Academic Journal Management Best Practices

Tales from the Trenches

Scholastica

Editor Contributors

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Contrary to the popular Rolling Stones song, for academic journal editors it never quite feels like "time is on my side." All editors face the daily struggle of vying for the time of co-editors and outside referees - all of whom are busy with their own research, peer review requests, and careers. Whether you're new to academic journal management or a veteran editor, you face the challenge of working with a group of volunteers with highly strained professional schedules. You may even be a volunteer yourself! Either way, you know the very real struggle of trying to get more hours out of people who are already strapped for time.

Do you ever wonder how other journal editors are handling the demands of modern-day publishing?

Since Scholastica's inception we've spoken with dozens of editors to learn about their peer review processes and best practices for journal management. In this guide we round up top suggestions from five editors managing academic journals in STEM, the humanities, and the social sciences.

Read on for advice from fellow editors on how to:

- Increase editorial team productivity by divvying up journal work more effectively
- Use metrics to alleviate bottlenecks in your journal's peer review process
- Create a training plan for new and existing editors to address editorial team expectations, software proficiency, and publication ethics
- Maintain a pool of peer reviewers and make them feel recognized and appreciated

As an editor time may not always be on your side, but with hard work and innovation you can ensure your editorial board is making every minute count. We hope this guide will be helpful to you as you continue to improve your journal workflow. We invite you to share thoughts, questions, and your own editorship experiences and best practices in Scholastica's scholarly community, The Conversation or by tweeting @Scholasticahq!

A place to discuss journal management best practices!

Visit the Tales From the Trenches Conversation online to share thoughts and questions about this ebook and your own journal management best practices with other editors!

Put your workflow to the test

One of the hardest things for busy editors to do is to pull back from their day-to-day journal tasks and re-evaluate their existing workflow.

Most editors find it difficult enough to make time for all of the manuscripts they have to shepherd through peer review, let alone to analyze their team's daily routines. But we all know that the span between a routine and a rut is just one hop, skip, and a jump away! - that's why it's so important to periodically take the time to look at the bigger picture of your journal and consider ways to optimize operations.

Christine Dymek, Senior Managing Editor at Kaufman Wills Fusting & Company Editorial Services, a leading academic publishing consultancy, specializes in helping journals assess and improve aspects of their peer review process.

"That can be anything from length of peer review, the submission checking process, how issues of ethics are handled, transparency, copyright, or conflict of interest," Dymek explained. "At Kaufman Wills one of the things we pride ourselves on is professionalizing the journals that we work on."

According to Dymek, the top areas all journal editors should constantly be re-evaluating are how clearly they are stating their submissions instructions on their journal website and how effectively they are assessing manuscripts prior to sending them out for review.

How are the submissions instructions on your journal website impacting your workflow?

When was the last time you or one of your colleagues looked over your journal website from the perspective of a submitting author?

According to Christine Dymek, refining the submissions instructions on your journal's website to make them clearer for authors is one of the easiest ways that you can improve the quality of the submissions you receive and consequently save your editors and reviewers a lot of time!

> *"Authors shouldn't have to search for a journal's conflict of interest, copyright, figure permissions, or other necessary forms."*

"The absolute best thing that you can do is have a clear descriptive information for authors link available on your online submissions webpage," she said. "Authors shouldn't have to search for a journal's conflict of interest, copyright, figure permissions, or other necessary forms."

When reassessing your submissions page, take the time to also think about additional resources your journal could offer authors that might alleviate common points of confusion. For example, *Criminology, Criminal Justice, Law & Society* (one of the journals that contributed to this guide) includes sample references for different content and media sources on their submissions page, which authors can compare their references to in order to ensure they're complete.

At the same time, while it's important to ensure that your journal isn't skimping on its submissions instructions, for journals with extensive submissions guidelines it can be a good idea to look for ways to make your submissions page more concise. You don't want to overwhelm authors with large blocks of information they may not immediately need to know. You can keep your master submissions page focused by just listing basic information all authors will need, and embedding links within the text to other sections of your website with further details. For example, you might link to a section of your site with additional information on your journal's open access policy from your submissions page.

However extensive you choose to make your master submissions page, Dymek said to make sure that above all else it follows a linear order. The more work authors have to do to mentally organize your journal's submissions instructions, the more likely they will be to forget a step.

