

Publications Committee SOP updated May 2025

Background and Charge to Publications Committee:

Biology of Reproduction (BOR) is a scholarly journal owned by the SSR and currently published by Oxford University Press (OUP). In alignment with the SSR Strategic Plan, the journal publishes research findings and reviews that advance scientific knowledge and understanding in the field of reproduction.

Additionally, BOR generates a substantial portion of the Society's Operating budget and represents a significant benefit of membership in SSR.

The Publications Committee is charged with providing oversight, coordination, consultation and evaluation of the key functional components of BOR including: editorial, production and management functions. The Committee tracks and advises the Board on journal performance relevant to these functions, and recruits and recommends candidates for Editors-in-Chief on a four-year cycle. The Committee (or a designated sub-committee) is also responsible for evaluating the publisher relationship and managing the bidding process for a new publisher if needed.

Accordingly, the Committee reports to the Board at the semi-annual Board meetings (winter and summer) and via interim conference calls as needed. Reports include data and metrics on the financial, business, and editorial performance of the journal, and may include proposals for changes in journal practice or new initiatives. The Committee is comprised of SSR regular members and *ad hoc* members who together provide the Board with expert evaluation of and advice on all aspects of scholarly publishing.

Regular and standing members:

1. **Chair** (one-year term): Will typically serve one year as Co-Chair, 1 year as Chair, and 1 year as Past-Chair. The Chair leads the committee meetings, coordinates reports to the Board, represents the committee to the Board, leads EIC recruitment process.
2. **Past-chair** (one-year term): Provides the committee with any historical committee information from their term.
3. **Co-Chair** (one year term): Assists the Chair, serves as Chair when Chair is unavailable, and succeeds the chair when their term ends. The Co-Chair serves in this capacity for one year.
4. **Editors-in-Chief** (four- year term) (EICs): Set peer review policies, attract submissions, make editorial decisions that determine BOR scientific quality and relevance to the field; work with and evaluate associate editors. EICs recuse themselves from activities associated with evaluating their performance. Incoming EICs are invited to participate in the committee beginning in the year prior to the start of their term.
5. **SSR member(s)** with knowledge and experience in scholarly publishing (such as previous Associate Editors) as needed to assist with committee activities in general and with the EIC recruitment as needed.

Standing "ex Officio" members:

1. **BOR Publisher (OUP)**: Coordinates peer review workflows and production functions with the Editors and SSR Executive Director to assure day to day operations and effect long term plans.
2. **SSR Publications Manager**: Coordinates business and marketing functions with the Publisher and editors; manages membership list distribution to Publisher; manages BOR related events at

annual meeting; leads review of Publisher's performance annually and identifies needs for contract revision or renewal.

3. **SSR Treasurer:** Tracks BOR budget and analyzes costs/benefits of new proposals; provides input and feedback from the Board on all matters related to BOR
4. **Board Liaison:** Represents the Publications Committee at Board meetings when the Committee Chair is not in attendance. Ensures that work of the Committee is aligned with Board priorities and decisions.
5. **SSR Executive Director:** Provides assistance to the Committee as needed.

Implementation of the Charge:

The Committee provides advice and assistance to the Board on all aspects of BOR's operations and metrics of journal effectiveness. The committee makes recommendations to the Board regarding long term planning related to journal and SSR Strategic Plan objectives and reflecting the current business/publication model (see Appendix 1). The Committee supports the efforts of the EICs to encourage submissions, support authors, and increase visibility of the journal. Any substantial changes to BOR policies, including author guidelines, page charges, etc, should be made in collaboration with the Committee and the EICs. The Committee develops and implements a plan and timeline for recruiting the next EICs, solicits and evaluates applications, and makes recommendations to the Board on their final selection (See Appendix 2). The Committee is also responsible for oversight and evaluation of the performance of the contracted Publisher, and for making recommendations for continuation of the publisher relationship, re-negotiation of contract terms, and/or oversight of the bidding process should the Committee and Board decide to pursue new publisher arrangements.

Meeting frequency:

The Committee is expected to hold an in-person meeting at the SSR Annual Meeting. Other meetings throughout the year are at the discretion of the Committee Chair.

Subcommittees:

OUP oversight: A subcommittee meets monthly throughout the year by conference calls to coordinate activities across sectors (OUP, EICs, and SSR), identify problems, and propose solutions related to journal operations and editorial activities.

Ethics: In the event of an accusation of ethical issues relating to research activities, peer review, or editor behavior, the Committee will appoint an ad-hoc sub-committee as needed comprised of individuals with specific expertise relevant to the allegations. The subcommittee will work with the EICs to resolve the accusations in accordance to guidelines established by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE). Should the allegations relate to EIC behavior, the EICs will be recused from the subcommittee. Chair of this Subcommittee is a member of the Publication Committee.

Semi-annual reports to the Board:

At least one EIC, the Committee Chair and/or Committee Liaison, and the Publisher are expected to attend the winter and summer Board meetings to discuss data, progress, performance metrics, and propose future plans for Board consideration. New budget items should be brought to the board at the winter and summer board meeting for inclusion in the upcoming fiscal year budget. Additional budget requests for other quarterly meetings will be made through the Board Liaison.

