

# ACM SAC 2018 Track Chair Guidelines

(Revised May 2, 2017)

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## Abbreviations

| <i>Abbreviations</i> | <i>Full Name</i>                   |
|----------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>ACM</b>           | Association of Computing Machinery |
| <b>CFP</b>           | Call for Papers                    |
| <b>PC</b>            | Program Chair                      |
| <b>SAC</b>           | Symposium for Applied Computing    |
| <b>TC</b>            | Track Chair                        |
| <b>TPC</b>           | Track Program Committee            |

## **I. Executive Summary**

1. TCs are responsible to find reviewers for their tracks.
2. Each paper must be double-blindly reviewed by at least three reviewers; this is an ACM requirement as SAC is a Refereed Conference.
3. Each Track must have a TPC of valuable scientific level in the track area, published on the track website.
4. TCs should normally avoid submitting their work to their own tracks. In such, the TC must contact the PCs with their intention to submit to their own track. The PC will insure proper handling of submission.
5. TCs cannot submit more than one submission to their own track.
6. A TC cannot nominate his/her own paper for the best paper award.
7. TCs prepare their own "Track CFP" in conjunction with the general SAC 2018 CFP after having been notified of the successful review of their track proposal.
8. The goal for a track is to receive around 32 submissions, which guarantee 2 sessions (8 papers). A track that receives less than 13 submissions may be cancelled or merged with another related track. However, we encourage a better alternative under which the TCs of the merged tracks work together to handle the papers as a group and merged into sessions, rather than outright cancelation. In the event of cancellations, authors will be notified and encouraged to submit their papers to other tracks. All cancellations (if necessary) will be done before the review process starts.
9. The Track CFP, Track webpage, and acceptance letters must state the following: *Paper registration is required, allowing the inclusion of the paper/poster in the conference proceedings. An author or a proxy attending SAC MUST present the paper. This is a requirement for the paper/poster to be included in the ACM digital library. No-show of registered papers and posters will result in excluding them from the ACM digital library.*
10. TCs are expected to receive papers within the official deadline. No extensions unless authorized by

the PCs will be given. This is to ensure meeting subsequent deadlines such as proceedings printing and shipping to SAC venue on time.

11. TCs are responsible for the reviews, reviews with scores only are not acceptable, and if reviewers fail to review the paper it is the TCs responsibility to find alternative reviewers. We strongly recommend that each paper is assigned to at least five reviewers.
12. Before notifying the authors, TCs submit to the PCs the listing of submitted papers, with the final outcome (acceptance/rejection) and the reviewers' markings. Based on this information, the PCs will allocate a maximum number of papers that each track may accept.
13. As a general rule of thumb, the average acceptance rate per track should be under 25%.
- 14. TCs are required to coordinate with the Posters Chair before author rejection notifications are sent out allowing the Posters Chair ample time to solicit/invite paper submissions to be considered for the Posters Program.**
15. Each Track has the opportunity to participate in the SRC program by reviewing Student Research Abstracts submitted to the track.
16. For a track to make it to the SAC 2018 Final Program, it must contain at least *four* fully accepted papers, forming one technical session.
17. The paper length is 6 pages + 2 pages at extra charge (max of 8 pages).
18. The poster length is 3 pages + 1 page at extra charge (max of 4 pages).
19. TCs are expected to participate in SAC and look after their sessions.
20. A track receives one or more free registrations depending on the number of sessions.
21. The free registrations are intended to support TCs attending the conference to manage their track sessions. **A free registration cannot be used to cover a publication unless the authoring TC is attending the conference.**
22. TCs are encouraged to organize Special Issues in journals related to the themes of their track, with a collection of the best papers accepted in their track.
23. TCs must report no-show papers to the PCs as soon as the session is concluded in order to keep track of no-show presenters and remove no-show papers/poster from the ACM digital library.
24. Any proposed changes in the management structure of a track should be immediately communicated with the SAC Organizing Committee and the PCs.
25. The SAC Organizing Committee and the PCs reserve the right to cancel a track at any stage if its TCs do not comply with these guidelines, or iteratively fail to communicate with the PCs.

