

Journal of Microbiology & Biology Education Review Section Author Guidelines

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JMBE Author Guidelines

FOCUS AND SCOPE

The *Journal of Microbiology & Biology Education* (JMBE) publishes original, previously unpublished, peer-reviewed articles that foster scholarly teaching, and provide readily adoptable resources in biology education. JMBE welcomes thoughtful and supported submissions pertaining to scholarly teaching in undergraduate, graduate and professional (e.g., medical school) education, K-12 outreach, and informal education.

The scope of the journal is rooted in the biological sciences and its branches to other disciplines. Examples of articles JMBE accepts include those addressing good pedagogy and design, student interest and motivation, recruitment and retention, citizen science, faculty development, and institutional transformation.

A unique feature of the JMBE editorial process is to provide extensive feedback, guidance, and support for authors from submission through publication.

JMBE is sponsored by the American Society for Microbiology (ASM; www.asm.org), the oldest and largest single life science membership organization in the world, and is indexed in [PubMed Central](#), [CrossRef](#), and [DOAJ](#). The JMBE Editorial Board is committed to providing open access content.

The journal features seven sections:

- **Letters to the Editor** directly address articles published in this or other biology education journals.
- **Research** is for hypothesis-driven research in student learning. Documentation of sound assessment strategies that support research conclusions is required. Articles that address social science or qualitative work are also welcome.
- **Perspectives** place a particular, current topic of science education into perspective. Articles focus on a specific topic, problem, or approach of broad, general interest to science educators, but do not primarily discuss the author's own work.
- **Curriculum** includes field-tested activities that foster active learning and other best practices in education. Activities may be used in the classroom, laboratory, and/or field or online in blended and distance-learning experiences. Manuscripts in this category must include evaluations of the activities, and these evaluations must demonstrate effective learning.
- **Tips and Tools** promote practical tips, suggestions, and advice for improving biology education.
- **Reviews** include reviews of books and media, Journal Watch, and Web Watch.
- **ASMCUE Abstracts** include accepted abstracts for the annual [ASM Conference for Undergraduate Educators](#).

PUBLICATION FREQUENCY

JMBE operates under a continuous publication model, where manuscripts are made available online as soon as they become ready. When a manuscript appears online, it will be catalogued in one of three issues: Spring (April), Back to School (August), or Winter (December). These three issues make up the year's volume.

Beginning in 2010, each May issue of JMBE will feature abstracts for that year's ASM Conference for Undergraduate Educators (ASMCUE; www.asmcue.org).

In addition, *JMBE* publishes a printed *JMBE* Spotlight issue for distribution at ASMCUE and other related educator meetings. The Spotlight issue is a compilation of articles from each section, hand-picked by *JMBE* Editors from the previous year's volume, as well as the accepted abstracts for that year's ASMCUE meeting.

ETHICAL GUIDELINES

In recent years, editors of scientific journals increasingly have reported problems relating to the integrity of the research in submitted and published papers. Scientific errors and incorrect interpretations inevitably occur in the published literature, but authors who knowingly commit fraud or other scientific misconduct seriously compromise the integrity of the scientific record and the success of future scientific research.

Authorship. Regarding authenticity of authorship, only those individuals who contributed directly to the intellectual content of the paper should be listed as such, with the implication that all of the following criteria have been met by the author(s) listed: (a) conceived and planned the work that led to the report; (b) wrote the paper, or reviewed successive versions and took part in the revision process; and (c) approved the final version. Holding positions of administrative leadership, contributing clients, and collecting and assembling data, are not, by themselves, criteria for authorship. Other persons who have made substantial, direct contributions to the work but cannot be considered authors should be acknowledged with their permission.

Previous or Duplicate Publication. In "Comments to the Editor," give full details on any possible previous or duplicate publication of any content of the paper. Previous publication of a small fraction of the content of a paper does not necessarily preclude its being published, but members of the Editorial Board need information about previous publication when deciding how to use space in the journal efficiently; they regard failure of full disclosure by authors of possible prior publication as a breach of scientific ethics. Please send a copy of any document that might be considered a previous publication via email to the Executive Editor, or provide this document during the submission process as a Supplementary file.

