WELCOME TO THE FRONTIERS COMMUNITY OF EDITORS

The following guidelines are meant to provide you with further practical information regarding your role as Specialty Chief Editor as well as the Frontiers peer-review process and platform. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact the journal team directly using their field Editorial Office account. If you are unsure of how to reach them, you can email the general Editorial Office at editorial.office@frontiersin.org. Please also do not hesitate to request an online demo of any of the features of the platform from your journal team. We are here to help you make your specialty a success.
LAST UPDATED ON: 21st OF DECEMBER 2017

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<td>Updated the editorial-board-membership discount % offered as per publication fees change effective December 9th 2017.</td>
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1. ABOUT FRONTIERS

Frontiers is a leading open-access publisher. Established in 2007, Frontiers drives innovations in peer-review, post-publication review, impact metrics, and transparent academic profiles, and provides an ecosystem of open-science tools.

Frontiers stands for the following fundamental principles:

- **Fair, fast, rigorous, and transparent peer-review** – A uniquely interactive and collaborative process in real time between authors and reviewers. Reviewers are acknowledged on published papers in recognition of their important contribution, as well as to safeguard transparency.

- **Community-driven** – Frontiers Journals are rooted in academic communities and are run by world-renowned researchers and scholars. Our Loop network provides a personalized data stream for each user, targeting articles to the right readership and maximizing impact.

- **Tier-climbing and impact-neutral publishing** – Papers are accepted based on objective criteria, not potential impact; the latter being evaluated by the community post-publication, through article-level impact analytics that track the number of views, downloads, and demographics of readers, as well as the “buzz” on social media and science blogs. Crowdsourcing algorithms democratically select the most important studies to showcase to a broader readership as Tier-climbing papers.

- **Open-access and unrestricted global visibility** – Articles are published under the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC-BY), visible to search engines, and can be accessed, distributed, and reused by anyone for free, with appropriate citation.

- **Below average publishing fees and fair distribution of the resources** – For articles to be freely available upon publication, they are subject to a publishing fee (available on a journal basis). Through our waiver program, we strive to ensure that publishing fees do not become an obstacle. Chief and Associate Editors receive a 10% discount on all Category A article types, as do contributions to Research Topics. There are no charges for color figures or supplementary material.

- **Strong IT focus** – Our web platform is designed in-house, evolving according to constant feedback from users in order to improve the accountability, efficiency, quality, fairness, and impact of scholarly publishing.

2. YOUR ROLE AS SPECIALTY CHIEF EDITOR

As the Specialty Chief Editor, you will be responsible for defining the editorial scope of your specialty as well as for building a strong board of Associate Editors, to whom the responsibility for the peer-review process will be delegated. You will then act as an advisor for the specialty, stepping in where issues may arise and making the final decision on manuscripts recommended for rejection as well as on Research Topic proposals.
2.1 COMPLETE YOUR FRONTIERS PROFILE ON LOOP

To join the editorial board, you created an account on our research network, Loop, which will allow you to take all necessary actions regarding your specialty directly in the system and at any time. We would now ask you to please complete your profile within one or two weeks by adding a photo, a brief bio, as well as a few specific keywords related to your expertise. Please also take a moment to confirm your publications (see screenshot below).

2.2 DEFINE THE SCOPE OF YOUR SPECIALTY

(Should you be taking over an existing specialty, please refer to section 5.1.1)

Your first task as Specialty Chief Editor will be to define the scope of your specialty by providing a description of maximum 500 words (you may simply email it to the journal team, and we can upload it to the system for you). This text will appear on the About page of your specialty and is important in helping authors and readers understand its aim, breadth, and perspective. The composition of the editorial board will have to reflect this scope as well. As a key feature, this should be completed within the first few weeks.
2.3 **BUILD A BOARD OF AT LEAST 15-20 ASSOCIATE EDITORS**

(Should you be taking over an existing specialty, please refer to section 5.1.2)

The Associate Editors will be essential in setting the standard for the specialty and should be experts in the field (typically Associate Professor level and above, or equivalent for various fields, with an established publication record in international journals). Their main responsibilities will consist of building a board of at least 10-15 Review Editors, setting an example on the standard of publications in the journal by submitting a free-of-charge Inaugural Article, and handling the review process of around 1-5 manuscripts submitted to the specialty per year.