Details of these guidelines are given below.

## II. Deadlines and Important Dates

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| May 08, 2017       | Submission of track proposals                                   |
| May 22, 2017       | Notification of acceptance/rejection of track proposals         |
| June 05, 2017      | Submission of track CFPs to the Program Chairs                  |
| June 10, 2017      | Dissemination of the first CFP and website for each track       |
| September 15, 2017 | Submission of regular papers and SRC abstracts                  |
| September 25, 2017 | Submission of Tutorial Proposals                                |
| October 25, 2017   | Notification of Tutorials Acceptance                            |
| November 03, 2017  | Submission of review outcomes to the Program Chairs             |
| November 10, 2017  | Notification of papers and posters and SRC acceptance/rejection |
| November 25, 2017  | Camera-ready copies of accepted papers                          |
| December 10, 2017  | Author registration due date                                    |
| January 26, 2018   | TC free registration deadline                                   |
| February 09, 2018  | Preparation of sessions (order of papers and session chairs)    |
| February 09, 2018  | Selection of the best paper for each theme                      |

### III. Message to Track Chairs

What follows is a description of the responsibilities of Track Chairs (TCs) and a presentation of some relevant guidelines. These responsibilities are dictated by the rules of the senior organizing body ACM and SAC itself. The associated guidelines below are the product of thirist-one years of experience in running the SAC and we hope you will appreciate the need for enforcing them. However, the SAC Steering and Organizing committees 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 following sections highlight the guidelines that all TCs are expected to adhere to for SAC 2018. These guidelines are evolving and are subject to change.

### IV. TC Group Formation

**Track Chairs must be experts with established experience in their field of applied computing and with Ph.D. credentials. Graduate students cannot be listed as TCs.** The TC group for a track should, throughout the year of organization, engage in the following activities:

1. Provide scientific visibility and attract papers (hence some TC is expected to be a well-known researcher in the field)
2. Promptly execute tasks as required by the Program Chairs (PCs) (hence some TC should always be reading emails, and providing timely communications)
3. Organize allocation of reviews, disseminate CFPs, prepare a Website (hence some TC should be designated as the **Lead TC** and ready to do the track leadership work)
4. Attend the conference (hence at least one TC should use the track Free Registration (see section VIII, item #5 below) and be available to attend SAC 2018.

Although there is no constraint on the number of TCs, it s unlikely that only one person can executes all the above tasks in a successful way, hence a group of 2-3 carefully selected scholars is suggested.

### V. Essential Rules

1. TCs are responsible to find 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 be used as reviewers for the track (using peer-review), but of course, not their own papers. Each paper must be **double-blindly reviewed by at least three reviewers; this is an ACM requirement as SAC is a "Refereed Conference". Please adhere to this requirement** Double-blindly means that the author of a paper does not know the reviewers of his/her paper and reviewers do not know the authors of the papers they reviewed. To ensure having at least three meaningful and constructive reviews (as per ACM requirement), many TCs in the past have used five reviews per paper: as a rule of thumb, be sure to prepare a reviewers' group able to provide five reviews per paper.
2. TCs are responsible to form their **TPC** of valuable scientific level in the track area. **The committee members must be published on the track website.** The committee should be appointed after the track is approved and publicized with the track call for papers.
3. The TCs should normally avoid submitting their work to their own tracks. **Even though this rarely happens in SAC, the TC(s) can be author(s) of at most one submission.** TCs submissions go

through the double-blind review process like all the other papers in the track. To protect the TCs credibility and to ensure the integrity of the ACM-required peer-review process, the TCs must inform the PCs of their submissions. At such time, the PCs handle and manage the TCs submissions, including assignment of reviewers, communication with reviewers, handling review results, processing scores, informing TCs of the outcomes, etc. whenever possible, we encourage TCs to consider submitting their papers to other related tracks. The widely acceptable ethical rules found in other respectable conferences also apply to SAC.

