

# Guidelines for the SoCG Program Committee

## The CG Steering Committee<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

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This document provides guidelines as well as general advice for the SoCG program committee, in particular for the SoCG program committee chairs.

## 1 Introduction

The goal of this document is to provide information for the SoCG program committee and, in particular, for the PC chairs. The document describes the whole process, from the formation of the PC to the notification of the authors and the handling of possible special issues. The guidelines in this document have been put together over the years, based on past experiences and with input from former Steering Committees (called SC from now on) and previous PCs.

The Steering Committee is available for consultation at any time during the process, and we encourage the PC chairs to make use of this whenever they want advice or when policy decisions need to be made. Major policy changes always should be discussed with the Steering Committee and may sometimes even need to be discussed in the SoCG community at large.

## 2 Overview of Process and Timeline

Let  $y$  denote the year when the symposium will take place. A typical timeline of the various steps in the process are as follows.

- Spring  $y - 2$ : SC selects PC chairs
- June  $y - 2$ : PC chairs are announced at business meeting of SoCG  $y - 2$
- March  $y - 1$ : PC chairs send proposal for PC members to SC
- April–May  $y - 1$ : After consultation with SC, PC chairs invite members of PC
- June  $y - 1$ : PC chairs announce PC at the business meeting of SoCG  $y - 1$
- Sept  $y - 1$ : PC chairs send draft of Call for Papers to SC
- Oct  $y - 1$ : PC chairs post final version of CfP
- Nov  $y - 1$ : PC chairs select invited speakers, in consultation with local organizers and SC
- Dec  $y - 1$  – Feb  $y$ : paper selection process by PC
- June  $y$ : Symposium takes place, PC chairs report at business meeting

The following sections discuss these steps in more detail.

## 3 Assembling the Program Committee

The PC chairs for SoCG  $y$  are selected by the SC in Spring  $y - 2$  and are announced at the business meeting of SoCG  $y - 2$ . The work of the PC chairs does not really start before the beginning of  $y - 1$ , but the early selection of the PC chairs enables them to plan their other obligations suitably.

The PC chairs are responsible for assembling their PC, and for leading and coordinating the work of the PC, as detailed below. PC chairs are expected to attend the symposium

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## 2 Guidelines for the SoCG Program Committee

in the year they chair the PC, so that they can report on the PC process at the business meeting. There are no registration fee waivers for PC members or chairs.

**Forming the PC.** The first task of the PC chairs is to assemble their PC. The PC chairs should start discussing potential PC members early in the year  $y - 1$ , so that they can send a proposal to the SC by March  $y - 1$ . The SC will then give feedback on the proposal. This can be feedback about the overall composition, about certain people on the list, and may also include some suggestions for alternative PC members. Then typically one or two more iterations follow, after which the PC chairs can finalize their list of PC members. The PC chairs invite the PC members in April/May in the year  $y - 1$ , so that the PC can be announced at the business meeting of SoCG  $y - 1$ .

The PC should have broad expertise and community representation, not only in terms of topical coverage, but also in terms of geography, gender, and seniority. PC members preferably have published several papers in SoCG, so that they are aware of its level and culture. Moreover, papers in SoCG or other high-level venues are indicators of the quality of the PC member's research and their ability to assess the quality of the submissions. To get a good impression of the overall composition of the committee, it is advisable to make an overview that contains for each PC member the following information:

Name, gender, country (of affiliation), seniority, previous SoCG PC memberships, number of SoCG papers, last SoCG paper, expertise (one or more main research topics), additional comments (for example: responsiveness, diligence, community presence (attendance at SoCG or other CG events)).

