

Chapter 1

Editorial Responsibilities

The editing of all scientific papers published by ASA, CSSA, and SSSA is a two-step process. First, the journal editor together with other members of the editorial board, usually technical editors (called co-editors in *Vadose Zone Journal* and senior editors in *Agrosystems, Geosciences & Environment*; referred to here as technical editors) and associate editors, determine whether a scientific paper represents a significant addition to the literature. If so, one or more of those editors work with the author to make certain the paper is complete and scientifically accurate.

After the assigned editor (journal, technical, or associate depending on the journal) accepts a paper for publication, journal program managers (program managers) employed by ASA, CSSA, and SSSA oversee production of the paper to ensure its adherence to ASA, CSSA, SSSA, and other recognized rules regarding style, grammar, and quality and consistency of presentation.

In cases of possible disagreement among editors, the journal editors have the final say regarding matters of scientific content and style, and the program managers have the final say regarding matters of grammar and presentation style.

Editors-in-Chief

Each society has an editor-in-chief, nominated by the president and confirmed by the board of directors. Each editor-in-chief serves a three-year term and may be reappointed for a second term. These persons have overall responsibility for all publications of the respective societies. The editor-in-chief serves in an ex officio capacity on that society's board of directors, on the editorial boards of all journals sponsored or cosponsored by that society, and on the intersociety Editorial Policy Coordination Committee. Chairship of this committee rotates annually among the ASA, CSSA, and SSSA editors-in-chief.

Each editor-in-chief makes recommendations to that society's president about appointment and reappointment of editors of journals and other publications. The editor-in-chief also, on behalf of the president and after consultation with the editor, appoints the persons to fill the technical editor posts created by the executive committee of the sponsoring society. New technical editor positions may not be created without the approval of the sponsoring society's board of directors.

Initial appeals are handled by the journal editor; if the situation is not resolved, an author may then appeal to the editor-in-chief, whose decision

is final. The editor-in-chief of each society is responsible for appeals of manuscript releases from the journals.

Editors-in-chief may also be called on by their society's board of directors to handle special projects or problems and to perform other editorial duties.

Editors

The journal editor, who serves as chair of the journal's editorial board, is nominated by the president of the sponsoring societies and confirmed by the board of directors. The editor serves for a three-year term and may be reappointed for a second term.

The editor is responsible for the overall quality of the journal's content and implements policy decisions approved by the board of directors. The editor and editorial board oversee procedures for manuscript submission, acceptance, rejection, and publication, as well as the criteria for review and referee of papers. The editor delegates editorial duties to other members of the editorial board and takes an active part in defining the journal's aims, scope, policies, and editorial coverage. The editor prepares an annual report for the sponsoring society describing the journal status and recommendations for changes.

The editors of most ASA, CSSA, and SSSA journals receive manuscripts, assign the papers to technical editors or associate editors, and track the status of manuscripts in review through the online submission system. The editor handles the initial appeals procedure for manuscripts that are rejected.

The editor may write editorials or solicit manuscripts on special topics. Letters to the editor are approved by the editor, who seeks advice from the editorial board and others as needed.

The specific duties of a journal editor may vary with each journal and are described in more detail in Chapter 3.

Technical Editors

Technical editors are nominated by the journal editor and appointed by the editor-in-chief on behalf of the president(s) of the respective society board(s). As with the duties of editor, the duties of technical editors (co-editors for *Vadose Zone Journal* and senior editors for *Agrosystems, Geosciences & Environment*) vary from journal to journal. Some journals have no technical editors.

Most technical editors are responsible for rejecting manuscripts, and some also hold the authority to approve manuscripts for publication. The technical editor serves for a three-year term and may be reappointed for a second term.

Technical editors work under the direction of the journal editor and are responsible for the technical and intellectual content of the journal in

their assigned areas. They direct the work of associate editors in reviewing and evaluating the manuscripts submitted to the journal.

The specific duties of a technical editor can vary with each journal and are described in more detail in Chapter 3.

Technical editors maintain the overall responsibility for determining that in-depth and timely reviews are obtained from knowledgeable scientists.

Technical editors also are responsible for taking an active interest in assisting the editor to define the journal's aims, policies, and editorial coverage and in recruiting members for the editorial board.

Associate Editors

Associate editors for each journal are appointed by the journal editor on behalf of the president of the respective society. Associate editors serve three-year terms and may be reappointed for a second term. In rare circumstances, associate editors may be reappointed for an additional term.

Associate editors are responsible for obtaining reviews of each manuscript and for evaluating in a timely manner the technical and intellectual content and suitability of manuscripts assigned to them.