One of the best strategies journals can use to avoid author confusion is to offer a high-level overview of their submissions instructions on their submissions page. Dymek said one of the most popular ways to do this is to give authors a step-by-step manuscript submission checklist. Your journal's checklist can either be a required part of submissions or an optional tool for authors, and should break down all of your submissions instructions into one-sentence steps that authors can either literally or mentally check off as they go.

"Some journals that I work with actually have an interactive checklist as part of their online submissions," said Dymek. "Prior to submitting, authors have to check off the individual boxes acknowledging that they had to adhere to the journal's different requirements."

In addition to making sure that your journal's submissions page has all of the components that it should in an easy-to-follow order, Dymek said it is also imperative to make sure that everything is written very clearly. "Keep in mind that English is not a primary language for all of your authors," she said. Dymek said she's seen an increase in international submissions at all of the journals she's worked on and that ambiguous submission instructions can be one of the primary causes for avoidable revisions among international authors.

Christine Dymek, Senior Managing Editor at Kaufman Wills Fusting & Company Editorial Services, encourages journals to publish all of their submissions requirements to a single webpage

- The aims and scope of the journal
- Instructions for manuscript blindness
- Copyright requirements
- A comprehensive overview of manuscript formatting
- Ethical guidelines
- Metadata and file formatting requirements
- Open access policy

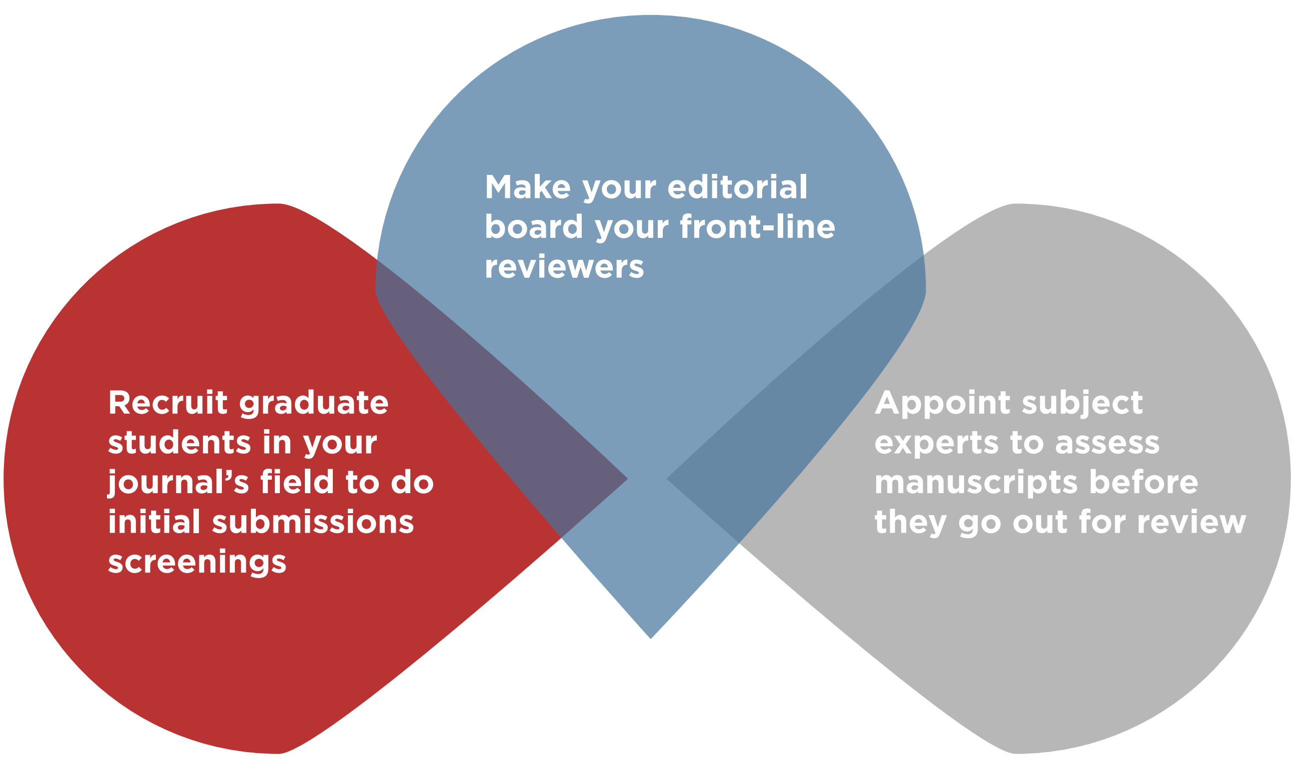
Are manuscript screenings slowing you down?