It is convenient for the SC if the proposal for the PC is made available to the SC in the form of an (online, editable) table with the above information for each proposed member. As some may have to be excluded and others may decline an invitation, the list should also include a number of reserve members. As a rule of thumb, the overall list (including reserve members) should contain about twice as many candidates as needed for the PC. When compiling the list of potential PC members, please take the following into account:

- Avoid people who served on the SoCG PC in the last five years. A list of previous committee members is available [on the CG webpages](#). The main reasons for this rule are to (1) fairly distribute the workload of PC work and (2) ensure a broad community representation. (Note: we do not always follow this rule in the selection of PC chairs, where it may be advantageous to select people who served more recently.)
- Avoid multiple PC members with the same affiliation.
- To determine the seniority of the PC members, one typically distinguishes four categories: early-career members (2–7 years after their PhD), established members (8–15 years after their PhD), experienced members (15–25 years after their PhD), and senior members (more than 25 years after their PhD).
- In the past few years the PC typically consisted of around 25 people, including PC chairs. The number of submissions was typically in the range 150–200, see [Table 1](#) below. With 3 PC members per paper, 25 PC members thus amount to 18–24 papers per PC member.

**Inviting PC members.** After the composition of the PC has been finalized in consultation with the SC, the PC chairs can start to invite the PC members. It is useful to already explain in the email what are the tasks of the PC members and what is the expected load (in terms of papers to be handled). This is especially important when inviting young people who may not have much experience with PC work, or people whose research area lies a bit

year	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
submitted	174	164	205	166	206	148
accepted	64	58	70	60	73	59
percent	36.8%	35.4%	34.1%	36.1%	35.4%	39.9%

■ **Table 1** Number of submissions and accepted papers at the SoCG over the past six years.

outside computational geometry (and whose own research area may have a different culture). A template letter for inviting PC members is proposed in Appendix A.

**Communication within the PC.** Once the PC chairs have assembled their PC, they should set up an efficient communication channel within the PC. Depending on their personal preferences, this can simply be done by email or using tools such as Slack.

EasyChair also facilitates communication between the PC chairs and the PC. Hence, once you have set up EasyChair, it is an easy and convenient method for the PC chairs to send messages to the PC. Obviously, EasyChair also supports discussions on particular papers during the paper selection process. However, at the time of writing, EasyChair did not provide a discussion forum, for topics such as possible invited speakers or best paper selection. A convenient solution is the following: the PC chairs create a dummy submission, that is, a paper titled “PC discussion” or such, with the chairs as authors, and add this paper to the EasyChair watchlist of all PC members. Discussions between the whole PC can then take place using the EasyChair discussion functionality for this dummy paper.

## 4 Call for Papers

The Call for Papers (CFP) is prepared by the PC under the leadership of the PC chairs. It is sent to the SC for comments by mid-September of year  $y - 1$ . When sending the draft to the SC, any changes with respect to the CFP of the previous year should be indicated. The CFP is finalized and made public no later than October 10,  $y - 1$ .

The CFP will typically simply be a copy of the previous year’s CFP, with changed dates and possibly some other minor changes. We mention some important aspects to take into account when preparing the CFP.

*Double submissions.* The case of double submissions to SoCG and to a journal must be very precisely settled in the CFP. Note that work previously presented in workshops without formal proceedings is allowed; this includes EuroCG and the Fall Workshop, but not CCCG or EuroComb (both of which have formal proceedings).

*Submission format.* Submissions are required to use the L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X document class available on the CG website and their length (that is, the main text in the submission) is limited to 500 lines. Submissions not adhering to the guidelines are to be rejected without consideration of their merits.

*Important dates.* The submission deadline is always early December (with the deadline for abstracts end of November) and notification is early/mid February. The submission deadline is firm and should not be extended. The exact dates are decided by the PC chairs in coordination with the SC and with the PC chairs of ICALP<sup>2</sup> and WADS/SWAT, which have

<sup>2</sup> The ICALP deadline is set in Spring  $y - 1$ . The SoCG notification date should be coordinated with the ICALP SC so that ideally it is sufficiently ahead of the ICALP submission deadline.

their deadline typically about a week or so after the SoCG notification. The deadline for camera-ready versions must be decided in coordination with LIPIcs (Section 7). Typically it is about 12 weeks ahead of the conference. Note that communication with LIPIcs (about this and other issues) is done via the SoCG Proceedings Chair; the current Proceedings chair is [listed on the CG web pages](#).