Preprint Policy. *JMBE* Editors will consider manuscripts for publication that have been posted in a recognized, not-for-profit preprint archive (such as bioRxiv), provided that upon acceptance of the manuscript for publication, the author is still able to grant ASM copyright or agree to the terms of an Open Access license. It is the responsibility of authors to inform the journal at the time of submission if and where their article has been previously posted. If the manuscript is accepted for publication in *JMBE*, authors are required to update the preprint with a citation to the final published article that includes the DOI along with a link.

Conflict of Interest Notification. Conflict of interest exists when an author, reviewer, or editor has financial or personal relationships that could inappropriately bias or compromise his or her actions (such relationships are also known as dual commitments, competing interests, or competing loyalties). More specifically, the following considerations are illustrative and would need to be addressed: (a) Authors should identify individuals who provide writing or other assistance and disclose the funding source for this assistance. (b) Investigators must disclose potential conflicts to study participants and should state in the manuscript whether they have done so. (c) Authors should describe the role of the study sponsor(s), if any, in the study design; in the collection, analysis, and interpretation of the data; in the writing of the report; and in the decision to submit the report for publication. If the supporting source had no such involvement, the authors should so state. (d) Editors may request that authors of a study funded by an agency with a proprietary or financial interest in the outcome sign a statement such as, "I had full access to all of the data in this study and I take complete responsibility for the integrity of the data and the accuracy of the data analysis."

Such perceived conflicts--or their absence in a study-- must be disclosed by the author via the "Comments to the Editor" route when the manuscript is submitted. Additionally, either the presence or

absence of perceived conflicts must be addressed on a Conflict of Interest Notification Page that follows the manuscript's title page.

Project Funding. Sources of outside support for research, including funding, equipment, and drugs, must be named in the contributed manuscript. The role(s) of the funding organization, if any, in the collection of data, its analysis and interpretation, and in the right to approve or disapprove publication of the finished manuscript must be described in the Methods section of the text.

Informed Consent. The use of human subjects or other animals for research purposes is regulated by the federal government and individual institutions. Manuscripts containing information related to human or animal use should clearly state that the research has complied with all relevant federal guidelines and institutional policies.

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PEER REVIEW PROCESS

Peer-Review. All manuscripts are considered to be confidential and are reviewed by the editors, members of the editorial board, or qualified ad hoc reviewers. When a manuscript is submitted, it is given a number and sent to the editor. Corresponding authors are notified of this number. Always refer to this number in communications with the editor(s) and *JMBE* production staff. It is the responsibility of the corresponding author to inform the coauthors of the manuscript's status throughout the review and publication processes.

The reviewers operate under strict guidelines set forth in "[Guidelines for Reviewers](#)" and are expected to complete their reviews within two weeks after receiving the manuscript. The corresponding author is notified, about six weeks after the submission deadline for the volume, of the editor's decision to accept, reject, or require modification. When a manuscript is returned to the corresponding author for modification, it should be returned to the editor within one month; otherwise it may be considered withdrawn. A point-for-point response to the reviews must be included with the revised manuscript; an extra copy of the revised manuscript should have the changes highlighted.

Any manuscript with a laboratory component will undergo review by *JMBE's* Laboratory Safety Review Committee, prior to regular review. As a result, authors may be asked to make safety-related changes to their manuscript before it goes out for regular review. This review has been established to ensure that all laboratory practices comply with ASM's [Guidelines for Biosafety in Teaching Laboratories](#) and to mitigate the risk to the students, faculty, and institutions who may be adopting the activity.

Manuscript Disposition. Manuscripts may be rejected upon receipt by the Editor-in-Chief and/or Editor if they do not fit the scope of the journal or section. In this case, the manuscript will not enter the review process, is considered rejected, and the Author will be asked to review the "Instructions to Authors" more thoroughly before resubmitting.

Once a manuscript is deemed appropriate for review, there are four possible final outcomes:

1. Editor enters a decision of "Decline Submission." This indicates that the paper is not appropriate for publication and the Author will not be requested to resubmit. The manuscript will exit the system, marked as "Archived."
2. Editor enters a decision of "Resubmit for Review." This indicates that while the manuscript topic is engaging, there are major issues with formatting, inadequate data, or lack of assessment, among others. The manuscript will exit the system, marked as "Archived," and the Author is requested to make extensive revisions based on Editor comments. The Author may submit a new manuscript when all reviewers' concerns have been addressed. A new manuscript number will be assigned upon receipt of the new submission.
3. Editor enters a decision of "Revisions Required." This indicates that the paper is acceptable, but minor revisions are necessary. The manuscript remains "Active" in the system. The author will upload a revised manuscript*, along with a cover letter indicating the changes made. The revised manuscript will be reconsidered by the Reviewers, and a final decision will be made.
4. Editor enters a decision of "Accept Submission." The manuscript matches the focus and scope of the journal and is accepted for publication. It will move forward in the production process.