Coordination of Committee roles and EIC succession: The EICs serve four-year terms and recruitment of the new EICs will begin mid-way through their terms. All efforts should be made to maintain the same Committee leadership during the new EIC recruitment process and in order to best assist with the editorial transition. The Chair and Co-chair should have intimate knowledge of the incoming EICs' goals and objectives. The EIC and Committee Chair also advises the SSR Vice President on the selection of the Co-Chair.

Appendix 1: SSR-OUP Business model and contract process:

BOR is currently produced and published by Oxford University Press (OUP) under terms of a contract between SSR and OUP that was put into place January 1, 2017. In this model, SSR appoints the Editors-in-Chief and approves the appointment of Associate Editors. Operating with editorial independence, the EICs are responsible for the scientific relevance and quality of all articles published in BOR. OUP is responsible for publishing BOR content, including all associated operations such as journal website design and operation, marketing, and revenue derivation through subscriptions and manuscript fees. Articles are published online ahead of press and as monthly issues (online and print).

OUP provides peer review manuscript management services to the editors and authors beginning with manuscript submission and extending through publication. The OUP publisher works closely with the EICs to ensure that author needs are met. The publisher advises the Editors on industry best practices for peer review and production, provides training to EICs and Associate Editors, and actively markets BOR to appropriate audiences. OUP also works with the SSR Executive Director and Treasurer to ensure member access to BOR and receipt and distribution of revenue received by SSR from OUP. Under the terms of the SSR-OUP contract, OUP generates revenue from institutional subscribers and author publication fees and shares revenue with SSR. Additional financial support provided by OUP includes EIC and associate editor stipends and training. OUP provides financial reports to the SSR at least annually.

The OUP publisher and SSR Publications Manager also market BOR to subscribers, authors and readers, coordinating their efforts and soliciting input from the Committee. They also coordinate training and other BOR activities whether at OUP facilities or at the SSR annual meeting. The SSR Executive Director works with the Treasurer to ensure proper budgeting and distribution of revenue from OUP.

SSR is currently bound to a publishing contract with OUP for a 5-year term beginning January 1, 2022. Per the contract terms, SSR must notify OUP 18 months prior to the end of the term if they wish to renegotiate terms or discontinue the publishing relationship. It is the responsibility of the SSR Publications Manager to initiate an evaluation of the publishing relationship, two years prior to the end of the contract term. Contract renegotiations, if needed, will be led by the SSR Executive Director and SSR Treasurer, with recommendations from other participants. Should SSR make the decision to change publishers, the RFP process will be overseen by the Publications Committee or a subcommittee thereof.

The timeline for the next contract review and renegotiation/bidding process (if needed) is as follows:

1. January 2025—Publications Manager initiates internal review of publisher relationship and contract terms. SSR Treasurer, Executive Director, EICs, and Publications Committee Chair(s) will participate in this review. Review should include financial terms as well as publisher performance

2. June 30, 2025—Final date for SSR to notify OUP of any intent to change terms of contract for the upcoming renewal.
3. July 1- September 15, 2025—Contract renegotiation with OUP if needed.
4. September 15-December 31, 2025—Development of RFP, if needed
5. January-April 2026—solicitation of publisher bids, if needed
6. April-June 2026—evaluation of bids and selection of contract awardee
7. July-September 2026—contract negotiation, signed by end of September
8. September-December 2026—publisher transition begins
9. January 1, 2027—new contract term begins

Appendix 2: EIC Job Description and Recruitment process.

The Publications Committee Chair is charged with conducting the search for the new EICs. The recruitment process involves a solicitation call for new EICs that is promoted via both the SSR and BOR. Interested candidates will be provided with a formal job description as well as an application package. When possible, candidates will be scheduled to meet with the current EICs, OUP staff, the Publication Committee Chair, and SSR business office staff during the Annual Meeting to become more familiar with the journal and position. The Publications Committee will present the most qualified applicants and their applications to the Board, and the Board will select finalists that will be interviewed further prior to a decision. The timeline for the next EIC search is as follows:

- 1) Spring 2027— Call for EICs posted on the SSR website and promoted via SSR and BOR. The EIC job description and application is available on the SSR website.
- 2) Annual Meeting 2027 – Interested candidates to meet with EICs, Publication Committee Chairs, OUP and SSR business office staff.
- 3) October 15, 2027 – Applications are due and will be reviewed by the Publications Committee, and a short list will be presented to the Board for consideration.
- 4) Winter 2027-28 – The Board will review the applications and conduct formal interviews with the selected finalists.
- 5) Spring/Summer 2028 – The new EICs will be announced and begin a formal transition process.
- 6) Fall 2028: New EICs present proposed budget to SSR Board
- 7) 2029 (Mid Winter Board Meeting?? Later???): EICs present their proposed Associate Editor team for SSR Board Approval
- 8) July 1, 2029 – The new EICs begin their term

Note: This SOP conforms with the By-Laws ARTICLE XI: COMMITTEE, Section 5, (c) Publications Committee. “ A Publications Committee composed of five or more Regular Members of the Society shall be responsible for the management of all publications of the Society. The Committee shall recommend to the Board of Directors candidates for editorial leadership. It will make recommendations regarding editorial policy and fiscal matters related to publications.”

Commented [JK1]: 1.Should the EICs be presenting their ideal list plus alternates prior to doing any outreach? Or should they have the team of AEs who have agreed, and then present to board for final approval?
2. If AEs are replaced, either due to poor performance or because they choose not to renew at the two-year point, should the EICs submit their proposed replacements to the Board as well?