*Special issues.* In recent years there were special issues in *Journal of Computational Geometry* (JoCG) and *Discrete & Computational Geometry* (DCG), which are typically edited by the PC chairs and/or other PC members. Starting in 2022 also *Computing in Geometry and Topology* (CGT) is a possible choice for a special issue. Ultimately, it is up to the PC chairs to decide to edit special issues or not. If they want to edit (a) special issue(s), the PC chairs can contact the editors-in-chief of JoCG, DCG, and/or CGT. It is good to do this before finalizing the CFP, so that the special issues can already be announced in the CFP. Among the aforementioned journals, only JoCG and CGT are fully open access, so the “[cost of knowledge](#)” may be worth considering. If you are interested in special issues in other journals (or are contacted by other journals), please consult the SC.

*Evaluation guidelines.* A link to the evaluation guidelines should be provided in the CFP. The [guidelines for SoCG reviewing](#) can be used as a baseline.

*Submission server.* CG Week has been using the [EasyChair conference system](#) for many years. EasyChair has three different types of licenses: free, professional, and executive (see <https://easychair.org/licenses>). Customarily, there is one joint EasyChair installation with three separate tracks for all four events: SoCG, YRF, MM, and the CG Challenge. One or both of the SoCG chairs act as a “super-chair” in EasyChair and set up the complete system with the three different tracks (multi-track support requires at least a professional license). EasyChair also support double-blind reviewing, through various functionalities. For full support of double-blind an executive licenses is needed. In recent years, CGweek has used such an executive license, since it also provides 24/7 support.

One of the SoCG chairs needs to request and pay for the EasyChair license. They will be reimbursed by the local organizers. A SoCG chair must be the one to register the license, so that their email address (EasyChair account) is linked to the superchair position and the helpdesk support. In other words: if another person (say the local OC chair) buys the license, they will necessarily be privy to all CGweek discussions, which is clearly undesirable.

The SC generally has members who are experienced EasyChair users and who are more than willing to help with the initial set-up (or at least the SC knows whom to ask to help). Please do not hesitate to ask for help with EasyChair configuration: it is a powerful program with many options that are well hidden. If you would like to use an alternative conference management system, please contact the SC beforehand to discuss options and pricing.

**Distributing the CFP.** As soon as the CFP has been finalized, the PC chairs send it to the chair of the Organizing Committee so that it can be added to the conference website. In addition, the PC chairs should distribute the CFP widely, by posting it on several mailing lists, including at least the following:

- [comgeom-announce@inria.fr](mailto:comgeom-announce@inria.fr)<sup>3</sup>
- [dma@zpr.uni-koeln.de](mailto:dma@zpr.uni-koeln.de)
- [theorynt@listserve.nodak.edu](mailto:theorynt@listserve.nodak.edu).
- [WinCompTop@googlegroups.com](mailto:WinCompTop@googlegroups.com).

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<sup>3</sup> See <https://www.computational-geometry.org/>

It is good practice to repeat the distribution once, about one week before the deadline for submission of abstracts.

## 5 Invited Speakers

There are usually two invited speakers at SoCG, whose expertise is generally not in computational geometry but in a neighboring or a complementary field. The invitations to the speakers should be sent out no later than November  $y - 1$ .

The invited speakers are selected by the PC, in consultation with the SC and the organizing committee (OC). The most important selection criterion is that they are engaging speakers and that the topic of their talk is of interest to a significant fraction of the community. Diversity, in a broad sense, of the invited speakers is important as well. Please also take into account the topics of the invited talks in previous SoCGs, to ensure a spread of topics over the years. Try to avoid invited speakers who have to travel from very far to attend the conference—they would be better invited when CG Week is held closer to their home. Conversely, it is good to consider having one invited speaker who is relatively “local”.

Typically, invited speakers can participate in CG Week free of charge and accommodation and/or travel costs are refunded. What exactly is covered for the invited speakers should be discussed with the OC chair, who is responsible for the conference budget, and it should be mentioned in the invitation email. In previous years there were sometimes abstracts of the invited talks in the proceedings. Current policy, however, is *not* to include them, and this should be mentioned in the invitation email. The main reasons are the following: (1) It is a talk, not a paper; (2) Only reviewed material should go into proceedings; (3) Extra work and costs, with little benefit.