You will be asked to invite at least 15-20 Associate Editors within the first two months of your appointment, so as to ensure that the expertise of the Editors on board covers the specialty as a whole. When doing so, aim for diversity (gender balance; geographical spread; different foci of research within the scope of the specialty). It is important to ensure that the board is large enough for Associate Editors not to be overburdened with manuscript assignments and for a flow of Inaugural Articles to populate the journal with its first content to raise interest and build reputation. Associate Editors will in turn be responsible for building the Review Editor board.

Note that Associate Editors receive a 100% fee waiver on their Inaugural Article and thereafter a 10% discount off the publishing fees for Category A article types published in any Frontiers journal.

**How do I invite Associate Editors?**

To invite Associate Editors, please log into your Frontiers account, navigate through My Frontiers > Specialty Chief Editor > Editorial Board > Invite New Editor, and enter the invitee’s name, email address, and affiliation. An official invitation email (with links for the invitee to accept or decline) will be automatically generated, but you are welcome to add a personal message as well. Invitees who accept will be prompted to create a Frontiers profile on Loop and then immediately be listed on the editorial board. Please note that, to ensure all necessary details are conveyed to those invited, the official invitation text itself cannot be edited.
You can also send the Editorial Office a list of peers whom you would like to invite as Associate Editors, and we can contact them on your behalf. You can see the status of invitations under My Frontiers > Specialty Chief Editor > Editorial Board > Associate Editors. Various tabs on this page will allow you to monitor the accepted, pending, and declined invitations.

**Review Editorial Board**

Should you wish to, you may also invite colleagues to join the board as Review Editors.

Review Editors are expert reviewers who are listed as members of the editorial board. Their primary role is to provide an in-depth review of submitted manuscripts, either upon invitation by the handling Associate Editor, or when the required number of reviewers is not reached for a manuscript submitted to the section (see details in section 3). This “pool” of reviewers is therefore paramount to ensuring that all manuscripts may be reviewed in a timely manner and by experts in the field.

Review Editors should be established researchers or experts in the field, e.g. readers, lecturers, principal investigators, assistant professors (not necessarily with tenure), or more senior. Exceptionally, outstanding senior postdocs can also be Review Editors, if they cover a specifically required expertise for the board.

Please note that Review Editors are entitled to a 10% discount on Category A article types submitted to any Frontiers journal within three months of joining the editorial board or no later than three months after each completed review assignment.

You may send invitations to potential Review Editors by going to My Frontiers > Specialty Chief Editor > Editorial Board > Invite New Editor.

**Contacting Editors on your board**

You will be able to get in touch with any Editor on your board by logging into your Frontiers account and selecting the envelope sign in the top right corner (1), followed by “Compose” (2). You will then be able to select the appropriate Editors by clicking on the address book icon under the “To” field (3). Once the recipients have been selected, enter your message in the corresponding text box and press Send Message (4). Please note that you may also attach files, if needed (5). It is important that you establish regular communication with your board to build a collaborative spirit as well as to update them on the performance of the journal and explain policies as needed.
2.4 **SUBMIT YOUR SPECIALTY GRAND CHALLENGE**

The Specialty Grand Challenge is a ~2'000 word editorial-type article and should be submitted within the first month of your appointment. It will give you the opportunity to highlight some of the biggest challenges and most recent developments in the field, thereby setting the tone for your specialty and giving it character and focus. Specialty Grand Challenges make some of the best initial content for introducing the specialty to the research community.

