



## ASTM Special Issue Policies

If guest editors who propose a special issue do not have an established credibility with ASTM—such as a peer reviewer, Editorial Board Member (EBM), author, or ASTM member—they will be asked to join the peer reviewer pool of the journal before they may submit a proposal for a special issue. The amount of time they serve as a peer reviewer will be at the discretion of the journal Editor(s).

### 8.1 The Special Issue

A special issue is a collection of papers focusing on a specific area of research that has a broad interest and is within the scope of the chosen journal. It could analyze and review a particular topic; address gaps, issues, or challenges in the body of knowledge; or enable and encourage dialogue and create new ideas.

### 8.2 The Guest Editor(s)

The responsibilities of guest editors include:

- Writing the call for abstracts and soliciting content for the special issue
- Reviewing submitted abstracts to determine their suitability for the special issue
- Promptly reviewing manuscripts as requested, inviting appropriate reviewers (not more than 1 of which can be recommended by the authors), and recommending action (accept, revise, reject) to the journal Editor
- Maintaining the desired standards of quality and credibility in the journal by means of the peer review process
- Adhering to all ASTM policies
- Ensuring that their editorial services will not compromise the impartiality of ASTM

It can be helpful for special issues to have more than one guest editor. This reduces potential bias and encourages balanced coverage. Guest editors should be able to demonstrate experience in editing or reviewing technical content. A team of guest editors may include a junior scholar who is building recognition in their field, if the other guest editors are accomplished and recognized scholars in the topic area. If none of the proposed guest editors are EBMs, the special issue will be overseen by the journal Editor or an EBM.

Guest editors may submit papers to the special issue. Their papers will undergo ASTM's standard peer review process along with all other papers. At the journal Editor's discretion, the peer review process for guest editors' submissions will be handled by either the journal Editor or an EBM of the journal Editor's choosing. To avoid competing interests, papers authored by the guest editors or their close colleagues (with close professional or personal relationships) should be a limited portion of the special issue content.

While soliciting content for the special issue, guest editors may send personal invitations to

request contributions to the issue. Guest editors shall not guarantee publication for any author, and guest editors shall not accept payment (monetary, in-kind, or through professional arrangements) in exchange for publication.

### **8.3 The Journals**

Special issues may be published in any of ASTM's active journals:

- *Advances in Civil Engineering Materials* (ACEM), <https://go.astm.org/ACEM>
- *Geotechnical Testing Journal* (GTJ), <https://go.astm.org/GTJ>
- *Journal of Testing and Evaluation* (JTE), <https://go.astm.org/JTE>
- *Materials Performance and Characterization* (MPC), <https://go.astm.org/MPC>
- *Smart and Sustainable Manufacturing Systems* (SSMS), <https://go.astm.org/SSMS>

### **8.4 The Proposal**

All proposals should be submitted by email to the Publishing Manager, Alyssa Conaway, at [aconaway@astm.org](mailto:aconaway@astm.org).

### **8.5 The Call for Abstracts**

If you are using an open call for papers, ASTM staff will work with you in conjunction with the journal Editor to finalize the call for abstracts.

Upon approval from the journal Editor, ASTM's marketing team will format the call for abstracts into an ASTM-branded email for distribution. ASTM staff will share this email with you so that you can use it in your solicitations. Special issues are often most successful when the guest editor is active and engaged in soliciting content.

Abstracts will be submitted to ASTM for tracking purposes; if authors send you abstracts directly, please forward them to ASTM staff. When the abstract deadline closes, you will receive an email package with all submitted abstracts and a tracking sheet with abstract information. You will be asked to indicate in this tracking sheet which abstracts are approved. The authors of those approved abstracts will be invited to submit full papers for the special issue.

### **8.6 The Authors**

Authors may be asked to submit a copy of their most recent CV/resume along with their abstract. Authors should be able to demonstrate experience in the topic of the special issue. Authors whose expertise is not within the scope of the journal or special issue will not be invited to submit full papers.

