SECTION 13
PUBLICATIONS

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NUMBER 13.1: PUBLICATIONS MISSION AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

APPROVED: FEBRUARY 2009
REVISED: JULY 2014, OCTOBER 2025

POLICY

The INFORMS publications program supports INFORMS by disseminating high-quality research and knowledge in operations research, management science, analytics, and related fields.

Guided by the values of impact, integrity, inclusion, and innovation, INFORMS publishes a suite of scholarly journals and books spanning a wide range of methodologies, applications, and disciplines. Each publication is guided by its Editor-in-Chief and editorial board, and maintains its own distinct mission aligned with the broader goals of INFORMS.

Through the dedication of these volunteer editors and reviewers, INFORMS' publications have been consistently recognized as leaders in their respective fields. Their continued service is essential to advancing scholarly communication and the impact of the INFORMS research community as it contributes to smarter decisions for a better world.

Organizational Structure and Oversight

Ultimate authority over publications rests with the INFORMS Board of Directors. General oversight is delegated to the Vice President of Publications, supported by an advisory Publications Committee, in accordance with the editorial and governance policies and procedures outlined in P&P Sections 13.2 and 13.3.

Editors-in-Chief and their editorial boards are responsible for the editorial content and peer review processes of their respective publications, in accordance with the editorial and governance policies and procedures outlined in P&P Sections 13.4 and 13.5. Editorial Search Committees are established as needed to recommend candidates for incoming Editors-in-Chief; Editorial Review Committees are appointed — typically at the end of an Editor-in-Chief's first term — to evaluate the publication and the performance of its editorial leadership. Policies and procedures for Editorial Search and Review Committees are described in P&P Section 13.6.

INFORMS staff, led by the Director of Publications under the authority of INFORMS' Executive Director, are responsible for the business, operational, and production aspects of the publishing program. This includes management of peer review systems and workflows; production and distribution of print and electronic content; budgeting and sales forecasting; marketing and outreach; rights, permissions, and licensing; and coordination of contractual relationships with vendors and publishing partners. The Director of Publications assigns a Managing Editor to each publication to support the Editor-in-Chief and coordinate editorial operations.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

INFORMS Policies and Procedures Manual, Section 13.2, Vice President of Publications
INFORMS Policies and Procedures Manual, Section 13.3, Publications Committee
INFORMS Policies and Procedures Manual, Section 13.4, Editors-in-Chief
INFORMS Policies and Procedures Manual, Section 13.5, Editorial Boards
INFORMS Policies and Procedures Manual, Section 13.6, Editorial Search and Review Committees

NUMBER 13.2: VICE PRESIDENT OF PUBLICATIONS

APPROVED: FEBRUARY 2005
REVISED: JULY 2021, OCTOBER 2025

POLICY

The Vice President of Publications is the senior volunteer leader guiding INFORMS' scholarly publishing program. As a voting member of the INFORMS Board of Directors and Chair of the Publications Committee, the Vice President represents the publishing program in organizational governance and provides strategic and policy-related guidance to the Board.

The Vice President of Publications is the primary volunteer liaison to INFORMS' Editors-in-Chief and works in close collaboration with the Director of Publications to ensure INFORMS' publications reflect the organization's strategic goals, uphold ethical standards, and promote scholarly excellence, intellectual breadth, and professional integrity across the journal portfolio.

The Vice President is responsible for overseeing the review and development of editorial policies, as well as nominating members to Editorial Search and Review Committees and bringing forth Editor-in-Chief appointment and re-appointment recommendations to the INFORMS Board on behalf of the Publications Committee (see P&P Section 13.6).

PROCEDURES

Strategic Leadership and Oversight

The Vice President of Publications provides strategic oversight of the INFORMS portfolio of scholarly publications, including its journals and book series, and serves as the Board liaison. In this capacity, the Vice President monitors the scope and positioning of the program to identify potential editorial gaps or overlaps, advises on initiatives to strengthen editorial leadership, and promotes alignment with INFORMS' commitment to intellectual breadth, open inquiry, and scholarly excellence, as outlined in P&P Section 13.5.1 (Editorial Board Member Appointment, Qualifications, and Term Limits). The Vice President also works closely with the Director of Publications to ensure that editorial policies and operational infrastructure remain coordinated and responsive to community needs and professional publishing standards.

Bridging Editorial Policy and Governance

The Vice President chairs the Publications Committee and convenes at least one meeting annually, typically held in conjunction with the INFORMS Annual Meeting. Acting as a liaison between Editors-in-Chief and the INFORMS Board, the Vice President communicates program needs and perspectives, provides guidance on matters of editorial policy, peer review standards, and publishing ethics, and serves as a point of contact for journal-level concerns requiring Board attention.

The Vice President also presents Publications Committee actions and recommendations to the INFORMS Board. While the Vice President typically conveys the consensus of the Publications Committee, as a voting member of the Board, the Vice President may present individual views or motions that have not been formally approved by the Publications Committee. This dual role ensures that both committee consensus and broader strategic insight are represented in Board-level discussions.

Editor-in-Chief Search and Review

The Vice President nominates individuals to serve on Editorial Search and Review Committees, as described in P&P Section 13.6. After review and endorsement of these committee recommendations by the Publications Committee, the Vice President presents Editor-in-Chief appointment and reappointment motions to the INFORMS Board for approval.

Budget Development and Resource Planning

While the Vice President does not directly manage publication budgets, the Vice President assesses editor requests for budget adjustments — such as additional pages, increased travel support, or new editorial initiatives — and evaluates, with the Director of Publications, whether such requests align with INFORMS' strategic goals, operational priorities, and available resources. Supported requests are incorporated by the Director of Publications into the draft annual budget. The Director of Publications consults, as needed, with the Vice President on pricing and other budget-related issues. Although institutional pricing is governed under a long-term distribution agreement, the Vice President may provide input on pricing for individual subscriptions and print sales. All pricing decisions are ultimately subject to Finance Committee review and Board approval.

Term of Service and Continuity

The Vice President of Publications is elected to a two-year term, in accordance with the organization's bylaws (see Bylaw 3, Nominations and Elections). Candidates typically have demonstrated experience in editorial leadership and a record of active engagement in INFORMS' mission and programs. The Vice President may run unopposed for a second consecutive term. To support leadership continuity, an incoming Vice President may invite the outgoing Vice President to continue serving on the Publications Committee for a limited period, typically not exceeding one year.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

INFORMS Bylaws, Bylaw 3, Nominations and Elections
INFORMS Policies and Procedures Manual, Section 13.5.1, Editorial Board Member Qualifications, Appointment, and Term Limits
INFORMS Policies and Procedures Manual, Section 13.6, Editorial Search and Review Committees

NUMBER 13.3: PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

APPROVED: FEBRUARY 2006
REVISED: NOVEMBER 2014, JULY 2021, AUGUST 2024, OCTOBER 2025

POLICY

The Publications Committee is established to provide strategic counsel on INFORMS' scholarly publishing program. The INFORMS Board of Directors retains ultimate authority over all publications.

