



# **Welcome Guide**

Welcome to Springer Nature. This guide provides a range of information and resources to help support you as you develop and grow within your role. We encourage you to review the material prior to handling your first manuscript.

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## Welcome to Springer Nature

At Springer Nature our mission is to advance discovery by publishing robust and insightful research, supporting the development of new areas of knowledge, and making ideas and knowledge accessible around the world. As a research publisher, Springer Nature is home to brands including Nature Research, Springer, BMC, Palgrave Macmillan and Scientific American. We are the world's largest academic book publisher, a pioneer in the field of open research, and have been a trusted source of knowledge for over 180 years.

Most importantly, we are proud to work with a global network of over 90,000 Editors and Editorial Board Members – and are delighted to welcome you to this community!

Our Editors and Editorial Board Members play a key part in helping us to advance discovery, from working with us to build a network of authors and peer reviewers, helping authors improve their papers, advocating for our journals, and sometimes dealing with research integrity issues. Ultimately, you help safeguard the scientific accuracy of the published record and ensure that our authors' work commands the highest level of trust.

We value the hard work and dedication our expert editors put into this important and rewarding role, and we are committed to working together and providing as much support and guidance as we can to make your role easier, more successful and enjoyable.

We look forward to working with you.

Ritu Dhand, PhD

Chief Scientific Officer, Springer Nature



## Your First 30 Days

We are excited for you to begin your journey at Springer Nature. In order to facilitate a smooth transition, we have outlined valuable starting points designed to assist you as you begin to navigate your role.

### Getting Started:

- ☐ Familiarise yourself with the [Springer Nature Code of Conduct](#)
- ☐ Prepare yourself for your first manuscript assignment with our core training by completing our Fundamentals for Editors: On-Demand webinar series training
  - ☐ [Finding Peer Reviewers](#)
  - ☐ [Making Editorial Decisions](#)
- ☐ Grow your understanding of our peer-reviewer system: Editorial Manager
  - ☐ EM Editor Training Sessions (contact [SupportSessions@springernature.com](mailto:SupportSessions@springernature.com) for future session dates)
- ☐ Bookmark key resources for continuous reference
  - ☐ [Editor Training](#)
  - ☐ [Resources and Tools](#)
  - ☐ [Editorial Policies](#)

We hope you find the above helpful. We suggest reading through the entirety of this guide, including the resources in our '[Springer Nature is Here For You](#)' and '[Useful Links](#)' sections, to gain insights into your role and access the additional tools and training available to you.

We will keep you up to date with the latest news, updates and upcoming events through our monthly Editor Update newsletter. Our dedicated editor support channel ([editorsupport@springernature.com](mailto:editorsupport@springernature.com)) is also available to help you with any queries related to the peer reviewer system and your role.



