

# MODELS 2023

## Foundations Track Reviewer Guidelines

As a MODELS 2023 PC member, you play a very important role in ensuring the quality of the conference. The reviews you write will be a direct reflection of the quality of the PC, and thus we all should strive to present a positive image of the PC as representatives of the MODELS conference. As in previous years, to emphasize the importance of high-quality reviews, outstanding reviewers will be nominated for the Best Reviewer Award.

Because the reviewing process has undergone several changes and adjustments over recent years, please read the following notes, even if you have seen similar ones before.

### Review Process Timeline

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| Phase I   | <b>18 April</b> reviewing by PC members begins  |
|           | <b>5 May</b> 50% of reviews completed   |
|           | <b>22 May</b> 100% of reviews completed   |
| Phase II  | <b>22 May–4 June</b> 1. PB-member-led electronic discussion round<br>( <i>consolidate reviews, identify early rejections, and prepare for the author response phase</i> ) |
|           | <b>4 June</b> Metareviews <a href="#">MR1</a> due   |
| Phase III | <b>5–7 June</b> author response period  |
|           | <b>8–15 June</b> 2. PB-member-led electronic discussion round<br>( <i>arrive at recommendations and final review versions</i> )   |
|           | <b>15 June</b> Metareviews <a href="#">MR2</a> due  |
| Phase IV  | <b>16–17 June</b> PB meeting  |
|           | <b>21 June</b> Metareviews <a href="#">MR3</a> due  |
|           | <b>26 June</b> Author notification  |

## General Review Guidelines

Below are the reviewing elements that we want to emphasize in light of past experiences:

- In addition to a PC, there is also a **Program Board (PB)** that will assist the PC chairs in monitoring and guiding discussions. PC members are responsible for the quality of their reviews and for participating in online discussions in EasyChair that lead to a recommendation. The PB members will be responsible for initiating, monitoring, and guiding discussions. Their aim is to lead discussions to consensus. The PB member will also invite you to help compiling a so-called **metareview**. As you can see in the timeline above, several variants of metareviews will be needed (MR1 - MR3). An overview of the different variants of metareviews can be found at the end of this document.
- While **all your reviews are due by May 22th**, you will have to review **half of your papers by May 5th**. The main rationale for this is to 1) allow the PB members to give you early feedback on the quality of your reviews and help you improve them if necessary, and 2) identify papers that were submitted to the wrong track, and potentially move them from the Foundations Track (Technical paper) to the Practice Track (but not vice versa, partly due to the double anonymous process). Please note that the New Ideas and Vision category is only available in the Foundations track, and not in the Practice track.
- After the reviews are completed, PB members will lead **discussions on papers** assigned to them to make initial recommendations. Papers that have at least one supporting review will progress to the second phase. Early reject notifications will be sent to papers without any supporting reviews. The PB may ask authors to briefly explain the reviewers' most critical questions or concerns during a lightweight (and optional) **Authors' Response** period. You should read the authors' responses, update your review and indicate whether or not your score for a paper has changed after reading the authors' response.
- As a member of the MODELS PC, you are expected to **write high-quality reviews**. Please see the review guidelines below for details. Of course, if the quality of a paper is clearly unacceptable for MODELS, or if the paper is clearly out of scope for MODELS, it is not necessary to write a detailed review. The PB members are responsible for ensuring a consistent level of review quality, and may therefore ask you to improve certain aspects of your review if necessary.
- Please also note that we use a **double anonymous review process for the Foundations Track**. In the double anonymous review process, authors are not be identified to reviewers and reviewers are not be identified to authors.
- Authors had the possibility to submit **supplementary material** through EasyChair (e.g., additional data on experiments, tool binaries or sources, etc). You should be able to access this material via EasyChair. You do not have to read this material but it might be helpful for a better understanding of the paper.
- In addition to your review, we ask you to propose candidates for **Best Paper Awards**.

In preparation for the review of papers, please read the call for papers to remind yourself of the instructions for authors and the types of papers we will accept:

<https://conf.researchr.org/track/models-2023/models-2023-technical-track#Foundations-Track>

Please also remember that MODELS 2023 solicits submissions on a wide range of topics related to modeling for software and systems engineering including, but not limited to the topics at:

<https://conf.researchr.org/track/models-2023/models-2023-technical-track>

## Detailed Review Guidelines

### Before you start the review:

1. Make sure you have declared all conflicts of interest in EasyChair. Please let us know immediately if you suspect a potential conflict of interest with a paper that is assigned to you.
2. Look carefully at the category of the submission. If the number of pages exceeds the maximum number of pages permitted for that category, please let us know immediately.
3. If the formatting is wrong, we can be a little flexible at this stage, but only if it is clear that the authors have tried to comply and that the reformatted paper will not exceed the page limit.