The Publications Committee provides policy guidance and strategic oversight of editorial activity across INFORMS' publications portfolio. It serves as the principal advisory body on editorial matters and supports the Board's oversight of journal performance and Editor-in-Chief appointments, developing INFORMS-wide editorial policies, and reviewing proposals to launch new publications or sunset existing ones.

While the committee supports consistency, transparency, and quality across the portfolio, it does not intervene in editorial decisions. Editors-in-Chief maintain autonomy in determining the suitability and acceptance of content, subject to INFORMS policy.

All participants in the INFORMS publishing program — including editors, reviewers, staff, and members of the Publications Committee — are expected to conduct themselves with fairness, accountability, and integrity in support of INFORMS' mission and professional standards.

PROCEDURES

Membership and Terms

The Publications Committee is chaired by the Vice President of Publications and consists of up to nine regular voting members, along with several ex officio, nonvoting members: the INFORMS Director of Publications, the Editors-in-Chief of the INFORMS' journals, and the editors of INFORMS' book series. Ex officio members may contribute to discussions but do not vote on motions. All voting members of the Publications Committee must be INFORMS members in good standing. For clarity, "Publications Committee" shall hereafter refer to the regular voting members.

Regular voting members serve staggered two-year terms. The Vice President of Publications shall designate one regular voting member to serve as liaison to the Subdivisions Council. Separately, the Vice President may designate other regular voting members to serve as representatives to other INFORMS committees as deemed relevant. In accordance with P&P Section 2.1 (General Committee Procedures), committee members are nominated by the Vice President of Publications and must be approved by the Executive Committee prior to the start of their term, typically beginning January 1. Members may be nominated for reappointment, but may not serve more than two consecutive terms.

A subset of the Publication Committee will be designated as a Publication Ethics Sub-Committee. This sub-committee is tasked with the formal review and adjudication of ethical violations in the publication process. Its composition and responsibilities are outlined in P&P 13.8 (Publication Ethics).

Relationship to the Board

The Vice President of Publications serves as the Board liaison and Chair of the Publications Committee. The Vice President works in coordination with the Director of Publications to prepare quarterly written reports to the INFORMS Board, summarizing committee activities and any pending motions or policy matters.

Scope of Responsibilities

The Publications Committee, through the Vice President of Publications, serves as the principal advisory body to INFORMS on editorial matters across the publications portfolio. It plays a key role in recommending future publications strategy and evaluating the alignment of INFORMS publications with INFORMS' mission and standards. While the committee does not directly nominate Editors-in-Chief, it reviews and either endorses or declines to endorse the recommendations of the appointed Editorial Search and Review Committees (see P&P Section 13.6). Operational responsibilities for costs, pricing, distribution, advertising, and circulation lie with INFORMS staff; however, INFORMS staff may ask the committee for strategic guidance when these matters intersect with editorial concerns.

Editor Appointments and Review

The Vice President of Publications advises the INFORMS president when an Editorial Search or Review Committee is needed and recommends committee rosters in accordance with the process defined in P&P Section 13.6. The Publications Committee shall have at least one representative, preferably a voting member, on each Editorial Search and Review Committee. This representative's role, alongside the INFORMS staff liaison, is to guide committees on publication policy and process, ensure consistency with INFORMS standards, and provide a portfolio-wide perspective. This may include advising on proposed editorial structures or scope revisions that could intersect with or duplicate the editorial scope of existing publications.

Budget Requests and Strategic Input

INFORMS staff manage the development and administration of publication budgets and will consult with the Publications Committee, as needed, for input on editor-initiated funding requests (see P&P Section 13.4, Editors-in-Chief). The Publications Committee does not play a formal role in budget formulation or approval.

Meetings

The Publications Committee shall meet at least one time per year. Typically, the committee meets virtually as needed throughout the year and holds a regular in-person session of the full Publications Committee (including all ex officio members) during the INFORMS Annual Meeting. In accordance with P&P Section 2.1, a quorum is defined as at least half of the voting members of the Committee. All motions intended for Board consideration shall be approved by the committee and submitted at least four weeks prior to the relevant Board meeting.

Expectations on Responsiveness

Publications Committee members are expected to respond to meeting requests and document reviews in a timely manner to support the committee's effectiveness.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

INFORMS Policies and Procedures Manual, Section 2.1, General Committee Procedures
INFORMS Policies and Procedures Manual, Section 13.4, Editors-in-Chief
INFORMS Policies and Procedures Manual, Section 13.6, Editorial Search and Review Committees
INFORMS Policies and Procedures Manual, Section 13.8, Publication Ethics

NUMBER 13.4: EDITORS-IN-CHIEF

APPROVED: FEBRUARY 2009
REVISED: NOVEMBER 2014, AUGUST 2017, JULY 2021, OCTOBER 2025

POLICY

The volunteer position of Editor-in-Chief is key to the INFORMS publications program. Editors-in-Chief and their editorial boards have primary responsibility for the editorial content and scholarly quality of INFORMS publications. As part of INFORMS' scholarly mission, Editors-in-Chief are expected to serve both the broader research community and the interests of the INFORMS membership.

Editors-in-Chief are appointed by the INFORMS Board of Directors, following the process outlined in P&P Section 13.6. Editors-in-Chief must be INFORMS members in good standing throughout their term of appointment. The normal term of appointment is three years, and an editor may not serve more than two consecutive terms.

Editors-in-Chief are expected to demonstrate significant scholarly expertise in the subject matter covered by the journal, have prior experience in editorial leadership roles, and possess the managerial skills necessary to oversee editorial operations and peer review processes.

Editors-in-Chief are responsible for:

- championing the journal's visibility, relevance, and strategic direction in alignment with INFORMS' mission and community needs;
- serving the INFORMS membership and broader scholarly community by advancing knowledge dissemination and contributing to INFORMS' thought leadership in the field;
- selecting and managing their journal's editorial board in accordance with INFORMS policies (see P&P Section 13.5.1 for appointment criteria, term limits, and expectations related to fostering broad intellectual representation, methodological openness, and professional integrity in editorial leadership);
- upholding INFORMS publications policies and fostering a publishing environment rooted in ethical conduct and responsible editorial practices (see P&P Section 13.8 for policies on publication ethics, research integrity, and data availability); and
- ensuring that the peer review process is fair, timely, and conducted according to INFORMS standards.

