

A Guide for Editors-in-Chief

Addressing Diversity &
Inclusion in EBM and
Reviewer Recruitment

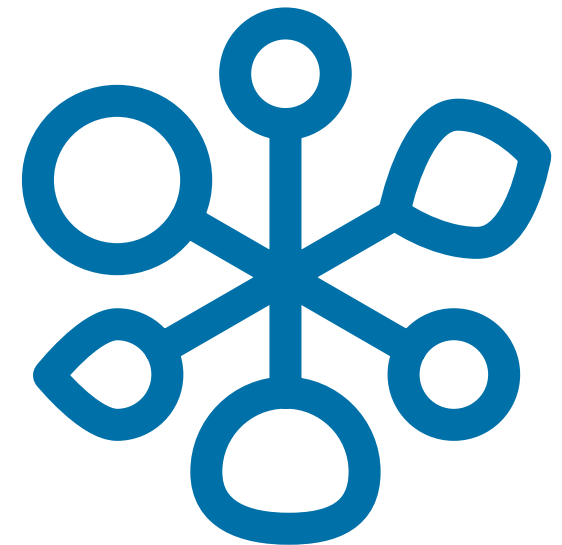
Introduction

Springer Nature is [committed to](#) the values of diversity, equity and inclusion. As an organization, we believe that diversity is a strength, that inclusion requires commitment and that representation matters.

These values are increasingly important for the credibility, trust and reputation of our journals. Our journals serve a diverse and global community and it is vital that this diversity is represented in both peer-reviewers and in the Editorial Boards who make decisions on content to be published.

These values are set out in our [code of conduct](#) for journals and [peer review policy](#).

As Editors, you play a key role in ensuring that your journal is inclusive, welcoming and representative of your research community. To help support this, we have developed best practice recommendations for the recruitment of peer reviewers. We strongly encourage you to use this framework to ensure that values of diversity, equity and inclusion are taken into consideration for your journal.



Considering diversity during recruitment of Editorial Board Members (EBMs)

1. Evaluate the current Editorial Board and consider appropriate representation

Before initiating recruitment of new EBMs, we recommend reviewing the current Editorial Board and assessing not only which expertise is required, but also which aspects of diversity could be increased with the aim for the Editorial Board to be representative of the community the journal serves.

It's important to consider whether there are geographic regions that are underrepresented on your Editorial Board compared to their research output. We also strive to ensure that we achieve a gender balance on our Editorial Boards.

In some cases, the scope of a journal may place even more importance on the diversity of the Editorial Board to ensure that content is reviewed fairly and to a high standard. For example, for a publication on global health, geographical representation is key, while for one on women studies, appropriate gender representation is vital.

2. Supporting diversity using combination of recruitment approaches

As a general principle, when recruiting, it is important to be aware of biases in the field and in the source of candidates. For example, an approach that calls for volunteers/applicants may result in a greater proportion of members from dominant groups.

These candidates may be considered (and properly vetted) as part of a suite of recruitment approaches, however it is important to ensure that a conscious effort is made to improve diversity.

This is expected to benefit the journal, and will have a positive effect on diversity and inclusion overall.

A diverse editorial team and board is more likely to invite a diverse peer reviewer pool.

- Talk to your SN Publishing contact about whether to consider applications from an EBM application form (see [example](#))
- Consider past authors and reviewers.
- Consult EBMs to identify candidates within their networks. Editorial outreach and networking.
- Public lists/spreadsheets of experts and discipline-based organizations or societies.
- Networks of researchers from underrepresented groups. In the Black community in particular, there are now various networks in STEM (e.g. Black in Microbiology).
- Data-supported approaches. Useful tools include Dimensions, Web of Science, Scopus, PubMed, Google Scholar. Some tools allow for an unbiased search for talent in a certain discipline using certain demographic information.
- Consider balancing career-stage representation across the Editorial Board. Appeal to ECRs – build relationships

Encouraging peer reviewer inclusivity at your journal

It can be hard to recruit reviewers, and efforts to balance the reviewer pool are welcome and appreciated. Actively considering a wider and more diverse reviewer pool improves our chances of finding appropriate and willing reviewers. Diverse reviewer pools also benefit the journal by increasing the visibility of the journals and by building relationships with new groups of researchers.