## 6 Reviewing and Selection Process

The main task of the PC is to select the best submissions through a thorough, fair, transparent, and confidential process. This section provides guidelines for achieving this goal, which are based on the experience gained by several people over many years. Different PC chairs may have slightly different preferences for certain aspects of the process, but significant deviations from the guidelines should first be discussed with the SC.

### 6.1 General Remarks

**Responsibilities of the PC chairs.** The PC chairs are ultimately responsible for the work done by the PC. One of their main tasks is to oversee the reviewing and selection process, and ensure that papers are evaluated in a uniform and consistent manner, even when they are handled by disjoint subsets of the PC and/or subreviewers with different backgrounds. The PC chairs should also make sure that the feedback sent to the authors is appropriate.

**Confidentiality.** All submissions are confidential. Only PC members are allowed to see the submissions, and subreviewers are only allowed to see submissions that they are being asked to review. In particular, neither the SC members nor the OC should have access to the submissions or reviews (unless, of course, they are PC members or subreviewers). PC members and subreviewers are not allowed to use results from a paper they have access to in any way, until the paper has been published or has otherwise been made publicly available.

**Communication with authors.** By default, authors just submit their paper by the deadline and then receive the decision regarding their paper (including reviews) by the notification date; there is no other communication between authors and the PC.

The authors are responsible for submitting a paper that adheres to the submission guidelines, is clear and unambiguous, and contains all necessary details (either in the main text or in an appendix). If the submitted paper is unclear, this should be taken into account in the assessment of the paper. There is no rebuttal phase and authors should not be contacted for clarifications. (Communication with the authors during the submission or reviewing process easily leads to a biased process in which not all papers are treated equally.) In very exceptional circumstances—for example, possibly, when there is significant overlap between two papers that requires an explanation—the PC chairs may decide to contact the authors of a paper. This is up to the discretion of the PC chairs, but they should make sure that any such communication follows a careful, unbiased process (and if at all possible, avoid such communication altogether). To this end, they should discuss among themselves in which circumstances they would contact authors and define a clear process, prior to the submission process. Individual PC members or subreviewers should never contact authors.

**Timeline.** The available period for the reviewing and selection process (that is, the time between the submission deadline and the notification) is typically about 10 weeks. The timeline of the process is then roughly as follows.

- After the deadline for abstracts, PC members can start bidding for papers. They should finish the bidding by the submission deadline.
- First two days after the submission deadline:
  - PC chairs check if any papers need to be rejected on formal grounds
  - PC chairs assign papers to PC members
- After the papers have been assigned, the PC members have five weeks to submit their reviews in EasyChair, possibly using subreviewers. The PC chairs should keep an eye on the number of reviews that are arriving over time, and send reminders (to the whole PC and/or individual PC members) where necessary.
- The remaining five weeks are used to discuss the papers and decide which papers to accept. Latest two weeks before the notification deadline, the PC chairs contact the SC and OC to establish the feasibility of the expected number of accepted papers.
- Latest by the announced notification date, the authors are notified whether their paper is accepted. The authors then also receive the reviews of their paper.
- In the week following the notification, the PC selects the paper(s) that will receive the Best-Paper Award.

Below the various steps are discussed in more detail.

## 6.2 Assigning Papers to PC Members

**Rejection on formal grounds.** Within 48 hours after the submission deadline, the PC chairs make a complete pass over all papers and identify those that deviate from the submission requirements regarding length and formatting. Any deviating paper should be rejected on these grounds. Not rejecting such papers gives an unfair advantage to bad actors and is frustrating for those who spent time and effort on making sure their paper follows the submission guidelines. The authors should be informed of the rejection immediately and the paper should not be considered in the rest of the reviewing process.

**The bidding and paper assignment process.** In the period between the deadline for abstracts and the final submission deadline, PC members can bid for papers they would like to review.