PROCEDURES

Editors-in-Chief are responsible for executing their editorial duties in accordance with INFORMS policies and in partnership with INFORMS staff and volunteer leadership. They play a central role in recruiting, soliciting, and nurturing high-quality content; overseeing the journal's submission and review guidelines; and maintaining a peer-review process that is thorough, fair, and timely (see P&P Section 13.5.2).

Editors-in-Chief are expected to monitor the scope and editorial objectives of the journal to ensure alignment with the journal's mission, relevance to the community, and support for emerging areas of research. They should periodically evaluate whether the journal's editorial structure telegraphs its thematic coverage, facilitates timely peer review, and reflects evolving needs for editorial specialization. Any proposed structural changes must follow the approvals outlined later in this section.

Editors-in-Chief contribute to the advancement of scholarship by championing their journal within the field, helping to build research communities, and promoting content diffusion (for example, through social media or conference engagement). They are also responsible for managing editorial capacity, including attention to article length and issue planning, in consultation with INFORMS staff.

The following procedures outline the Editor-in-Chief's working relationship with INFORMS governance bodies, staff, and operational structures.

Relationship to the Vice President of Publications and Publications Committee

The Vice President of Publications and the Publications Committee provide policy guidance to Editors-in-Chief and participate in the review and development of editorial policies across INFORMS publications. The Vice President serves as the liaison between the Editors-in-Chief and the INFORMS Board, representing the publications program and advocating for journal-specific and cross-journal editorial matters that merit Board attention.

Editors-in-Chief may consult the Vice President when questions arise about editorial policy, emerging challenges in peer review, or publication ethics (for example, plagiarism, dual submission, and fabrication/falsification of data).

Editors-in-Chief are ex officio nonvoting members of the Publications Committee and are expected to participate in its standing meeting held at the INFORMS Annual Meeting each fall. These meetings, convened by the Vice President of Publications, allow editors to discuss shared editorial challenges, coordinate cross-journal practices, and provide input on matters of publication policy.

Changes to a journal's editorial structure (such as the addition or removal of departments or roles) that have not been explicitly approved as part of the editor search or review process (described in P&P Section 13.6) must be proposed in consultation with the journal's editorial board and must be submitted to and approved by the Vice President of Publications prior to implementation. The Vice President of Publications may consult with the Publications Committee on editorial structure change requests, but final approval rests with the Vice President.

Reporting

Each Editor-in-Chief is required to submit an annual report by September 15 of each calendar year to the Vice President of Publications and Publications Committee detailing the health of their journal. These reports are shared by the Vice President with the INFORMS Board of Directors in conjunction with its fall meeting. Reports should include:

- submission and acceptance summaries (by department or area, if applicable);
- review cycle time data;
- contextual commentary on editorial decision times, submission volume, and other key workflow statistics, including challenges encountered, notable successes, emerging trends, or opportunities for innovation;
- editorial board membership roster, including the INFORMS membership status of each board member;
- editorial board turnover and term compliance, including how the board aligns with term limits and reappointment guidelines outlined in P&P Section 13.5.1;
- notable editorial initiatives or other important developments;
- response to Editorial Review Committee recommendations, when applicable, including any actions taken (or rationale for not taking action) during the editor's current term (see P&P Section 13.6); and
- a brief narrative on how the journal supported INFORMS' mission and served the needs of its members.

Annual reports may serve as input into subsequent Editorial Search or Review Committee (see P&P Section 13.6) and may elicit feedback from any parties receiving the report (for example, the INFORMS Board, Publications Committee, Vice President of Publications, or Director of Publications) when warranted.

Relationship to the Publications Department and INFORMS Staff

Staff Roles and Responsibilities

INFORMS' Publications Department is responsible for operational components of the publishing program, including peer review support, production workflows, content delivery, vendor coordination, and day-to-day systems administration (see P&P Section 13.1). The department's professional staff bring specialized expertise in scholarly publishing and manage a complex, multi-journal infrastructure that supports standardization, quality, efficiency, and recognized editorial and production norms across all INFORMS journals.

Each Editor-in-Chief works closely with an assigned Managing Editor — a member of the INFORMS staff — who serves as their primary contact for editorial workflow, author and reviewer support, and coordination of peer review activities. As outlined in P&P Section 13.1, Managing Editors are assigned by the Director of Publications and serve as the staff lead for each journal's operational and logistical needs. INFORMS staff are also responsible for ensuring that accepted manuscripts are complete and production-ready; confirming that all necessary rights, permissions, and licenses have been secured; coordinating with publishing vendors; and scheduling content for publication in print and online. Managing Editors also assist with issue planning, data reporting, and the organization of editorial board meetings — including securing meeting space, arranging audiovisual services and catering, managing invitations, and preparing relevant performance slides. Adequate advance notice is required for meeting support, particularly for new or unscheduled meetings.

INFORMS staff can also provide support for journal content diffusion and visibility efforts. Editors-in-Chief and their editorial boards are encouraged to promote their journals through social media and other communication channels. To ensure consistent branding and sustainable access as boards rotate, any new journal-affiliated social media accounts should be coordinated with INFORMS staff. While INFORMS is not resourced to manage journal-specific campaigns, staff can support account setup, provide guidance, and amplify content through institutional channels as capacity allows.

Policy, Ethics, and Data Support

Editors-in-Chief are also encouraged to consult with their Managing Editor or Director of Publications when questions arise related to editorial policy, peer review standards, or publishing ethics — including matters such as plagiarism, duplicate submission, authorship disputes, or data integrity. INFORMS staff can provide operational and policy guidance in support of INFORMS' publication standards. Where questions fall outside existing policy, the Director of Publications will confer with the Vice President of Publications to determine an appropriate course of action.

INFORMS staff also play a central role in supporting data-informed editorial leadership. Editors-in-Chief receive quarterly dashboard reports, which are managed and overseen by the Director of Publications, covering submissions, acceptances, acceptance rates, production volume, decision times, publication backlogs, and content usage. These dashboards apply a standardized methodology to ensure consistency and comparability across all journals and support data-driven decision-making at both the journal and portfolio level.

Managing Editors are equipped to generate customized reports, interpret system data in context, and identify trends that inform strategic planning, performance assessment, and editorial board review. While standard reports are available through the peer review system, these may not always reflect journal-specific configurations or provide adequate granularity. Staff expertise helps ensure that reporting is accurate, actionable, and aligned with the broader goals of the publishing. Editors are encouraged to coordinate any reporting needs through their Managing Editor to ensure the most effective support.

Initiatives and Proposals

Editors-in-Chief are encouraged to bring forward ideas that may enhance the quality, discoverability, or community engagement of their journal. INFORMS staff can assist in evaluating ideas, assessing resource implications, and coordinating cross-departmental input. Managing Editors serve as key partners in ensuring proposals — such as new editorial features, content formats, or special initiatives — are feasible, aligned with portfolio standards, and supported by available resources.