***Note:** When preparing revised manuscripts, it is essential to carefully follow the instructions given in the Editor's letter. In particular, provide an annotated copy of the manuscript as well as a cover letter that addresses, point-by-point, the concerns of the Reviewers. Failure to do so will cause a delay in the review of the revised manuscript and may result in its return. Revised manuscripts must be uploaded under the "Editor Decision" section, located at the bottom on the manuscript's Review page. Revisions received more than three months after requested may be held for another review cycle, at the Editor's discretion. If a revision is not received within six months after requested, the file may be closed and archived.

ONLINE SUBMISSION PROCEDURES

Creating an Author Account. Before submitting a manuscript, authors must create a user account and check the "Author" box in their user profile. Once this box is checked, select the "Submit a Manuscript" button to the right and follow the prompts for submission. [Create a JMBE account.](#)

Author Tip. Authors should review journal articles in the section to which they plan to submit and make sure their manuscripts follow the formatting of those articles published in 2012 and beyond.

Submission Process. Authors can find additional guidance and step-by-step instructions for the submission process, as well as instructions for uploading revised manuscripts, in the "[Online Submissions](#)" section of the Author Guidelines page. Be sure to download and follow the PDF documents "How to Submit a Manuscript to *JMBE*" and "How to Submit a Revised Manuscript to *JMBE*."

Step 1: Start Submission. Under “Journal Section,” a drop down menu allows the selection of type of article. The author should complete the submission checklist indicating the article is prepared in the proper format and has not been previously published. Use the optional “Comments to the Editor” section to report any previous or duplicate publication and/or conflict of interest (see General Guidelines). Select Save/Continue to proceed to the next section.

Step 2: Submission Metadata. The first, middle, and last name of each author, affiliation, and email address are required for each author. An optional biographical statement may be added for each author. Spaces are provided for the Submission Title and Submission Abstract. A space is provided for the author to name Agencies that provided support for the work presented in the submission.

Step 3: Submission Upload. Four steps are required to submit the manuscript, which must be saved on the hard drive of the Author’s computer. 1. Click Browse to open a Choose File window for locating the manuscript on the hard drive. 2. Locate the submission file and highlight it. 3. Click Open on the window, which places the address in the box on this page. 4. Click Upload on this page, which uploads the file from the Author’s computer to the journal’s website and renames it following the journal’s system. The file can be viewed by clicking on the file name. A new or revised file can be uploaded, deleting the one that currently appears. After clicking Upload, the upload window clears; click Save/Continue to move to the next step.

Step 4: Supplemental Files. An important feature of this publishing system is the ability to upload separate graphics files. Having graphics files separate from text files facilitates the HTML markup of the article for online viewing. An additional advantage is its ability to post and index any number of supplemental files for each published investigation. These might include samples of student work, teacher versions for exercises, teacher research instruments, data sets, information sources, etc. In addition, special permission to use figures, copyright release statements, may be included.

Step 5: Confirmation. This step allows the author to review the submission for completeness, note the file(s) name change in the system, note the submission file size, and upload date. **The author should click Finish Submission to confirm the upload.**

ONLINE SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

As part of the submission process, authors are required to check off their submission's compliance with all of the following items, and submissions may be returned to authors that do not adhere to these guidelines.