**Wrong category.** It happens that authors categorize their papers incorrectly at the time of submission. If you feel that a paper has been submitted in the wrong category, please still review it in the category in which it was submitted and contact the FT PC chair if you feel that the paper is in the wrong category. Although it is the authors' responsibility to choose the correct category or to contact the relevant PC chair for assistance, we do not want a high quality paper to be rejected because of this problem. There is a tick box in the submission form which you should use if such a situation emerges. Please also explain your thoughts on the category change in the confidential comments of your review and comments to the committee so that we can discuss a fair solution in the Program Board.

**Paper acceptance.** Our main message to you is to maintain a positive attitude when reviewing submissions. The job of the program committee is to critically evaluate submissions, which means identifying both their strengths and weaknesses. During reviewing it can be all too easy to focus on the weaknesses and lose sight of the positive aspects of a submission. Our aim should be to create an interesting conference program and not to reject submissions that do not meet journal-level quality standards. Therefore, a few minor problems, a disagreement regarding the approach taken, some missed opportunities, etc. should generally not lead to rejection. We do aim at high standards for MODELS papers but we a) bear in mind the differences between conference and journal papers, and b) allow that good aspects may compensate for some weaknesses. Note that while we do not support a conditional accept process, missing or incorrect details can often be corrected in time for the camera-ready deadline. If the paper is interesting, if you have learned something from reading it, if you would recommend it to others, if you think it could generate a good debate, then these could be good reasons to accept the paper. Critical issues can be clarified

as part of the authors' response. Make sure you include the most important points and questions in your review and check the authors' responses carefully.

**Quality of writing.** It is very important that accepted papers are well-written. Please make comments on the clarity of the text, the appropriateness of the diagrams, and the organization of topics.

**Championing papers.** It is good to make oneself a "champion" for a submission, i.e., a passionate advocate who is prepared to fight for a submission against resistance, in case one is convinced it deserves publication. It is also good to become a detractor, i.e., a tenacious critic who is not prepared to readily give in to an otherwise positive view, in case one is convinced a submission is severely flawed.

In both cases, however, keep an open mind for the arguments by opposing reviewers. Try to convince them of your view by expressing as clearly as possible what justifies your position, but also have an open ear as to why others may not share the same judgements.

The challenge and the reward of the online discussions lies in using a rational debate to overcome what may at first seem like incompatible views.

**Reviewer award.** A reviewer award will be awarded for the best reviewer of MODELS 2023.

## Review Form

**Summary.** The first (mandatory) field in the review form is a "summary" field because a summary in your own words shows the author how you understood the essence of the paper and is also helpful in PC and PB discussions. A summary forces you to reflect on the contribution of the paper (that we suggest to be part of this summary).

**Pros and Cons.** These two (mandatory) fields shall be used to provide a concise overview of the strength and weaknesses of the paper in bullet point format.

**Overall Evaluation.** The subsequent "Main evaluation" field is for elaborating on the strengths and weaknesses, commenting, and suggestions for improvement. This will facilitate discussions between the PC and PB. For the negative points, please suggest possible improvements. This constructive approach will show the authors that the reviewer is not an enemy. Please also share your general comments with authors and point out any grammatical errors in the paper. However, you should not spend more time reviewing than the authors spent writing their paper. Note that we did not include a "0 - borderline" rating to avoid even slight tendencies towards acceptance or rejection to be hidden by a neutral rating. Please consider which side of the fence you have a preference for, bearing in mind the points made above in "Paper acceptance". The "-1" and "1" ratings are understood to be very weak votes in either direction and are best read as "close to neutral with some tendency to accept/reject". Please use ratings with absolute values of "2" or "3" to make stronger recommendations.

**Reviewer Confidence.** Please indicate how confident you are in your review based on your own expertise in the area defined by the paper and your general understanding of the paper.

**Confidential Comments for the Program Committee.** Authors will not see the comments in this section - they are only visible to the other reviewers assigned to the paper (as well as PC Chairs and assigned PB member). Please justify your comments to the other reviewers outside of the context shared with authors. If you think that a paper is a good candidate for acceptance, please justify your recommendation. In this section, you can also share your critical concerns about the paper with the other reviewers. This section should also be used to express thoughts about the paper being placed in the wrong category, or any other issues (e.g., self-plagiarism).