Because INFORMS publications operate within an integrated publishing infrastructure, proposed changes to journal style, formatting, or production workflows should be coordinated through the Director of Publications. Proposals that support innovation, improve the reader experience, or strengthen scholarly communication are welcome and will be carefully considered for implementation. Editors are encouraged to initiate these discussions early in the calendar year to allow adequate time for evaluation and planning. Approved changes are typically implemented at the start of the next journal volume or book cycle.

Escalation and Dispute Resolution

In the event of a disagreement between the Editor-in-Chief and the Director of Publications regarding editorial operations or proposed changes, either party may refer the matter to the Vice President of Publications and, if needed, to the Publications Committee for evaluation. Matters involving contracts or vendor relationships fall under the authority of INFORMS, with final decision-making delegated to the Executive Director. While a matter is under review, proposed changes will be paused to ensure that any implementation reflects a shared understanding and institutional alignment.

Budgets

INFORMS staff are responsible for developing, monitoring, and managing the publications budget, which supports all INFORMS journals within a shared infrastructure. Because the majority of expenses are tied to shared staffing, systems, and vendor contracts, INFORMS does not provide journal-level profit-and-loss statements. Instead, Editors-in-Chief are provided with budget-related details relevant to their responsibilities, such as page allocations, travel allowances, honoraria, and editorial meeting support.

Each year, INFORMS staff analyze submission volume, acceptance rates, article length, and other trends to project page needs for the upcoming budget cycle. These projections form the basis of each journal's preliminary page budget. Editors-in-Chief are typically invited to review these projections in late winter or early spring and may request adjustments where justified.

Requests for additional pages, additional issues or publication frequency changes (note: special issues planned within the existing page budget do not require additional authorization), or other unbudgeted editorial features or support — such as additional travel support to represent the journal at a meeting not covered by existing allocations — should be submitted in writing to the Director of Publications. Requests must include justification and, if applicable, potential sources of supplemental funding. To be considered for the annual budget, such requests should be submitted no later than June 30, in advance of the summer meeting of the INFORMS Board. If endorsed by the Vice President of Publications, requests are incorporated into the draft budget, which will undergo review by the Finance Committee before consideration by the INFORMS Board. If approved by the Board, changes take effect in the following calendar year.

Because most publication expenses are governed by multiyear contracts and collective agreements, journal-specific budget flexibility is limited. Editors-in-Chief are encouraged to focus their attention on the content, review process, and community engagement of their journals, while INFORMS staff oversee the financial and operational infrastructure that supports publication delivery.

Journal Affiliation with or Co-Sponsorships of External (Non-INFORMS) Conferences

Editors-in-Chief may wish to organize a conference under the banner of their journal, or may be invited to affiliate their journal with, or serve as a co-sponsor of, an external (non-INFORMS) conference. Any such affiliation or initiative must comply with the policies outlined in P&P Section 10.2.1, Joint Organization and Co-Sponsorship of External Conferences.

Editors-in-Chief may not sign or negotiate contracts, memoranda of understanding (MOUs), or other formal agreements on behalf of their journal or INFORMS. All proposals for journal-organized events or co-sponsorships must be reviewed and approved through the process defined in P&P Section 10.2.1.

Coordination with INFORMS ensures that any proposed arrangement does not conflict with INFORMS-sponsored meetings (including those organized in conjunction with INFORMS subdivisions) and that all terms — such as branding (see INFORMS Branding Guide), financial liability, revenue sharing, intellectual property, and management responsibilities — are clearly documented. Approval is also required for any use of the INFORMS name or logo, journal title, or other INFORMS or journal branding.

Editorial collaborations with external conferences — such as inviting submissions based on conference presentations, developing special issues from selected conference presentations, or offering fast-track consideration for papers presented at specific conferences — may be pursued at the editor's discretion and do not require formal review under P&P Section 10.2.1. However, if the initiative involves journal branding, promotional support from INFORMS, or any form of publishing commitment, it must be disclosed to INFORMS staff in advance for coordination.

Editorial Transitions

The transition between outgoing and incoming Editors-in-Chief typically occurs on January 1, following Board approval of the incoming editor's appointment. INFORMS staff will work with both editors to establish a transition timeline and communication plan.

As part of the transition, outgoing editors should continue to oversee the peer-review process for any manuscripts submitted during their term, unless other arrangements are explicitly agreed upon by both parties and documented by INFORMS staff. This ensures clarity around responsibility, continuity of peer review, and appropriate system access. Outgoing editors are encouraged to conclude their work on manuscripts in process by March 31. After that point, unresolved submissions will be transferred to the incoming Editor-in-Chief unless an alternative plan is reviewed and accepted by the Vice President of Publications in consultation with the Publications Department.

INFORMS will provide incoming Editors-in-Chief with an orientation to the publishing program, including journal operations, editorial systems, relevant policies and governance structure, and the delineation of roles and responsibilities across INFORMS staff, editors, and volunteer leaders. Incoming editors will also be invited to attend the joint Editors-in-Chief/Publications Committee meeting held during the fall INFORMS Annual Meeting prior to the start of their term. INFORMS will provide travel support for this purpose.

Incoming Editors-in-Chief will be provided with the current editorial board roster, including term start dates and highlighting any individuals who are near or beyond established term limits as outlined in P&P Section 13.5.1. Incoming editors may also request editorial performance data from their Managing Editor to inform decisions about which editorial board members to invite for continuation and which to rotate off.

In shaping their editorial team and workflow, incoming Editors-in-Chief may have committed to changes to the editorial board structure or peer review workflow as part of their selection, or may propose changes as part of their onboarding. Because such changes may require system reconfiguration or staffing adjustments, they must be submitted in writing to the Director of Publications. Proposed changes will be evaluated based on alignment with program-wide infrastructure standards, feasibility, and implementation timeframe. INFORMS staff will advise on operational impact, any necessary approvals, and coordinate configuration updates as needed.

Editors-in-Chief may choose to publish an introductory or farewell editorial at the time of transition. Editors should consult with their Managing Editor to confirm applicable deadlines and production schedules to ensure publication within the desired issue.

In most instances, an incoming Editor-in-Chief will assume responsibility for a journal that includes a backlog of accepted but unpublished manuscripts and will be responsible for scheduling those papers as expeditiously as possible. Special issues should be scheduled together as originally planned. However, incoming editors are not obligated to delay publication of content accepted during their term until all previously accepted material has been published.

