



SECTION EDITOR ROLE

Section Editors (SEs) are an integral part of the journal and its operation. They are experts in the fields of research they serve, experienced in the peer review process, ambassadors for Open Science, and active participants in their communities. Section Editors lead the subject sections within the journal scope and advise a group of Academic Editors with expertise in their discipline.

SEs oversee a greater number of manuscripts than Academic Editors (AEs) but are not required to take a hands-on role in the review process. The invitation process works differently as well: Section Editors are not “invited” but are assigned incoming manuscripts in their area of expertise by the staff.

The SE position requires less hands-on time with manuscripts, but it is a role with a greater degree of responsibility and authority. The final decision on manuscript acceptance lies with the Section Editor, and we rely heavily on our Section Editors to resolve difficult issues, provide advice to their fellow Section Editors, and to assist us in preventing delays caused by unresponsive Academic Editors or reviewers.

To foster a partnership between the journal and the research community, Section Editors strive to:

Edit

- Assess the quality and scope of new submissions within three days
- Secure an Academic Editor or Guest Editor on manuscripts as needed
- Submit a decision within three days of receiving a recommendation
- Adhere to editorial best practices

Advise

- Provide counsel on journal policies, including scope, research ethics, community standards, and reporting guidelines within their discipline
- Advise on the suitability of a manuscript for publication at any stage of the peer review process and in relation to any aspects covered by the publication criteria (scope, study design, ethics, etc.) within their discipline

- Adjudicate on difficult editorial decisions and advise in appeals as needed

Lead

- Act as a leader or co-leader of a section
- Support and advise Academic Editors in their section in editorial decision making and more broadly by providing editorial guidance
- Assist in the editorial development of their section and the journal as a whole, including content curation, solicitation of submissions and selection of content for promotion within their disciplines
- Recommend potential candidates with expertise in their discipline to serve as Academic Editors

Represent

- Actively promote and maintain the integrity, reputation and high editorial standards of the journal
- Liaise with journal staff, Editorial Board members, and in the community as the voice of their section

Ambassadorship

Our editors are PLOS ambassadors who are empowered to use their expertise to spread awareness of our [mission](#) and [values](#) in the global research community, forge inclusive relationships, guide and encourage a diverse group of prospective and current contributors, reflect community needs, and increase goodwill.

Code of Conduct

In addition to these role expectations, all editors adhere to PLOS's [Code of Conduct](#) for Editorial Board Members.