

# IEEE International Conference on Quantum Computing and Engineering (QCE) Guidelines for Reviewing QCE26 Manuscripts — V55

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## Opening remarks

[The IEEE International Conference on Quantum Computing and Engineering \(QCE\), or IEEE Quantum Week](#), has rapidly grown into a premier international forum for quantum computing and engineering, with participation increasing from 1,600+ attendees in Montréal in 2024 to 1,750+ in Albuquerque in 2025, who work at the forefront of quantum technologies. IEEE Quantum Week 2026 will be held at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, September 13-18, 2026, in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

QCE26 features nine Technical Paper Tracks:

[QALG](#), [QAPP](#), [QECS](#), [QGDD](#), [QML](#), [QNET](#), [QPHO](#), [QSYS](#), [QTEM](#).

The full track topics can be found on the QCE26 website and on the QCE26 EasyChair website as follows:

<https://qce.quantum.ieee.org/2026/call-for-technical-papers/>  
<https://qce.quantum.ieee.org/2026/authors/conference-topics/>  
<https://easychair.org/cfp/QCE26>

QCE25 received a record number of 600+ technical paper manuscripts—an increase of 150+ compared to QCE24. We expect 600-700 technical paper manuscripts for QCE26. At least three reviewers must review each manuscript, and each reviewer is expected to review 6-8 papers. Thus, we need 300+ reviewers for the QCE26 technical paper review process.

The number of papers submitted for QCE25 to each track are as follows: QAPP: 130+, QML: 120+, QSYS: 110+, QNET: 90+, QALG: 80+, QTEM: 40+, and QPHO: 15+. For QCE26, we have two more tracks: QECS and QGDD. Before the papers are assigned to reviewers, the Technical Program Board Chairs and the Paper Track Program Chairs will check whether each paper was submitted to the most relevant track and attempt to balance the tracks based on the number of submissions to be reviewed. They will also aim to identify obvious desk reject papers.

We hope the following review guidelines will help guarantee the quality of the reviewing process experience and the authors' experience. A big thank you to all the QCE26 reviewers for their expertise and commitment, and for completing the reviews in a timely manner. Conferences, such as QCE26, are only sustainable with the outstanding and dedicated support of the reviewers.

The review of manuscripts submitted to the Technical Paper Tracks of IEEE Quantum Week 2026 is carried out by scientists and engineers from the global quantum ecosystem.

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## QCE26 Paper Track Co-Chair Role Overview

- **Track curation:** Ensuring papers are in the right track and performing initial desk rejects.
- **Team Management:** Recruiting and motivating your TPC members.
- **Quality Control:** Monitoring the bidding and review process continuously to ensure every paper gets three high-quality reviews.
- **Decision-making:** Leading the discussion phase to reach a consensus for accept/reject recommendations.

To support you through the review cycle, the program board will distribute a bi-weekly QCE26 Newsletter. This newsletter will serve as your primary resource for: Upcoming Deadlines, Direct Links, or Pro-Tips. We may host a Live Q&A for EasyChair troubleshooting.

## QCE26 Paper Track Program Committees

Each Paper Track Program Committee (TPC) will review the manuscripts submitted to its track using a single-blind review process, as has been practiced at QCE over the past six years. Single-blind peer review is a conventional method in which the authors do not know who their reviewers are. However, the reviewers know who the authors are. In contrast, double-blind peer review is when neither the authors nor the reviewers know each other's names or affiliations. Papers and reviews that substantially deviate from the guidelines outlined on the QCE26 website, including generated papers, will be desk-rejected.

