

APPENDIX B

Journal Editors Meeting Melbourne, Australia, 23 August 2023

Chair: Andrew Allen

Attendees: Andrew Allen (IUCr Editor-in-chief), Takashiro Akitsu (*Acta E*), Angela Altomare (*Acta A*), Natalia Alvarez (*Acta E*), Svetlana Antonyuk (*Acta D*), Miguel Aranda (*JSR, IUCrData*), Mois Aroyo (*Acta A*), Ted Baker (*IUCrJ*), Marc de Boisseau (*Acta B*), Charlie Bond (*Acta D*), Henry Chapman (*IUCrJ*), Louise Dawe (*Acta B*), Louise De Las Penas (*Acta A*), Miguel Delgado (*Acta E*), Zygmunt Derewenda (*Acta D*), Graciela Diez de Delgado (*Acta E*), Paulina Dominiak (*Acta A*), Javier Ellena (*Acta E*), Fabio Furlan Ferreira (*Acta E*), Andy Fitch (*IUCrJ*), Santiago Gracia-Granda (*Acta E EAB*), Mauro Gemmi (*IUCrJ*), John Helliwell (*IUCrData*), Jan Ilavsky (*JAC*), Andrzej Katrusiak (*Acta B*), Loes Kroon-Batenburg (*IUCrData*), Genji Kurisu (*Acta D*), William Lewis (*Acta C*), Garry McIntyre (*JAC*), Brian McMahon, Louisa Meshi (*IUCrJ*), Atsushi Nakagawa (*Acta F*), Allen Oliver (*Acta C*), Takashi Ohhara (*Acta C*), Lukas Palatinus (*Acta A*), Vanessa Peterson (*IUCrJ*), Thomas Proffen (Commissioning Editor), Ian Robinson (*IUCrJ*), Amy Sarjeant (*Acta C*), Linda Shimon (*Acta F*), Leo Suescun (*Acta E*), Masaki Yamamoto (*JSR*), Shao-Liang Zheng (*Acta E*), Xiaodong Zou (*IUCrJ*)

Chester staff: Amanda Berry, Gillian Holmes, Louise Jones, Jenny Skade, Peter Strickland

1. Introduction

Andrew Allen welcomed everyone to the meeting. He reported that the first in-person JMB meeting in four years had been held in Chester in March and that a lot of this session would focus on what came out of those discussions.

2. Summary of actions from recent JMB meetings

Increasing the number of high-quality submissions across all of the journals

The journals continue to do well, but the main result of the pandemic has been a big reduction in submissions. Four of the IUCr journals are wholly open access and the remainder are hybrid. It is therefore important to increase the number of submissions, not only for the health of the journals, but also for the financial stability of the Union for which the journals are the primary source of income.

Working with Commissioning Editors

Three Commissioning Editors were appointed prior to the pandemic. At the JMB it became clear that commissioning is the responsibility of everyone – Main Editors and Co-editors as well as Commissioning Editors – and that a more collaborative approach is needed so the role of the Commissioning Editors has changed slightly.

It is important to have discussions about potential topics for special issues as there are a number in the pipeline. We do not want to merely repeat previous special issues, rather they should have a different flavour in the future. Special issues can be across journals and in these cases the Commissioning Editors can play an important role. Normally there are two Guest Editors for a special issue, one from the journal board and one invited. All contributions are subject to the normal review process.

A special collection can be created retrospectively with papers on a theme, with perhaps a few extra articles being commissioned to complete it.

Main Editors to be pro-active in checking for papers substantially held up in review

Some papers get delayed and an author can feel that nothing is happening, and in such cases they often contact Andrew. Co-editors need to be aware of papers that are not moving – if authors get annoyed, they might not submit again and may also report problems to their colleagues. Main and Managing Editors should be prepared to intervene and move matters on. Sometimes there can be complicated issues that take time to resolve but where there are good interactions with the author this is not a problem. However, when papers seem to get stuck for no good reason, action needs to be taken.