The topic of a manuscript should be considered when identifying appropriate peer reviewers. However, we strive for diverse demographic representation of peer reviewers, and Editors are strongly encouraged to consider geographical regions, gender identities, racial/ethnic groups, and other groups when inviting peer reviewers.

It is also important to ensure that the journal is able to encourage Early Career Researchers (ECRs) to participate in the peer review process. In this way Editors can support diversity and inclusion in their journal by supporting junior researchers by inviting them to review (or co-review with a more experienced colleague) and by directing them to existing [resources](#) that Springer Nature provides to support reviewers (see also [here](#)).

Your journal can take actions to publicly encourage and support diversity in peer reviewers as outlined below. You can also find further detail in our guide titled 'Managing the Peer Review Process: Addressing Diversity & Inclusion in Reviewer Recruitment' available on our [website](#).

If you are interested in either of these approaches, please discuss with the Springer Nature publishing contact for your journal



Tips & Examples

For increasing peer reviewer inclusivity

Encourage researchers to volunteer as peer reviewers through an [online application form](#) on the journal website or by contacting the journal (see [Interested in reviewing for Communications Biology?](#))

It is important to note that any volunteer reviewers should be vetted to ensure that they are appropriate to the journal/manuscript and that their identity can be verified. However, it is also important to be aware of biases in the field and in the source of candidates. For example, an approach that calls for volunteers / applicants may result in a greater proportion of members from dominant groups.

For increasing peer reviewer equity

Make peer reviewer resources available (e.g. on journal website, attach to email)

- www.springernature.com/gp/reviewers
- www.nature.com/ncomms/for-reviewers/reviewer-training
- www.nature.com/commsbio/referees/resources-for-referees

If you are interested in this approach, please discuss with the Springer Nature publishing contact for your journal.

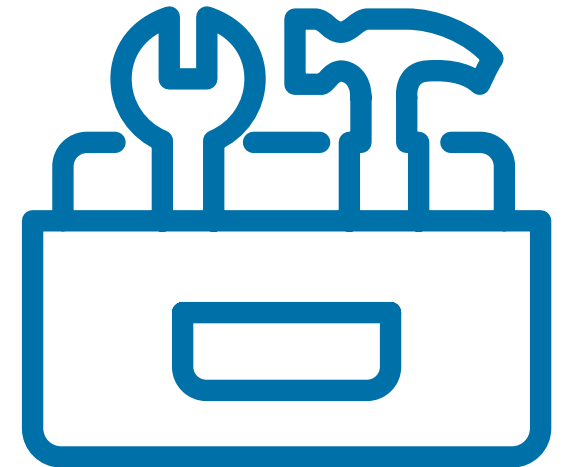
Consider initiating peer review mentoring programs, such as the introduction of an Early Career Researcher (ECR) Board. Examples of existing initiatives include the launch of new ECR peer review programs at [Biogeochemistry](#), [Nature Communications](#) and the [Nature Reviews journals](#).

If you are interested in either of these approaches, please discuss with the Springer Nature publishing contact for your journal



Resources

- [University of Washington Resources for Hiring Diverse Faculty](#), which contains a helpful section on discipline-based organizations
- [University of California, Davis Resources to Broaden Applicant Pool](#), which contains a list of discipline-based organizations and minority networks
- [NIH Recruitment Search Protocol](#), which contains step-by-step directions for how to conduct an unbiased talent search using certain demographic information (e.g. from Web of Science)
- American Psychological Association's [toolkit for DEI](#), which includes a section on representation on Editorial Boards and a section on inclusive peer review
- [COPE's guidance](#) on diversifying editorial boards
- Courses for external Editors – [Editor Courses](#) | [Editors](#) | [Springer Nature](#)
- Peer review policies:
 - [BMC](#)
 - [Nature Portfolio](#)
 - [Palgrave Macmillan](#)
 - [Springer](#)
- Springer Nature [Journal Editors' Code of Conduct](#)



Thank you

For more resources for editors,
you can visit [Springer Nature's Editor pages](#).
You can also find out more about
Springer Nature's DEI initiatives on our [website](#)