
The primary goal of RA-Letters is to join other journals and conferences in serving the RAS membership and the robotics and automation community, which have greatly increased in membership and productivity, by providing more capacity for high-quality, fully reviewed journal papers. The goals of RA-Letters are to provide a publication process that is complementary to the existing evolutionary process from RAS conferences to the journal papers and to improve the efficiency of the peer-review process.

RA-Letters will publish papers reporting on innovative ideas and unpublished results that need to be rapidly published. To this purpose, RA-Letters will provide a final decision on any manuscript within six months from submission. Papers will be six pages long, with, at most, two extra pages allowed at a charge, and it will allow open access for those authors who require it. The review cycle will follow the highest standards of IEEE periodicals. Each paper will be assigned to a senior editor, an associate editor, and at least two independent reviewers. The review process may also include a fast revise-and-resubmit process, after which a final decision will be made by the Letters Editorial Board (LEB). Finally, accepted papers will be electronically archived on IEEE Xplore and will be available for early access by readers only a few days after submission of the final version. An edited XML version for searching and indexing will be available shortly after the final version is added. RA-Letters is an electronic-only journal.

A unique feature of RA-Letters is the opportunity for authors to publish a paper in a peer-reviewed journal and present the same paper at the RAS flagship conference: the IEEE International Conference on Robotics and Automation (ICRA). While submission to RA-Letters is open throughout the year, there will be a time window during which authors will have an option for their submission also to be considered for presentation at the following ICRA. To present a paper at ICRA 2016, the window for submission is between 1 July and 31 August 2015.

Manuscripts submitted to RA-Letters for ICRA will undergo a regular RA-Letters review. However, the results of the first review round by the LEB, with all comments by referees and editors, will be passed along to the ICRA Senior Program Committee (SPC), which will use them to decide which manuscripts will be included in ICRA. The ICRA Conference Editorial Board will continue to provide reviews and comments for all manuscripts submitted directly to the ICRA (i.e., not submitted to RA-Letters).

A manuscript accepted for RA-Letters and included in the ICRA program will appear in IEEE Xplore as RA-Letters. It is possible, however, for a paper submitted to RA-Letters with the ICRA option to be accepted for presentation at ICRA but ultimately be rejected for RA-Letters; in this case, the paper will appear in ICRA Proceedings. It is also possible for a manuscript first reviewed by the LEB to be rejected for presentation at ICRA by the SPC, but its revision (capitalizing on editorial comments and suggestions) may eventually be published in RA-Letters. The timing of all reviewing procedures and decisions will guarantee the feasibility of these options. The final program of the ICRA will feature presentations of work archived in IEEE Xplore as either RA-Letters or ICRA Proceedings.

In conclusion, you may wonder where to submit your work in the new RAS panorama. If you are interested in a RAS publication, then you should consider the following as a guide for submission:

- RA-Letters for rapid, concise reports
- IEEE Transactions on Robotics (T-RO) and IEEE Transactions on Automation Science and Engineering (T-ASE) for more mature and in-depth treatments
- IEEE Robotics and Automation Magazine (RAM) for more accessible, wider diffusion articles.