Annual online meetings of Editorial Boards

Andrew commented that we had all learned how to do things differently during the pandemic and that online Zoom meetings of Editorial Boards had become quite important. It can be tricky to schedule them because of the wide geographical spread of participants, but Main Editors should aim to have one or two Zoom meetings a year. They are excellent ways of making sure that everyone is on the same page and also to make new editors aware of journal practices and help them to feel part of the team. The Editorial Office will host the meetings and send the invitations out and Andrew will attend where possible. These meetings help to bring people together and are also a forum where commissioning can be discussed. The relevant Commissioning Editor will also be included. This will hopefully help to bring in new articles.

New journal scopes

One of the problems the journals face is the perception that crystallography is not a modern science. We would prefer not to change the titles of journals, but rather look at their scopes to make sure they reflect the sort of papers we wish to attract. It is planned to have both shorter, impactful scopes and longer versions for all of the journals.

3. Activities at the Congress

Andrew highlighted how all editors could help the journals by:

- Acting as ambassadors for their journal
- Asking speakers and poster presenters to publish their future work with us
- Putting up a slide about their journal if giving a talk
- Identifying Co-editor candidates
- Considering topics for special issues

4. IUCr 75th Anniversary

Editorial

Andrew's editorial [Allen, A. (2023). *IUCrJ*, **10**, 509–518] describes significant papers that have been published in the journals. Excerpts may be published in other journals and a shortened version in the IUCr Newsletter.

Congress special collection

All speakers and microsposium chairs were invited to submit a paper on their work to the journals. This may be split into different fields as the number of contributions may be very large.

AfCA special collection

A special collection is being created to celebrate crystallography in Africa and AfCA being admitted as the fifth regional associate of the IUCr. There has been a strong push to bring crystallography to African countries and there is a strong connection with IUCr outreach work.

5. Mentoring and training of Co-editors

Welcoming new Co-editors

Andrew asked seasoned Co-editors to please help to support new board members. He felt that regular virtual meetings will help with this as well.

6. Notes for Authors

Notes for Authors and Co-editors should be a useful resource and could resolve some queries. They are revised on an ongoing basis.

Use of AI

We expect that tools will be developed to make it clear where AI has been used. Important points to note in relation to authorship are that:

- AI has its place, but including chatGPT or similar as an author of an article is not acceptable.
- Use of AI needs to be properly documented. Parts of a paper can be written with AI as long as it is stated that this has been done. This approach could be useful for authors with poor English.

The reporting of the use of AI in research work was also discussed. It is key that we understand when AI has been used.

Data requirements

There are specific requirements if a structure is reported. Data requirements for the submission of structural biology data were updated recently [Baker *et al.* (2021). *Acta Cryst. D* **77**, 1477–1478]. Co-editors are encouraged not to be too quick to reject papers because of checkCIF alerts – it is better to get to the bottom of the problem rather than reject automatically. Greater clarity should be encouraged as to how much a CIF report relies on experimental measurements versus what is derived from computer simulations, e.g. DFT.

Crystallographic nomenclature

There is a Commission on Crystallographic Nomenclature. In addition, the online dictionary is a useful resource. We should be mindful that crystallography intersects with many fields that might have their own terminology. We do not want to put authors such fields off by insisting on IUCr terminology. It might be appropriate to add a footnote regarding the terminology. In general, it should be OK if the term in question is explained properly in the paper.

Preprint servers

We would appreciate hearing people's views on this matter. Some other journals already expect papers to be archived in preprint servers while undergoing review. The IUCr is considering creating an IUCr archive and trialling this as a form of open review.

Suggestions included having a button to click to ask the author if they wanted to add their paper to the IUCr archive upon submission. There could be a link to the paper if it was later published, with it staying in the archive if rejected. Thought is needed whether there would be individual journal archives or a more general one for structural science, and how the archive would operate.

7. Review system developments

Peter Strickland reported on developments at the Editorial Office.