Your Specialty Grand Challenge may be submitted [here](#) (please make sure that you select the appropriate specialty and article type).

For examples of what other Specialty Chief Editors have published, please see the links below:

- Grand challenges in marine conservation and sustainable use
- The Grand Challenge: use of a new approach in developing policies in the area of radiation and health
- Grand challenges in engine and automotive engineering
- Challenges and opportunities for digital history

2.5 **SUBMIT YOUR INAUGURAL ARTICLE**

Just like your Associate Editors, you will be able to submit a free-of-charge Inaugural Article within 4-6 months of your appointment. Please provide the Editorial Office with an estimated submission date and tentative title as soon as possible. This manuscript may have multiple authors, but you will have to be listed as one of the corresponding authors. Inaugural Articles serve as an important foundation for the specialty, showing support and setting a quality standard therein. Previous experience has shown us that it is difficult to convince authors to publish in a journal when the Chief and Associate Editors do not do so themselves; this article, together with your Specialty Grand Challenge, will therefore be key to getting your specialty off the ground.

Inaugural Articles can be of any Tier 1 article type, for example Original Research, Perspective, Review, or Methods.

Your Inaugural Article may be submitted [here](#) (please make sure that you select the appropriate specialty).

2.6 **ACT AS AN AMBASSADOR FOR THE JOURNAL**

As the Specialty Chief Editor, you are the main representative of your specialty and will be expected to act as an ambassador for the journal. Should you be attending any conferences, please do let the Editorial Office know, and we will be happy to provide any necessary material (journal flyers, PowerPoint slides, etc.) or to assist in arranging a meeting with other attendees from your editorial board. Frontiers also attends a number of conferences every year, so as to increase the visibility of the journals and get feedback from the community. You can also suggest conferences to the Editorial Office which you think would benefit from our attendance.
3. THE FRONTIERS PEER-REVIEW PROCESS

The Frontiers collaborative review process has been designed to optimize the quality of published articles by fostering objectivity, rigor, and iterative collaboration. Associate Editors and reviewers are acknowledged publicly on all published articles.

3.1 OVERVIEW

Submission and initial evaluation

When submitting a manuscript, authors are requested to select an Associate Editor from the board whom they believe to be both knowledgeable and unbiased for editing their manuscript. This “preferred Editor” will be automatically invited to handle the review process. Should the preferred Associate Editor decline the assignment or fail to reply promptly, an invitation will be sent to the rest of the Associate Editors on board, so that the most appropriate, available Editor may be found. As the Specialty Chief Editor, you will be notified by email of every submission made to your specialty (these messages also include the name of the “preferred Editor” indicated by the authors). You may step in anytime, should you wish to be actively involved in the Editor assignment, and will be able to revoke invitations, replace Editors, or invite new Associate Editors to take over the process at any stage, if needed. Please also note that, in the case of Research Topic submissions, the “preferred Editor” selected by the authors will not be invited, but will be assigned to the manuscript directly instead (see details in section 4.2.3).

Once an Associate Editor accepts an assignment, they will be given 7 days to look over the manuscript and ensure that:

- They do not have any conflict of interest with the authors or the submitted research (see our Review Guidelines for more details);
- The manuscript fits within the scope of the specialty;
- The authors have chosen the correct article type (see here for a description).
- The handling Associate Editor will also be asked to validate the soundness of the manuscript and determine whether it should be sent for review or recommended for rejection. A manuscript may only be recommended for rejection before reviewers are assigned or after the authors have been given a chance to respond to the reviewers’ comments.

Should the manuscript be recommended for rejection, you as the Specialty Chief Editor will be asked to step in to make the final decision. When doing so, please bear in mind that, at Frontiers, it is the soundness of the research that should be evaluated, not its potential impact. Before reviewers are invited, rejection is only justified if the manuscript is poorly written (at a standard that will severely impact the ability of the reviewers to assess it), if it contains significant objective errors, or if the standards of research quality or ethics are insufficient.