Contact information for an incoming Editor-in-Chief will appear in the journal's masthead and website at the start of their term. Contact information for the outgoing editor will be removed in the same issue. Past editors may be invited to continue in an advisory role at the discretion of the incoming Editor-in-Chief.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

INFORMS Policies and Procedures Manual, Section 10.2.1, Joint Organization and Co-Sponsorship of External Conferences
INFORMS Policies and Procedures Manual, Section 13.1, Publications Mission and Organizational Structure
INFORMS Policies and Procedures Manual, Section 13.5.1, Editorial Board Member Appointment, Qualifications, and Term Limits
INFORMS Policies and Procedures Manual, Section 13.5.2, Double-Anonymous Peer Review
INFORMS Policies and Procedures Manual, Section 13.6, Editorial Search and Review Committees
INFORMS Policies and Procedures Manual, Section 13.8, Publication Ethics
INFORMS Branding Guide

NUMBER 13.5: EDITORIAL BOARDS

NUMBER 13.5.1: EDITORIAL BOARD MEMBER APPOINTMENT, QUALIFICATIONS, AND TERM LIMITS

APPROVED: FEBRUARY 2005
REVISED: AUGUST 2017, AUGUST 2018, AUGUST 2024, MARCH 2025, APRIL 2025

POLICY

Editorial board members attract, select, and help shape the highest quality and most appropriate content for publication and will do so in a timely manner and with fairness and respect shown to authors of rejected as well as accepted papers submitted for review.

Editors-in-Chief shall encourage members of their editorial board to belong to INFORMS. To help INFORMS' leadership keep its different subcommunities satisfied, the editors will, as part of their annual report to the INFORMS Board, provide the membership status of their editorial boards.

INFORMS is committed to fostering editorial leadership that reflects a broad spectrum of perspectives, experiences, and methodologies. Editors-in-Chief play a critical role in ensuring that our journals remain open to innovative ideas, rigorous debate, and scholarly contributions from across the global research community. To this end, editorial boards should be composed to encourage intellectual breadth, prevent insularity, and support an environment of open inquiry, collaboration, and professional integrity. INFORMS expects its editors to uphold principles of academic freedom, fairness, and constructive discourse while maintaining the highest standards of scholarly excellence.

PROCEDURES

Selection and Qualifications

Editorial boards for each publication are appointed by the Editor-in-Chief and serve at the editor's discretion. This includes Advisory Editors, Area Editors, Department Editors, Senior Editors, and Associate Editors. They should give each publication a broad international representation of the top researchers or practitioners in the subject areas covered by the publication. They have an important role in the peer review process and in determining authors' experience with their submissions to INFORMS publications.

The following guidelines should be considered when selecting individuals for appointment to an editorial board:

- The individual should be a recognized expert in a particular area or topic covered by the journal.
- The individual should have an established record of scholarship in the area for which editorial board membership is being considered, including evidence of an active research agenda in journal topics the last three to five years.
- In some cases, the individual should have demonstrated leadership in a niche area or a specific domain relevant to the journal.
- The individual should have an acknowledged commitment to providing timely and constructive feedback to the Editor-in-Chief and other editors on submitted manuscripts and other issues as they arise.
- The individual should have a history of providing refereeing services to the journal for which editorial board membership is being considered.
- The individual should have recognized professionalism, integrity, and respect for research methods and procedures that might be considered novel or unconventional.
- The individual should be committed to upholding the integrity of the journal and the confidentiality of the peer review process.

Term and Term Limits

The normal term of appointment per role for all individual members of an editorial board is three years. In general, terms for Area Editors, Department Editors, and Senior Editors will be considered to mirror that of the Editor-in-Chief. Staggered terms are recommended for Associate Editors to ensure continuity and minimize disruption to the editorial review process, though final discretion lies with the Editor-in-Chief.

An incoming or reappointed Editor-in-Chief may, at his or her discretion, reappoint individual members from the previous term's editorial board. However, in the interest of fostering new perspectives, diversity, and inclusion, the Editor-in-Chief should strive to reappoint no more than 50% of the outgoing board. Exceptions may be made for journals with smaller editorial boards or in niche fields where recruiting new members may be challenging. Such exceptions should be documented in the Editor-in-Chief's annual report to the INFORMS Board.

Editorial board members should serve no more than two consecutive terms (six consecutive years) per role. Limited exceptions may apply for continuity or unique expertise, as approved by the Editor-in-Chief.

A maximum length of service will be capped at nine years per role, with exceptions requiring approval from the Vice President of Publications, in consultation with the Publications Committee. Once an individual has reached their maximum length of service in a role, an Editor-in-Chief may, at his or her discretion, appoint select term-limited individuals to an advisory position in order to maintain the academic stature and reputation of their journal. Advisory Editors shall no longer actively handle manuscripts except on a limited, ad hoc basis as needed (i.e., as guest editors).

There is no restriction on the number of editorial boards on which an individual may serve concurrently. However, individuals invited to join an editorial board are expected to disclose any concurrent service on other INFORMS and non-INFORMS editorial boards to their Editor-in-Chief. Editors serving on multiple boards should ensure that their commitments do not lead to overlapping responsibilities or perceived conflicts of interest, particularly with overlapping subject areas or closely related communities. If deemed necessary, the Editor-in-Chief may request the individual to step down from other commitments or revoke the editorial board invitation.

Reporting

Editors-in-Chief will, as part of their annual reports to the INFORMS Board, provide a summary of their editorial board appointments, reappointments, and turnovers.

NUMBER 13.5: EDITORIAL BOARDS

NUMBER 13.5.2: DOUBLE-ANONYMOUS PEER REVIEW

APPROVED: JANUARY 2025

POLICY

To uphold INFORMS' commitment to diversity, inclusivity, and the promotion of equal opportunity, Editors-in-Chief and their editorial boards are required to implement double-anonymous peer review for all submitted manuscripts in their respective journals. This policy is based on the extensive body of research supporting double-anonymous peer review as a means to mitigate conscious and unconscious bias in manuscript evaluation.

While complete anonymity of authors may not always be possible (for example, authors may post a preprint of their manuscript on SSRN, arXiv, or other scholarly collaboration network), INFORMS adopts this policy to underscore its dedication to fair evaluation practices and to address any perception of bias in the evaluation process. The goal is to create an environment that encourages the free exchange of ideas and ensures that all submissions are evaluated solely on their scientific merit.

Authors are encouraged to adhere to the following guidelines when anonymizing their submissions:

- Exclude any mention of grants or acknowledgements in the anonymous version of the manuscript. This information can be provided separately through the web submission form and will be reintroduced into the manuscript text upon acceptance.
- Avoid including any identifying information in page headers or footers.
- Minimize self-citations, and if necessary, use third person to refer to your own work.
- Review your source files, including supplemental material, code, or data files, for personal identifying information or metadata.

This policy does not intend to impose any new restrictions on authors regarding the dissemination or publicizing of their work before, during, or after the peer review process. INFORMS will instruct referees to avoid trying to identify authors during the review process.

