

New Initiative of the M&SOM Journal: Frontiers in Operations

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Goals: Frontiers in Operations is a new initiative that the *M&SOM* journal is piloting. This initiative has the following goals: (i) to pilot a different way of reviewing papers that is more “holistic”, that is, (as described below) papers will be reviewed all together by a panel of senior scholars who will make an “up or down” recommendation (this goal is a key motivation for this initiative). As a side effect, this initiative will also allow us to (ii) promote faster publication for papers in the *M&SOM* journal (conditional acceptance in around a year) and (iii) finally, and very importantly, due to this more holistic approach, an outcome would also be that we will encourage and publish more innovative and risky research in the *M&SOM* journal.

The key premise of this initiative is that all papers submitted for consideration will be reviewed all together by a panel of senior people. This panel will include all the department editors (DEs), the EIC and additional senior scholars from the community who will serve as Associate Editors (AEs) for submissions received through this initiative. This panel may also include practitioners with close ties to academia.

Criteria: Papers will be evaluated using criteria consistent with the journal’s current criteria, that include the following: a high level of academic contribution, a strong quality of exposition and clarity of contributions, and academic and potential practical impact that is generalizable beyond one organization or data set. We hope we will be able to encourage submissions where there is the potential for high impact and innovation in research.

Submission: Authors who want their paper to be considered for this initiative will need to submit it to the *M&SOM* journal through ScholarOne by a specific deadline that will be announced to the community well in advance. For the first round of this initiative, submissions will be received **between November 1, 2022 and January 15, 2023**. Authors will need to select “Frontiers in Operations” for the manuscript type. The following three items will need to be included:

(1) A manuscript that will need to comply with the journal guidelines (32 pages including references and figures and up to 16 pages of appendix).

(2) An “extended abstract” of up to two pages that highlights (i) the problem addressed in the paper as well as why it is innovative, important and has the potential to be impactful, (ii) the methodology and the key results in the paper, explicitly stating what is the key new conceptual contribution and why is it novel and finally, (iii) academic and potential practical impact beyond a particular organization. (As examples of impact, the paper may catalyze a new stream of innovative research, or it may have the potential to be widely implemented.) In summary, the extended abstract will be a 2-page version of the regular abstract but with an emphasis on the potential impact and the innovativeness of the research in the paper.

(3) A commitment letter that is signed by all authors which includes the following statement:

“If invited to do so by the Frontiers in Operations Initiative, we hereby commit to do our best to perform in good faith any revision work requested by the editorial and to publish our submitted manuscript in the *M&SOM* journal.”

Process/Timeline: The process we will follow for the papers submitted to this initiative will consist of the following stages:

- **Submission:** We will accept submissions between November 1, 2022 and January 15, 2023. During this period, we will begin screening submissions, but there will likely be a delay before authors receive initial feedback.
- **Stage one (Pre-Selection):** For each submitted paper, the EIC together with the most relevant Department Editor (DE) for the paper will perform an initial high level desk review. Papers will then either be placed under consideration in this initiative or be desk rejected or transferred for review in the regular track of the journal. The EIC and DE will then also assign a senior person to serve as AE for the paper, from either the current editorial board (either another DE or an AE) or a guest editor. For the AE role, a strong preference will be given to more senior people in the community. The relevant DE and assigned AE for each paper will also prepare a short half page report on the paper, primarily based on their assessment of the authors' 2-page extended abstract (and perhaps paper itself). All assigned AEs will also be invited to participate in a panel for this initiative.
- A panel of M&SOM DEs together with the assigned AEs and EIC will use a majority vote to decide, based on the 2-page extended abstract submissions and the half page DE/AE team reports, which papers have the potential to be published as part of this initiative, and advance each of those papers for one round of review.
- **Stage two (One Round of Review):** A review round will take place for each paper invited to this stage. The relevant DE and AE can either seek input from at most 2 referees or review the full paper themselves. The review team will provide a report on the full paper that is consistent with the *M&SOM* journal's review forms. Any referees recruited to help in this task by the DE/AE team will check the paper for correctness as well as for contribution relative to the literature and will not be asked to provide a recommendation to reject, revise, or accept the paper. Based on the reviewers' reports and their own assessments, the DE and AE will then score the paper on a 1-10 scale on how likely it is to be eventually published in the *M&SOM* journal. Considering this score and the reviewers' reports, the panel will then decide whether or not to invite the authors to submit a revision of their paper for this initiative. The authors will then be given three months to submit a revised version of their paper with detailed responses to all the comments raised by the review team. The revised manuscripts will then be considered in the third stage.
- **Stage three (Panel Review):** At this stage a panel consisting of the EIC, all the M&SOM DEs, and the AEs for the papers that qualify to this stage will meet again (in person or virtually) to determine a majority-vote-based “thumbs up (conditional accept) or thumbs down (reject)” decision for every paper that made it to this stage. This panel meeting will be conducted similarly to an NSF panel

