Letter from the Chair

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Dear SIGIR Community and Friends,

This is my first letter as chair and I approach it with a certain emotion and great sense of responsibility.

First of all, I would like to start with a big thank to the *previous committee*: **Vanessa Murdock** (Chair), **Ryen White** (Vice Chair), **Carsten Eickhoff** (Treasurer), **Laura Dietz** (Secretary), and **Ben Carterette** (Past Chair) for all the work and commitment they put in making our community great, which did not end with their term but still continues in many forms, some of which you will hear more about in the coming months.

I would also like to sincerely thank the other members of *current committee*: **Yi Zhang** (Vice Chair), **Chirag Shah** (Treasurer), **Bhaskar Mitra** (Secretary), and **Vanessa Murdock** (Past Chair), with whom we have been working and regularly meeting together during these first months to discuss about and act on the many changes, challenges, and opportunities our community is facing; in particular, I would like to thank Vanessa for her endless support, historical memory, and advice.

SIGIR Volunteers and Officers – Thank you!!!

SIGIR sits on the shoulders of its volunteers and we, both as SIGIR Exec and as a community, are very thankful for their work and service. Most of the volunteer positions are three year terms, and some of them are ready for a change of hands, or just changed as you will see below. Volunteering is a great way to get to know, and be known by, the community. If you are interested in volunteering[1], please contact the Exec Committee at `exec_SIGIR@acm.org`, specifying the position you are volunteering for, your motivations and experience, and the amount of time per month you could devote.

First of all, we would like to thank volunteers who have just completed their mandate – the former *SIGIR Forum Editors* **Tirthankar Ghosal**, **Josiane Mothe**, and **Julián Urbano** and the former *Student Travel Award Chair* **Sole Pera** – for their continued work and contribution to our community. At the same time, we would like to welcome the new *SIGIR Forum Editors* –

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[1]The list of current volunteers and positions is available at: `https://sigir.org/general-information/officers-and-volunteers/`.

Keping Bi, **J. Shane Culpepper**, and **Jiqun Liu** – and the new *Student Travel Award Chair* – **Joonseok Lee** – and thank all of them for accepting these important commitments.

We would like to thank the *SIGIR Academy Chairs* **Yoelle Maarek** and **Marc Najork**, the *Awards Chairs* **Mark Sanderson** and **Hamed Zamani**, and the *Early Career Awards Chair* **James Allan**. A thank you also to the *Sustainability Chairs* **Tetsuya Sakai** and **Paul Thomas**, the *Student Affairs Chairs* **Maria Maistro** and **Qingyao Ai**. We would also like to thank the *DEI Chair* **Hussein Suleman**, the *Women in IR Chair* **Gabriella Pasi**, the *Information Director* **Joel MacKenzie**, and the *SIGIR Historian* **Donna Harman**.

Conferences and Events

Volunteering does not stop at the ACM SIGIR level with the different positions we have seen above but it reaches far beyond with the organization of many conferences and events. Again, we are very thankful to all the general, program, and other chairs of these events for keeping our community thriving.

In particular, along 2025, ACM SIGIR fully sponsored the following conferences, listed in chronological order:

CHIIR 2025 – ACM SIGIR Conference on Human Information Interaction and Retrieval[2] [Buchanan et al., 2025], held on 24-28 March 2025, Melbourne, Australia, organized by **George Buchanan** and **Haiming Liu** as General Chairs, **Dana McKay** and **Doug Oard** as Program Chairs.

SIGIR 2025 – International ACM SIGIR Conference on Research and Development in Information Retrieval[3] [Ferro et al., 2025], held on 13-17 July 2025, Padua, Italy, organized by **Nicola Ferro**, **Maria Maistro**, and **Gabriella Pasi** as General Chairs, **Omar Alonso**, **Andrew Trotman**, and **Suzan Verberne** as Program Chairs.