NOTE: This policy will become effective January 1, 2025, for all journals except *INFORMS Journal on Computing*, *Mathematics of Operations Research*, and *Stochastic Systems*, which are required to implement double-anonymous review with their next EIC transition (January 1, 2026). This note may be automatically removed from P&P Section 13.5.2 after January 2026.

NUMBER 13.6: EDITORIAL SEARCH AND REVIEW COMMITTEES

APPROVED: FEBRUARY 2005
REVISED: NOVEMBER 2014, AUGUST 2017, JULY 2021

POLICY

INFORMS maintains a rigorous and transparent process for reviewing its scholarly publications and appointing and reappointing Editors-in-Chief. To support this process, the Vice President of Publications convenes Editorial Search and Review Committees under the auspices of these Board-approved policies and procedures, to ensure that INFORMS publications remain aligned with INFORMS' strategic goals, editorial standards, and community needs.

Editorial Search and Review Committees are charged with two interrelated tasks: (1) evaluating the journal or book series to ensure it continues to meet the needs of the scholarly community it serves, and (2) conducting a search for a new Editor-in-Chief or reviewing the performance of the current Editor-in-Chief, as appropriate to the circumstances. This approach offers both strategic insight into the publication's health and direction, as well as an informed assessment of its editorial leadership.

All INFORMS journals and book series are subject to these procedures, regardless of publishing model or disciplinary focus. Reviews of the publication and its Editor-in-Chief typically occur near the end of an editor's term but may be initiated earlier if concerns arise or if an editor steps down unexpectedly (see P&P Section 13.7). Each review may result in one of several outcomes: recommendation for reappointment, recommendation for reappointment with conditions (probation), recommendation to initiate a search for a new editor, or recommendation to sunset the publication.

The INFORMS Board of Directors retains final authority over editorial appointments, reappointments, and sunsetting decisions. Through these procedures, the Board delegates responsibility for evaluation and candidate identification to Editorial Search and Review Committees, operating under the supervision of the Vice President of Publications and the Publications Committee. INFORMS staff support these committees by providing logistical coordination, policy guidance, and operational data.

INFORMS expects its editorial leadership to foster intellectual breadth, support inclusive participation, and uphold the highest standards of professionalism and scholarship. The search and review process is a key mechanism for reinforcing these expectations and ensuring that INFORMS' publications remain vital, trusted, and forward-looking.

PROCEDURES

Committee Formation and Composition

Each Editorial Search and Review Committee should reflect the breadth of the journal's stakeholder community, drawing from a mix of scholars, practitioners (as applicable), and others with strong familiarity with the publication's scope, scholarly reputation, and editorial standards — including, when relevant, those affiliated with INFORMS subdivisions. All members are expected to maintain confidentiality and adhere to established conflict of interest protocols throughout the committee's work.

Each committee is convened by the Vice President of Publications under the authority of the INFORMS Board of Directors and in accordance with these Board-approved policies and procedures, to ensure a robust, fair, and transparent evaluation of INFORMS publications and their editorial leadership.

Committee Composition, Appointment, and Approval

Each Editorial Search and Review Committee includes a Chair, a liaison from the Publications Committee, and a member of the INFORMS publications staff (typically the Director of Publications or their designee). Committees must consist of at least five voting members, including the Chair and Publications Committee liaison. To facilitate decision-making, an odd number of voting participants is recommended. This count excludes the ex officio, non-voting staff liaison.

The Vice President of Publications nominates a proposed Editorial Search or Review Committee Chair to the INFORMS President for approval. The Chair must be an INFORMS member in good standing. To preserve neutrality and avoid perceived conflicts of interest, the Chair should not be the immediate past Editor-in-Chief. The President is encouraged to consult with the Board Executive Committee prior to approving the Chair appointment.

The Vice President of Publications may begin collecting input on potential committee members in advance of Chair approval to ensure timely formation. Once in place, the Chair will work collaboratively with the Vice President to develop a slate of prospective committee members, drawing from suggestions provided by the Publications Committee, editorial board, relevant subdivisions, or the INFORMS volunteer database. They may engage INFORMS staff to assist with gathering relevant background, such as membership status, prior editorial engagement, or institutional representation.

When a journal maintains a direct affiliation with an INFORMS subdivision (for example, a society, section, or forum), the Chair and Vice President should solicit input from relevant community officers regarding potential committee members to ensure meaningful stakeholder engagement and representation.

In constructing the roster, consideration should be given to prior participation within the journal's community, availability, and the ability to contribute to a fair, inclusive, and rigorous evaluation process. Committee members should also be members of INFORMS in good standing, although INFORMS membership is not strictly required. Final rosters are submitted by the Vice President to the INFORMS President for review and approval. The President is encouraged to consult with the Board Executive Committee prior to approving the committee roster.

A liaison from the Publications Committee is appointed by the Vice President to help ensure procedural fidelity and to provide portfolio-wide perspective. This includes identifying potential scope overlaps, dependencies, or unintended consequences that could affect other INFORMS publications or priorities — particularly in cases where committees or candidates are considering changes to editorial scope, departmental structure, or publication format.

INFORMS Staff Participation

The Director of Publications (or their designee) serves as an ex-officio, non-voting member of each Editorial Search and Review Committee. In this capacity, the staff representative contributes policy expertise, publishing program knowledge, and logistical coordination. At the committee's first meeting, the staff representative will provide an orientation on applicable policies, procedures, and expectations, including an overview of the committee's charge, deliverables, and timeline.

In addition to supporting policy and procedural continuity, the staff representative coordinates meeting logistics, provides relevant operational data, and assists with documentation and timeline management. While staff do not vote on editorial evaluations or candidate recommendations, their active participation helps ensure adherence to INFORMS policy and consistency of process across committees.

INFORMS staff serve in an advisory and operational capacity and do not hold decision-making authority in governance matters. In situations involving discretion, conflict of interest, or procedural guidance, the Director of Publications advises the Vice President of Publications, who retains final authority subject to Board oversight.

Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality

All committee members must review and acknowledge the INFORMS conflict of interest policy before beginning their work. A conflict of interest exists when a member has a personal, professional, or financial relationship that could reasonably be perceived to impair their objectivity. Examples include, but are not limited to, recent co-authorship with a candidate (within the past five years), shared institutional affiliation, close supervisory or mentorship relationships, or active research collaborations. Holding an editorial role under the candidate's leadership (for example, as an associate editor) is not automatically disqualifying but should be disclosed and evaluated for appropriate limitations on participation.

Any real or perceived conflicts that arise during the course of the committee's work should be immediately disclosed to the Committee Chair and the Director of Publications, which will be resolved in consultation with the Vice President of Publications. Depending on the nature and severity of the conflict, possible resolutions include:

- recusal from discussion of a specific candidate;
- abstention from voting on the committee's recommendation; or
- withdrawal from the committee if impartiality cannot be reasonably preserved.

