Ethical Policies and Procedures

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Editor and Reviewer Conflict of Interest. Editors and Reviewers should avoid making decisions on papers for which they may have a potential conflict of interest, financial or otherwise. Reviewers who are collaborating with the author, or who are working on very similar research, should recuse themselves from reviewing a paper for which they have a conflict. An Editor in Chief should have a Consulting Editor or Associate Editor make a decision on a paper for which he or she has a conflict. When an Editor in Chief submits a paper to his or her journal, the paper is automatically assigned to a Guest Editor, a Consulting Editor, or an Associate Editor, who will handle all aspects of the peer review of the paper. Such reviews are handled in the web-based peer review system in such a way that the author (i.e., the Editor in Chief) will not have access.

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Prior Publication. Material published by the author before submission in the following categories is considered prior publication: 1) articles published in any publication, even online-only, non-peer-reviewed publications, such as Nature Precedings or the physics arXiv (see exception below for the Journal of Neurophysiology); 2) articles, book chapters, and long abstracts containing original data in figures and tables, especially in proceedings publications as well as posters containing original data disseminated beyond meeting attendees, e.g., displayed in websites such as that maintained by F1000; 3) widely circulated, copyrighted, or archival reports, such as the technical reports of IBM, the preliminary reports of MIT, the institute reports of the US Army, or the internal reports of NASA.

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Authors with concerns about possible prior publication that does not fall clearly into one of these categories should contact the Director of Publications and forward the material for examination.

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Updated Summer 2011.