

The Royal Society of Biology **Research Communications Newsletter**

A collection of online information and opinion pieces.

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This newsletter provides links to published news articles. Views or opinions presented are those of the original author(s) and do not necessarily represent the views of the Royal Society of Biology.

Top story

Clarivate Unveils Comprehensive Framework to Evaluate the Societal Impact of Research

Clarivate Plc, a global provider of transformative intelligence, has announced the development of a comprehensive framework for evaluating the societal impact of research. The approach has been outlined in a new report published by the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI)[™] to address the growing demand for demonstrating the benefits of research and development (R&D) investments across various sectors of society.

Opportunities

Editorial Board Member for the Journal of Biological Education

The Royal Society of Biology seeks a new Editorial Board member for the Journal of Biological Education, with particular expertise in biological education within early years and/or primary education; informal learning; or medical education. In this voluntary role, the successful applicant(s) will manage submission and review of at least two manuscripts each month and make recommendations to the Editor-in-Chief regarding publication.

More information can be found [here](#). Applications close at **23.59 on 15th November**.

Series Editor for the Oxford Biology Primers series, Human Health and Disease

The Royal Society of Biology seeks a new Series Editor for the Oxford Biology Primers series, with particular expertise in human health and disease. In this discretionary role, the successful applicant will determine the approach and coverage of the Human Health and Disease strand of the Oxford Biology Primer series, in collaboration with Oxford University Press. This will involve recommending and approaching authors to write content for the series and supporting them to develop proposals and manuscripts that reflect the aims of the series, with assistance from the Publisher.

More information can be found [here](#). Applications close at **23.59 on 15th November**.

Open Biology's Open Questions competition

The Royal Society has announced the launch of [Open Biology's](#) inaugural Open Questions competition. Submit a pressing, understudied or interesting ['open question'](#) in cellular and molecular biology. Participants have the chance to win an overall prize of £1,000 and enjoy a full Article Processing Charge (APC) waiver - submit your article before **31st October 2024**.

Prime Minister's Council for Science and Technology launches recruitment campaign

The Council for Science and Technology is the government's highest-level advisory body on science and technology providing independent advice directly to the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

This campaign is seeking applicants with expertise in science, technology, engineering or innovation with experience at a national level (whether academia, business, finance, or the not-for-profit sector).

Applicants should also have strong interpersonal and communication skills and have the ability to operate at the interface between disciplines, integrate different perspectives, and develop evidence-based advice.

The closing date for applications is **12:00 on Monday 7th October**. Please only apply via the link above. Applications through third party websites will not be accepted.

Spotlight on open access

[Think tank urges academic publishing reform to 'save £30m'](#)

Think tank UK Day One has published a new report recommending that UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) stop supporting open-access block grants to universities, according to Research Professional News. The report argues that these grants cost £40 million every year and are used to pay article processing charges to academic publishers. Instead, £10m should go to direct support for “not-for-profit preprint servers” as well as “post-publication peer review platforms”, says the report. The rest—£30m—can go to Dsit, allowing the department to “realise cost-savings”, it suggests. Open-access block grants are currently used by UKRI to provide funding to support its own open-access policy.

[Opinion: The long wait for long form open access](#)

Charting the history of open access policy for long form publications in the UK, research consultant Simon Kerridge argues on the LSE Impact Blog that the most recent Research Excellence Framework delay may herald an even more distant future for open access books.

[Academic Publishing: France's Publishers on Open Access](#)

In a bid for ‘copyright and academic freedom,’ France’s publishers cheer a court ruling on a university’s open-access policy, reports Publishing Perspectives.

Publication policy and debate

[‘Substandard and unworthy’: why it’s time to banish bad-mannered reviews](#)

The publisher of Physics World and other journals is marking Peer Review Week 2024 by calling for more courtesy in the process, reports Nature News. Peer review, which has for centuries been the standard tool to determine an academic paper’s suitability for publication, is known to be flawed. Now one of its major weaknesses, sheer bad manners on the part of the reviewer, has been highlighted in a YouTube video from IOP Publishing (IOPP), headquartered in Bristol, UK — a society-owned publisher of more than 90 journals.