ICTIR 2025 – International Conference on Innovative Concepts and Theories in Information Retrieval[4] [Zamani et al., 2025], held on 18 July 2025, Padua, Italy, organized by **Hamed Zamani** as General Chair, **Laura Dietz** and **Benjamin Piwowarski** as Program Chairs.

SIGIR-AP 2025 – International ACM SIGIR Conference on Information Retrieval in the Asia Pacific[5] [Bi et al., 2025], held on 7-10 December 2025, Xi'an, China, organized by **Qingshan Li** and **Keping Bi** as General Chairs, **Evangelos Kanoulas**, **Bhaskar Mitra**, and **Yadan Luo** as Program Chairs.

ACM SIGIR also co-sponsored the following conferences, listed in chronological order:

WSDM 2025 – ACM International Conference on Web Search and Data Mining[6] [Nejdl et al., 2025], held on 10-14 March 2025, Hannover, Germany, organized by **Wolfgang Nejdl** and

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[2] https://chiir2025.github.io/
[3] https://sigir2025.dei.unipd.it/
[4] https://ictir2025.cs.umass.edu/
[5] https://www.sigir-ap.org/sigir-ap-2025/
[6] https://www.wsdm-conference.org/2025/

Sören Auer as General Chairs, **Marc Najork**, **Meeyoung Cha** and **Marie-Francine Moens** as Program Chairs.

CIKM 2025 – International ACM Conference on Information and Knowledge Management[7] [Cha et al., 2025], held on 10-14 November 2025, Seoul, Republic of Korea, organized by **Meeyoung Chai**, **Chanyoung Park** and **Noseong Park** as General Chairs, **Carl Yang**, **Senjuti Basu Roy**, **Jessie Li**, and **Jaap Kamps** as Program Chairs.

JCDL 2025 – ACM/IEEE Joint Conference on Digital Libraries[8], held on 15-19 December 2025, virtual, organized by **Hamed Alhoori**, **J. Stephen Downie** and **Mat Kelly** as General Chairs, **Sagnik Ray**, **Ingo Frommholz**, and **Jiangping Chen** as Program Chairs.

It is important to understand that the IR community at large is a whole eco-system, going beyond the boundaries of ACM SIGIR itself, where several relevant conferences and events, run by other organizations, happen along the year, often supported also by ACM SIGIR through the *SIGIR Friends* program[9], which offers funding to support events related to ACM SIGIR mission, particularly to facilitate student participation in these events.

A special event, which happens every few years, took place in 2025:

SWIRL 2025 – Strategic Workshop on Information Retrieval in Lorne[10] [Trippas et al., 2025], held on 9-12 February 2025, Torquay, Australia, organized by **J. Shane Culpepper** and **Johanne R. Trippas**.

Two other main events occurred this year, listed in chronological order:

ECIR 2025 – European Conference on Information Retrieval[11] [Hauff et al., 2025a,b,c,d,e], held on 6-10 April 2025, Lucca, Italy organized by **Franco Maria Nardini**, **Fabrizio Silvestri**, and **Nicola Tonellotto** as General Chairs, **Claudia Hauff** and **Craig Macdonald** as Program Chairs.

ESSIR 2025 – European Summer School on Information Retrieval[12], held on 7-11 July 2025, Wolverhampton, UK organized by **Anirban Chakraborty**, **Ingo Frommholz**, **Haiming Liu**, and **Emine Yilmaz**.

All these events are then complemented by many workshops, tutorials, national conferences and symposia which make our community extremely lively.

Finally, one of the most unique features of the IR field are its large-scale evaluation campaigns, which represent a backbone for the whole community, listed in chronological order:

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[7] https://cikm2025.org/
[8] https://2025.jcdl.org/
[9] https://sigir.org/general-information/funding-for-sigir-related-events/
[10] https://sites.google.com/view/swirl2025/home
[11] https://ecir2025.eu/
[12] https://2025.essir.eu/

NTCIR-18 – Evaluation of Information Access Technologies[13] [Ai et al., 2025], held on 10-13 June 2025, Tokyo, Japan, organized by **Charles Clarke**, **Noriko Kando**, **Makoto P. Kato**, and **Yiqun Liu** as General Chairs, **Qingyao Ai**, **Chung-Chi Chen**, and **Shoko Wakamiya** as Program Chairs.