(It is advisable to tell the PC members in advance that they should reserve some time in their agenda for the bidding process.) The bidding is done using the functionality provided by EasyChair. EasyChair can then suggest an assignment of papers to PC members, based on the submitted preferences. Each submitted paper should be assigned to three PC members. The assignment should be done within a few days after the submission deadline.

It is up to the PC chairs to decide if (and how many) papers they want to assign to themselves, but it should be kept in mind that monitoring and guiding the whole reviewing and selection process is already a task that requires a very significant time investment.

### **Conflicts of interest.**

*Note: This section refers to the previous, single-blind reviewing process.*

Obviously, a paper should not be assigned to a PC member or subreviewer who has a conflict of interest (CoI) with the paper. CoIs with PC members are handled during the bidding process. This is done through EasyChair, which allows PC members to indicate during the bidding process with which submissions they have a CoI. EasyChair then ensures that the discussions and other information about the submission is hidden from them. In exceptional cases the PC chairs can approach a PC member with a CoI during the discussion phase, for example to help resolve technical questions. In such cases the nature of the CoI should be stated explicitly and openly by the PC member when giving their opinion.

In general, a PC member or subreviewer should declare a CoI when they may be biased towards (one of) the authors, or when there is some other reason that they cannot review a paper objectively. In particular, a PC member or subreviewer should declare a CoI when they have one of the following relations to an author:

- Family member, (ex-)significant other, or close friend.
- PhD advisor or advisee (no time limit), or postdoctoral or undergraduate mentor or mentee within the past five years.
- Same institutional affiliation.
- Involved in an alleged harassment incident. (It is not required that the incident be reported.)
- Reviewer owes author a favor (e.g., recently requested a reference letter).

Note that even though a PC member or subreviewer may believe they can write an objective review in some of the above cases, they should still declare a CoI to avoid the appearance of bias.

Another reason for a CoI is the following:

- Frequent or recent collaborator whom you believe you cannot review objectively.

If a PC member or reviewer feels that they can write an unbiased review about a paper co-authored by a recent collaborator, they can still review the paper. In such cases they should mention the “soft CoI” in the “Comments for PC” in EasyChair. This should also be done if the PC member or subreviewer has obtained competing results, or in other cases that can be perceived as a CoI by others. Of course if a PC or subreviewer feels uncomfortable to review a paper for such reasons, they can simply declare a (hard) CoI and decide not to review the paper.

## **6.3 Reviewing**

Each submitted paper will receive (at least) three independent reviews. The main purpose of the reviews is give an evaluation of the contributions of the paper and of its strengths and weakness, on which a decision about acceptance or rejection can be based. The reviews

should be sufficiently detailed and clear so that someone who did not read the paper (such as the PC chairs) can understand the evaluation and, in particular the pros and cons of the paper. A second purpose is to provide feedback to the authors about the evaluation of their paper and possibly help them to improve the presentation. A separate document gives guidelines for reviewers. It is useful to share the document with the PC members, and ask them to share it with their subreviewers.

**Use of subreviewers.** Most PC members will send many of their assigned papers to subreviewers. This helps to keep the workload under control, and it allows papers to be reviewed by experts on the topic of the paper. However, PC members should still form their own opinion on the paper, based on the review provided by the subreviewer and their own reading. Ultimately, the review is the full responsibility of the PC member. It is expected that the PC member modifies reviews if they do not satisfy our reviewing standards. These changes should be documented in the confidential remarks for PC members.

PC chairs are advised to warn PC members about the following issues when using subreviewers:

- The background of a subreviewer—the community they come from, or their level of seniority—may influence the assessment of a subreviewer. For example, mathematicians may not be used to the competitive nature of TCS conferences, and thus recommend acceptance more easily. Or junior researchers may be more easily impressed by a technique, because they do not realize it is fairly standard.
- Experts on a topic can often shed light on the novelty of the techniques used in a paper. However, the fact that they are experts may also lead to bias. For example, if a reviewer has worked on the same problem, they will probably consider it to be very interesting, while it could be that few other people care about the problem.
- Subreviewers only see one (or perhaps a few) of the submissions, so they cannot compare the strengths and weaknesses to other submissions.

