

I. Submissions and Decisions: 2017

Number of Original Submissions in 2017

357 (286 regular manuscripts, 54 Point of View manuscripts, 15 Software for Systematics and Evolution manuscripts, and 2 Book Reviews; includes resubmissions)

This is an increase of 63 (~26%) compared to 2016. In 2016 there was a decrease in submissions, but there were incremental increases in submissions from 2012 to 2015.

Of the 325 decisions made on original manuscripts in 2017, 56 were rejected as “not appropriate for journal”. This is much lower than last year’s percentage (40%). 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.

Thomas Near in 2017: 325

Accept: 55 (16.9%)

Accept pending receipt of final changes: 51 (15.7%)

Accept with minor revisions: 17 (5.2%)

Accept with major revisions: 53 (16.3%)

Reject, encourage/permit resubmission: 45 (13.8%)

Reject: 48 (14.8%)

Not Appropriate: 56 (17.2%)

Final Decisions

Overall acceptance rate: 34.9%

Overall rejection rate (including reject/resubmit): 65.1%

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 for 2017, not including "not appropriate for journal" and "accept pending receipt of final changes" is 44.6 days.

Time to initial decision by manuscript type in 2017:

Regular Manuscript (81.1%), 43.7 days

Point of View (14.6%), 36.4 days

Software for Systematics and Evolution (3.7%), 29.3 days

Book Review (0.6%), 49.5 days

The breakdown by decision category for 2017 (which includes manuscripts initially submitted prior to 2017):

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 were 46 Associate Editors on the roster in 2017. As Editor-Elect and Editor-In-Chief, I have recruited several new AEs; Hernan Fernandez-Lopez, Jeanne Serb, Matt Friedman, Rachel Mueller, Matthew Hahn, Stephen Smith, Ken Halanych, Brian Moore, Richard Ree, Leo Smith, and Jeffry Townsend. John McCormack and Erika Edwards have stepped down as AEs. I am actively trying to recruit additional AEs in several areas of systematics and phylogenetics. I encourage members of the SSB Council to forward the names of scientists that we can recruit as AEs.