## IEEE Quantum Week 2026

**Table 1:** Summary of Key Deadlines for the QCE26 Technical Paper Review Process

Technical Paper Review Phase	Start Date	End Date
Track Chairs identify and invite TPC Members	Feb 16	Mar 16
Track Chairs encourage TPC Members to disseminate the QCE26 Call for Papers and Proposals <a href="https://easychair.org/cfp/QCE26">https://easychair.org/cfp/QCE26</a>	Feb 16	Apr 20
Track Chairs ascertain that TPC Members log into EasyChair	Feb 16	Mar 23
Technical Papers due <a href="https://gce.quantum.ieee.org/2026/submission-deadlines">gce.quantum.ieee.org/2026/submission-deadlines</a>	Apr 13	Apr 27
TPC Members bid for papers to review	Apr 20	May 4
Track Chairs assign papers to TPC Members	May 4	May 11
TPC Members review papers	May 4	Jun 22
Track Chairs and TPC Members discuss reviews	Jun 22	Jun 29
Track Chairs make final decisions	Jun 29	Jul 3
Final check & decisions by Technical Program Board Chairs	Jul 3	Jul 6
Program Board Chairs send out Technical Paper Notifications	Jul 6	Jul 13
Track Chairs select the top three Best Papers of their track	Jul 13	Jul 27
Track Chairs group accepted papers into sessions of three papers	Jul 13	Jul 27
Track Chairs identify session chairs	Jul 20	Aug 3

The following sections describe the QCE26 review process using EasyChair, outlining each phase, from inviting TPC members for each track and paper bidding to final decisions and identifying session chairs. These sections include essential guidelines, responsibilities, and evaluation criteria to ensure a fair, rigorous, and effective review process. Reviewers and track chairs are strongly encouraged to read and follow these instructions carefully to maintain the conference's high standards, including meeting the outlined reviewing process deadlines.

## QCE26 Review Process

### Part 1: Identifying and Inviting TPC Members

As a Technical Paper Track Chair, you are responsible for identifying and inviting Program Committee members with strong expertise aligned to your track's scope and topics. Aim to build a balanced committee that reflects depth across relevant subfields of quantum computing and engineering, while also ensuring diversity across academia, industry, geography, and career stage. Invited members should have a demonstrated record of high-quality research, peer review experience, and a commitment to providing timely, constructive reviews. Ensure that the TPC members log in to QCE26 EasyChair immediately to facilitate expeditious paper bidding.

**Recommended Invitation Message for TPC Members.**

*On behalf of the IEEE International Conference on Quantum Computing and Engineering (QCE26), to be held Sep 13-18, 2026, at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, we invite you to serve as a member of the **Technical Program Committee for the [Name of your Technical Paper Track]**. TPC members play a critical role in shaping the technical quality of the conference by providing thoughtful, timely peer reviews and contributing to paper discussions within their area of expertise. Each TPC member is expected to review 6-8 papers. Your participation would help ensure a rigorous, fair, and impactful technical program that reflects the latest advances in quantum computing and engineering across academia, industry, and government labs.*

**Part 2: Paper Bidding by TPC Members**

We will employ **EasyChair's manuscript bidding feature** to facilitate the track chairs' paper assignment tasks. During the first few days of the review process, TPC members are asked to bid for papers they would like to review and for which they have expertise. The Technical Program Board Chairs will open the bidding for each track and invite TPC members to **bid for approximately 15-20 paper manuscripts**. Each TPC member must review 6-8 papers, but bidding for 15-25 papers is essential for the bidding process to be effective. Track chairs, please monitor the bidding and send reminders three days before the bidding deadline. TPC members, please complete the bidding by the bidding deadline.

**For Track chairs**, the bidding is enabled using the **Administration tab** in EasyChair. Select **Configure**, search for Paper bidding, and **enable Paper bidding** button using the pencil on the right-hand side (Cf. Table 2):

**Table 2: EasyChair Track Paper bidding and assignment setup**

Paper bidding and assignment	
For paper assignment, do you use paper bidding or relevance detection?	paper bidding
Is paper bidding enabled?	no
Is viewing bids of PC members by chairs enabled?	yes
Is assignment of submitted papers to the program committee enabled?	yes
The number of reviewers per paper is	3

If you have questions, please contact **QCE26 Program Board Chair** Andrea Delgado, Qblox <andrea.delgado@qblox.com > or **Technical Paper Tracks Program Board Chairs** Robert Wille, Technical University of Munich <[robert.wille@tum.de](mailto:robert.wille@tum.de)> and Silvia Zorzetti, Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory <[zorzetti@fnal.gov](mailto:zorzetti@fnal.gov)>.

After you have enabled Paper bidding, send an email to your PC members to strongly encourage them to bid by the deadline.