Thus, after forming their own opinion on a paper, PC members should check if they concur with the subreviewer's assessment. If not, they should add a comment that expresses their own opinion (and ideally they should also add a short comment if they do agree with the assessment). Where necessary, PC members should calibrate the assessment and score given by a subreviewer; of course this should be written clearly, in the confidential remarks part of Easychair. (For example: "I am less enthusiastic than my subreviewer about the paper, because . . . Hence, I have reduced the score from 2 to 1.") If some part of a subreviewer's review is not well argued then it is the responsibility of the PC member to address these shortcomings, either by contacting the subreviewer and asking for clarifications and/or by updating/editing the review themselves. In the latter case, they should indicate this in the confidential remarks part of Easychair.

The issues mentioned above for subreviewers also play a role for the PC members themselves: some PC members tend to be much more critical than others, and/or have biases towards certain topics. PC chairs should monitor this.

## 6.4 Discussion and Selection

The reviews provided by the PC members and subreviewers form the basis of the discussion process, which will eventually lead to a decision about acceptance or rejection of each paper. It is the task of the PC chairs to oversee the discussions, stimulate PC members to be active in the discussion phase, and make accept/reject proposals and decisions about each paper.

**Use of numerical scores.** Reviewers not only provide a textual review for a paper, they also give numerical scores that indicate how they feel about accepting/rejecting a paper. These scores are useful to get a rough idea of the amount of support that a paper has. However, the usage of numerical scores can vary between PC members and even more so between subreviewers, since every reviewer uses their own personal frame of reference for score calibration. This phenomenon is exacerbated by the fact that a non-negligible fraction of reviewers are from adjacent fields (for example, mathematics), that can have very different attitudes towards conferences and the necessary quality of papers for acceptance. It is therefore useful to provide a verbal description of each of the scores to the PC members and subreviewers, which helps to calibrate the scores. But even with such a verbal description, some reviewers will be more strict than others. Hence, simply using a numerical cut-off is not a suitable instrument to decide upon acceptance or rejection; decisions should be taken based on the textual reviews of and the discussion about a paper.

**Making decisions.** Before the selection phase starts, each paper is unlabeled in EasyChair. When the PC chairs feel that consensus can be reached about a paper, they can move that paper to the "accept?" category or the "reject?" category. When doing so, they inform the involved PC members about their proposal by posting a comment with the paper in EasyChair. It is useful to include a short motivation for the accept/reject proposal, based on the reviews and discussions, and to ask for an explicit confirmation of the proposal from all involved PC members. If all PC members agree then the paper is moved from "accept?" to "ACCEPT", or from "reject?" to "REJECT". If some PC members do not agree, the paper may be moved into the "discussion" category.

Generally speaking, no decision should be made on a paper, unless several comments have been exchanged by PC members. Hopefully PC members start discussing and reach consensus about papers by themselves. More often this is not the case and the PC chairs need to start up and stimulate the discussion. This can be done in several ways.

- PC chairs can ask specific PC members—typically one whose assessment stands out by being much more positive or negative than the other assessments—to state the main reason for their (lack of) enthusiasm.
- PC chairs can ask PC members to give their opinion on specific points raised by other PC members.
- PC chairs can summarize the discussion and then ask the involved PC members to comment on the summary. (Summarizing the discussion is also useful when making a proposal for acceptance or rejection.)

When the discussion stalls or no consensus is reached, the PC chairs can ask additional PC members for their opinion; the PC chairs would then add the paper in question to the PC members' EasyChair watch list. PC chairs can also ask PC members if they want to champion a paper (meaning that the PC member would make a strong case for accepting the paper) or "anti-champion" a paper (making a strong case for rejection). At the final stages of the decision process, the remaining papers are often also compared against each other. As mentioned, this may involve asking PC members to have a look at some additional papers.

The quality of the submissions is the main criterion for acceptance or rejection. However, the PC should also pay some attention to the overall balance of the program. This typically starts playing a role when filling the last number of slots from a pool of roughly equivalent candidates.