Of course, regardless of how clear your online submissions instructions are, your journal will still inevitably get it's fair share of manuscripts in need of revision. According to Dymek, the next best step journals can take to speed up their peer review process, after re-evaluating their submissions website, is to look at how well they are assessing the quality of the manuscripts they are receiving. Primarily, Dymek said journals should focus on how well they are determining whether or not new submissions are worthy of review.

"The reviewer should never be an initial screen," she said. "I think desk rejects is a really important topic right now. The big talk in academic publishing has been the increased strain on reviewers."

Dymek said journals need to become even more conscious about making sure the manuscripts they are assigning to reviewers are truly candidates for publication, to avoid burning out their willing reviewers with unnecessary work.

So what are best practices for screening submissions? Here are the top 3 suggestions that the editors we spoke with had to share:



Recruit graduate students in your journal's field to do initial submissions screenings

Henry Fradella, Coeditor-in-Chief of *Criminology, Criminal Justice, Law & Society*, said his journal ensures that all of their submissions are getting the proper attention prior to review by enlisting graduate students in the field to serve as co-managing editors. The student editors, who are automatically alerted when new submissions come in via Scholastica, do all initial submissions screenings. "Then they reach out to one of our co-editors and make a recommendation," Fradella explained.

When a co-editor receives a manuscript they are then able to do a quick cursory read of the submission, guided by notes provided by the student co-managing editor. From there, if they spot areas in need of work, Fradella said his co-editors will often ask authors to revise and resubmit their manuscripts prior to sending them out for external review.

"By the time a manuscript is going out for review there's already been a grad student, a co-editor, and then two other co-editors doing a cursory read," he said.

Fradella said having the help of graduate students is beneficial to all members of his journal team. The students are able to get valuable peer review experience while, at the same time, substantially reducing the amount of time the journal's co-editors have to spend dividing manuscripts among each other and doing initial readthroughs.

Recruiting graduate students to help with submission screenings is an idea other editors we spoke with were thinking about as well, including Anita Harris, Managing Editor of *SubStance: A Review of Theory and Literary Criticism*.

"We don't have [graduate student editors] yet, but I think we may need it," said Harris. "Our process is that articles come in and they are all considered by one of our lead editors."

Harris said for her team, having the help of graduate students could speed up the journal's peer review process by reducing the amount of time lead editors have to spend screening clearly unacceptable submissions, which a student could quickly flag down.

Make your editorial board your front-line reviewers

Among journals with fast peer review turnaround times, *Sociological Science* is one of the most impressive. The journal promises to give all authors manuscript decisions within thirty days or less. Many factors contribute to the journal's speed, including the way the founding editors have chosen to structure their editorial board and peer review process.

"The way the model works is that we have a board of consulting editors and we have the deputy editors and myself, and that's the reviewer pool so to speak," explained Editor-in-Chief Jesper Sørensen. By doing the heavy review work, Sørensen said his editors can be sure that they are only showing external referees submissions worthy of review. They are also able to substantially limit the burden of reviewer assignments. "What we ask the reviewers to do is read the paper and tell us according to [journal] criteria is this something good or bad, is this something with any obvious flaws in it? - without the need [for them] to write multiple pages on what they reviewed," said Sørensen. *Sociological Science's* consulting editors then compile decision letters for authors with detailed feedback.

Appoint subject experts to assess manuscripts before they go out for review

Christine Dymek, of Kaufman Wills Fusting & Company Editorial Services, said another way to keep lower-quality submissions from slipping through the cracks and being sent to reviewers is to enlist the help of topic experts. “We’ve seen some journals bring on topic experts to actually stand in-between the editor-in-chief and the reviewers, to give an additional screen and recommendation,” she said.