### How to Bid for Papers using EasyChair

TPC members log into their EasyChair account and click on the **Bidding tab** to access the track's paper submissions list. They can then read the abstracts or full papers to decide which papers to review. For each paper, select one of the following options:

**yes:** I want to review this proposal (paper)

**maybe:** I can review it

**no (default):** I prefer not to review it

**conflict:** I have a conflict of interest

Please note the **conflict** option, which can be used to **declare any potential conflicts of interest**. Maintaining the integrity and fairness of the QCE26 review process is paramount, and it hinges significantly on our ability to manage conflicts transparently and effectively. Conflicts of interest include **personal relationships with authors, professional relationships, such as colleagues in the same department or institution, prior or current collaborations, including joint publications or research projects, or financial interests that the outcome of the review process might influence**. Note, you cannot undeclare a conflict once you have selected the conflict option for a paper.

If a reviewer declares a COI, EasyChair will block them from seeing the paper. As a chair, you must ensure that paper is reassigned to a different, non-conflicted TP member immediately to maintain the three-review minimum.

### Part 3: Paper Assignments by Track Chairs

After the bidding process, the track chairs assign paper manuscripts to TPC members **using the bidding information received and the EasyChair interactive assignment system**. The goal is to match paper manuscripts with reviewers who have expressed the most interest and expertise, thereby improving the quality of the review process.

**Track chairs** use the **View Bids and Assignment tabs** to assign papers to reviewers. When the TPC members have completed their bidding, the track chairs can use the **Automatic Assignment** menu item to make a first pass at the review assignments. On the second pass, track chairs use the **Interactive Assignment** menu item. Having the **View-bids page** open next to the **Interactive Assignment page** is very helpful. You have to **log in to EasyChair twice** to have two EasyChair tabs open simultaneously.

### Part 4: Paper Review by TPC members

#### QCE26 Paper Manuscript Evaluation

Three TPC members must review each technical paper before it can be included in the IEEE Xplore digital library.

Please note that submitted manuscripts must **NOT** have appeared in or be under consideration for another conference, workshop, or journal (cf. IEEE Policies below).

### Prohibition on Use of Generative AI Platforms in the Peer Review Process

Information or content contained in or about a manuscript under review shall not be processed through any public platform (directly or indirectly) for AI-generated text for review. Doing so is considered a breach of confidentiality because AI systems generally learn from any input. Uploading a QCE26 manuscript or a review to a generative AI platform (e.g., for summary or review generation) is strictly prohibited.

**Paper categories.** QCE has two major paper categories:

1. **Full papers** — 8-10 pages (including figures, tables, and appendices), plus two additional pages for references for a maximum of 12 pages. Full papers should fall into one of the following subcategories (listed in an EasyChair column):
  - a. **Research papers (RESP)** — novel contributions and/or innovations and the research methods used in quantum computing and engineering.
  - b. **Survey papers (SURP)** — a survey on a quantum computing and engineering research topic.
2. **Short papers** — 4-6 pages (including figures, tables, and appendices), plus one additional page of references for a minimum of 7 and a maximum of 7 pages. Short papers fall into one of the following subcategories (listed in an EasyChair column):
  - a. **New Ideas and Emergent Results (NIER) papers** — novel and promising ideas and/or techniques often in an early development stage.
  - b. **Experience and Application (EXAP) papers** — experiences gained from applying/evaluating quantum computing and engineering research results in practice. It is encouraged that partners/co-authors from both practice and research join the effort so that the paper reflects the perspectives of both. The papers should emphasize the value of the experience to the community.
  - c. **Artifact papers (ARTI)** — model problems, exemplars, or practical sets of resources valuable for the broader quantum computing and engineering community.

**Reviewer guidelines:** As a reviewer for IEEE Quantum Week, your expertise is crucial to upholding our conference's quality standards. We count on your thoughtful evaluations to maintain and enhance the quality, rigour, and reputation of the QCE proceedings. To ensure the effectiveness of the review process, please adhere to the following guidelines:

- **Review Length and Content:** Each review should be comprehensive yet concise, typically spanning a few paragraphs. Begin by summarizing the paper's main ideas, ensuring you capture the essence of the submission's contribution to quantum computing and engineering.
- **Strengths and Weaknesses:** Discuss at least a couple of the work's strengths and weaknesses. It is essential that your critique is balanced—acknowledge the areas where the submission excels and those that require improvement.
- **Constructive Feedback:** Always frame your comments constructively. Consider how your feedback can help the authors improve their manuscript. Suggestions for improvement should be specific and actionable, aimed at elevating the quality of the work. Please note constructive feedback is essential for both accepted and rejected papers. In the QCE26 peer-review process, there is no interaction between reviewers and authors—do not contact the authors.

