

Since You Asked... Advice from the CSE Editorial Policy Committee

Jill Jackson

Working in an editorial office can be very routine as there are policies in place to answer most questions. But what about those times when you have a question but are unsure of the answer or where to even begin the work to find the best possible solution? Your colleagues at CSE have most likely encountered a similar situation and are a great resource for answers. In this section, we will highlight a few of the questions that may have come up in your editorial office recently.

Serving on Multiple Editorial Boards

A question came up on the CSE Listserv about editorial boards: "I am curious if you prohibit your editorial board members from serving on other editorial boards. If yes, do you limit them from all other boards or only those of select journals?"

The following section (2.1.6; updated in 2017) from the CSE White Paper on Publication Ethics^{1,p13} provides some guidelines to consider when developing a policy on serving on multiple editorial boards:

The editor-in-chief or principal editor should define the terms and roles of the editors and editorial board that are appointed by and report to him or her. As mentioned above, the editor-in-chief should require disclosure of any conflicts of interest.

The editor-in-chief or principal editor should ensure that the journal's editors and editorial board are identified in the journal masthead; receive the necessary training and oversight to adequately perform editorial functions; and actively perform their responsibilities, such as assigning reviewers or reviewing manuscripts and advising on policy considerations.

The number of scholarly journals continues to increase, among them several "mega journals". These mega

JILL JACKSON is Managing Editor & Publishing Administrator, *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

journals can have editorial boards that include thousands of editors. The ever-increasing demand for leading scholars to populate editorial boards has led to researchers frequently and repeatedly receiving invitations to join editorial boards. Some scholars accept several such invitations and sit on multiple editorial boards simultaneously, including the boards of journals that compete directly for the same content.

Scholars, and journal editors, should consider the following issues when deciding whether any one researcher should sit on multiple editorial boards simultaneously. Importantly, these considerations are most relevant to situations where the editor has decision-making authority over manuscripts for more than one journal and/or influence on more than one journal's editorial policies.

- *If the number of manuscripts that the editor is expected to handle for each journal is high, their ability to assess all of them thoroughly and in a timely manner may be compromised.*
- *Having the same scholar as gatekeeper for manuscripts on any given subject area for more than one of the primary journal outlets in a field is unhealthy because it gives that person undue influence over what is being published in that field.*

In the context of the above, researchers should disclose all of their existing editorial board commitments when they are approached about taking on an additional editorial role and the editors who are recruiting them should take those other commitments into consideration.

Permission to be Acknowledged

A question came up recently in an Editorial Policy Committee meeting regarding permission to be acknowledged in a manuscript, and how editorial offices handle these permissions. Does the editorial office collect the letters of permission from the person being acknowledged or ask the corresponding author to attest to having obtained letters

CONTINUED

of permission? The discussion revealed that editorial offices typically do one or the other. Below is the information from the CSE White Paper on Publication Ethics (Section 2.2.3)^{1, p27-28}; while it does not specifically state how an office should collect these letters, it does mention the importance of obtaining permission from the persons being acknowledged. Editorial offices should let authors know if permission forms will be required for publication.

In an Acknowledgments section, authors may wish to include the names and contributions of those whose involvement in a study did not qualify them for authorship or, because of journal policy on the number of authors in the author byline, cannot be included in the author byline. An example of this would be technical

laboratory or writing assistance; the specific contribution should be noted. Authors should have each person listed in the acknowledgment sign a disclosure form or other statement acknowledging that they agree to have their names appear. Those acknowledged should disclose potential conflicts of interest.

Do you have a question problem that needs an answer? Post your question on the CSE Listserv or email the CSE Editorial Policy Committee and it may be featured in the next column. Chances are your colleagues may have the solution.

Reference and Link

1. <https://www.councilscienceeditors.org/resource-library/editorial-policies/white-paper-on-publication-ethics/>



Council of
Science Editors

Call for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Scholarly Resources

CSE has launched a repository of journal and organizational statements related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Many journals have begun working to improve editorial board diversity, evaluate peer review processes for implicit bias, revise guidelines for authors, or develop training opportunities, while others are struggling with where to start.

Has your journal or organization issued a statement about policies and practices related to diversity, equity, and inclusion? Please consider sharing your efforts with our community by completing the [DEI Resources Submission Form](#) on the CSE homepage under “Resource Library.”

Submitted resources will be publicly available on the CSE website.