The quality the decision process, and in particular all papers getting an equal treatment, hinges on the fact all PC members are equally engaged in the discussions. It is the duty of each PC member to ensure they represent the papers in their batch fairly, and it is the duty

of the PC chairs to oversee the process and remind and encourage PC members that fall behind.

**(Perceived) errors.** Reviews that claim technical problems or errors in a paper must provide a precise and detailed description of the perceived errors. Serious errors must be cross-checked and corroborated by at least one additional PC member or external reviewer, if necessary via email conversation with the external reviewers. Unsubstantiated claims of errors need to be removed from reviews.

If two or more reviewers are not able to agree on there being an error or not, then this fact has to be clearly communicated to the authors. The same is true if none of the reviewers is able to verify the correctness since the paper is not written sufficiently clearly or important details are missing. In such cases, the PC did due diligence and the authors need to improve the presentation of the paper. While such concerns are not necessarily errors per se, they should be listed under the weaknesses in the review and should negatively impact the evaluation.

**Number of accepted papers.** There is neither a pre-determined number of accepted papers nor a pre-determined acceptance percentage. (See Table 1 on Page 3 for examples of acceptance ratios in the past few years.) The PC is, in principle, free to choose their own threshold, while maintaining the desired high quality of accepted papers. The final program ideally showcases the breadth of the field and also leaves room for some “unusual” topics. There is, however, an organizational constraint on the number of papers that can be presented in the schedule. Towards the end of January the PC chairs should have some indication as to the number of papers they would roughly like to accept. At this point, they need to contact the SC and the OC to establish the feasibility of the desired number of presentation slots.

## 6.5 Notification and Feedback to Authors

After all decisions have been made, the authors are notified of the decision. This is done through EasyChair. The notifications should be sent out at the notification date at the latest, and include the reviews. The numerical scores are not included.

To be able to send the reviews together with the notification, it is recommended that reviews on a paper are finalized when the decision on that paper is reached; this avoids that the work of checking and editing reviews is concentrated at the end, when discussion fatigue has set in. Usually the reviews are fine and nothing needs to be done, but sometimes they may contain inappropriate or incorrect remarks, which should be fixed. Thus, when a decision on a paper has been reached, the PC chairs should ask PC members to check their review and, when necessary, prompt them to clean up certain parts. This is particularly important when reviews point out (perceived) errors; when these errors are not corroborated by others then the wording of the review should be changed so that it accurately reflects the situation. If the discussion about a paper is not properly reflected in the reviews, or the main reason for the final decision is unclear from the reviews, then one PC member should be appointed to include a summary of the discussion or arguments in an additional review.

Sending high-quality reviews is very important: it increases trust in the SoCG reviewing process within the community and helps the authors to improve the presentation of their paper. Let us emphasize once again that every PC member carries the responsibility for the reviews they provide, be it directly or via a subreviewer. If the review of a subreviewer is inappropriate then it is the responsibility of the PC member to address these shortcomings. They can choose to either contact the subreviewer and ask for a revised review, or they can edit the review themselves. As mentioned earlier, they should then indicate this in the

confidential remarks part of EasyChair. The PC chairs carry the ultimate responsibility for the work done by the PC and as such they should monitor that the reviews are appropriate. As a last resort, PC chairs have the power to edit reviews themselves to ensure that all reviews sent back to the authors are factual, fair, and constructive.

## 6.6 Best-Paper Award

After the notifications have been sent, the PC should decide on a best paper. Alternatively the PC can decide to award two best paper awards. If the best paper is potentially of interest to a broader CS community, then it may be invited to the *Journal of the ACM* (JACM). The PC chairs should contact Jean-Daniel Boissonnat to enquire. If JACM agrees then the PC chairs should inform the authors of both the award and the invitation; if JACM declines the authors should just be informed about the award. The PC chairs should also inform the SC about the best-paper award, so that the SC can make sure the paper(s) are listed on [the CG webpages](#).

## 7 Proceedings

Since SoCG 2015, proceedings have been published by [Lipics](#). Since 2018, SoCG has established a *SoCG Proceedings Chair*. The proceeding chair is appointed by the SoCG Steering Committee, and will handle all interactions with LIPIcs. The responsibilities of the SoCG PC chairs regarding the proceedings include: (1) preparing a “Preface” for the proceedings; (2) collecting information such as “Additional reviewers” (see more on this below); and (3) helping the proceedings chair to collect the papers.