## The Editorial Process

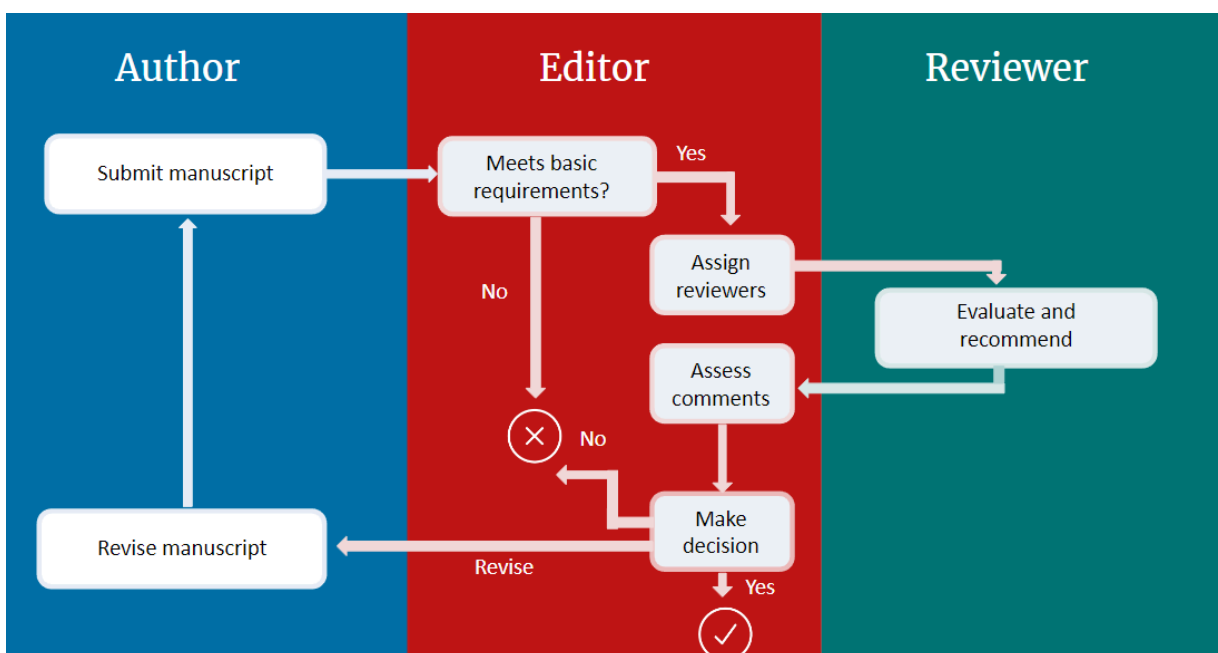
### A brief overview of the editorial process

The editorial process intends to provide constructive guidance to authors, while ensuring we only publish research that is scientifically robust, original, and of the highest quality.

The process is rarely linear, and the exact pathway each manuscript will take is dependent on a number of factors. Some examples include:

- the policies and procedures of the journal
- the content of the manuscript
- any issues raised during peer review

However, peer review at its simplest might proceed akin to the image below:



The author submits their manuscript and you determine whether it meets the journal's requirements. If 'yes', reviewers are assigned. If 'no', you may decide to either reject or request pre-review revisions at this stage.

If the manuscript does proceed to peer review, the reviewers will then evaluate and provide reports for you to review. After these have been received, you may use them to help you decide if the manuscript should be accepted, rejected, or sent back to the authors for revision.



## Assessing a new submission

When you are assigned a manuscript, your first responsibility is to decide if it's suitable for peer review. At times, you will be expected to handle a manuscript that does not directly align with your expertise, and so we encourage you to utilise the information below and seek guidance from fellow Editorial Board Members when necessary.

Let's consider what to look for when assessing the manuscript.

1. Does the manuscript adhere to the ethos, editorial standards and scope of the journal while having sufficient interest to the readers?
2. Is the research question scientifically valid?
3. Does the manuscript appear to make an original contribution?
4. Does the manuscript appear to be scientifically sound overall?
5. Does the manuscript adhere to the journal's editorial policies?

You should also keep in mind specific requirements for your journal and the particular field of research, for example:

- Have the authors followed [Springer Nature editorial policies](#) regarding:
  - Ethics approval
  - Informed consent to participate in research
  - Informed consent to publish (if images or personal information are included)
  - Animal ethics
- Have the authors followed journal policies regarding:
  - Plagiarism
    - Editors may be required to review the Crossref Similarity Report powered by the iThenticate Report & Response (IRR) service and take action if any issues are raised.
    - For information on how to use the IRR service, view our [eLearning course](#).
  - Declaration of conflicts of interest
  - Other policies relevant for the journal, e.g. data sharing, author contribution statements

Once your initial assessment is made, you will then need to decide whether the manuscript is ready for peer review. You can send back for revisions or additional information, but if a manuscript fails to pass these initial questions or is deemed to be obviously flawed, you may reject the manuscript at this stage without sending it for peer review.

**Further guidance:** View our webinar module, '[Making Editorial Decisions and Evaluating Peer Review Reports](#)' for general guidance on this step in the peer review process. To learn more about what you can do to prevent and detect plagiarism, we have available [a series of free e-Learning modules](#), where you can also find specific guidance on how to use the iThenticate Report & Response Service.