(there will be 2-3 discussants for each paper including the relevant DE and AE and potentially another member of the panel). For each paper, the panel will consider both this discussion and how the authors addressed the reviewer comments, to make a thumbs up (i.e., acceptance, possibly conditional on a revision) or thumbs down (rejection) decision. If revisions are required, they should be done in a timely manner (that is, within 2 months). The revised paper will then either be accepted by the DE or sent back to the same review team for confirmation of completion of requested changes.

- It is important to note that a paper that passes this round will be published in the *M&SOM* journal with a special mention on the paper's cover page highlighting its participation in this initiative, analogous to OM Forum papers. The paper will appear toward the top of the published sequence of papers in the *M&SOM* journal issue in which it appears. If there are enough papers accepted through this initiative there may be a full issue dedicated to these papers.
- We will also **coordinate with the MSOM society to have the accepted papers in this initiative presented in a session(s) during either the INFORMS or the MSOM conferences**. The goal is to highlight these accepted papers.
- Note that at every key selection stage described above, the panel may decide to transfer a paper and any related feedback developed as part of this initiative, to the EIC for further consideration as part of the *M&SOM* journal's regular submission review process for publication, provided consent is given by the author(s).

The goal is to complete the whole process and have a thumbs up or down decision for each paper in less than a year. **Figure 1** summarizes the Frontiers Initiative process and compares it to the traditional submission process.

If a paper is not resubmitted in time at any stage of the process it will no longer be considered for publication as part of this initiative and will need to undergo the regular *M&SOM* journal process, with no guarantee of acceptance. Also, papers rejected at any stage can be submitted to the regular track at the *M&SOM* journal.

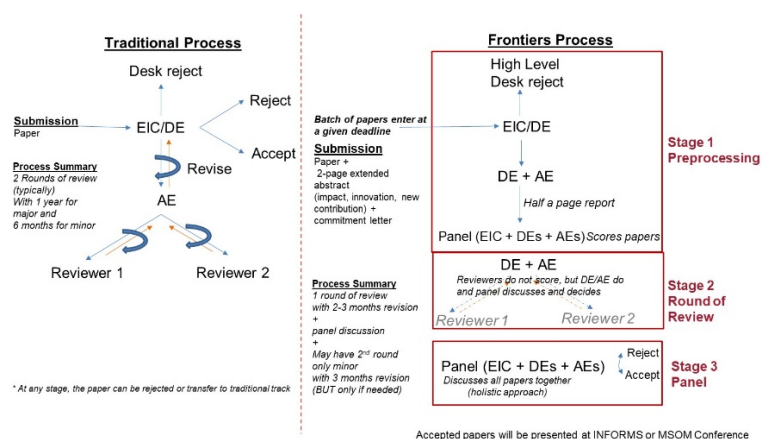


Figure 1. Traditional versus Frontiers Submission Process