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- **Justification of Recommendation:** Based on your manuscript analysis, justify your recommendation. Your rationale must be rooted in the paper's content and the conference's evaluation criteria.

### Reviewing full papers

- Focus on assessing the paper's originality, technical soundness, clarity of presentation, and significant contribution to the field.
- Assess whether the chosen research methodology appropriately addresses the research questions and objectives.
- Assess whether the evaluation is appropriate to determine its success and answer the research questions.
- Assess the cited sources relevant to the paper's topic and research questions. Do the references support the arguments and claims made in the paper?
- Provide detailed feedback on strengths and weaknesses and suggest areas for improvement.

### Reviewing short papers

- Focus on the core research contribution, assessing its novelty, significance within the field, and clarity of presentation, while keeping in mind the brevity of the format.
- Concentrate on evaluating the key findings and their implications without expecting the same level of depth as a full research paper.
- Is the paper pertinent to its short paper category (i.e., NIER, EXAP, and ARTI)?
- Avoid excessive criticism based on length limitations: Recognize that the paper's brevity may restrict the level of detail provided.
- Avoid demanding extensive data or methodology not feasible for a short format: Focus on the core concepts and their presentation.
- Avoid unfairly comparing to full-length research papers: Evaluate the paper based on its intended format.

**Review Criteria** — Submissions will be assessed according to the following evaluation criteria:

- Interest and relevance
- Correctness and depth of technical content
- Originality and novelty
- Significance and potential impact
- Organization and quality of presentation
- Relevance, quality, currency, and diversity of references

### Suggested Review Format

- *Summary of the paper (3-4 sentences)* — Capture the core idea and contribution.
- *Strengths* — Highlight novel aspects, solid technical content, or impactful results.
- *Weaknesses* — Identify limitations, unclear explanations, missing references, or potential improvements.
- *Justification of recommendation* — Provide reasoning for the decision in alignment with the conference criteria (short vs long paper, rating on a scale of -3 to +3, track topic alignment)

The depth of your analysis is crucial for the decision-making process and the QCE26 Program's overall quality.

### Part 5: Discussion by Track Chairs & TPC Members

The track chairs will start the discussion process, during which the three reviewers of each paper can revise their reviews and converge. Note that the authors will not have the opportunity to respond to reviews.

Papers with nearly uniform scores do not require discussion (e.g., (2, 2, 2); (3, 2, 1); (-1, -1, -1); or (-1, -2, -2). Papers with a significant spread in review scores must be discussed (e.g., (2, 0, -2); (1, 1, -2); or (3, 0, -1). Review scores can be adjusted during the discussion phase.

The track chairs will select a discussion leader among the three reviewers. Ideally, discussion leaders are experienced researchers with expertise in the paper's subject area, or reviewers who provided a positive review.

If a review uses inappropriate language, the reviewer should be advised to revise it. Reviewers who make comments about authors using generative AI must be moved to the confidential comments box for the program committee.

Summarizing a paper or writing a review for a paper is strictly prohibited. Using tools (e.g., Grammarly) to correct spelling and typos is acceptable.

### Part 6: Final Check & Decisions by Track Chairs

Track chairs mark each paper with **ACCEPT / REJECT**.

### Part 7: Final Check by Program Board Chairs

The Technical Program Board Chairs will conduct a final assessment of the reviewers' review results. Our general goal is to accept approximately 40-50% of the submitted papers (the acceptance rate per track can vary). The Chairs reserve the right to adjust paper scores to achieve this goal.

### Part 8: Technical Paper notifications by Program Board Chairs

**Technical Paper Notifications (Accepts and Rejects)** sent via EasyChair by Program Board Chairs to Manuscript Authors.

### Part 9: Best Papers Selection by Track Chairs

Each track selects the top three papers: (1) best paper, (2) first runner-up paper, and (3) second runner-up paper. During the QCE26 conference, the track chairs will announce the best papers and present certificates to the authors on stage before the daily keynotes.