1. **ONLINE SELF-DIAGNOSIS TOOL:** The Author has used this tool to determine if their manuscript is ready for submission. Structured similarly to popular online quizzes, this tool helps authors understand the scope and level of assessment required by each section. [Diagnose Your Manuscript.](#)
2. **GUIDELINES FOR MANUSCRIPT TITLES:** The Author has used the following guidelines to help increase their manuscript's "discoverability" online, thus leading to a wider audience and increased citations. [Improve Your Manuscript Title.](#)
3. **JMBE How-To Series: Steps for Submitting a Manuscript to the Journal:** The Author has watched the 10-15 minute video tutorial that provides an overview of *JMBE* and its five sections, a walk-through of the submission process, and tips for a successful submission.
4. **CONTENT ADHERES TO AUTHOR GUIDELINES:** The text meets the journal's formatting requirements as outlined in the General Guidelines and specific Section Guidelines for the section to which the paper has been submitted.
5. **LABORATORY BIOSAFETY GUIDELINES:** The author has confirmed that any laboratory procedures and/or practices outlined in the submission adhere to the [ASM Guidelines for Biosafety in Teaching Laboratories](#). Furthermore, the author has indicated in the submission how those procedures and/or practices adhere to the ASM Guidelines for Biosafety in Teaching Laboratories.
6. **PREVIOUS OR DUPLICATE PUBLICATION:** The submission has not been previously published, nor is it before another journal for consideration; or an explanation has been provided in "Comments to the Editor."
7. **FILE FORMAT:** The submission file is in Microsoft Word or RTF document file format.
8. **DOCUMENT FORMAT:** The text is double-spaced; uses a 10-point Times New Roman font or equivalent; employs italics, rather than underlining (except for URL addresses); with figures and tables placed at the end of the text, rather than embedded within.
9. **WEBSITE LINKING:** All URL addresses in the text are activated and ready to click.
10. **FIGURES AND TABLES:** Figures and tables are placed at the end of the text, rather than embedded within. They are numbered and include a heading followed by a period. **Permissions are required to reproduce or modify figures and tables within the submitted manuscript and any associated supplemental materials.**
11. **IMAGES:** All images are uploaded as Supplemental Files in JPG or GIF with 300 dpi (color or grayscale). Monochrome images have been saved in grayscale mode; color images are in RGB. No BMP, RTF, or TIF images are included. Images are at least 3 inches and no greater than 5 inches in the greatest dimension. **Permissions are required to reproduce or modify images within the submitted manuscript and any associated supplemental materials.**
12. **SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS:** Supplemental materials are loaded as one Word doc file. All materials are designated as Appendix 1, Appendix 2, etc., within the manuscript text and listed at the end of the manuscript as well. **Permissions are required to reproduce or modify images, figures (including maps), and tables within the supplemental materials.** A formatted and linked Table of Contents will be provided for supplemental materials once the manuscript and associated supplemental materials have been accepted for publication in *JMBE*.
13. **REFERENCES:** References are listed in the order in which they are cited in the manuscript (citation-sequence reference system) and formatted according to [ASM Style](#).
14. **INFORMED CONSENT:** The use of human subjects or other animals for research purposes is regulated by the federal government and individual institutions. Manuscripts containing information related to human or animal use should clearly state that the research has complied with all relevant federal guidelines and institutional policies.

Preparing a Review Section Manuscript

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Review manuscripts provide constructive critique of material that facilitates undergraduate students' understanding about the biological world. More than a descriptive overview, a useful review compares the text edition or digital resource to previous versions or similar alternatives, in a way that helps the potential adopter make an informed choice.

- Manuscripts may include reviews of new books, textbooks, videos, digital resources, or other multimedia of use in science education.
- Suggestions for items to be reviewed are accepted throughout the year and must include the title, author, publisher, and distributor information, including cost.
- Reviews of journal articles (Journal Watch) and websites (Web Watch) are welcome.
- Especially helpful is if the reviewer has used the text or resource in their teaching and can include details or specific examples of sections, activities, or programs they found either well-done, marginal, or of little help.
- All reviews need not be glowingly positive and in some cases the Editor may request a "point" and "counterpoint" opinion from more than one reviewer.
- The goal will consistently be to provide useful and trustworthy information about resources for educators who are struggling to choose among a myriad of available options.

Manuscript length: 500-600 words in length.

Editorial Style. The editorial style of ASM journals conforms to the ASM Style Manual for Journals (American Society for Microbiology, 2011, in-house document) and How To Write and Publish a Scientific Paper, 6th ed. (Greenwood Press, Westport, CT, 2006), as interpreted and modified by the editors and the *JMBE* production staff. The ASM copyeditors and the *JMBE* production staff reserve the privilege of editing manuscripts to conform to the stylistic conventions set forth in the aforesaid publications and in these Author Guidelines. On receipt at ASM, an accepted manuscript undergoes an automated pre-editing, cleanup, and tagging process specific to the particular article type. To optimize this process, manuscripts must be supplied in the correct format and with the appropriate sections and headings. Authors who are unsure of proper English usage should have their manuscripts checked by someone proficient in the English language. Manuscripts may be editorially rejected, without review, on the basis of poor English or lack of conformity to the standards set forth in these Author Guidelines.

