

The Biochemical Society - Job Description for:

Job Title	Commissioning Assistant
Reports to	Managing Editor/Commissioning Editor
Department	Publishing
Location	Remote

Overview

We are seeking a proactive Commissioning Assistant to support the editorial team and take charge of key steps of the publishing process across the Portland Press fully-commissioned review journals. In this role, you will implement copyflow and pipeline-management plans and quality-assure submissions, overseeing the peer-review process for any review articles. With a focus on researcher service you will communicate with authors, reviewers and editors to answer questions and resolve any difficulties they might have in using the online manuscript system.

You will build strong relationships with the scientific community, and the Guest Editors and Editorial Boards of the titles in particular. Using your initiative, you will maintain and improve the editorial system and, where needed, manage assignment of manuscript duties to Editorial Board members. You will work in close alignment with the Managing/Commissioning Editor to deliver on publishing targets and to support and help develop the content strategy for each title. Building up knowledge of editorial workflows, publishing policy and technology, you will also suggest improvements to departmental processes and procedures, and drive first-class author, reviewer and editor service.

Key accountabilities

- For all manuscripts in the review/fully commissioned journals: carry out quality-control checks on submissions, and on accepted articles.
- Administer and oversee the peer-review process from manuscript submission to final editorial decision in line with target timelines.
- Manage the shared journal editorial-mailbox, ensuring timely and helpful responses.
- Keep internal teams apprised of copy-flow.
- Send review-article invitations to potential contributors and assist with Guest Editor recruitment for themed issues; assist with commissioning activities supporting journal requirements.
- Contribute topic ideas as appropriate.
- Assist with commissioning activities for the research journals on an ad hoc basis.
- Implement pipeline-management plans and ensure suitable copy-flow to support timely publication; chase and 'shepherd' inputs from both external and in-house contributors to the review journals.
- Communicate with authors, reviewers and editors by email and telephone to answer queries and resolve any difficulties they might have in using the online manuscript handling system.
- Contribute to the arrangement of relevant Editorial Board meetings, including the collation and distribution of papers and processing of Board/Committee expenses.
- Produce timely, accurate minutes for meetings of the Editorial Boards.
- Take ownership of the correspondence around (and maintain current and accurate records of) all relevant communications pertaining to reviews/perspectives/editorials submitted to any of the titles.
- Identify opportunities that would lead to increased efficiency in terms of accuracy, improved publishing-journeys, speed of review and/or turnover of manuscripts.
- Communicate information regarding process (or other) changes to external Editors as required.
- Develop and maintain awareness of key stakeholders in the biosciences community e.g. Editorial Board members, leading researchers, repeat or high-profile authors and Society Trustees in order to maximize opportunities for the journals if/when dealing directly with them.

- Foster excellent working relationships with Guest Editors and Editorial Board members, and develop a network within the molecular-bioscience community in order to build loyalty and goodwill.
- Provide support to the editorial team for a range of activities. This could include retrieving data from databases, sending electronic mailings, maintaining and updating contact lists and updating websites.
- On occasion and as needed, provide assistance to other teams within the organization.

Key knowledge and skills

- Candidates must be qualified to a degree level in the biosciences and will ideally have experience of working in STM/scholarly publishing.
- Interest and awareness of bioscience research.
- Must be efficient and highly competent in the use of common software packages.
- Good organisational and time-management skills are required, together with the ability to work under pressure and to meet deadlines.
- Track record of identifying issues and using own initiative to suggest solutions.
- Track record of balancing multiple and potentially conflicting priorities.
- Embraces change with a positive attitude.
- Experience of providing high-quality customer service.
- Detail oriented; ensures accuracy in documentation and data.
- Excellent communication skills (both verbal and written).

Competencies to be evidenced in this role are:

Initiative and Creativity

Plans work and carries out tasks without detailed instructions; makes constructive suggestions; prepares for problems or opportunities in advance; undertakes additional responsibilities; responds to situations as they arise with minimal supervision; creates novel solutions to problems; evaluates new technology as potential solutions to existing problems.

Cooperation/Teamwork

Works harmoniously with others to get a job done; responds positively to instructions and procedures; able to work well with staff, co-workers, peers and managers; shares critical information with everyone involved in a project; works effectively on projects that cross functional lines; helps to set a tone of cooperation within the work group and across groups; coordinates own work with others; seeks opinions; values working relationships; when appropriate facilitates discussion before decision-making process is complete.

Attention to Detail

Is alert in a high-risk environment; follows detailed procedures and ensures accuracy in documentation and data; carefully monitors gauges, instruments or processes; concentrates on routine work details; organizes and maintains a system of records.

Reliability

Personally responsible; completes work in a timely, consistent manner; works hours necessary to complete assigned work; is regularly present and punctual; arrives prepared for work; is committed to doing the best job possible; keeps commitments.

Quantity & Quality of Work

Maintains high standards despite pressing deadlines; corrects own errors; regularly produces accurate, thorough, professional work.

Produces an appropriate quantity of work; does not get bogged down in unnecessary detail; able to manage multiple projects; able to determine project urgency in a meaningful and practical way; organises and schedules people and tasks.

Customer (Author, Editor, Reviewer) Service

Listens and responds effectively to customer questions; resolves customer problems to the customer's satisfaction; respects all internal and external customers; uses a team approach when dealing with customers; follows up to evaluate customer satisfaction; measures customer satisfaction effectively; commits to exceeding customer expectations.

Problem Solving

Anticipates problems; sees how a problem and its solution will affect other units; gathers information before making decisions; weighs alternatives against objectives and arrives at reasonable decisions; adapts well to changing priorities, deadlines and directions; works to eliminate all processes which do not add value; is willing to take action, even under pressure, criticism or tight deadlines; takes informed risks; recognizes and accurately evaluates the signs of a problem; analyses current procedures for possible improvements; notifies supervisor of problems in a timely manner.

Job Knowledge/Technical Knowledge

Demonstrates some knowledge of scientific and/or publishing procedures. Confident IT user who is keen to apply themselves to the smooth running of the online editorial system and editorial processes. Applies knowledge to identify issues and internal problems; works to develop additional technical knowledge and skills.

Communication

Writes and speaks effectively, using conventions proper to the situation; states own opinions clearly and concisely; demonstrates openness and honesty; listens well during meetings and feedback sessions; explains reasoning behind own opinions; asks others for their opinions and feedback; asks questions to ensure understanding; exercises a professional approach with others using all appropriate tools of communication; uses consideration and tact when offering opinions.