Dymek said, in general, most journals will not need topic experts. But, for journals that accept submissions from a wide range of disciplines, topic experts can help lead editors make more informed decisions about manuscripts outside of their primary disciplines.

Spot manuscripts in need of technical edits:

Depending on how specific journals' submissions requirements are, some may also have managing or assistant editors do technical checks of submissions before they are sent to lead editors for an initial readthrough. Technical checks involve checking that manuscripts are set up correctly with all necessary components, such as an abstract and complete references. If you have the manpower, incorporating technical checks into your journal workflow can be a good way to quickly spot errors that need to be addressed before manuscripts enter formal peer review, such as extensive formatting mistakes or submissions from non-English speaking authors that require additional substantive edits prior to being considered.

When it comes to technical checks, Christine Dymek said editors should focus on the basics and not get bogged down with too many stylistic concerns that can be addressed during first revisions. In the adjoining case study she offers an example of how she helped one journal find the right balance for technical checks.

Case Study: The Effects of Technical Checks

Among peer review practices to periodically reevaluate Christine Dymek, Senior Managing Editor at Kaufman Wills Fusting & Company Editorial Services, said journals should take the time to assess the speed and value of their manuscript technical check procedures. Dymek shared her experience with one of the journals she consulted that was accruing an unsustainable amount of backlog submissions that still needed to be assigned to editors. After assessing the journal's existing technical check process, Dymek helped the team revamp their approach to reduce their submissions backlog from over one hundred manuscripts to only nine.

"At one of the journals that we picked up, we walked into a situation where there was a significant backlog of new submissions in the mid-100 range," said Dymek. "These were submissions that had been submitted but hadn't been processed and assigned to an editor yet."

Dymek said the submissions pileup was due to both external factors and unsustainable internal processes, chief among them the journal's overly detailed technical check procedures.

"A lot of times when journals grow rapidly, and they go from traditional publishing to online publication, they start to see a surge in submissions. There's some adapting that needs to go with that increase," she explained. "This journal in particular had experienced a surge in submissions, but they hadn't changed their technical check policies from old ways to new."

After the journal's submissions increased it became apparent that the old manuscript check process was significantly drawing out the journal's time to first review. The old process required too much time from the journal's managing editors and asked too much of authors, who were being required to address an exhaustive amount of formatting concerns before a first round of peer review.

"The journal's acceptance rate is in the low 20s," said Dymek. "So 80% of the manuscripts coming in were going to be rejected anyway."

After watching the editors' normal technical check procedures Dymek said she explained to them that they needed to restructure their check to make it more selective, choosing only the issues that were most important for the journal's editors on first glance. "I asked them - what needs to take place? The abstract needs to be there, word length is important. Let's pick the top things that are important at this stage and push everything else to first revision - that way we're not asking authors to jump through hoops only to be rejected a week later," said Dymek. "Just by doing something as simple as that, changing the policy and having the editors agree to it, we were able to cut through the submissions backlog in two and a half months."

Know where your journal needs to improve: the magic of metrics

Short of waving a magic wand, it can be difficult for editors to break down their journal's peer review process and spot specific areas in need of improvement. The good news is, there is a more mundane form of magic that your team can tap into - the magic of metrics.

"I think that metrics are absolutely something that journals need to track and audit annually, if not bi-annually, just to see where they stand and to set goals," said Christine Dymek.

Dymek said that for the journals she works on she typically creates full editorial analytics reports to share with editors at group meetings. Among the metrics she focuses on, Dymek said her top priorities include:

- Average time to decision for the journal as a whole
- Submission rate
- Submission rate by country
- Submission rate by topic
- Overall acceptance and rejection rate
- Average number of desk rejections
- Acceptance and rejection rate by editor
- Time to decision by editor

Dymek said she usually works on journals using peer review management software, and is able to pull analytics reports automatically. For journals that are not presently using journal management software, tracking all of the metrics listed above may seem daunting. But that doesn't mean you should forgo metrics altogether!

Anita Harris, Managing Editor of *SubStance,* advises smaller journals to focus on manually tracking just one or two of their most important metrics. "Right now our main metric that's pressing is time," said Harris. "I am looking at the time from when an article was submitted to when the author received some kind of response from us."