## Identifying suitable reviewers

If you decide the manuscript should proceed to peer review, the next step will be to identify suitable reviewers.

As a general rule of thumb, we recommend that you make a decision based on the advice of at least two qualified, independent reviewers other than yourself. Please note that your journal may have a policy regarding the number of independent reviewers required, so it is important to check with your in-house journal contact.

To provide an informed and unbiased opinion on a manuscript, reviewers should possess an active presence in the field, with a recent and relevant publication record that reflects expertise in the manuscript's subject matter and methodology.

### Criteria for a suitable reviewer include:

- Experienced in the subject area or methodology of the submitted manuscript
- An active, consistent, and recent publication record
- Prior publications on topic to the submitted manuscript
- 'Independent' of one another and you as an Editor (i.e. not both work at the same lab/institution or with an obvious bias or competing interests)
- 'Independent' of the author (i.e. not both work at the same lab/institution, no known close relationship [or co-authorship], no relation to funder/where there is a commercial interest)

### In some instances, you can be flexible:

- Where a reviewer has co-published with an author once or twice as a small proportion of a prolific publishing history, or in articles with extensive author lists, e.g. a multicenter trial
- Where a reviewer is junior, but exactly on topic, especially if their supervisor agrees to look at the report before it is submitted and includes their name
- Where it would make valid peer-review impossible if requests for exclusion were honoured

### Unsolicited Reviewer Suggestions from Authors

We strongly discourage the use of unsolicited reviewer suggestions from authors. However, if you've exhausted numerous methods and need to consider author-suggested reviewers, please ensure you have extensively verified that there are no conflicts, the suggestions appear valid, and their contact details can be confirmed via our database or their institutional profile.

### Diversity in Peer Review

Springer Nature is committed to diversity, equity and inclusion and we strive for diverse demographic representation of peer reviewers. We strongly encourage you to consider geographical regions, gender identities, racial/ethnic groups, and other groups when inviting peer reviewers to ensure you are drawing from as diverse a pool as possible within the field. Discover our best practice guidance for the [recruitment of peer reviewers](#).

**Further guidance:** View our webinar module, ['Finding Peer Reviewers: Solutions for Identifying and Securing Potential Candidates'](#)



## Finding peer reviewers

There are a number of tools and resources available to you to help identify potential new reviewers beyond using your own network of peers.

Whichever network or tool you use, it is your responsibility to ensure that the reviewers you invite are qualified to assess a manuscript and meet our criteria. If you are not familiar with a potential reviewer, we encourage you to review the guidelines above to ensure that you are confident that they will be able to provide a quality report.

Suggested tools and resources available include:

- The Springer Nature Reviewer Finder Tool: our intelligent, AI-powered search tool makes it easier for you to find and invite relevant reviewers
- Suggestions made by candidates who have declined to review
- Authors of articles published in the journal on similar topics
- Authors of articles cited in reference lists in the journal on similar topics
- Depending on your journal and the commitments of your Editorial Board Members, you may look to them as potential reviewers (while keeping the criteria in the section above in mind)
- Examples of online tools to identify similar articles and potential authors include:
  - [PubMed](#)
  - [Google Scholar](#)
  - [PubReMiner](#)
  - [Anne O'Tate](#)
  - [Dimensions](#)
  - [Jane](#)

**Further guidance:** View our webinar module, [\*'Finding Peer Reviewers: Solutions for Identifying and Securing Potential Candidates'\*](#)





## Making editorial decisions

After receiving reviewer reports, it is your duty to make an editorial decision or recommend one to the Editor-in-Chief. This decision will depend on your journal's process and is guided by your evaluation and the reviewer reports. There are variations in terminology for the decision types used by different journals and imprints, but these will equate broadly to the following categories:

- Accept
- Revise (Either 'Major' or 'Minor' revisions)
- Reject (Either allow transfer or 'Do not transfer')

To reach an informed decision, you should read reviewer comments carefully and interpret them in view of the journal's editorial criteria. You can then make the final judgement on aspects such as whether:

- The manuscript adheres to the ethos, editorial standards and scope of the journal
- Further experiments or changes suggested by the reviewers are essential
- The conclusions could be toned down to accurately reflect the findings

### When should I suggest revisions?

- If you feel the manuscript is likely to be acceptable for publication after modifications
- If revisions might require further experiments or reanalysis, but the underlying methodology is valid
- If you would like to consider a revised manuscript instead of recommending resubmission after rejecting

### Should I recommend the revisions be 'Major' or 'Minor'?

- A minor revision involves making a few small improvements to the manuscript for publication. Depending on the extent of the changes required, you may choose not to send it for re-review after the new version has been submitted.
- A major revision involves substantial changes for the manuscript to be deemed suitable for publication. After the author submits the new version, a fresh round of peer review assesses whether comments have been addressed and identifies any new concerns.

### When should I reject and allow transfer?

A reject decision automatically sends the manuscript to the Transfer Desk. You should continue with this option:

- If the content is outside the scope of the journal
- If it could be publishable somewhere, but does not meet the editorial threshold for the journal

## When should I reject and opt to not transfer?

You can opt out of automatically sending to the Transfer Desk by selecting 'Do Not Transfer'. You should continue with this option:

- If there are serious issues related to validity of the research that could not be rectified with additional experiments
- If the study would have to be repeated in its entirety to be acceptable
- If there are serious flaws in the design or rationale behind the study

## Decision letters

Communication of the decision is a vital step in the process and one which can sometimes be overlooked. It is important to let the authors know why you are rejecting or requesting revisions so that they can understand the rationale or requirements.

Please offer constructive feedback by explaining your reasoning, specifying areas of focus, and addressing reviewer comments. If the reviewer reports conflict or a reviewer requests unreasonable additional experiments/analyses, we encourage you to provide guidance on which revisions are essential for the authors to consider for acceptance.

**Further guidance:** View our webinar module, [\*'Making Editorial Decisions and Evaluating Peer Review Reports'\*](#).



## Editorial policies and research integrity

Springer Nature strives to share outstanding and robust research while maintaining a positive and proactive approach to preventing errors and misconduct. As an Editor, you play a crucial role in ensuring that published articles reflect the journal's high editorial standards. Upholding the [Springer Nature Code of Conduct for Editors](#) and embracing [COPE Core Practices](#) not only supports ethical publishing but also contributes to fostering a positive scholarly environment.

### Springer Nature Publishing and Editorial Policies

Our publishing and editorial policies have been developed in consultation with the research communities that we serve. These guidelines are rooted in our belief that fostering greater transparency in our operational processes enhances scholarly communication.

- [Publishing Policies](#): These policies ensure that what we publish is as discoverable and accessible, understandable, usable, reusable, and shareable as possible
- [Editorial Policies](#): These policies underpin our commitment as a leading research publisher to editorial independence and supporting research excellence

### Where to get help

If you suspect a manuscript contains any research integrity concerns, including potentially libellous statements, please make sure your in-house contact is aware, and they will walk you through the next steps to best preserve the integrity of your journal.

In complex cases, including those post-publication, your in-house contact may ask the [Springer Nature Research Integrity Group](#) (SNRIG) for further advice. The SNRIG is dedicated to promoting best publication practice and supporting editors to resolve publication ethics issues.

**Further guidance:** *Get started by taking our [eLearning course on the Code of Conduct](#), to learn more about how you can uphold the ethical standards and expectations associated with your role.*

*Please visit our [Editor Training page](#) for more information on how Springer Nature can support you in our shared mission of preventing and addressing errors and misconduct.*



## Championing your journal

Editors and Editorial Board Members are the voices of their journal within the community. As you handle the rigorous peer review of our manuscripts and uphold Springer Nature's editorial standards, you are also expertly placed to answer questions about the journal from your communities, and promote submissions from your colleagues.

### Encouraging high quality submissions

As champions of your community, you are in the best possible position to pinpoint topical subjects, explore emerging research avenues, and encourage submissions within your specific expertise. There are various ways in which authors may be encouraged to submit their articles to your journal. In general, the more targeted an approach is, the more likely it is to succeed.