If so delegated by the editor or technical editor, the associate editor works with the authors to obtain the required changes in manuscripts that are likely to be acceptable after revision.

Associate editors recommend to the editor or technical editor (depending on the board's structure) when manuscripts should be rejected. Depending on the board's structure, the associate editor recommends acceptance to the editor or technical editor. For some journals, the associate editor may be authorized to accept papers for publication.

Associate editors also assist the editor in defining the journal's aims, policies, and editorial coverage, as well as in recruiting members for the editorial board.

The specific duties of a associate editor can vary with each journal and are described in more detail in Chapter 3.

Journal Program Managers

The program manager of each journal is assigned by the publications director. The program manager oversees submission and production of papers approved for publication, including transmittal of proofs to authors. The publications director, together with the program manager, makes contract arrangements for production of the journal. The program manager works closely with the editor and editor-in-chief to maintain the quality of the journal.

The publications director may assign one or more production manager to aid in journal production.

Accepting or Rejecting a Paper

The policy of ASA, CSSA, and SSSA is that no scientific paper may be published in any of their journals, books, or other scholarly publications unless at least two unbiased professional scientists agree that the paper is acceptable. Similarly, once the formal review has begun, no scientific paper may be rejected by one of the scholarly publications unless at least two unbiased professional scientists agree to that rejection. Editorial board members are expected to exercise professional judgment, not merely follow the conclusion of the volunteer reviewers. Specific procedures for implementing this policy are detailed in Chapter 2.

Editorial Misconduct

The following statement on editorial misconduct was approved by the ASA, CSSA, SSSA Executive Committees in their respective March 1997 meetings.

Allegations of editorial misconduct by members of the editorial boards or by reviewers of any ASA, CSSA, or SSSA publication are serious and deserve attention and resolution by a fair and impartial process. Procedures to investigate alleged editorial misconduct are designed to provide all parties to the dispute an opportunity to confidentially present and discuss the facts, and to avoid potential discredit to any party involved. Equitable resolution of the matter is the goal of this policy. All parties in the dispute are urged to seek the opinion of legal counsel.

Definition: Editorial misconduct is any action by a participant in the editorial and review procedure of an ASA, CSSA, or SSSA publication that disadvantages the scholarship of the authors of an unpublished document in the scientific community. Examples of editorial misconduct include plagiarism, copying unpublished scholarly documents without authorization of the authors, or use of documents submitted to Societies' publications for unethical scientific, academic, or scholarly advantage.

1. Allegations of editorial misconduct must be submitted in writing and signed by the complainant. The complainant will submit the written complaint to the editor of the publication responsible for managing the review of the complainant's unpublished document.
2. The editor will endeavor to secure from the complainant all materials pertaining to the alleged misconduct. The editor will summarize the facts of the allegation and communicate them in writing to the alleged perpetrator of the misconduct, hereafter called the respondent. The editor will advise the president of the appropriate Society and the appropriate Society editor-in-chief of the allegations. The editor-in-chief will manage the inquire into the alleged editorial misconduct.
3. The editor-in-chief will appoint an ad hoc committee of three Society members to investigate the allegations and to obtain additional information from any parties to the dispute.
4. The ad hoc committee will conduct its investigations and deliberations in

confidence. At the conclusion of the investigation, the committee will submit its findings in writing to the editor-in-chief, and return to that officer all materials used in the conduct of their duties.

5. The editor-in-chief will communicate the findings of the ad hoc committee to the complainant and to the respondent. If the committee finds for the complainant, the editor-in-chief will determine and implement the action to be taken against the respondent. If the committee finds the allegations to be without merit, the editor-in-chief will send a letter of no-finding to the respondent and the complainant, and dismiss the inquiry.
6. Either party to the dispute has the right to appeal the findings of the investigation. The appeal must be submitted in writing to the Society president within 90 days of the date of the editor-in-chief's findings. The Society president will determine the merits of the appeal. The Society president will determine the process and venue for resolving the appeal and communicate its findings in writing to the complainant and respondent.
7. After resolution of the allegation, the editor responsible for managing the review of the document involved in the dispute will summarize the matter for the editor-in-chief and president and propose modifications of editorial policy or practice to reduce the likelihood of a recurrence of the alleged misconduct.

Record Retention

The review process is managed entirely through the online submission system; thus, record retention for a manuscript is automatic. Headquarters retains records of the production process of approved manuscripts for at least three months after their publication.

Stipend Policy

The three societies provide an allowance to journal editors and technical editors. Those entitled to a stipend are informed at the beginning of their term of the policies regarding reimbursement and are updated annually on the allowed maximum amounts for the coming year.