

I. Submissions and Decisions: 2016

Number of Original Submissions in 2016

243 (200 regular manuscripts, 36 Point of View manuscripts, 7 Software for Systematics and Evolution manuscripts; includes resubmissions, but does not include book reviews)

This is a decrease of 63 (~20%) compared to 2015, and is the first decrease following incremental increases from 2012 to 2015.

Of the 206 decisions made on original manuscripts in 2016, 82 were rejected 82 (~40%) as “not appropriate for journal”. This is much than last year's percentage (26%). As is usually the case, many of these papers were simply inappropriate for the journal (i.e., they focused on topics in medicine, genomics or molecular evolution without a systematics component, or were really “systems biology”), though a few were phylogenetic studies that were simply not of broad interest. Associate editors weighed in on a number of these “not appropriate for journal” editorial decisions. The main goal of editorial rejection is to reduce the burden on the AEs, Editorial Board members, and reviewers.

As of 1 January 2017, Thomas Near took over as the Editor-In-Chief for the journal and from this date has made all of the editorial decisions.

Initial decisions made by Frank Anderson and Thomas Near in 2016: 206

Accept: 1

Accept pending receipt of final changes: 1

Accept pending minor revisions: 23 (11%; 11% in 2015; 6% in 2014; 9% in 2013; 14% in 2012; 17% in 2011; 11% in 2010)

Accept pending major revisions: 31 (14.8%; 17% in 2015; 15% in 2014; 18% in 2013; 11% in 2012; 10% in 2011; 20% in 2010)

Reject, encourage/permit resubmission: 25 (12.1; 27% in 2015; 23% in 2014; 23% in 2013; 28% in 2012; 25% in 2011; 24% in 2010)

Reject: 38 (18.4%; 24% in 2015; 27% in 2014; 22% in 2013; 21% in 2012; 19% in 2011; 20% in 2010)

Not Appropriate: 82 (39.8%; 21% in 2015; 26% in 2014; 22% in 2013; 26% in 2012; 28% in 2011; 24% in 2010)

Overall acceptance rate: 27% (29% in 2015; 24% in 2014; 33% in 2013, 25% in 2012; 27% in 2011; 31% in 2010)

Overall rejection rate (including reject/resubmit): 73% (71% in 2015; 76% in 2014, 67% in 2013, 75% in 2012; 73% in 2011; 69% in 2010; 66% in 2009)

II. Manuscript Handling

Please refer to the Publisher's and Virtual Editorial Office report for details on how OUP handles accepted manuscripts, data on manuscript submissions, turnaround time, etc. In short, accepted manuscripts are made available via the journal web site's "Advance Access" section in less than a week once the authors complete the copyright form.

In 2016 the average time from submission to first decision, not including "not appropriate for journal" was 79.6 days.

The average to date for 2017, not including "not appropriate for journal" and "accept pending receipt of final changes" is 41.2 days.

The breakdown by decision category for 2017:

Reject: resubmission encouraged, 16 manuscripts, 57.5 days

Reject, 20 manuscripts, 34.8 days

Accept with minor revision, 44.0 days

Accept with major revisions, 59.6 days

Accept pending receipt of final changes, 2 manuscripts, 10.0 days

Not appropriate for journal, 25 manuscripts, 3.7 days

III. OUP

In May 2017, Julia McDonnell took over as Publisher at OUP for *Systematic Biology*; she is doing an excellent job in working with me to develop strategies for the journal. Paula Potter is our primary contact at OUP and provides excellent support for the editors of *Systematic Biology*.

IV. AE news and work loads

There are 46 Associate Editors on the roster in 2017. As Editor-Elect and Editor-In-Chief, I recruited 10 new AEs; Erika Edwards, Jeanne Serb, Matt Friedman, Rachel Mueller, Matthew Hahn, Stephen Smith, Ken Halanych, Brian Moore, Richard Ree, Leo Smith, and Jeffry Townsend. Karl Kjer, Lars Jeremiin, and Tiffani Williams have stepped down as AEs. I am actively trying to recruit additional AEs in several areas of systematics and phylogenetics.