM SAC Track Chair Guidelines

Dear Track Chairs.

What follows is a description of the responsibilities of a Track Chair (TC) and a presentation of some relevant guidelines. These responsibilities are dictated by the rules of SAC itself but also ACM, which is the senior organizing body. The associated guidelines below are the product of 22 years of experience in the running of SAC and we hope you will appreciate the need for enforcing them. However, we are always open to any suggestions, and indeed criticism, for improving the management of this conference. Please do not hesitate at any moment to offer us your feedback. Please note that these responsibilities may be updated and new responsibilities may emerge as we work with the Track Chairs on improving the quality and management of SAC Tracks.

The current guidelines that TCs are expected to adhere to for SAC 2008 are the following:

1. TCs prepare their own “Track CFP” in conjunction with the general SAC 2008 CFP. (Note, that the latter CFP has already been prepared by the Program Chairs (PCs) and will be distributed to other international forums and publicity websites.) **A CFP for a particular track should NOT be merely a carbon copy of the general CFP.** Instead, it should contain information regarding the particular track, i.e. aims and scope of it, topics to be covered, and contact information of its TCs, etc. However, the CFP for this track should mention the official title of the conference, respect the general conference deadlines and rules, report the general SAC paper submission site, etc. Upon request, a TC can be provided with a model Track CFP that he/she can use to prepare his/her own Track CFP.
2. A TC must prepare the CFP for his/her track within 2 weeks (see dates below) of having been notified of the successful review of his/her track proposal. The TC then submits it to the PCs for approval. Once the TC gets the go ahead, he or she is responsible for distributing the CFP for the track as widely as this is possible, within the international forums related to the themes of the track. The TC should also inform the PCs of the forums where the CFP will be published. This is necessary not only for the PCs to assess the publicity campaign for a track but also to alleviate any problems stemming from the overuse of certain popular forums (e.g. dbworld) with CFPs for different SAC tracks. We cannot overly emphasize the importance for a wide and effective publicity campaign for the success of a track but also the conference as a whole. We recommend that a Track CFP is published twice or three times (“Preliminary CFP”, “CFP”, and “Last CFP”) before the expiration of the deadline for accepting submissions. Furthermore, a TC should set up a web site for the track and link it to the conference’s main site. A TC is invited to examine web sites of tracks held as part of past SAC events, by following the links from <http://www.acm.org/conferences/sac/>. We also urge the TCs to seek collaboration with and help from the other ACM SIGs, relevant to the themes of their track.
3. TCs solicit reviewers. It is recommended that TCs contact their reviewers and get their commitment to review for the track before sending papers out for reviews. Authors may review for the track, but of course, not their own papers. Each paper must be **blindly reviewed by at least three reviewers; this is an ACM requirement as SAC is a “Refereed Conference”.** **Please adhere to this requirement.** In fact, many tracks in the past have used four or five reviews per paper.

4. TCs are expected to safeguard the impartial and accurate review of the papers submitted to their track. Common rules of logic apply here as in any other conference event (e.g., reviews with written comments should be valued more than those without comments). TC's will be asked to compile the list of reviewers used in their track. This will include name and affiliation.
5. TCs are expected to receive papers within the official deadline: it is forbidden to extend the deadline, unless this is a decision taken by the SAC Program Chairs (in which case this will be promptly communicated to TCs). TCs should screen each paper to make sure the paper has been submitted to the correct track (If a paper does NOT fit your track, please contact the PCs. Please **DO NOT send papers to other tracks without discussing the matter with the PCs and the other TCs**). If the topic does not seem to make the track, contact the PC's. The TC will submit to the PCs the listing of submitted papers, with the final outcome (acceptance/rejection) and the reviewers' markings and reviews for each paper. These are kept for filling purposes according to ACM regulations.
6. In particular, **before notifying the authors**, the TCs submit to the PCs a table (or spreadsheet) of the overall review outcomes (i.e., for every paper the overall score by each reviewer and the TCs' recommendation). The PCs reserve the right to argue about the decision to be taken regarding some paper(s) and ask for further justification of the TC's decisions or further reviews to be sought. Based on the information provided by the TCs, the PCs will allocate a maximum number of papers that each track may accept. This decision is based on the number of papers submitted to the track, criteria related to the capacity of the conference, overall acceptance rate, and conference facilities (number of sessions and number of rooms).
7. SAC has grown to be a large and competitive conference. Therefore, it is understandable that not all acceptable papers (according to the reviewers) may actually be accepted for publishing. As a general rule of thumb, the average acceptance rate per track should be around 32%.
8. Poster Sessions: papers that received high reviews (that is acceptable by reviewer standards) but were not accepted due to space limitation will be invited for the poster session. The poster session procedures and details will be posted on SAC 2008 website as soon as they become available. Since poster invitations are sent before author notifications (rejections), this requires TCs to coordinate their effort with the Posters Chairs. Please contact the Posters Chairs for potential posters in your track before you send out the rejection letters.
9. It is the responsibility of the TCs to make sure that the final version of an accepted paper incorporates the reviewers' comments and suggestions. The TCs are also responsible for all formal communication with the authors of papers submitted to their track (the TCs are effectively the communication interface between authors of submitted papers and SAC). That includes acknowledging a submission, notifying authors of acceptance or rejection, and where appropriate forwarding the Authors Kit (see item 12 below), and dispersing other information to authors from the PCs and Conference Chairs, taking care that authors submit the camera ready version of their papers and copyright forms by the deadline.
10. For a track to make it to the SAC 2008 Final Program, it must contain at least 4 fully accepted papers, which is the length of one technical session (90 minutes), namely, it should

have more than 10 papers submitted. If less than 10 submitted papers are received in some track, the track might be cancelled and their papers distributed to the most related of the other tracks, and will be presented in the technical sessions of those tracks.

11. Each track chair or track co-chair(s) cannot submit more than ONE paper to their own track. The paper goes through the blind review process like all the other papers in the track. It is recommended that papers submitted by TCs or Co-TCs to their own track refer to work done in collaboration with others (typical example here is the case of supervised students), and TCs should normally avoid submitting to their own track papers where they appear as the sole or principal author. The widely acceptable in other respectable conferences ethical rules apply in SAC too.

12. TCs are expected to take an active role in the preparation of the conference technical program, especially with respect to issues related to their track. This includes forming the technical sessions (list and order of the papers in each session), appointing session chairs, attending the conference and participating in any committee meetings that will take place as part of it. Although not a requirement, the TCs are encouraged to examine the possibility of organizing Special Issues in journals related to the themes of their track, with a collection of the best papers accepted in their track.

13. Any proposed change in the management structure of a track (e.g. involvement of a new TC or withdrawal of a TC or nomination of a co-TC) should be immediately communicated to the Organizing Committee and the PCs who reserve the right to refuse ratifying such a change and, if necessary, cancel a track.

If at any stage, a TC is unsure as to how s/he must proceed, s/he should contact the PCs immediately and ask for any clarifications. The SAC Organizing Committee and the PCs reserve the right to cancel a track at any stage if its TCs do not comply with the above guidelines.

SAC2008 Program Committee

Deadlines for TCs (and important dates):

April 13, 2007: Submission of track proposals

April 30, 2007: Notification of acceptance/rejection of track proposals

May 15, 2007: Submission of track CFPs to the Program Chairs

June 1, 2007: Dissemination of the first CFP

Sept 16, 2007: Submission of papers by authors

Oct 12, 2007: Submission of table of review outcomes to the Program Chairs

Oct 19, 2007: Notification of paper acceptance/rejection

Oct 30, 2007: Camera-ready copies of accepted papers