Susan Altman, Managing Editor of *Global Environmental Politics,* also tracks all of her journal's metrics manually using Excel documents. "I keep stats on all of the basic things," said Altman. "I look at the number of manuscripts submitted by year, how many go through the peer review process, how many are desk rejected, and how many get rejected at the first or second phase of review."

Altman recommends that journals also track metrics about their peer reviewers. "We definitely keep track of how long it takes a manuscript to get through the review process," she said. Like most editors, Altman said her biggest struggle is trying to get reviewers to complete assignments in a timely manner without pestering them too often. "We know that all of our reviewers have a lot on their plates," she said.

For Altman, tracking reviewer metrics is an easy way to get the big picture of which of her reviewers are the most timely. Additionally, Altman tracks all of the review requests that she sends in order to avoid reaching out to the same reviewers too often.

"I think that metrics are absolutely something that journals need to track and audit annually, if not bi-annually, just to see where they stand and to set goals"

Address peer review tensions from the start

Aside from serving as a source of interesting information about how your editors and journal as a whole are working, what can metrics do for you?

One of the primary benefits of tracking metrics, particularly editor specific stats, is that journals can more easily spot and address concerns among editors about recurring workflow holdups. Christine Dymek gave one example of how she was able to use metrics to address tensions between editors at a journal she was working with in order to avoid conflict.

"We had one editor in particular that was taking over two months to make a decision from the time a manuscript was assigned. You can send email after email, prompt after prompt, but sometimes it's not enough," said Dymek. "We were finally able to give the editor-in-chief core data that said - here are the dates that the manuscripts were assigned, here are the number of days to review, here are our averages to compare, here are our goals."

Dymek said the editor-in-chief was able to use the data provided to address the issue with the editor. "They were able to discuss and address the reasons surrounding the longer time to decision, and it avoided conflict completely," she said.

According to Dymek, one of the best things editors can do when looking over their metrics reports is to take the time to consider the factors that may be behind the numbers. "Why are some editors moving at a slower rate? Are they getting adequate training? Are they unfamiliar with the journal's software system? Are they not aware of editorial office policies and standards?" Dymek said once editors start asking these question they'll be able to quickly spot potential points of friction in their process and address them.

Are you constantly improving your journal?

You've looked at your journal's workflow with a critical eye and spotted areas in need of improvement. Now it's time to start making some changes. When looking to improve your journal workflow, two of the best places to start are: assessing whether your journal's editors and reviewers are receiving adequate support, and determining whether or not your editors are taking the time to implement new journal initiatives.

Build training into your peer review process

If your journal is seeing variations in editor and reviewer performance and you would like to achieve a standardized peer review process, Christine Dymek said training can often be the answer.

"I think editor training is absolutely critical," said Dymek. "These are the faces and the voices of your journal. They impact your workflow, they impact your turnaround time, and the best investment you can make is in solid training."

Dymek said editor training doesn't have to be a terribly time-consuming affair. For a lot of the journals that she works on Dymek said she helps the editors create documentation that can be reused every time a new editor joins the team. Documentation can take the form of a complete editor training guide or just a series of tips and tricks that new editors can keep for future reference.

"Training can also be nothing more than an hour long video conference or screen share, just to walk through the software system your journal uses and how your account is organized," said Dymek. "Training is becoming increasingly important with the use of online submission systems, because no longer are you just receiving manuscripts by physical mail. Every editorial team has to make a commitment of time, and energy, and resources to training the editors."

As part of editor training, Dymek encourages all journal editors to make sure they are giving themselves and their co-editors robust ethical guidelines to follow.

"With the increase in submissions something that can't be left out is to have a policy on publication ethics," she said. Primary ethical concerns that all journals should instate policies around are how to spot plagiarism or duplicate publication and how to handle instances of either.

Dymek said journals looking to implement new ethical policies or to update existing practices can look to The Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) for guidance. "I live by COPE," she said. "You will not find a better resource out there." In addition to extensive literature on publication ethics, COPE offers flowcharts with steps editors can follow in the event that they suspect a common ethical concern, such as duplicate publication or changes in authorship. For medical journals, Dymek said the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors' (ICMJE) "Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing, and Publication of Scholarly work in Medical Journals" is another resource editors can look to when determining or updating their ethical policies.

