

Building an Editorial Board

The structure of the Editorial Board lays the foundation for journal success. The Editorial Board should reflect the geographical diversity and subject expertise of the submitting authors and journal scope. As community journals, the team working with the Editor-in-Chief (EiC) should have capacity to easily review appropriate submissions and give high level author service.

For more context, please watch the Editorial Best Practice [webinar](#).

An EiC working with manuscript-handling editors drives journal success.

- All journal teams are recommended to have an EiC working with at least 2–3 manuscript-handling editors.
- A team ensures there are sub-disciplinary experts who can champion their subjects and provide diverse demographic representation.
- A larger journal should also include Section Editors, who are more senior editors that can support the EiC by running mini-teams and maintain oversight and rigor in peer review.

Why is a team of empowered manuscript handling editors important?

- The team can provide cover if the EiC is absent which is important for author service.
- Empowered decision-making editors, are more invested in the journal and will be better journal advocates; using their own networks to attract submissions from conferences & local talks, poster sessions & preprint servers.
- A journal that publishes papers that reflect the thinking of a cross-section of editors, will be more representative of the many scientific interests of a broader readership and thus engage more potential authors.

Why is a geographically diverse team of editors important?

- Studies show the importance of Editorial Boards reflecting the diversity (regional and gender) of submitting authors.
- In a global research landscape, regional knowledge can be important to fully appreciate and assess the impact of a research study.
- For example, the environmental, economic, and social needs of countries vary and can affect the perceived impact of a piece of research as in malaria research or water purification.

Recruitment needs should be reviewed annually.

- Recruit more editors if the journal has high editor workloads (recommended ~15–20 submissions /editor/ year to enable review of 60–70% of manuscripts), slow decision times (reflective of high workloads), there is a change in regional diversity of submissions. In addition, submissions from emerging areas may require new expertise is added to the board.
- It is also best – practice to annually off-board inactive editors and replace them.
- Sources for new candidates include, asking existing editors on the board that currently do not handle manuscripts, taking suggestions from the editorial board, asking frequently used reviewers as well as authors that have submitted to the journal.
- Focus on early career researchers who usually have more time to engage with peer review.