4. TCs have the option to nominate a paper for consideration for the **Best Paper Award** in the theme to which the track belongs. To keep this process professional, **TCs cannot nominate their own paper from their own track for the best paper award.**

## VI. Attracting Papers

1. TCs prepare their own “Track CFP” in conjunction with the general SAC 2018 CFP. (Note that the latter CFP has already been prepared by the Program Chairs 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 the track, topics to be covered, contact information of its TCs, etc. Note that 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, the PCs will provide an example of the Track CFP that a track can use to prepare their own Track CFP, but we encourage TCs to look for similar events in the area of the track for a better idea of what a specific track CFP should contain.
2. TCs must prepare the CFP for the track after having been notified of the successful review of their track proposal (see Section II). TCs then submit it to the PCs for approval. Once TCs get the go ahead, they are responsible for distributing the CFP for the track as widely as possible, within the international forums related to the themes of the track. We recommend that the Track CFP is published three times (“Preliminary CFP”, “CFP”, and “Last CFP”) before the expiration of the deadline for accepting submissions. Furthermore, TCs should set up a website for the track and link it to the conference’s main website. TCs are invited to examine web sites of past tracks available at [www.acm.org/conferences/sac](http://www.acm.org/conferences/sac).
3. Other than sending the CFP, we urge TCs to explicitly invite colleagues, and other well-known researchers in the field to submit good papers to the track. While doing this, the SAC location can also be an important factor for the consideration. For instance, SAC 2018 has a potential to attract many papers from Europe, South America and North America. Personal networking is often a key to a successful track. Note that, given the average acceptance ratio and session size (see item #4 below), **a goal for TCs is to receive around 32 submissions, which guarantee a track of reasonable size (2 sessions, 8 papers).**
4. **A track that receives less than 13 submissions will be cancelled. Authors of papers in that track will be notified and encouraged to submit their papers to other tracks. All track cancellations (if necessary) will be done before the review process starts.** A minimum of one session per Track is required (4 accepted papers) and will strictly be enforced for SAC 2018. In general, the average acceptance rate per track should be under 25%.
5. The Track CFP, Track webpage, and acceptance letters must state the following: **Paper registration is required, allowing the inclusion of the paper/poster in the conference proceedings. An author or a proxy attending SAC MUST present the paper. This is a requirement for the paper/poster to be**

included in the ACM digital library. No-show of registered papers and posters will result in excluding them from the ACM digital library. This requirement must be explicitly mentioned on the Track webpage and in the acceptance letters sent to the authors.

## VII. Paper Reviewing Process

1. 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 PCs (in which case this will be promptly communicated to TCs). As the deadline expires, TCs should screen each paper to make sure it has been submitted to the correct track. If a paper does NOT fit your track, please contact the PCs. After that, be sure to properly allocate papers to reviewers, according to their expertise or to their bid.
2. TCs are responsible for the reviews. If reviewers fail to review the paper it is the TCs responsibility to find an alternative reviewer or, in the worst case, even review the papers themselves. Given that the deadlines are fixed, we recommend TCs to send a reminder one week before the reviews are due. Moreover, TCs are also responsible for the quality of reviews: a review with scores only is not acceptable; it should not be considered and must hence be replaced by a proper one. 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 thorough written comments or with high confidence should be valued more). The on-line discussion about the reviews is strongly encouraged among the TC and reviewers using the START system. We also strongly recommend that each paper is assigned to at least five reviewers.
3. As the deadline for reviewers is due and **before notifying the authors**, TCs submit to the PCs the listing of submitted papers, with the final outcome (acceptance/rejection) and the reviewers' markings. The PCs reserve the right to argue about the decision to be taken regarding some paper(s) and ask for further justification of the TCs 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).
4. SAC has grown to be a large and very 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 under 25%.*
5. **Poster Sessions:** Papers that received high reviews (that is acceptable by reviewer standards) but were not accepted due to space limitation can be invited for the poster session. The number of papers per track may depend on the track size. Since poster invitations are sent before author notifications (rejections), this requires TCs to coordinate their effort with the Posters Chairs. **Please contact the Posters Chair for potential posters in your track before you send out the rejection letters.** This gives the Posters Chair ample time to solicit submissions to the Posters Program.
6. It is the responsibility of the TCs to make sure that the final version of an accepted paper is properly revised based on 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 dispersing other information to authors from the PCs and Conference Chairs, taking care that authors submit the camera-ready version of their papers including the checking of formatting issues, and submission of ACM copyright forms by the deadline. Again, the acceptance letter must include the following

