

## *Relations Between Editors and Their Publishers or Sponsoring Societies*

A scientific editor recognizes that scientific and editorial ethics are founded on integrity, competence, and a responsibility to protect the communal and public interest. The editor works to advance the reporting of science in ways that ensure the highest standards of reliability, accessibility, openness, and integrity of the scientific enterprise and that promote the broader ethical and communal interests of science in the public domain. Effective journal operations can best be achieved if the editor and the publisher or sponsoring society of a scientific journal and its officers develop clear policies similar to those below.

The editor has total responsibility, authority, and accountability for editorial content of the journal. The editor must be free to authorize publication of peer-reviewed and other appropriate research reports—as well as society news, appropriate advertising, and other materials—and must be free from unilateral, politically biased, or otherwise arbitrary interference that may detract from the long-standing tradition of a free scientific press. The publisher or sponsoring society and its officers are usually responsible for financial and other management issues, but they will always recognize and accept the journal's scientific integrity and the editorial independence of the editor.

The editor and the publisher or sponsoring society and its officers should enter into a clear signed and witnessed contract to ensure proper editorial freedom and responsibility. Such a contract should identify the officers, committee, or other management group that the editor is primarily responsible to. Furthermore, the contract should state clearly the job

description, reporting responsibilities, and performance measurements. These should include statements of scientific, editorial, and administrative expectations of all parties; terms of reference under which the journal is published; the length of the contract; financial conditions, including operating expenses and remuneration (if any); and terms for termination by either party.

The editor will act professionally without prejudice or conflict of interest.

To maintain professional autonomy associated with publication of peer-reviewed reports, the editor will not allow his or her editorial judgment to be influenced by political, commercial, or other considerations that are beyond the scope of each scientific report and analysis of possible impacts and applications.

The editor will inform the publisher or sponsoring society and its officers of any political, commercial, or other incidents that could impair the scientific credibility of the publication and will take measures necessary to ensure that such incidents do not affect decisions that he or she is called on to make.

Whether a volunteer or employed on a full- or part-time basis, the editor will report annually to the publisher or sponsoring society and its officers any noneditorial, scientifically related activities in which the editor is engaged. The editor will ensure that peer review and other related publication assignments are undertaken by qualified specialists as necessary and that these specialists disclose conflicts of interest with the editor, the submitting authors, the publisher, or the sponsoring society and its officers.

The editor will work with the publisher or sponsoring society and its officers to ensure that services and products of contractors, vendors, and other commercial interests required for proper publication are selected on the basis of merit.

The editor will warn the publisher or sponsoring society and its officers of any adverse consequences to be expected if his or her professional judgment is overruled and will ensure that proposed alternative actions do not impair editorial integrity.

The editor will not disclose confidential information unless authorized by the source of that information, unless there are allegations of misconduct that require access to that confidential information for proper investigation, or unless the editor is required by law to disclose that information.

The editor shall refrain from using confidential information for personal gain and shall take reasonable steps to ensure that such information is not used for the advantage of other parties.

If the editor becomes aware of a contravention of these guidelines, he or she will report it to the publisher or sponsoring society and its officers.

The editor may be called on to assist the publisher or sponsoring society and its officers in the education and training of new editors.

Note: Some examples of guidelines and agreements covering scientific editorial and administrative functions will be added to this policy statement in due course.

