

2017 SSB Mid-year Executive Council Meeting  
Editor's Report – 18 December 2017  
Thomas Near

**I. Submissions and Decisions: 2017**

**Number of Original Submissions in 2017**

**247 (199 regular manuscripts, 35 Point of View manuscripts, 11 Software for Systematics and Evolution manuscripts, and 2 Book Reviews; includes resubmissions)**

This is a increase of 5 compared to 2016.

Of the 206 decisions that I made on original manuscripts in 2016, I 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.

## **Initial decisions made by me in 2017: 302**

Accept: 56 (18.5%)

Accept pending receipt of final changes: 42 (13.9%)

Accept pending minor revisions: 16 (5.3%)

Accept pending major revisions: 47 (15.6%)

Reject, encourage/permit resubmission: 44 (14.6)

Reject: 41 (13.6%)

Not Appropriate: 56 (18.5%)

Overall acceptance rate: 28.4%

Overall rejection rate (including reject/resubmit and not appropriate): 71.6%

## **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 2017 I have made substantial improvement on the time from submission to first decision, which in 2016 was 79.6 days. Below are listed the average time to first decision by manuscript type.

Regular Manuscript: 38.3 days.

Point of View: 28.9 days.

Software for Systematics and Evolution: 19.6 days

## **III. OUP**

Julia McDonnell continues to operate as Publisher for our journal; she appears to be permanently ensconced in this role, and she has done a wonderful job.

#### **IV. AE news and work loads**

There were 43 Associate Editors on the roster in 2017.