> *"With the increase in submissions something that can't be left out is to have a policy on publication ethics"*

To help editors proactively address concerns about having limited time for journal work Henry Fradella, Coeditor-in-Chief of *Criminology, Criminal Justice, Law & Society*, added that journals can benefit from encouraging editors who are actively teaching to request course releases. "That's fairly common and colleges are usually accommodating," he said. Fradella said some of his lead editors have been able to get course releases for one fall and one spring semester course, freeing up more time for journal work. Journals can add information about how to request a course release to their editor training documentation.

Make time for editorial board meetings

As you assess your journal's workflow you may find it necessary to make one or multiple widespread changes in order to streamline your process, such as restructuring your editorial board or adopting journal management software. In order to address such publication-wide decisions, setting aside time for team meetings is paramount. Even for smaller journals that have frequent informal group discussions, many of the editors we spoke with said that having dedicated meeting times is important. Structured meetings can often result in more concrete next steps, implementation benchmarks, and outcomes for new initiatives.

Anita Harris, Managing Editor of *SubStance*, said her publication has full editorial board meetings at least once a year. "We have one formal meeting per year where all of the editors and the founding editors get together. That's when we hash out plans and make projections," she said.

As the new managing editor at *SubStance*, Harris said she is looking forward to the upcoming annual meeting as an opportunity to discuss ways to improve the main metric she has been tracking - the amount of time it takes the journal to make manuscript decisions. "I think it's really a matter of communication," she said. "What can I do to prompt the editors' attention and differentiate regular emails from those with more urgency?"

For journals that operate under the umbrella of a society or university press, Christine Dymek added that it's also a good idea to establish a publications committee, if one doesn't exist already. "A publications committee is different than an editorial board in that it pulls in a wide range of people," said Dymek. "On the publications committee you can have the editor-and-chief of the journal, a high level representative of the editorial office, maybe society members from different disciplines to make sure every discipline is covered, and a representative from the journal's association."

Dymek said publication committees should plan to meet in person one to two times a year. "They can deal with ethical issues that come up, talk about the journal's scope and mission, and if they want to make bigger changes such as implementing submission fees they can have that conversation," she said.

Henry Fradella, Editor-in-Chief of *Criminology, Criminal Justice, Law & Society*, offered an example of how past editors at his journal convened with their editors and society to change the publication's name. "The journal was originally called the *Western Criminology Review*, said Fradella. "Before I came in they made the switch." Fradella said the previous editors prepared a document to present to The Western Society of Criminology, which the journal is published under. The document included reasons for the name change including re-branding the journal to better show the full scope of the publication and draw in more high-quality submissions. Fradella's example demonstrates the importance of editors not only discussing larger publication changes but also taking formal steps to make them possible.

When deciding how to organize *Sociological Science,* Editor-in-Chief Jesper Sørensen said he and his editors made a point to meet and discuss all of their options. Together they came up with an innovative take on the traditional peer review process that enables them to make all of their manuscript decisions in an impressive thirty days or less. In an interview with Scholastica, Sørensen explained the journal's process.

"One of the things that slows down more traditional journals is they spend a lot of time just trying to find people who are willing to review," said Sørensen. "So our deal with our consulting editors is that to be a consulting editor you have to pre-commit to doing a certain number of papers a year, so that we can get our decisions done in thirty days. In that sense our review and editorial model is quite different from most standard journals."

Sørensen said in addition to deciding to ask their consulting editors to serve as a sort of built-in reviewer pool, during initial journal meetings he and his co-editors decided they would also eliminate the need for revise and resubmit requests.

"We tell the authors, we are not going to give developmental feedback. Our model is simply we are going to make a decision. Is this interesting? Is this novel? Does this have the potential to make a contribution to the field? And are there any obvious flaws? If [the submission] passes all of those tests we'll publish it, or we'll give a conditional acceptance where we'll say there is one flaw here that you can fix," Sørensen explained.

A driving factor behind *Sociological Science's* no revise and resubmit policy is the journal's mission to embrace errors of commission over errors of omission.

"We think it's wrong to believe the review process is good enough to essentially eliminate any errors of commission," said Sørensen. "One of the costs of simply trying to eliminate any errors of commission is that you tend to crush things that are novel and controversial, because people can't agree about whether or not they are right."