If the conflict involves the Committee Chair, the Director of Publications and Vice President will coordinate with the INFORMS President to appoint a new Chair, preferably from the existing committee roster. The original Chair may be permitted to remain on the committee to preserve continuity and insight, provided their continued participation does not present an unresolved conflict of interest as defined above.

In borderline cases — such as former collaborations beyond the five-year threshold, indirect supervisory relationships, or other circumstances that may not rise to a formal conflict but could raise concerns about impartiality — the committee member should disclose the relationship to the Committee Chair and staff representative. The Chair and staff will apply a standard of reasonableness, in consultation with the Vice President of Publications, to determine whether what action is appropriate.

For transparency, all disclosures and resulting decisions should be documented internally by the staff representative. Summaries of conflict disclosures should be included in the committee's final report when they resulted in recusal or altered participation. When appropriate, a brief rationale may be documented for transparency. Details that are immaterial or could cause reputational harm may be withheld from the committee's final report at the discretion of the Vice President of Publications, provided the rationale is documented.

All committee proceedings, materials, and deliberations are strictly confidential. Breaches of confidentiality or failure to disclose conflicts may be considered a violation of INFORMS' publishing ethics policies (see P&P Section 13.8) and could result in removal from the committee or additional sanction as appropriate. They may also be considered a breach in INFORMS Code of Conduct (see P&P Section 2.4). Committee members are expected to uphold a duty of loyalty to the committee's final recommendation, even in cases of personal dissent. Concerns about procedural fairness or outcomes should be addressed internally through the Director of Publications or Vice President of Publications, not through external disclosure.

Committee Charge and Responsibilities

Each Editorial Search and Review Committee is convened to fulfill a dual charge:

1. to evaluate the health and direction of the publication, ensuring it continues to meet the needs of its scholarly and professional community; and
2. to evaluate the publication's editorial leadership by either conducting a search for a new Editor-in-Chief or reviewing the performance of the current Editor-in-Chief, as appropriate to the circumstances.

Publication Review

In pursuit of the first charge, the committee's primary responsibilities include:

- conducting a broad and inclusive consultation with the publication's stakeholder community — including authors, reviewers, editorial board members, readers, and most relevant INFORMS subdivisions — to assess the publication's overall health, visibility, and impact;
- evaluating whether the publication continues to effectively serve its intended scholarly and professional audience, and identifying whether changes to editorial scope, structure, or format may be warranted;
- working in cooperation with the Editor-in-Chief to identify key strengths, areas for improvement, and potential opportunities — both short-term (within the current editorial term) and long-term — that would enhance the publication's quality, reach, and strategic alignment;
- preparing recommendations to inform and support future editorial leadership, the Vice President of Publications, and the Publications Committee in their ongoing efforts to strengthen the publication;
- identifying any resources or institutional support needed to achieve the above goals; and
- recommending whether the publication should be continued or, in rare cases, recommended for sunsetting, based on a combination of community input and operational indicators. (See "Recommendation to Sunset" for additional guidance.)

Committees are encouraged to use both quantitative and qualitative evidence, such as operational data (submission volume, decision timeliness, and acceptance rates), citation patterns, survey feedback, and indicators related to diversity, participation, and editorial process integrity. INFORMS staff will provide relevant data upon request and assist with survey administration and analysis where appropriate.

Evaluation Criteria for Publication Review

Committees should assess the publication's overall vitality, strategic positioning, and relevance to the community it serves. While metrics may vary by field, journal age, or format, evaluations should draw on both qualitative and quantitative sources. The following areas represent core evaluation domains, accompanied by optional prompts to aid discussion. These are not intended as a checklist, but rather as guidance to ensure a comprehensive and thoughtful review.

1. Editorial Scope and Objectives

Evaluate whether the journal's scope, aims, and departmental structure (if applicable) remain clear, relevant, and aligned with community needs.

- Is the scope still well-defined and appropriately differentiated from related INFORMS or external publications?
- Are there areas of thematic overlap, ambiguity, or missed opportunity in relation to other INFORMS publications?
- Are there emerging research areas or methodologies that the journal could better reflect or integrate?
- Has the journal evolved appropriately with the field? Has it demonstrated innovation in editorial approaches, department structure, content formats, or community engagement?

2. Editorial Board Composition

Assess the qualifications, diversity, and engagement of the editorial board.

- Does the board reflect a balance of scholarly expertise, methodological orientations, career stages, institutional types, geographies, and identities?
- Are editorial roles and responsibilities clearly defined and effectively distributed?
- Are there patterns of turnover or stagnation that may require attention?
- Is the editorial board's structure appropriate and effective for solicitation and review of high-quality submissions within the journal's field?

3. Perceived Quality and Scholarly Standing

Evaluate the journal's visibility, influence, and reputation within its field.

- How is the journal perceived relative to peer publications?
- Does the journal attract a sufficient submission volume and quality to fulfill its publication frequency?
- What do stakeholder surveys or citation metrics (for example, impact factor and downloads) suggest about the journal's scholarly contribution?
- Are there indicators of increased or diminished reputation within its field?

4. Editorial Process Integrity

Review the transparency, efficiency, and fairness of the editorial process.

- Are peer review and editorial decisions conducted in a timely, constructive, and consistent manner?
- Are practices for handling special issues, decision appeals, and ethical concerns well defined and followed?
- What do trends in submission volume, acceptance rates, desk rejections, and time to decision suggest about the health and transparency of the editorial process?
- Are editorial tools and systems (for example, ScholarOne features) being used effectively to manage workflow?
- Are editors responsive to author and reviewer inquiries and committed to timely communication?

5. Capacity Management

Consider whether the journal's publishing volume and article length are well-aligned with its capacity and mission.

- Are there signals that the journal is exceeding, meeting, or underutilizing its page or article allocation?
- Are paper lengths and issue sizes appropriate and consistent with community expectations?

6. Market and Readership

Assess the reach and engagement of the journal among its intended readership.

- Is there evidence of growth or decline in readership, submissions, or subscriptions?
- How widely is the journal cited, downloaded, or shared across different audiences?
- Are there opportunities to enhance visibility or reader engagement? (See also "Community Alignment" for stakeholder satisfaction considerations.)

7. Community Alignment

Assess the extent to which the journal reflects, engages, and serves its intended scholarly and professional community.

- Is the journal reaching the disciplinary, methodological, geographic, and demographic segments it was designed to serve?
- Does the contributor base (authors, reviewers, board members) reflect the diversity and breadth of the field?
- Are there observable gaps in representation or participation that may warrant attention?

- Is there evidence that the journal is viewed as a valued resource or intellectual home by its target community?
- How well does the journal align with related INFORMS communities, such as societies, sections, or interest groups?
- Has the journal kept pace with changes in its intended community's size, focus, or expectations?