Please also note that all manuscripts are checked for potential verbatim plagiarism. If serious issues are identified, the Editorial Office will notify the authors and handling Associate Editor as part of our standard procedure. You will of course be informed if the issue persists, or in cases involving the Associate Editors as authors.
Inviting reviewers

Should no issues be identified in the initial verification of the manuscript, the handling Associate Editor will be asked to secure reviewers (minimum 1-2, depending on the article type, but they may of course assign more). Invitations may either be sent to Editors on board or to external reviewers. In the latter case, the reviewer will be asked to register with Loop when accepting the assignment, so that they may be given access to our review forum. If the required number of reviewers is not reached after 7 days, automatic invitations will be sent to the most appropriate Review Editors on board (recruited by the Associate Editors and selected using a keyword-matching algorithm), so as to avoid any delays and to ensure the authors can receive prompt feedback on their submission. At this stage, Associate Editors and Specialty Chief Editors can still revoke and send new invitations, as appropriate. Please note that, during the review process, the identity of the reviewers is visible to the Associate Editor and Specialty Chief Editor, but not to the authors. It will only be made public upon completion of the process, should the reviewers endorse the manuscript and should the latter be published.

The independent review phase

Once reviewers are assigned, they are expected to fill out a template review questionnaire within 15 days. The review questionnaires vary depending on the article type and have been designed to facilitate the work of the reviewers as well as to focus on objective issues. At this stage, reviewers conduct their review independently and do not have access to any comments made by the other parties. The Associate Editor will be automatically notified once independent review reports have been submitted and will be asked to activate the interactive review forum, thus giving the authors access to the reviews. Even if the independent review reports are unfavorable to the authors, the interactive review forum must be activated and the authors allowed the opportunity of rebuttal; this is a fundamental Frontiers principle. If the Associate Editor feels that a reviewer has not conducted a thorough review of the manuscript, they are encouraged to invite additional reviewers. They may also consider revoking a reviewer at any stage of the process, should this reviewer become unresponsive or if they are not participating in the review in a constructive manner.

The interactive review phase

Once the interactive review process is activated, all parties involved are able to enter the Frontiers review forum and access each other’s comments. The review forum has been designed to enable an extensive and constructive discussion between authors and reviewers, so that manuscripts may be improved to a publishable form, wherever appropriate. During this phase, the Associate Editor is responsible for mediating the discussion, where needed, so as to ensure the constructiveness of the participants’ interactions. They may also provide the authors with any comments they may have directly by posting them on the review forum. The review forum allows for unlimited rounds of discussion, the aim being to help authors improve their manuscript so that the reviewers can publically approve the final version by being named on the article, if accepted. Reviewers may “withdraw” their participation from the process at any stage if they are unable to continue, if they disagree with the contents, or if they consider that the manuscript cannot be sufficiently improved and should they wish to recommend it for rejection to the handling Associate Editor. Reviewers who withdraw from the process will remain anonymous, and their recommendation will be sent to the Associate Editor, who will be asked to either:
• Invite another reviewer;
• Recommend rejection of the manuscript based on the reviewers’ recommendation.

The reasons for withdrawal are accessible to the Associate Editor and Specialty Chief Editor in the review forum under the withdrawn reviewer's tab (these are not visible to the authors). On the other hand, should a reviewer be satisfied with the authors’ responses and revisions, they will indicate this by endorsing publication of the manuscript. Please note that most article types require a minimum of 2 reviewers’ endorsements to be accepted for publication. Furthermore, no review may be left pending in order for a manuscript to move forward in the process.

Making the final decision

The Associate Editors on your board will be responsible for the acceptance of manuscripts, based on the reviewers’ feedback, while all recommendations for rejection will be sent to you for final approval. You may however step in at any stage of the process, should you have any concerns regarding a manuscript or should you wish to provide the authors with your own comments as well. Accepted manuscripts undergo a final technical check by the Editorial Office, to ensure that the submission can be sent to production. You will be notified by email when a submission enters the final validation stage and you can raise any concerns by contacting the Editorial Office. Please note that the manuscripts will automatically proceed to production once the checks are complete.