Prophy

Prophy is currently being integrated into the review system. This is a database of over 150 million journal articles that have been indexed for context and can be used to suggest referees for an uploaded paper. The Prophy system has a list of previous referees for IUCr papers. It is possible to obtain a profile for a prospective referee to see if they would be appropriate. The default listing gives the most senior people first but a filter can also be applied to look for mid-career researchers working in this area, or to emphasize a particular topic to find a more specialized referee. There are various indicators within Prophy that can help to avoid potential conflicts of interest, *e.g.* referees at the author's institution, previous major collaborations, *etc.* It is hoped that Prophy will be a big help in finding referees and be able to find people who are more likely to be willing to referee. Referees suggested by the authors can also be checked out using Prophy. The experience so far has been positive, and any feedback would be welcome.

It would be useful to give a demonstration of Prophy at virtual editorial board meetings.

Chasing overdue articles

This is important to help increase publication speed and avoid making authors annoyed. The submission and review system has not been good at identifying delayed papers and where they have become stuck, currently merely flagging in red articles that have been in the system for more than 6 months. The improved system will break the review process into stages and flag a paper in red if it has been at any stage for too long. Main Editors will also be able to see these papers. New buttons for use in emails are being worked on that will take the user directly to the action that is needed.

It was felt that an option to remove reminders would be useful, for example if the Co-editor had decided not to chase reviewers. The system is currently not forgiving if it thinks you should be doing something that you are not if you try to do something unusual. It would be useful for the Editorial Office to know which actions editors think are inappropriate or not useful. An 'uninvite' option has been added to the system within the last year. Andrew thought that the ability of the editor to override the chasing emails is important.

It was suggested that it is better to give the date when a review is required rather than a time (*e.g.* two weeks) and then send an email two days before along the lines of “your review is due on <date>” to encourage reviewers to respond. Sometimes people send the review to the Co-editor rather than the system and there is no way to upload it. In these cases, the Co-editor can send the review to the Managing Editor who will put it into the system.

Ways of rewarding referees were also touched on. A certificate that could be sent to research councils stating that a person had acted as a reviewer would be helpful. It is possible to add a review to an ORCID record and Clarivate also has a system where this information can be added. Some reviewers would find this useful but it would need to be optional.

It was also pointed out that reviewers would like to be informed when a paper gets published. This was considered to be a good idea as it is also a nice advert for the paper.

It was felt that it would be useful to have titles for references when reviewing and there was discussion of whether they should be included in the published article, with other options such as a mouseover mentioned. It was also thought that DOIs are useful and some other journals ask for the title of a reference and the DOI.

A lot of time was thought to be wasted on formatting and a format neutral submission route could be better for authors.

Including a structure duplication check in checkCIF reports would be useful - the IUCr will discuss this possibility with CCDC.

8. New developments/new areas

Raw Data Letters

This new section in *IUCrData* has been launched and three articles and an editorial have been published so far. There has been a lot of work to develop tools for authors. Anyone interested in submitting is encouraged to contact the Main Editor, Loes Kroon-Batenburg (l.m.j.kroon-batenburg@uu.nl), for more information.

Electron crystallography

A new section in *IUCrJ* was established after the last Congress to capture articles in this important area.

Crystal growth

This new section in *Acta B* was launched recently as the journal had been losing papers on crystal growth and engineering to other publications.

Powder diffraction

Work is ongoing to attract more papers to the journals and also to improve checkCIF for powder papers.

9. Open journals meeting (24 August)

This meeting, open to all, would report on progress with the journals and include a reviewer workshop given by Randy

Read (slides for this will be available online in due course).

10. Any other business

Andrew Allen praised the professional and scholarly way in which work is done on the journals and thanked all present. He encouraged everyone to visit the IUCr stand.

Following the Journals Editors meeting and connected with IUCr Commission reporting activities to the IUCr EC and General Assembly, Commissions are being strongly encouraged to hold their own online meetings at least on an annual basis. While each Commission already appoints a contact member for liason with the journals, it would be *extremely* useful if one or more of the journals of interest to a given IUCr Commission could be represented by a Main Editor or Co-editor at such Commission meetings. This could greatly facilitate article commissioning and Special issue planning relevant to the work of each IUCr Commission.