**Acknowledging subreviewers.** The list of subreviewers is included in the proceedings, so that their work is properly acknowledged. After the review process is closed, the PC chairs should inform all subreviewers that they are free to request their name *not* to be listed.

## 8 Conference

### 8.1 Preparing the schedule

Once the selection process is completed, the PC chairs inform the SC and the local organizers about the number of accepted papers. The detailed schedule for CG Week is prepared by the local organizing committee in consultation with the SC, who serve as general chairs of CG Week. The OC will provide the PC chairs with a schedule that indicates the slots for the SoCG talks. The PC chairs then organize the accepted papers into sessions according to the agreed upon slots.

To do so, the PC chairs solicit the name of the presenting author as well as any availability restrictions from the authors as soon as possible. In addition, it is important to know if the presenting author is a student and hence eligible for the Best Student Presentation Award (Section 8.2). Talks by students need to be scheduled early in the conference, so that the feedback given by the audience can be taken into account properly when selecting the best student presentation. PC chairs are also responsible for assigning chairs for each SoCG talk session, as well as the invited talks sessions.

## **8.2 Best Student Presentation Award**

SoCG also has an award for the best student presentation. The award must be announced in the welcome talk of the conference, given by the OC chair. More information on how to organize the Best Student Presentation Award (including evaluation criteria) can be found in the [award guidelines](#). The PC chairs should inform the OC of the list of speakers who are students, the title of the papers, and the time when the talks are scheduled, so that this information can be included in the conference program. The PC chairs are responsible for setting up the voting and collection of feedback. After all feedback on the student presentation has been collected, the PC chairs can decide on the winner(s) of the award, following the guidelines mentioned above. The PC chairs may involve other PC members or the SC in organizing the selection process, if they want. The winner(s) of the award will be announced at an appropriate moment on the last day of the conference, which the PC chairs can pick in consultation with the OC.

## **8.3 Business Meeting**

It is expected that the PC chairs will attend SoCG and participate in the business meeting. Specifically, the PC chairs should present a report on the PC work at the business meeting. Examples of prior years' PC chair summaries are available [on the CG webpages](#).

**A** Template for Inviting PC Members

Dear [name](#),

We would like to invite you to join the program committee of SoCG [20xx](#) planned to be held in [location](#) next year. Your help in selecting the papers to be presented at the symposium would be greatly appreciated.

We expect each PC member to be assigned about [X \(25?\)](#) papers. PC members are responsible for producing thorough reviews for the papers assigned to them. They may use subreviewers, but they should familiarize themselves sufficiently with the papers and reviews to be able to participate in the discussions and, where necessary, to calibrate the score of the subreviewers. (More detailed guidelines will be distributed among the PC in due time.) SoCG aims to give high-quality and helpful feedback to authors of all papers. To this end each PC member is responsible for summarizing the discussion of about [Y \(8?\)](#) papers, to give additional feedback to the authors (e.g., about main grounds for rejection), and for checking and possibly editing the reviews on the paper (e.g., to get rid of inappropriate comments).

The time line for the PC is as follows. Paper bidding will start in late November [20xx-1](#), after the deadline for registering submissions; the bidding process helps in assigning papers to PC members who are best aligned with the topic of the papers. The paper submission deadline will be early December, after which the papers are assigned to PC members and the reviewing starts. Reviews will be due in mid January, at which point the discussion and selection phase starts. The notification to authors will be mid February. The above processes will be done electronically using EasyChair.

We realize that serving on the SoCG PC is a major time investment. Since the quality of the symposium depends highly on the availability of qualified PC members such as yourself, we really hope that you will be able to accept our invitation and join the PC.

Please let us know at your earliest convenience if you are willing to serve on the PC, and do not hesitate to ask any question you may have!

Best regards,

[PC Chair 1](#) and [PC chair 2](#), co-chairs of SoCG [20xx](#)