The Editors of each specialty have complete editorial independence over content-related decisions and will be supported in the accomplishment of their tasks by the Editorial Office. Frontiers, however, maintains discretion over the policies that are core to its mission, so as to ensure a sustainable and successful environment for publishing. This includes issues such as, for example, plagiarism, conflicts of interest, and compliance with author guidelines.

For further information regarding the review process, please refer to our Review Guidelines.

3.2 YOUR ROLE DURING THE REVIEW PROCESS

While you may step in at any stage of the review process, there are a number of cases in particular in which the Editorial Office will contact you for assistance or input, so as to facilitate the process. These include, but are not limited to:

• The Associate Editor assignment, should no Associate Editor accept to take on a specific manuscript within a reasonable time frame, or should a conflict of interest arise between the authors and handling Associate Editor. In such cases, please also ensure that the manuscript is sound and fits within the scope of the specialty;
• Delays in the review process, should the handling Associate Editor become unresponsive;
• Potentially problematic manuscripts, as flagged by the handling Associate Editor and/or Editorial Office;
• Recommendations for rejection.
3.3 ACCESSING THE DIGITAL EDITORIAL OFFICE

As the Specialty Chief Editor, you will have access to a Digital Editorial Office which provides you with an overview of the manuscripts under review or published in your specialty, as well as with a list of pending tasks that require your attention. To access the Digital Editorial Office, log into your account, visit your specialty's homepage, and select "Digital Editorial Office" in the top bar.

This will take you to the following page:
The "Your Tasks" tab allows you to keep track of and take action on pending tasks, which you will be able to mark as "In Progress" as you start working on them. Tasks that have been resolved will automatically be removed from the list.

Under "Manuscripts", you will find the full list of manuscripts in your specialty, which may be filtered by review stage and status. Clicking on a manuscript title in the left hand side menu will display the full manuscript details (stage in the review process, status, handling Editor and reviewer information, submitted date, manuscript title, author list, Research Topic, etc.). Use the buttons at the top to navigate through the list ("Next") or to enter the review forum of a given manuscript ("Enter Review Forum").
3.4 TAKING ACTION IN THE REVIEW FORUM

You will be able to access the review forum of any manuscript submitted to your specialty by signing in to your Frontiers account and selecting My Frontiers > Specialty Chief Editor > Monitor Review > Micro-Monitor. Then, check the box next to the manuscript you would like to look at and press “Enter Review Forum” under the grid.
On the right hand-side of the review forum, you will find options to:

- Download the latest version of the manuscript (1);
- Access all related files (cover letter, abstract, and supplementary material, where appropriate) (2);
- Accept the manuscript and initiate the final validation stage (this option is disabled until the required number of reviewers have endorsed publication) (3);
- Reject the manuscript (this may only be done before reviewers are assigned or after the authors have been given a chance to respond in the interactive review forum) (4).

Managing the Associate Editor assignment

Associate Editors are directly invited to handle submissions, but you may step in anytime to send out personal invitations, either individually (1), or to several Associate Editors whom you select from a list (2). In the latter case, the invitation will be extended to the rest of the editorial board, should the selected Associate Editors decline or fail to reply promptly. The status of the invitations (pending, declined, revoked, and accepted) is displayed in a summary grid under the “Manage Editors” tab, which allows you to remind (3) or assign (4) Associate Editors, or to revoke invitations (5) (see screenshot below). The first Associate Editor who accepts to handle a manuscript will automatically be given access to the review forum, while the other invitations will be cancelled. Prior to accepting, they will be asked to respond to a list of questions regarding potential conflicts of interest with the authors. Should you wish to, you may also assign yourself to handle submissions made to the section (6).
Once an Associate Editor is assigned, you will still be able to replace them, if needed. You can do so by either assigning the Associate Editor of your choice (1), or by inviting several Associate Editors (2). In the latter case, the invitation will be extended to the rest of the editorial board, should the selected Associate Editors decline or fail to reply promptly.