### **8.7 The Reviewers**

Papers submitted to special issues undergo the same peer review process as regular submissions. All papers must receive at least 2 reviews from independent reviewers. As a guest editor, you may not also be a reviewer.

Peer reviewers may be EBMs or ASTM members, but this is not required. The guest editor should have previously vetted the peer reviewers and confirm that they are qualified to review on the issue topic. A single peer reviewer should not be assigned to more than 10% of total papers or more than 5 papers, whichever is less. Peer reviewers who do not use institutional email addresses may be asked to provide their institutional webpages or CVs/resumes to verify their credentials.

## 8.8 The Peer Review Process

The peer review team will check-in all submissions and ensure they are ready for peer review; i.e., all files are present and correctly formatted, all entries in the peer review site are complete, etc.

ASTM uses single-blind peer review, where the authors do not know the identity of the reviewers, but the reviewers know the identity of the authors. If the reviewers have any potential conflict of interest with the authors or the authors' affiliated organizations, they should decline to review.

The peer review process is as follows:

1. The peer review team will assign one guest editor as the handling EBM for each paper.
2. When you first receive a submission, you have the option to reject without review. This may be appropriate if the paper has a high iThenticate score for plagiarism, if the paper is poorly written, or if the paper is outside the scope of the issue or journal. If you recommend rejection without review, the paper is sent to the journal Editor for a final decision.
3. Most papers proceed to peer review. Please assign at least 2 independent reviewers for each paper. We recommend inputting 3 or 4 reviewers for each paper and inviting the first 2. If a reviewer declines, the peer review staff can invite your alternate reviewers.
4. Once 2 reviews are submitted, you will be asked to make a recommendation (Revise, Accept, Reject). If the reviews greatly conflict, you may seek a third review. If you feel you have a situation that requires more than 3 reviewers, please contact ASTM staff ([aconaway@astm.org](mailto:aconaway@astm.org)).
5. To make a recommendation, please read the paper and the reviewer comments, synthesize the reviewer comments, and add feedback for the authors.
6. The paper, along with feedback from you and the reviewers, is then sent to the journal Editor for a decision.
7. If the paper is accepted or rejected, a final decision letter is sent to the authors. The decision letter includes the feedback from the reviewers, guest editor, and journal Editor.
8. If revisions are requested, a decision letter is sent to the authors with a revision deadline as well as the feedback from the reviewers, guest editor, and journal Editor.
9. When the revised paper is submitted, you will be notified to make a recommendation (Revise, Accept, Reject). You may send the revision back to 1 or more of the original reviewers. Please do not add new reviewers for revised papers.
10. The journal Editor makes the decision for all papers. When all papers in the issue have a final decision (Accept or Reject), peer review closes for the issue.

## 8.9 The Publication Process

Papers move through production (copyediting, typesetting, author proofing) individually after they complete peer review. Papers that finish peer review and production before the scheduled special issue publication date may publish online on the journal's First Look website. The First Look paper is assigned a DOI and is considered a published paper.

After the last paper completes peer review, you will be asked to provide an Editorial for the issue. The Editorial will serve as an introduction to the special issue, and it will be available for free download online so that interested readers can learn more about the special issue topic.

All authors will receive a link to download their paper and the full eBook of the special issue.

If staff or Editors identify irregularities during peer review, production, or post-publication, or if suspicions of ethical violations are raised by authors, reviewers, Editors, or third parties, ASTM

will suspend the peer review and publication process of all content in the issue to investigate the concern. Such concerns may include but are not limited to peer review manipulation, trading of citations, or identity concerns of authors, editors, or reviewers involved in the special issue.

#### **8.10 ASTM's Publication Decisions**

All decisions of ASTM regarding the publication of articles or this issue are final, and ASTM is not obligated to publish any article or issue that does not meet its standards for quality or ethical conduct.