CLEF 2025 – Conference and Labs of the Evaluation Forum[14] [Carrillo-de-Albornoz et al., 2025], held on 9-12 September 2025, Madrid, Spain, organized by **Jorge Carrillo-de-Albornoz**, **Alba García Seco de Herrera**, **Julio Gonzalo**, and **Laura Plaza** as General Chairs, **Josiane Mothe** and **Florina Piroi** as Program Chairs, **Paolo Rosso** and **Damiano Spina** as Lab Chairs.

TREC 2025 – Text Retrieval Conference[15], held on 11-12 December 2025, online, organized by **Ian Soboroff** as Overall Coordinator.

FIRE 2025 – Forum for Information Retrieval Evaluation[16], held on 17-20 December 2025, Varanasi, India, organized by **Prasenjit Majumder**, **Debasis Ganguly**, and **Kripabandhu Ghosh** as Overall Coordinators, **Thomas Mandl**, **Kripabandhu Ghosh**, and **Srijoni Majumdar** as Overall Track Co-ordinators.

Again, thank you to all the organizers of such amazing initiatives!

ACM Open from 1st January 2026

ACM Open[17] will enter fully in effect since 1st January 2026 and it represents a complete paradigm shift to a fully open access publishing model, offering a large-scale, high quality, and rigorously curated corpus of scientific articles and related artifacts free for everyone, contributing to the spread of computing research. ACM Open will represent a landmark also for the SIGIR community and its many conferences and events.

To ensure a smooth transition and avoid leaving any authors or papers behind, ACM and SIG leaders have defined the details described below for 2026:

Subsidized APC costs the Article Processing Charge (APC) costs are subsidized by ACM and discounted

- for articles where one of the named co-authors is an ACM or SIG **Member**, the subsidized rate is **$250/article** (down from the list price of $700);
- for articles where **none** of the named co-authors is an ACM or SIG **Member**, the subsidized rate is **$350/article** (down from the list price of $1,000).

The APC costs apply only to APC-eligible articles[18].

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[13] https://research.nii.ac.jp/ntcir/ntcir-18/
[14] https://clef2025.clef-initiative.eu/
[15] https://trec.nist.gov/
[16] https://fire.irsi.org.in/fire/2025/home
[17] https://libraries.acm.org/acmopen
[18] https://libraries.acm.org/acmopen/article-types

Geographic Waivers and Discounts ACM provides geographic waivers and discounts[19] to authors affiliated with institutions in countries covered by ACM's agreements with EIFL[20] and Research4Life[21] and to authors affiliated with institutions in the lower-middle-income countries, as defined by the World Bank.

Financial Hardship Waivers (FHW) SIGIR, supported at 50% by the SIG Governing Board (SGB)[22], allocated an additional budget to fund FHW requests for **ACM** and **SIGIR members** and to ensure that any contributions whose authors cannot afford APCs because of financial hardship are covered, allowing us to support **more than 400 papers** across our sponsored and co-sponsored conferences, i.e. a substantial percentage of those that are estimated to not have institutional coverage in 2026.

To this end, the SIGIR Exec has created a new volunteering position, the **SIGIR ACM Open Committee**, which is in charge of assessing the FHW applications and granting (or not) the waiver. The committee will handle all the requests for the SIGIR 100% sponsored conferences – namely, CHIIR, ICTIR, SIGIR, and SIGIR-AP – and the co-sponsored conferences – namely, CIKM, JCDL, and WSDM, in agreement with the other co-sponsoring SIGs, i.e. SIGKDD[23], SIGMOD[24], and SIGWEB[25].