Please do not assign Associate Editors unless they have first confirmed to you that they are willing to handle a manuscript and have no conflicts of interest.
Managing the reviewer assignment

Associate Editors are responsible for assigning reviewers to a manuscript, but you may decide to send out personal invitations as well, should you know of any expert who would be able to review a given manuscript or if the handling Associate Editor encounters difficulties. Frontiers requires a minimum of 2 reviewers for the majority of article types and, as such, we recommend that a minimum of 4 invitations be sent out for each manuscript. There are two options for inviting reviewers:

- The handling Editor, or yourself, may send invitations to members of the Review Editor board. To do so, use the search bar to enter the names of the Review Editors you would like to invite (1) or use the “Search by Keyword” option (2);
- The handling Editor, or yourself, may send invitations to external reviewers. To do so, fill out the relevant information in the “Invite an External Reviewer” tab (3) and click on the “Invite” icon.

Reviewers who accept to review a manuscript will be requested to register with Loop and then be automatically given access to the review forum.

The status of active reviewers and invitations is displayed in a summary grid under the “Manage Reviewers” tab (see screenshot above), which allows you to access information regarding the reviewers’ activity, to assign reviewers who have been invited (4), or to revoke invitations (5). Please do not assign reviewers unless they have first confirmed to you that they are willing to review the manuscript and have no conflicts of interest.
Giving authors access to the interactive review forum

For article types requiring activation of the interactive review forum, this is the responsibility of the Associate Editors. Should they encounter any delays, however, you may be asked to step in to activate the interactive review, once the reviewers have submitted their independent review reports. To do so, select the “Activate Interactive Review” option (1) and choose the recommended level of revisions based on the review reports (2). This choice will determine the amount of time that authors are given to respond to the comments (minor, moderate or substantial revisions would allow authors 15, 25 or 35 days respectively). Add a personal message and finalize the activation by clicking on “Activate” (3).
Interactive review – Adding your own comments

To add your own comments to the review forum, click on the ‘Add Comment’ icon (1) below the relevant discussion point. A box will appear where you can enter text (2). Comments auto-save when you click outside of the comment box. Continue to respond throughout the review forum using the same process. After all of your comments have been made, scroll to the top of the page and click “Submit all Comments” (3) – this will make your comments visible to the other participants, who will be notified by email.

Making a final decision on a manuscript

Should an Associate Editor recommend a manuscript for rejection, the authors will not be notified until you have made your final decision. You will be contacted every time a manuscript is recommended for rejection and will be provided with a direct link to the review forum. The reasons for the recommendation for rejection provided by the Associate Editor are accessible in the summary grid under the “Manage Editors” tab (see screenshot below). These are not visible to authors and reviewers.
If you agree with the Associate Editor’s decision, you will be able to send a rejection note to the authors by selecting the “Reject Manuscript” option in the right-hand side menu of the review forum and by ticking the most appropriate box (see options below). Although adding a personal message is not mandatory, we strongly recommend that you provide the authors with additional details as feedback. Please note that the Associate Editor’s comments will not be automatically forwarded to the authors. You can also add a personal message to the reviewers and Associate Editor.

Acceptance of manuscripts is the responsibility of the Associate Editors, but you can visit the review forum of any manuscript to make the final decision yourself, should you wish to. Manuscripts may be accepted and sent to the final validation stage by selecting the corresponding option in the right-hand side menu of the review forum, once the required number of reviewers have endorsed publication, and should no further review be active.

