

Editorial Fellowships: Acquainting Editorially Inclined Health Professionals and Scientists With the Workings of Journals

Madison Semro

Editorial fellowships are excellent opportunities to acquaint medical professionals and scientists with the world of academic publishing. By completing a fellowship, these scientists learn about manuscript evaluation and the behind-the-scenes of journal publication. In addition, “It’s a great crash course in peer review,” said Ashley Ketelhut,¹ Managing Editor of American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) Publications.

Fellowship activities often include reviewing manuscripts, selecting peer reviewers, attending editorial meetings, and helping with other journal activities. Some fellowships allow fellows to flex their writing skills for the journal’s more public-facing publications, and others allow fellows to help develop content for a journal’s social media. Fellowships can be an excellent bridge to an editorial career at a journal, but the program can also greatly benefit the journals hosting them.

“The strength of our fellowship is really the strength of the candidates,” said Angela Colmone,² Assistant Executive Director of Science and Communications at the Radiological Society of America (RSNA). “Candidates that apply for this fellowship are really truly interested in the editorial process and want to help our journals publish the best papers, and it’s exciting to see that there’s a continuous group of people interested in doing this and interested in working with the journals.”

Fellowships offer journals an opportunity to train the next generation of journal editors—who can then return to their home institution and share what they’ve learned with their colleagues. Ketelhut calls it a “train-the-trainer model,” as the journal staff trains the fellow who can then share what they have learned with colleagues at home.

Training of early-career scientists is not the only benefit a fellowship program can bring to a journal. Colmone added

that many fellows “take the fellowship, experience it, and really step off and go into the editorial role.” These fellows continue in academic publishing after their fellowship, either becoming associate or deputy editors at journals or joining a journal’s editorial board.

Getting the opportunity to network with and be mentored by the current associate and deputy editors of a journal is one of the biggest benefits of pursuing an editorial fellowship. Many programs pair fellows with experienced editors who can show them how to review manuscripts and evaluate peer reviews. Plus, these editors are often experienced scholarly publishers as well. “Relationship building is probably one of the major benefits of [RSNA’s] program,” Colmone said. “[Fellows] have a number of real opportunities to meet people that they might not be able to meet at this level of their career.”

Who that potential mentor is—and what their expertise is—is important to consider when choosing a fellowship program, Ketelhut noted. She recommends potential fellows search for fellowships in journals that match their interests and specialty so that they can maximize the experience. “We try to pair people up as best as we can to the right journal and the right mentor who has the right expertise,” she said. “And if we are able to do that well and effectively, I really think they will get the most out of the program.”

It is important for potential candidates to get involved in the peer-review process. Many fellowships look for candidates with such experience. “If you do not have previous editorial involvement, reach out to become a reviewer for the journals,” Colmone advised. “It is a great way to get your foot in the door and really start to become involved and show interest in editorial work and really build yourself up to become a prime candidate.”

Examples of Editorial Fellowships

From the American Psychological Association (APA) to the RSNA, many journal publishers offer fellowships (Supplemental Table, <https://www.csescienceeditor.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/46-005-table.pdf>). Below are some brief overviews of fellowship programs for researchers

Madison Semro is Associate Scientific Editor in the Research Medical Library, The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center.

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and medical professionals interested in academic editing and publishing.

The APA offers editorial fellowships³ at many of the association's journals. Candidates who are no more than 10–15 years postdoctoral are eligible to apply, although the qualification requirements vary slightly among journals. Plus, many journals reserve some fellowship spots for members of historically marginalized groups. Fellows complete editorial tasks such as screening manuscripts, selecting peer-reviewers, and making acceptance decisions under the guidance of a mentoring editor. Fellows become members of the editorial board upon successful completion of the fellowship, which lasts for 6–12 months at most APA journals.

ASCO Publications' editorial fellowship⁴ teaches oncology fellows about peer review and the editorial process of medical journals. The year-long fellowship involves reviewing manuscripts, attending editors' meetings at the ASCO annual meeting, and completing a final project about the experience. Fellows must be less than 1 year out of an oncology fellowship or have completed a PhD in biostatistics less than 4 years prior and be in an oncology-related field. Previous experience publishing journal articles is preferred.

The American Society of Nephrology matches early career scientists or trainees with *Journal of the American Society of Nephrology (JASN)* editors in its 2-year editorial fellowship program.⁵ Fellows learn about editorial processes and peer review by reading manuscripts, selecting reviewers, and evaluating peer reviews. The program was established in March 2019.

The editorial fellowship program⁶ at *Blood* introduces late-stage fellows or early-career faculty members to medical publishing and editing. *Blood's* program is year-long and introduces fellows to the editorial process of biomedical journals. Fellows are mentored by a *Blood* associate editor and review manuscripts and receive feedback from their mentor.

JAMA Network offers the Morris Fishbein Fellowship in Medical Editing.⁷ This fellowship is 1 year long and introduces physicians to the world of editing. Activities of previous fellows⁸ include reviewing and preparing journal manuscripts for publication, recording podcasts, and writing for The JAMA Patient Page. Fellows must hold an MD or DO degree, have completed residency training, and demonstrate writing proficiency. The fellowship is held at JAMA's downtown offices in Chicago.

The *New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM)* hosts several editorial fellows⁹ who have typically just completed residency, though more experienced fellows and faculty are also welcome. Fellows learn about academic editing and publishing as they attend editorial meetings, write for the NEJM Image Challenge column, review and edit images,

contribute to the *NEJM* Review article series, and more. Fellows also undertake projects for *NEJM* based on their own interests or major events in healthcare; examples of past projects include the *NEJM* Resident 360 website and the Curbside Consults podcast series. The yearlong fellowship is located at the *NEJM* offices in Boston.

Since 1998, RSNA has offered the Eyer Fellowship.¹⁰ This fellowship is for mid-career radiologists who have at least 3 years of attending-level work at an academic institution. The month-long program introduces fellows to radiologic journalism, manuscript preparation and editing, peer review, journal production, and more. Fellow activities include traveling to Madison, WI, to work with the editor of *Radiology*, virtually visiting the editors of RSNA subspecialty journals, and attending editorial meetings during RSNA's annual meeting.

RSNA also offers the William W. Olmsted Editorial Fellowship for Trainees.¹¹ It is a week-long fellowship for trainees to introduce them to academic editing; fellows learn about peer review, manuscript editing, and digital publishing. The fellows visit RSNA offices to work with editors of RSNA journals, such as *Radiographics*, and attend RSNA editorial meetings during the RSNA annual meeting. To be eligible, one must be an RSNA member, be a resident or clinical fellow, and have published in peer-reviewed, scientific journals.

The Society for Cardiovascular Angiography & Intervention provides editorial training for in-training and early-career interventionists through its JSCAI Editorial Fellowship Program.¹² Fellows co-review 12 manuscripts alongside the JSCAI's deputy and associate editors throughout the year-long fellowship. In addition, they attend editorial board meetings and present a report on what they learned throughout the experience.

References and Links

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2. Interview, December 14, 2022.
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