[Pricing framework to foster global equity in scholarly publishing](#)

cOAlition S has announced the release of a new pricing framework designed to foster global equity in scholarly publishing. Developed by Information Power following consultation with the funder, library/consortium, and publisher communities, the framework is intended to enable discussion, promote greater transparency and inspire publishers and other service providers to implement more equitable pricing across different economies.

[6 major academic publishers face antitrust lawsuit](#)

A professor at the University of California, Los Angeles filed a class-action complaint against six major publishers, alleging that several of their policies violate antitrust law and impede academic research, reports Higher Ed Dive. The class-action lawsuit, filed in federal district court in New York, names Elsevier, Wolters Kluwer, Wiley, Sage Publications, Taylor & Francis, and Springer Nature as defendants. The publishers allegedly agreed to make peer reviewing an unpaid job, prevent academics from submitting manuscripts to more than one journal at a time, and bar them from freely sharing their findings during the lengthy peer review process. The defendants have done “tremendous damage to science and the public interest,” the complaint alleged.

[Opinion: Thoughts on a class action lawsuit brought against scholarly publishers](#)

On September 12, the law firm of Lief, Cabraser, Heimann, and Bernstein announced antitrust litigation against six publishers: Elsevier, Springer Nature, Taylor and Francis, Sage, Wiley, and Wolters Kluwer. In this article, members of the Scholarly Kitchen community share their thoughts on this litigation.

Publishing ethics

[The 'publish or perish' mentality is fuelling research paper retractions – and undermining science](#)

In recent years the number of retractions has been rising sharply, The Conversation reports. For example, in 2023 more than 10,000 research papers were retracted globally. This marked a new record. Fuelling this troubling trend is a mentality known in academia as “publish or perish” which has existed for decades. The publication of research papers drives university rankings and career progression, yet the relentless pressure to publish has contributed to an increase in fraudulent data. Unless this changes, the entire research landscape may shift toward a less rigorous standard, hindering vital progress in fields such as medicine, technology and climate science.

[Use of generative AI in application preparation and assessment](#)

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) has launched a new policy on the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) during the funding application and assessment process.

[Opinion: If generative AI accelerates science, peer review needs to catch up](#)

Studies have increasingly shown the widespread use of generative AI in research publications. Faced with the consequent uptick in the number of publications, research integrity expert Simone Ragavooloo argues on the LSE Impact Blog that editors and reviewers should embrace AI tools to undertake the heavy lifting of statistical and methodological review and to allow them to focus on areas that require human expertise.

[Opinion: Ottoline Leyser: Equality, diversity and inclusion must be disruptive](#)

Shifting what and who is valued will strengthen the research system, writes Ottoline Leyser, UKRI chief executive, in Research Professional News. EDI are three letters that trigger strong associations: a long fight for social justice; a set of policies and processes that must be followed to comply with the law; a source of anxiety about what to say and not say; or woke nonsense. For many, EDI is contentious. It is therefore worth remembering, she writes, that for most people, the concepts for which EDI stands—equality (or equity), diversity and inclusion—are not contentious. In research and innovation there is compelling evidence that diverse perspectives drive excellence. Creativity and innovation thrive when difference is valued, sought out, and catalyses engaged discussion.

And finally...

[How I apply Indigenous wisdom to Western science and nurture Native American students](#)

In this Nature Careers Q&A, biochemist Dr Joslynn Lee shares how her Indigenous heritage shapes her research, and how she mentors the next generation of biochemists. Leveraging her expertise in computational chemistry and biology, Lee has created undergraduate teaching curricula for studying environmental microbiota that include place-based research, an approach that can incorporate Indigenous viewpoints. In 2023, she was selected as a Kavli Frontiers in Science fellow, a programme for developing leadership potential in early-career scientists.

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