**Questions to the author(s).** Authors of submissions that receive some reviewer support will have the opportunity to respond to the reviews and answer reviewer questions. Please formulate up to three questions whose answers could potentially change your support for the submission. This is a mandatory field. In case you do not have any questions, please indicate that you do not have questions, the answers of which could change your opinion on the paper.

**Best paper candidate?** If you think the quality of this submission rises to a level where it should be included in the paper awards selection process, then please tick this box.

**Submitted to wrong category/track?** If you are proposing that this submission be moved to a different paper category or the Practice track, please tick this box. Please specify the new category/track in the confidential remarks.

## Code of Conduct: PC Reviews and Discussions

Your review will not only go to the authors of the paper, but will also be used to initiate discussions about the papers among other PC members and the Program Board, and to help make the final decision during the Program Board meeting. For those not yet familiar with the review process, we recommend the guidelines suggested in the paper by Alan Jay Smith, "[The Task of the Referee](#)," IEEE Computer, 23(4), pp. 65-71, April 1990.

Here are some points that we ask you to consider.

1. **Submit your reviews on time:** If you foresee that you will be unlikely to complete a review on time for unexpected issues, please let the PC Chairs know as soon as possible.
2. **Ensure review quality:** You are expected to personally read and write reviews for every paper assigned to you. You may solicit additional help from trusted colleagues, but this help would be in addition to your own reviewing work, not in place of it. Even if you use external help, you are responsible for the quality of the review and have to be able to participate in the paper discussions, and we specifically ask you to ensure that the assigned grades are fair.
3. **Ensure professional reviews:** Above all, we expect MODELS reviewers to act professionally.
  - a. **Respect:** Reviewers should respect the time and effort that authors put into writing their papers. Please do not use disparaging language, and make sure that your criticisms are constructive and valid (i.e., based on the actual content of the paper). However, your time is also precious, so do not spend more time on your review than authors have spent on writing their paper!
  - b. **Discussions:** Discussions must be respectful to both the authors and the other reviewers. It is very likely that there will be reviewers who have

opposing views on the significance of some papers. You are strongly encouraged to discuss these differences, but this must be done politely and with respect. You are also expected to carefully read and respond to relevant responses from authors in the discussion phases.

4. **Confidentiality:** All submissions are to be treated as confidential information. This also means that you must not refer to other papers you are reviewing in the reviews of the papers assigned to you.
5. **Double Submission and Plagiarism:** If you suspect that a paper falls into this category, please inform the PC Chairs as soon as possible. Do not wait until the review deadline.
6. **PC Chairs Conflict of Interest:** Although the General Chairs and the Foundations Track and Practice Track Chairs are not allowed to submit papers to MODELS, it may happen that the PC chairs also have conflicts of interest regarding certain papers. In such cases, the PC chairs will represent each other or appoint a PB member to represent them.

## **Acknowledgments**

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## **For Questions or Further Comments**

Many thanks for all the hard work and time you are willing to offer to MODELS. If you have any questions or further comments, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Gabriele Taentzer, MODELS 2023 Foundations Track Chair

## Metareviews

| #          | Due            | Target                              | Function   | Typical Contents   |
|------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>MR1</b> | 4<br>June      | Author(s)<br>[public]               | elicit<br>author<br>response                               | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. very brief summary of the main reviewer points.</li> <li>2. list of weaker aspects of the submission that reviewers would like to see clarifications on in order to increase their scores or confidence.</li> <li>3. up to five concrete questions to authors.</li> </ol>  |
| <b>MR2</b> | 15<br>June     | PB<br>meeting<br>[confiden<br>tial] | support<br>decision<br>making                              | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. very brief summary of the main strengths and weaknesses of the submission.</li> <li>2. brief summary of reviewer viewpoints, often including a history of discussion dynamics.</li> <li>3. acceptance recommendation justification, e.g., <i>"accept, if there's space" / "undisputed reject"</i>, etc.</li> </ol> |
| <b>MR3</b> | 2<br>1<br>June | Author(s)<br>[public]               | justify<br>decision<br>/<br>specify<br>revision<br>actions | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. summary of (combined) reviewer response to the author response.</li> <li>2. justification for final decision, e.g., an enumeration of which aspects remained unsatisfactory, which responses helped, etc.</li> <li>3. potentially: action items for authors for the camera-ready version.</li> </ol>               |