Venktesh Viswanathan and **Eugene Yang** have accepted to act a co-chairs for the committee and we greatly thank them for this; we are also seeking for another co-chair. You can reach the committee at `acmopen_SIGIR@acm.org`.

To grant a waiver, the SIGIR ACM Open Committee adheres to the general *ACM Policy on APC Waivers for Financial Hardship*[26] and adopts some additional criteria to prioritize, for example, self-funded students, professionals, or NGO/not-for-profit organizations.

More and updated information can be found at `https://sigir.org/acm-open/`.

How do Authors Request a FHW?

Figure 1 shows the overall workflow for APC costs and/or FHW requests. After a paper is accepted, the *corresponding author* receives an email to complete the **eRights Publishing Workflow**. This process includes the *APC Settlement*, which can either happen through an ACM Open membership or Author Payment.

If the authors have to pay an APC and cannot afford to pay during settlement, they can request a FHW during the eRights Publishing Workflow. To request a FHW, the corresponding

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[19] `https://www.acm.org/publications/policies/policy-on-geographic-apc-waivers-and-discounts`
[20] `https://www.eifl.net/`
[21] `https://www.research4life.org/`
[22] `https://www.acm.org/special-interest-groups/sig-governance`
[23] `https://www.kdd.org/`
[24] `https://sigmod.org/`
[25] `https://www.sigweb.org/`
[26] `https://www.acm.org/publications/policies/policy-on-discretionary-open-access-apc-waivers`
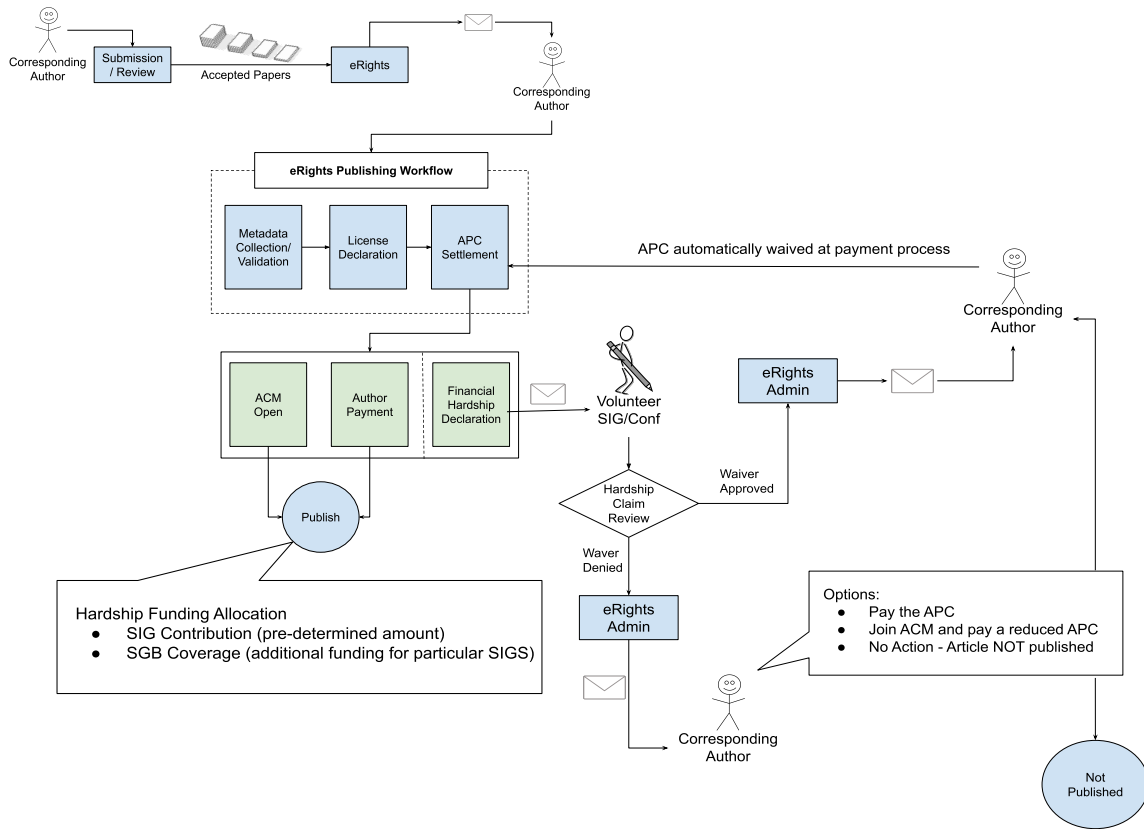
Figure 1. Author workflow for APC and FHW.