To support you in this effort, here are some of our suggestions:

- Recommend your journal to peers preparing a submission, highlighting the ethos and scope
- Promote the journal at relevant conferences and solicit research from appropriate presenters at poster sessions
- Highlight the journal on your social media by posting published papers that you have accepted, encouraging authors to do the same, and interacting with Springer Nature posts
- Sign up for article alerts and consider pre submissions for your own journal when scanning these alerts
- Include a link to the journal homepage in your email signature to promote the journal
- Continue to submit your own research to the journal
- Support your Editor-in-Chief in managing and creating new ideas for collections and calls for papers for your journal

**Further guidance:** View our webinar module, '[Championing Your Journal and Attracting High Quality Submissions](#)'.



## Springer Nature Is Here For You

### Editor Support

Our dedicated support channel ([editorsupport@springernature.com](mailto:editorsupport@springernature.com)) is here to help you with any of your day-to-day queries as you learn to navigate your role. We encourage you to use this support channel to follow up on any questions or concerns you may have. For example, questions regarding navigating our initiatives or current pain points in your role, and more specifically:

- Information on your training programme
- How to update your contact details
- What to do if you are struggling to find reviewers
- The process for commissioning content or suggesting a content collection

### Training Courses

To further support you, we offer a suite of resources and training from introductory webinars to in-depth e-Learning courses. Here you may find guidance on both the everyday aspects of your critical role and the challenges you may face.

We highly recommend attending the following webinars as a part of our Fundamentals for Editors series, as they are designed to support you in your transition to your new Editor role:

- [Finding Peer Reviewers: Solutions for Identifying and Securing Potential Candidates](#)
- [Making Editorial Decisions and Evaluating Peer Review Reports](#)

The full list of webinars as well as additional resources can be found on our [Editor Training page](#) and include:

- Fundamentals for Editors: On- Demand Webinars
- Short Courses
- Free e-Learning

## Editor Events

Join us at future events exclusive to our global network of Springer Nature Editors designed to keep you informed within your academic community.



### Spotlight On...

These sessions focus on topics at the heart of our community, providing updates on what we are doing at Springer Nature to support our editorial partners, and information about new editorial and publishing activity.

These events feature regular live Q&A sessions, helping you to engage with the topics, the speakers, and your fellow Editors.

*“The Spotlight talks are very useful for editors. They provide timely and relevant information which helps us to do our jobs more effectively.”*

- ‘Spotlight On...’ Attendee

Subscribe to the series to hear about [upcoming events](#).

## Editor Update Newsletter

Finally, look out for our monthly Editor Update newsletter with all the latest news from Springer Nature, including policy announcements, upcoming Editor events and new training. We recommend adding the email address [springernature@newsletter.springernature.com](mailto:springernature@newsletter.springernature.com) to your safe sender list to ensure receipt of this newsletter and prevent it from being filtered into your spam or junk folder.

## Useful Links

Below you can find links to Springer Nature resources that may provide helpful guidance when navigating your role. It may be useful to bookmark these pages for quick reference.

### Editor Training & Resources

If you're looking to find guidance on numerous aspects of your role:

- [Editors Training](#)
- [Resources and Tools](#)

If you're looking for more help specifically throughout the peer review process:

- [Addressing Diversity & Inclusion in Reviewer Recruitment](#)
- EM Editor Training Sessions (contact [SupportSessions@springernature.com](mailto:SupportSessions@springernature.com) for future session dates)

### Springer Nature & Best Practices

If you need to refer to Springer Nature policies regarding best practices, code of conduct, and research integrity:

- [Publishing policies](#)
- [Editorial policies](#)
- [Journal Editors Code of Conduct](#)
- [COPE Core Practices](#)
- [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Research Publishing](#)

And please note our dedicated support channel ([editorsupport@springernature.com](mailto:editorsupport@springernature.com)) is always available to assist with any query that you may have.

Thank you for joining the Springer Nature network! We wish you all the best in your new role.