Manuscripts should only be accepted once the final version of the manuscript has been uploaded by the authors.
Contacting the parties involved

You can contact the authors, reviewers, or Associate Editor at any stage of the process by selecting the blue envelope sign next to their name (see screenshot below). Please use this function only when direct correspondence is necessary. The review of each manuscript should be carried out openly in the forum, which acts as a record of the process.

![Screenshot of manuscript review process](image)

3.5 REPLACING EDITORS

Should the handling Associate Editor of a manuscript become unavailable, or should they have a conflict of interest with the authors, the review process will be halted, and the manuscript will momentarily be assigned to the Editorial Office. This is to prevent any reminders from being sent out or further actions being taken by the Associate Editor during this transitory period.

The Editorial Office will not use this mechanism to take any actions regarding the publication of the manuscript (any action performed in a review forum can be followed in the “History” tab, should you wish to keep track of the steps taken). The Editorial Office will then invite new Associate Editors to be able to re-assign the manuscript as soon as possible.

You will be contacted in many but not necessarily all of these cases; please do let the Editorial Office know, should you wish to be informed every time this action is taken. This information will also be visible in the Digital Editorial Office.
4. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4.1 ARTICLE PUBLISHING FEES

Frontiers operates on a gold open-access model, whereby authors of accepted articles will be asked to pay a publication fee, depending on the article type selected as well as on the journal it was submitted to. Author fees help us offset the cost of Editorial Office staff who support the editorial boards as well as of developing and maintaining the technology required to sustain the journals and the journal website, typesetting of articles, and many other associated costs.

What does this mean for authors?

- Authors of accepted articles will be asked to pay a publication fee, depending on the article type submitted (available on a journal basis);
- Authors will retain the copyright to their work;
- Readers will not be asked to pay a fee to access the authors' work, thus allowing for maximum visibility and discoverability.

4.1.1 FRONTIERS WAIVERS

We do not want our fees to become an insurmountable obstacle, and Frontiers is always eager to consider solutions for any barriers to publication. In cases where authors do not have the means to pay our publishing fees, they will be able to apply for a waiver depending on the financial capability of the corresponding author of the paper. While priority is given to lower income countries, we are able to grant at least partial waivers in most cases. Fee waiver applications may be sent to waivers@frontiersin.org and will be processed within a week. This should ideally be done before or right after submission. To avoid any business influence on editorial decisions, waiver assessments are done by the accounting department at Frontiers, independent of the editorial board and Frontiers editorial staff.

You may find additional information on our fees and waivers here.

4.1.2 INSTITUTIONAL AGREEMENTS

In an effort to strengthen our connection with the research communities we serve and to centralize communications, Frontiers is working with libraries, funding agencies, and research consortiums to find ways to support researchers and scholars directly. These agreements enable us to remove some or all of the responsibility for article publishing fees from individual authors.

For a list of the institutions with which we currently have an institutional agreement, click here. You can also recommend Frontiers to your library by clicking here.
4.2 FRONTIERS RESEARCH TOPICS

4.2.1 ABOUT RESEARCH TOPICS

Frontiers Research Topics are collections of ideally at least 10 articles on a focused research area. They create an online dialogue between many research groups about their latest advances, methods, ideas, and more. They are a great opportunity to highlight a research focus or a conference, intensify collaboration, and drive the next developments in your field. Research Topics are an important content acquisition strategy, as they create targeted interest in the journal and foster a community spirit. As Specialty Chief Editor, you are in a unique position to shape your section to highlight timely themes and should aim to suggest around 3 to 5 Topics a year.

Research Topics may be proposed by any experts in the field, who will become Guest Editors on your board for the duration of the Topic. We recommend that Research Topics be hosted by a minimum of two Topic Editors, who will be responsible for soliciting contributions from their peers (although submissions are open to all), for selecting contributions based on abstract submissions, as well as for overseeing the review process of submitted manuscripts. Research Topics result in an encyclopedic collection of peer-reviewed articles available to everyone both online and as a free, downloadable e-book (see here for an example).

