

# Role description of Joint Editor of the Royal Statistical Society, Series C (Applied Statistics)

## **1. General description**

The primary task of a joint editor is to manage the review process of manuscripts submitted to the series through the ScholarOne Manuscripts web-based submission and peer review system. This begins with the initial screening of manuscripts for suitability for further consideration via selection of the appropriate associate editor from the editorial panel, who will then usually assign independent referees. The submission system automatically records the progress of the review process and the history of each manuscript, enabling the editor to manage the quality and timeliness of the review process. The overall administration of the system and journal production are carried out by Oxford University Press (OUP), who deal with any problems and provide assistance, but the RSS journals office is also on hand to support, advise and deal with other administrative matters.

## **2. Co-ordination between joint editors**

Each joint editor is assigned half of the series submissions to handle, but it is essential that they maintain a close working relationship to provide mutual support in matters of policy and technical content. At the start of a new editor's term, they will deal with new papers or those for which authors are awaiting the first decision. At the end of June of an editor's first year, the previous editor's remaining open files are transferred in a final handover. For continuity, the joint editors' terms of office are staggered. Working with the journals manager, the continuing editor sets up and chairs a search committee to find a replacement for the next editor who is due to retire at the end of the following year. The joint editors typically meet in person only if there is an editorial panel meeting or when meetings are convened with the publishers or the Honorary Officer for Journals. Most of the time, contact is by email or MS Teams online meetings.

## **3. The editorial panels**

For Series C each editor will receive about 180–200 new manuscripts per year. Each year, after consultation with their panels and with the support of the RSS journals office, the joint editors select cohorts of new members for the editorial Panel to replace retiring members. Associate editors serve for 4 years. They are chosen to reflect the various areas of expertise that need to be covered, for being scientifically outstanding in their area(s) of expertise and for their commitment to a rapid reviewing process. Associate editors should therefore be well organized and have good communication skills.

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### **4. Co-ordination with the publishers and editorial office**

New submissions arrive through the ScholarOne on-line system for all the series daily, and the publishers assign the manuscripts to the appropriate joint editor within a day or so of receipt. The editor is then responsible for them until the review process has been concluded (ultimately resulting in either rejection or acceptance). Accepted papers then go into production with OUP. OUP and the journal editorial team can provide editorial and production updates and specific reports from the peer review system if needed. Notes on how the system operates, and peer review guidelines are provided for all new editors and associate editors at the beginning of their terms.

### **5. Personal characteristics**

Joint editors are reputable statistical scientists, with a broad view of the field that is covered by the series. S/he must have enthusiasm for the process of scholarly publication and have a desire to continue the tradition of the *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, while having an interest in innovative ways to develop it further. It is essential that he or she can commit and sustain sufficient time over their term of office to devote to achieving these aims.

The joint editor must be able to work independently but also be a team player, as he or she will work in close relationships with the other joint editors, the journals manager, journals publishing assistant and publishers and his or her editorial panel. Excellent communication and diplomatic skills are indispensable since some aspects of the job may require tact, such as in communicating the rejection of a manuscript to authors and urging associate editors and referees to turn in their reports quickly, while recognizing that likewise they are giving their time for free and have other pressing commitments. Good organizational skills are essential to ensure the smooth running of the journal.

### **6. Support**

The Society is a registered charity which operates under a Royal Charter and byelaws and therefore cannot make *ex gratia* payments to its journal editors. However, travel and subsistence costs to attend committee meetings and other out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed.

### **7. Aims and Scope of the Series C**

Series C seeks to publish papers that are tackling genuine problems in applied statistics, i.e. where applications are central to the paper and provide the motivation for the work

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presented. This usually implies that the specific application under study will also be mentioned in the title, and should figure prominently in abstract, introduction and discussion as well as in other parts of the paper. In essence, papers should directly engage with the application and should clearly indicate what additional insights into the applied problem have been gained by applying the suggested methodology. This also implies that some technical details, derivations and proofs might not form part of the main body of the text but might be moved into supplementary material.

Series C papers make a novel contribution to statistics by adapting or developing new statistical methodology for a specific applied context, or by demonstrating the innovative combination of existing advanced statistical methods. Series C also accepts papers on computational statistics, machine learning and data science, if they are engaging with an application as outlined above. Papers where the application merely serves as an illustration for new methodology or papers that use well-established statistical methods to analyze data are not suitable for Series C. Similarly, papers that only contain brief numerical illustrations or focus exclusively on simulation studies are not suitable, although numerical illustrations and simulations may of course form part of a Series C paper.

In terms of application areas and methodologies, Series C tries to be as broad as possible and therefore covers the whole range of interdisciplinary fields where statistics is applied, including but being by no means limited to agriculture, biology, chemistry, ecology, economics, genetics, industry, medicine, physics, and social sciences.