Copyediting. After final acceptance, a manuscript will be copyedited to conform to the editorial style of the ASM Style Manual for Journals (American Society for Microbiology, 2011, in-house document) and How To Write and Publish a Scientific Paper, 6th ed. (Greenwood Press, Westport, CT, 2006), as interpreted and modified by the editors and the *JMBE* production staff. It is the responsibility of the corresponding author to read the copyedited manuscript he or she will receive, and to answer all queries fully.

MANUSCRIPT COMPOSITION AND FORMATTING

File Format. The submission file should be in Microsoft Word or an RTF document file format.

Document Format. The text should be double-spaced; using a 10-point Times New Roman font or equivalent; employing italics, rather than underlining (except for URL addresses).

Website Linking. All URL addresses in the text should be activated and ready to click.

Abstract. Review article abstracts must be included below the title and follow the format “**Review of:** [formatted reference of article, resource, etc.]”

MANUSCRIPT TITLE GUIDELINES

Creating a title that conveys the purpose of your work can be one of the most difficult parts of scientific writing. Before digital archiving, “eye-catching” titles were preferred because they could draw a reader to the abstract. In today’s research environment, keywords in titles and abstracts are the most important indicator that a paper will be read. Remember: if it can’t be found (and quickly!), it won’t be utilized. Below are some guidelines and an activity to help you craft a title that will be attractive for today’s online searching methods.

The *JMBE* Editorial Board recommends that you consider these questions as you develop a title for your submission:

- **What organism/research method/activity style/key concept is central to your paper?** Make sure this appears in your title.

- **What action is your manuscript calling for?** What do you want the reader to do after reading your manuscript (i.e. revise policy, use it in their classroom, etc.)? Make sure that similar action verbs are reflected in your title or abstract.

- **What keywords would you use to search for your article?** Make a list of the top five keywords and then use them in a search. Are the papers that you find in a similar vein to yours? If yes, make sure to incorporate these keywords appropriately in your title.

- **Is your title ambiguous or misleading?** Ask someone who is not familiar with your paper to read just the title of your manuscript and have them tell you what they think it is about. If they misinterpret your title, have them clarify which words were confusing. Remember: someone searching for your paper may not have your expertise.

- **Don’t get too carried away.** While you want your title to describe your paper accurately, it might not be attractive to today’s reader if it is more than one line long. Remember that there is an abundance of resources available to today’s reader, and if they don’t find your title and understand the content quickly, they will not read it!

Now take the test!

Consider the following fictitious titles, which are based upon published submissions. Which one do you think would attract the most search hits? What makes the other titles ineffective?

Giving the Undergraduate Laboratory Meaning and Purpose
Exploding Cells and Dynamic Colors: Creating Engaging Laboratories in the Science Classroom
Laboratory Exercises that Promote Student Engagement and Learning about Osmosis

Answer:

While not particularly “original,” the third title is the best in terms of keywords that will guide a reader to the manuscript. It states the topic of the laboratory, and indicates what the reader can gain from reading the manuscript (ways to engage and promote student learning).

Giving the Undergraduate Laboratory Meaning and Purpose

> Is this a discussion of HOW to give a lab meaning and purpose or WHY it is important? Both? What is covered in this laboratory? This is the vaguest title, and is likely to be passed over because it is not specific or clear enough to draw in a reader.

Exploding Cells and Dynamic Colors: Creating Engaging Laboratories in the Science Classroom

> While “eye-catching,” it isn’t clear whether this is a “how to” article or an overview of the author’s experience. It also remains vague on what students actually learn in the laboratories.



AUTHOR AGREEMENT

Manuscript ID#: _____

Manuscript Title (hereafter "Work"): _____

Author(s) [collectively the "Author"]: _____

NOTE: At the time the Work is submitted, the Corresponding Author should complete, sign, and email this Author Agreement to the *JMBE* Editorial Office at jmbe@asmusa.org.

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- book
- report
- symposium proceedings
- company textbook, supplemental materials, white paper, or website
- funder's website

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AGREED TO BY AUTHOR:

Corresponding Author: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

If your employer claims copyright, this form must also be signed by a person authorized to sign for and on behalf of your organization as confirmation that your employer agrees to the terms of this Author Agreement.

Employer: _____

Date: _____

Signature (on behalf of employer): _____

Name: _____

Title: _____