4.2.2 YOUR ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All Research Topic proposals made to your specialty will be sent to you for review. As the Specialty Chief Editor, you will be able to:

- Accept the proposals that are suited to your specialty;
- Reject the proposals that are not adequate and provide a reason for the rejection;
- Ask Topic Editors to make changes to their proposal before a decision is made.

Where needed, an Associate Editor from the board may be involved in the Topic, so as to guide the Topic Editors and oversee the review process of submitted manuscripts. Research Topics will only be posted online once you have approved them. Please do let us know, should you be interested in hosting a Research Topic yourself. Alternatively, you may send us a list of potential themes and colleagues whom you believe would be appropriate to host Research Topics.

4.2.3 EDITING RESEARCH TOPIC SUBMISSIONS

Submissions made to a Research Topic will undergo the standard Frontiers review process. Instead of selecting their “preferred Editor” from the board, however, authors will be asked to indicate the Topic Editor whom they believe to be the most knowledgeable and unbiased for editing their manuscript. This “preferred Editor” will be assigned to the manuscript directly and will be responsible for overseeing the review process. The Topics Editors are also able to redistribute the assignments among themselves, should this not constitute a conflict of interest.

Should a conflict of interest arise between the authors and Topics Editors, or should any of the Topic Editors be listed as an author on a submission, the manuscript will need to be handled by an Associate Editor from the board. In such cases, an invitation will be sent to the board, so that the most appropriate, available Editor may be found. As the Specialty Chief Editor, you may step in anytime, should you wish to be actively involved in the Editor
assignment, and will be able to revoke invitations, replace Editors, or invite new Associate Editors to take over the process at any stage, if needed.

4.3 YOUR CONTACTS AT THE EDITORIAL OFFICE

Your main point of contact at the Editorial Office will be your Journal Manager and journal team, who will be able to address any query yourself, your Editors, or the authors may have regarding the journal and editorial policies, the Frontiers review process, etc. You may find a full list of the journal teams’ email addresses here. Please stay in touch with your Journal Manager regularly and let them know of any periods when you may be unavailable. We recommend setting up occasional phone calls to ensure that any issues are escalated to you in a timely manner.

For any technical issue, please contact the Frontiers IT Helpdesk at support@frontiersin.org.

5. APPENDIX

5.1 TAKING OVER AN EXISTING SPECIALTY SECTION

5.1.1 THE SCOPE OF YOUR SPECIALTY

The text on the About page of your specialty section defines the scope of the specialty and is key to helping authors and readers understand its aim, breadth and perspective. The composition of the editorial board will have to reflect this scope as well. While you can edit or replace the existing text, this is not essential if you feel that it adequately reflects your own view of the field. If you do wish to make changes, you may simply email these to the journal team, and we can upload the updated text to the system for you.

5.1.2 THE ASSOCIATE EDITOR BOARD

Associate Editors are essential for setting the standard for the specialty and should be experts in the field (typically Associate Professor level and above, or equivalent for various fields, with an established publication record in international journals). Their main responsibilities consist of building a board of at least 10-15 Review Editors, setting an example on the standard of publications in the journal by submitting a free-of-charge Inaugural Article, and overseeing the review process of around 1-5 manuscripts submitted to the specialty per year. Typically, Specialty Chief Editors are asked to invite at least 15-20 Associate Editors, so as to ensure that the expertise of the Editors on board covers the specialty as a whole. You are free to expand the board beyond this number by inviting more Associate Editors, and this is certainly something to consider if you decide to redefine the scope of the specialty. If doing so, try to aim for diversity (gender balance; geographical spread; different foci of research within the scope of the specialty). It is important to ensure that the board is large enough for Associate Editors not to be over-burdened with manuscript assignments. Note that Associate Editors receive a 100% fee waiver on their Inaugural Article and thereafter a 10% discount off the publishing fees for Category A article types published in any Frontiers journal.

How do I invite Associate Editors?
Please see section 2.3 for details.