author provides a justification and funding details of the research. The request is then routed to **SIGIR ACM Open Committee**, in our case, which approves or declines the request.

If the FHW is approved, the authors go back to the Author Payment step and the payment will be fully waived. If the FHW is declined, the authors can still make a payment. If they don't make the payment, the paper will not be published in the proceedings.

A clarification on the notion of **corresponding author** has to be made since it has no semantic meaning and does not reflect any "special" status of an author, e.g. being the most important author, as it happens in some countries. Indeed, the "corresponding author" field is used here in an "opportunistic" way, since it was just a field already available in the ACM eRights system, which is not actually shown in the ACM DL or elsewhere. So, instead of adding a new field in the system to indicate "this is the co-author belonging to an ACM Open institution, no need to pay for the APC fee", they are just re-using and overloading a spare field already there. This might be counter-intuitive to some authors, who attribute to "corresponding author" a semantic meaning, e.g. the primary author, being this relevant in some countries when assessing a curriculum vitae.

Therefore, if among the co-authors of a paper, some of them belong to an institution part of ACM Open, then one of those co-authors needs to be indicated as corresponding author, so that the ACM eRights system will recognize her/him and automatically settle the APC costs; this author will be also the one who is going to receive notification emails from the ACM eRights system. Note that, for all of this to properly happen, the corresponding author has to use her/his

institutional email (not a personal one), so that the ACM eRights system can recognize her/him as belonging to an institution part of ACM Open.

SIGIR Reviewing Task Force

The SIGIR Exec has revamped an activity planned for and discussed by the previous Exec, concerning the reviewing and publication model for ACM SIGIR.

Guido Zuccon has agreed to chair this task force and we greatly thank him for this effort, which is critical for our community. The task force will start working in 2026.

The Exec asked the following questions to the task force:

- Considering that we already have a revise-and-resubmit mechanism in place among some of our conferences, e.g. SIGIR and SIGIR-AP or SIGIR and ICTIR, should SIGIR adopt a **rolling review model**, such as the ARR[27], for its conferences and, if yes, how should it be customized and operationalized to fit the needs of our community?
- If we move to a rolling review model, would it be worth also considering a PACM[28] publication mode, i.e. **conferences** associated with a **journal publishing modality**, e.g. something like PVLDB[29] or other similar examples?
- How could we use an rolling review model as a way to **welcome and attract people from other communities into SIGIR**? Indeed, a rolling/journal-like reviewing model could make it easier for outsiders to approach SIGIR, since it would not be a binary accept/reject decision but you could use the review cycles to shepherd researchers from outside SIGIR to understand and join our community. An obvious example of neighbour community is ACL[30], where lots of IR-related research happens but which has a paper style tradition slightly different from the SIGIR one and may benefit from a more progressive way of entering in the SIGIR "domain".

As you can see, a 2026 of great opportunities, changes, and challenges is ahead of us and thanks to the enthusiasm, passion, and competence of our community we will be ready to seize them.

Nicola Ferro,
Chair, ACM SIGIR Executive Committee

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[27]https://aclrollingreview.org/
[28]https://www.acm.org/publications/pacm
[29]https://www.vldb.org/pvldb/
[30]https://www.aclweb.org/

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