statement: [Paper registration is required, allowing the inclusion of the paper/poster in the conference proceedings. An author or a proxy attending SAC MUST present the paper. This is a requirement for the paper/poster to be included in the ACM digital library. No-show of scheduled papers and posters will result in excluding them from the ACM digital library.](#)

7. Student Research Competition (SRC) Program: Graduate students are invited to submit research abstracts (maximum of 2 pages in ACM camera-ready format) following the instructions published at SAC 2018 website. Submission of the same abstract to multiple tracks is not allowed. All research abstract submissions will be reviewed by researchers and practitioners with expertise in the track focus area to which they are submitted. TCs are responsible to assign SRC submission to their reviewers and generate at least three reviews for each SRC abstract submitted to their track. TCs must NOT notify SRC authors. The SRC Chair will handle the selection and invitations of SRC submissions.

Authors of invited SRC abstracts (up to 18 students) will have the opportunity to give poster and oral presentations of their work and compete for three top-winning places. The SRC evaluation committee will evaluate and select First, Second, and Third place winners. The winners will receive medals and cash awards. Winners will be announced during the conference banquet. Invited students receive SRC travel support (US\$500) and are eligible to apply to the SIGAPP Student Travel Award Program (STAP) for additional travel support.

### **VIII. Accepted Papers and Posters and Session Preparation**

1. For a track to make it to the SAC 2018 Final Program, it must contain at least four fully accepted papers, forming one technical session.
2. The length of the paper is 6 page (included in the registration) + 2 pages (at extra charge) = 8 pages maximum.
3. The length of the poster is 3 pages (included in the registration) + 1 page (at extra charge) = 4 pages maximum.
4. 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 in the conference. 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 after the conference.
5. Each track receives one to three Free Full-Conference registrations as CREDIT equivalent to the early “Author Member” registration rate depending on the number of sessions allocated for the track. Please note, 3 free registrations for 5-sessions tracks, 2 free registrations for 3-sessions and 4-sessions tracks, and 1 free registration for 1-session and 2-sessions tracks. TCs are strongly encouraged to be ACM members. Free registrations are non-transferable to non-TCs. It is the TCs responsibility to designate the recipient of the free registration and communicate that to the Conference Registrar no later than **January 26, 2018**. Free registrations expire after such date. The free registration can be used to cover an accepted publication authored/co-authored by the receiving TC and the receiving TC must attend the conference. In such case, the TC receiving the free registration as an “Author Member” uses “Check Payment” option (don’t send a check) and must contact the Conference Registrar to credit his/her registration account with the proper credit. If the registration account carries a balance, the registered TC is responsible for the outstanding balance.

6. TCs must obtain a “Session report”, for each session, from the session chairs to track no-show papers. This report **MUST** be submitted to the PCs as soon as the session is concluded in order to keep track of no-show presenters and remove no-show papers and posters from the ACM/IEEE digital library.

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 with the SAC 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 he/she must proceed, he/she 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 the TCs do not comply with the above guidelines, or iteratively fail to communicate with the PCs.

**SAC2018 Conference Chairs:** Hisham M. Haddad and Roger L. Wainwright

**SAC2018 Conference Vice-Chair and Host:** Richard Chbeir

**SAC2018 Program Chairs:** Dongwan Shin and Maria Lencastre

**SAC2018 Posters Chair:** Chih-Cheng Hung

**SAC2018 SRC Program Chair:** Armin R. Mikler

Please contact the SAC Steering Committee and PCs for any questions or additional information. Your participation in SAC 2018 is greatly appreciated. With your help, we look forward to another successful and exciting edition of SAC.

For ACM SAC Steering and Organizing Committee

Hisham Haddad

May 2, 2017