### IEEE Policies for Reviewing Papers

#### Reviewer Guidelines for IEEE Computer Society publications

- <https://www.computer.org/publications/reviewer-resources>

#### Understand Your Peer Review

- <https://conferences.ieeeauthorcenter.ieee.org/understand-peer-review/>

#### Ethics in Peer Review

- <https://conferences.ieeeauthorcenter.ieee.org/understand-peer-review/ethics-in-peer-review/>

#### IEEE Technical Paper Policies

- IEEE positions on submission and peer review policies are detailed here:  
<https://journals.ieeeauthorcenter.ieee.org/become-an-ieee-journal-author/publishing-ethics/guidelines-and-policies/submission-and-peer-review-policies>
- <https://cis.ieee.org/publications/t-emerging-topics-in-ci/tetci-ieee-preprint-policy>
- [https://www.ieee.org/content/dam/ieee-org/ieee/web/org/pubs/author\\_version\\_faq.pdf](https://www.ieee.org/content/dam/ieee-org/ieee/web/org/pubs/author_version_faq.pdf)

#### arXiv Submission Policy

Having a paper on arXiv arXiv.org, TechRxiv.org, or any not-for-profit preprint server approved by the IEEE Publication Services and Products Board (PSPB) does not prohibit authors from submitting a paper to QCE26. arXiv papers are not peer-reviewed and not considered formal publications. Hence, arXiv papers do not count as prior work. Authors are not expected to compare their submission to an arXiv version of the paper, provided the paper has not appeared in a journal or workshop/conference proceedings.

#### IEEE Guidelines for Artificial Intelligence (AI)-Generated Text

The use of AI-generated content in an article (including but not limited to text, figures, images, and code) shall be disclosed in the acknowledgments section of any article submitted to an IEEE publication. The Generative AI system used shall be identified, and specific sections of the article that use AI-generated content shall be identified and accompanied by a brief explanation regarding the level at which the Generative AI system was used to generate the content. Using Generative AI systems for editing and grammar enhancement is standard practice today and, as such, is generally outside the intent of the above policy. In this case, disclosure, as noted above, is not required.

#### Author Guidance on Text Produced by Generative AI Tools

The QCE26 conference allows tools, such as OpenAI ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, Google Gemini, Perplexity, Grammarly, and other AI assistants to help improve the paper submission text. We recommend reviewing your submission for language issues using these AI services. Of course, using such Generative AI services is not required. As required by IEEE, the use of any AI-generated text shall be disclosed in the acknowledgments section. The sections of the paper that use AI-generated text shall have a citation to the Generative AI system used to generate the text.

### **Reviewer Guidance: Prohibition on Use of Generative AI Platforms in the Peer Review Process**

Information or content contained in or about a manuscript under review shall not be processed through any public platform (directly or indirectly) for AI-generated text for review. Doing so is considered a breach of confidentiality because AI systems generally learn from any input. Uploading a QCE26 manuscript or a review to a generative AI platform (e.g., for summary or review generation) is strictly prohibited.

### **Reviewer Guidance: Confidentiality of Manuscripts and Guidelines for Co-Reviewing**

IEEE receives papers in confidence and protects the confidentiality of their contents until they are published. As a reviewer, you are obligated to maintain the confidentiality of both the paper you are reviewing and also of your review.

Information contained in an article under review is confidential and shall not be shared with others. An exception to this is when a reviewer requests assistance from a colleague as a second reviewer in the review process, such as a professor asking a student to assist as a form of training. In such cases, the reviewer from whom the review was originally requested is responsible for the following: attention shall be given to potential conflict of interest or bias regarding authors of the article being reviewed, the confidentiality of the review process shall be strictly maintained with both reviewers involved, and it shall be reported to the editor requesting the review that a co-reviewer was used in the review process. In the case that the co-reviewer provides an independent review, the name of the reviewer shall be reported to the editor requesting the review.

### **Reviewer Guidance: IEEE Policy on Reviewers Using AI**

Information or content contained in or about a manuscript under review shall not be processed through any public platform (directly or indirectly) for AI-generated text for review. Doing so is considered a **breach of confidentiality** because AI systems generally learn from any input.