

A scientific journal's editorial team

Description, groups, make-up and functions

This document looks at the most common names used to denote the management, advisory and editorial management bodies of scientific journals and the people responsible for the various jobs.

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Introduction

The number of people and make-up of the editorial team in terms of where they are from in geographical or institutional terms are indirect indicators of the prestige the journal enjoys, as they attest to its ability to attract recognized scientists and relate to the outside world. This may guarantee greater objectivity and neutrality, better judgement in the design of the editorial policy and a higher profile for the journal.



1. Editorial team

The academic editorial board or editorial board is comprised of a group of specialists, academics or scientists in the discipline covered by the journal, who are selected for their scientific quality. It advises the chief editor and makes proposals to ensure the ongoing improvement of the publication and to help them in decision-making.

To fulfil one of the current quality criteria for scientific journals, it should include the details of each person (full name, institution to which they belong and country of origin).

The chief editor is the main editorial post in the journal. They are a member of the academic editorial board and have recognized scientific prestige. This is the person who guides and takes overall responsibility for the scientific quality of the journal, and therefore, that of the academic editorial board and the editorial team. According to the Public Knowledge Project (PKP), the chief editor supervises the whole of the review, editing and publication process of an article. The main functions are:

- Evaluate the development of the content.
- Take strategic decisions in each edition.
- Represent the journal on an institutional level.
- Have an overall editorial vision and establish the guidelines of the editorial policy.
- Ensure the quality of the content and editorial excellence.
- Manage the activities of the drafting, advisory and scientific committees.
- Approve the final version of each issue, taking the final decision on the publication of articles and also with regard to the issue in which they should be published depending on the contents.
- Draft the schedule for reviewing and delivering the articles.

The editorial director or publisher is appointed by the sponsoring body (the UOC). Generally speaking, they are specialists with great prestige and a very strong academic connection in the discipline or profession at which the journal is aimed. They also have general knowledge of the publishing process.

The functions of the editorial director are:

- Decide, together with the academic editorial board, the editorial policy.
 - Manage the activities of the academic editorial board.
 - Represent the publication on an official and statutory level.
 - Deal and negotiate with the media.
 - Plan and supervise the promotion of the journal.
- In some countries, the term editorial director is used to differentiate the editorial tasks undertaken by the journal manager, which are of a political and academic nature rather than administrative ones.

The secretary is a specialist in the discipline or branch to which the publication is dedicated, and has a sound knowledge of the editorial task. In addition to assisting the director in the management of the publication, this is the person who interacts with the editors, referees and authors on a daily basis, in order to guarantee the smooth running of the publishing process. Since they are the professional on the academic editorial board with the greatest knowledge of publishing – both the processes and the national and international “competitor” publications, etc – they are responsible for proposing the measures and actions that contribute to the development of the publication.

Their roles include:

- Drafting the minutes of the executive editorial board meetings and, together with the chief editor, drafting the agenda for the meetings.

- Managing the human and financial resources of the journal, in accordance with the policy established by the board.
- Responsibility for locating, managing and maintaining the indexation rules and appropriate distribution lists for the journal.
- Issuing certificates that are requested, certifying accredited facts.
- Ensuring compliance with the policy established by the executive editorial board.
- Being familiar with the manuscripts and deciding in the first instance which ones are to follow the official procedure established, taking as a reference the ethical aspects and the official publication rules of the journal.
- Drafting annual statistical reports on the editorial process.

In addition, the chief editor and the secretary are jointly responsible for:

- Drafting the publication rules of the journal.
- Drafting the self-evaluation questionnaire for the authors, which will be used by the executive editorial board as a verification document to check compliance with the publication rules.
- Drafting the standard manuscript assessment document to be used by the reviewers appointed for this task.
- Ensuring that the ethical rules of research and experimentation are complied with in the published articles.

2. Executive editorial board

The executive editorial board is comprised of the director, who chairs it; the secretary; and the board members appointed by the director, who also has the authority to revoke appointments. Board members will remain in their posts until revoked or they explicitly give up their post. The director will appoint them according to merit, dedication and ability, and will decide the number and duration of the post (eg a minimum of six members and a maximum of sixteen for two years).

The functions attributed to the members of the executive editorial board are:

- Receive the originals and distribute them among the external reviewers.
- Assist the chief editor in all their functions, and most especially in monitoring work (receipt, assessment and acceptance).

- Check compliance with rules for presentation of originals, design, creation and orientation of the various sections of the journal.
- Monitor the flow of manuscripts and ensure compliance with the established rules and the ethical precepts of the journal. They are responsible for proofing the originals and the review and proofing of the abstracts and the methodological aspects and the style of the article.
- Ensure the quality of the reviewers' reports.

The composition of the executive editorial board must be in line with the following directive:

- Institutional openness: At least one-third of the members of the advisory board must belong to different institutions from the publishing body, in this case the UOC, and at least one-third of the authors must not be members of the executive editorial board.

3. Advisory board or scientific committee

The members of the scientific committee or advisory board are appointed by the chief editor, who also has the authority to revoke appointments. It may comprise university professors and researchers of recognized prestige and members of educational or governmental institutions.

The principal functions of the scientific committee are:

- Supervise the editorial content and development of the journal in specific areas.
- Promote the journal in their field.
- Secure collaboration from potential authors.
- Draft, jointly with the chief editor, the scientific strategy of the journal and the periodical assessment of results.
- Depending on needs and expectations, propose the publication of single-subject issues on areas of special interest or relevance.
- Provide support to the executive editorial board and give it conceptual and scientific guidance. They may also act as reviewers for the journal.

The composition of the scientific committee must be guided by the following two directives:

- Institutional openness: at least one-third of the members of the scientific committee or advisory board must belong to different institutions from the publishing body – in this case the UOC and any co-publishing institutions – and at least one-third of the authors must not be members.

- Geographical openness: at least one-third of the scientific committee or advisory board should be comprised of members from foreign institutions.

4. Production team

The members of the production team are appointed by the director, who also has the authority to revoke appointments.

The production team is responsible for:

- Monitoring proofreading, composition, layout and electronic editing tasks.
- Managing the administrative and economic aspects.
- Promoting, designing and developing new products.
- Conducting a market study.
- Managing subscriptions.

5. Team of external reviewers

Reviewers may be internal, that is, within the editorial structure, or external, but under no circumstance may they have a connection with the journal's executive editorial board.

Scientific reviewers can be selected on the basis of the following factors and actions:

- Personal acquaintances of the members of the journal's executive editorial board.
- Use of an in-house database.
- Search in bibliographical databases.
- Review of the list of references cited in the article.
- Suggestion by the author of the article.

The double-blind system must be guaranteed, in which the identity of the authors and the reviewers is not known by the other side. We recommend indicating the usual number of reviewers used by the journal. The number usually considered to be the most adequate is two, with recourse to a third reviewer if the reports diverge absolutely.

In the team of reviewers, it is advisable to include a reviewer who is an expert in scientific methodology. If there is a methodological reviewer, this should be stated; similarly, it should also be stated if there are style reviewers responsible for ensuring grammatical correctness, the appropriateness of the scientific style and respect for the journal's style rules.

At the end of every year, or at the end of every two years in the case of journals that come out biannually, the list of external reviewers should be disseminated, with a time lag of two years.

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