Do you have a reviewer retention plan in place?

When it comes to reviewer retention, Henry Fradella, Editor-in-Chief of *Criminology, Criminal Justice, Law & Society*, said the best way to keep reviewers is to first make sure you're reaching out to the right ones.

"We try and reach out to people whose institutional affiliations or publication histories suggest that they're active researchers," he said. "We wouldn't be going to somebody who hadn't published or who is at a teaching institution where they have a heavy teaching load and are therefore not as engaged in research as other scholars."

Depending on the field you publish in you may have a large number of early-career researchers to reach out to, which can be among the most willing reviewer pools. In order to attract and retain early-career scholars, Christine Dymek said implementing some form of reviewer training is a good idea.

"I don't think that [reviewer training] is something that has gained a lot of attention in the past, but I definitely see a trend of it moving forward," she said. Dymek said some larger publishers have even begun creating reviewer-specific resource webpages and webinars.

"For smaller journals I think any documentation that they can provide would be helpful," she said. "A lot of these people are coming in with absolutely no review experience whatsoever, and they get an email to serve as reviewer with minimal support documentation. So, I definitely think as more and more is being asked of these reviewers that you are going to see an increase in training."

On the flip side, for journals publishing in smaller fields comprised of more experienced scholars, striving for simple reviewer documentation can prevent referees from feeling overwhelmed by journal requests. Susan Altman, Managing Editor of *Global Environmental Politics*, said she's found that the best way to retain reviewers is to keep assignments simple and to the point, without building in too many supplementary guidelines.

"There are only 4 or 5 questions that we ask reviewers to answer," said Altman. "We ask them to comment on the organization of the manuscript, whether or not it's appropriate for the journal, how well the content ties into what's been done in the field before, and how well written it is. We get really thorough reviews that way."

Regardless of how you choose to structure your reviewer assignments, all of the editors that we spoke with emphasized the importance of letting reviewers know that you appreciate their hard work.

“We always send them a thank you letter,” said Henry Fradella. “And if the manuscript is published we send them another thank you with a link to the published article. We think that’s a nice additional step to take.”

The Rise of Reviewer Recognition

Scholars and publishers are becoming increasingly sensitive to peer reviewer shortages and the importance of giving academics incentives to review. In September 2014 a group of over 40 Australian editors actually sent a letter entitled *Journal Reviewing and Editing: Institutional Support is Essential* to the Australian Research Council, the National Health & Medical Research Council of Australia, Universities Australia, the Australian academies, and all Australian Deputy Vice Chancellors of Research. In the letter the editors called for institutions and funding bodies to formally acknowledge reviewer contributions in hiring and grant decisions. The editors’ letter reflects concerns about lack of reviewer recognition that many scholars around the world share and continue to voice.

In terms of how institutions will respond to such requests for reviewer recognition, we’ll have to wait and see. In the meantime, what else can editors do to give their reviewers the acknowledgment they deserve?

Christine Dymek suggests publishing an annual reviewer recognition listing - a list of everyone who reviewed for your journal in the last year - on your journal website and sending a copy of it to all of your journal subscribers. Additionally, she said some journals are looking to reviewer reward systems as a possible solution. “Some of the more progressive publishers are offering reward systems. It can be a fee waiver for a future submission, online badge, or some other benefit,” she said. Dymek said she expects to see more publishers surfacing the use of reviewer rewards in the future.

> *“as more and more is being asked of these reviewers you are going to see an increase in training.”*

A workflow that works for your journal

Are you ready to reassess your journal's existing workflow and implement best practices to improve your peer review process? There's no time like the present to take the first step. We hope this guide has given you some valuable suggestions to get started, and sparked some new ideas that you can bring to your editorial board, as well!

As you find new ways to improve your peer review process, we encourage you to share your thoughts and questions on Scholastica's Conversation!

About the author

Scholastica is a web-based academic journal management platform with all the tools needed to track submissions, automate administrative tasks, and coordinate communication throughout peer review. Along with a complete peer review management system, Scholastica offers open access publishing software and webpage hosting to its member journals. Scholastica is hosted, managed, and updated by our team in the cloud, so journals don't have to worry about IT at all.