8. Future Direction and Strategic Positioning

Solicit recommendations for strengthening the journal's relevance and long-term success.

- What opportunities exist to expand the journal's impact, accessibility, or community engagement?
- Are there any strategic risks or vulnerabilities that warrant attention?
- Should any structural, scope, or editorial model changes be explored?

In support of this evaluation, committees are encouraged to request a brief self-evaluation report from the sitting Editor-in-Chief or conduct an exit interview with the outgoing Editor-in-Chief as appropriate to the circumstances. Outgoing editors may be encouraged to nominate candidates for the next Editor-in-Chief. Committees may conduct additional interviews with members of the editorial board for additional insights into the operation, challenges, and opportunities of the journal. Committees should conduct a survey of the publication's stakeholder community — authors, reviewers, editorial board members, and readers, including the membership of any relevant INFORMS subdivisions or other communities served by the journal — which should invite open-ended, anecdotal comments about the perceived reputation of the journal and whether it continues to meet the needs of its stakeholders. This collective feedback can provide helpful context regarding accomplishments, challenges, and aspirations for the journal's future.

Outcomes of the Publication Review

Following its evaluation of the publication, the committee must formulate a recommendation regarding the future of the journal or book series. This recommendation should be grounded in the evidence reviewed and framed with respect to INFORMS' strategic priorities, community needs, and the publication's long-term viability.

1. Continuation

In most cases, the review will result in a recommendation to continue the publication.

- This recommendation may be accompanied by suggestions for strengthening the journal's editorial scope, community engagement, capacity management, or strategic positioning.
- Recommendations may be directed to the current Editor-in-Chief (if under review), to future editorial leadership (if a transition is anticipated), or to the Vice President of Publications and Publications Committee for broader consideration.
- The committee should also identify any resources or structural changes needed to support the publication's continued success and relevance.

2. Continuation with Conditions

If the committee identifies notable concerns but believes they are addressable within the current publication framework, it may recommend continuation with conditions, including:

- Specific recommendations for improvement in areas such as editorial structure, departmental organization, stakeholder engagement, or data reporting.
- A timeline for reevaluation or follow-up, if appropriate (for example, a review of specific metrics after one year).
- Identification of support needs or process improvements to help implement changes.

This outcome may or may not be accompanied by a recommendation for reappointment of the Editor-in-Chief. The two judgments (journal viability and editorial leadership) are related but distinct.

3. Recommendation to Sunset

In rare instances, the committee may conclude that the publication no longer effectively serves a distinct scholarly community or strategic purpose, and may recommend sunsetting the journal or book series.

This recommendation must be accompanied by:

- A clear rationale based on evidence such as diminishing submissions, declining relevance to the field, persistent quality concerns, or significant overlap with other INFORMS or external publications.
- Documentation of stakeholder consultation and feedback.
- Consideration of possible alternatives to sunsetting, such as restructuring, refocusing scope, or merging with another INFORMS publication.

If at any point the Committee Chair believes there is a strong likelihood that the committee will recommend sunsetting a publication, the Chair should immediately alert the Vice President of Publications, the INFORMS President, and the Executive Director so that appropriate planning can begin. Sunsetting recommendations, once finalized, will receive careful review by the Publications Committee and INFORMS Board. For the avoidance of doubt, any such recommendation will be forwarded in full to the Board for discussion and final decision, regardless of the Publications Committee's endorsement. Any decision to sunset a publication requires Board approval, who will be advised by the Director of Publications and Executive Director of any contractual or operational ramifications prior to its formal vote.

If the recommendation to sunset the publication is upheld, the consideration of original submissions will cease immediately and all remaining accepted but not yet published articles will be published prior to closing the publication. In general, a sunset publication should cease publication no later than the end of the following calendar year. INFORMS staff will ensure that any sunsetting decision is accompanied by appropriate planning for content archiving, indexing agreements, and notification of publishing partners.

Editor Search and Review

In pursuit of the second charge, committees are tasked with either identifying and recommending a new Editor-in-Chief (in a search) or assessing the performance of the current Editor-in-Chief (in a review).

The normal term of appointment for an Editor-in-Chief is three years (P&P Section 13.4). Editors may be appointed to a second consecutive term following review. Reviews are generally initiated in January of the third year of a term; searches are generally initiated in January of the sixth and final year (assuming reappointment after an initial term). An Editor-in-Chief may not serve more than two consecutive terms.

Search Committees

Search Committees are responsible for:

- drafting a position description that reflects the publication's current and anticipated editorial needs;
- issuing a broad call for nominations from the INFORMS community and relevant external networks, with attention to diversity, disciplinary breadth, and global representation;
- reviewing the pool of nominees and identifying a shortlist of finalists based on their experience, scholarly stature, editorial vision, and leadership approach;
- inviting shortlisted finalists to submit editorial vision statements and participate in interviews with the committee; and
- recommending a single candidate for appointment, with a clear rationale supported by the evidence collected.

Search Committees should attempt to solicit a reasonably sized pool of nominees for the position. To the greatest extent possible, the pool should reflect the diversity of the journal's stakeholder community, including, but not limited to, variation in area of scholarly expertise, methodology, geography, institutional affiliation, career stage, and personal identity.

Since the nomination process does not require nominators to inform nominees of their nomination, Search Committees may need to confirm shortlisted candidates are willing to be considered before proceeding to the invitation of editorial vision statements and interviews. At least two finalists should be selected for the shortlist; when selecting shortlisted candidates, committees are encouraged to identify backup shortlist candidates in the event any of the shortlisted nominees decline to be considered.

While shortlisted candidates are not required to be INFORMS members, the committee should communicate that Editors-in-Chief must be INFORMS members in good standing throughout their term of appointment.

Interviews must be conducted by a minimum of two members of the Search Committee. With the candidate's approval, interviews may be recorded for view by absent members of the Search Committee. Recorded videos may only be viewed by members of the Search Committee and must be promptly deleted at the close of the search.

Review Committees

Review Committees are responsible for:

- evaluating the sitting Editor-in-Chief's performance based on the expectations communicated at appointment and as outlined in P&P Sections 13.4 and 13.5;
- assessing operational and stakeholder data for evidence of strong editorial leadership, procedural integrity, and responsiveness to community needs; and
- recommending one of three outcomes:
    - reappointment;
    - reappointment with conditions (probation); or
    - non-reappointment.

Evaluation Criteria for Editor-in-Chief Assessment

Editorial Search and Review Committees should apply consistent, transparent, and mission-aligned criteria when evaluating either prospective candidates or the performance of a sitting (incumbent) Editor-in-Chief. While the context may differ between a search and a review, many core evaluation dimensions remain shared. The following areas represent key domains of assessment, each accompanied by optional prompts to guide thoughtful discussion. These are not intended as a checklist, but rather as a framework to support comprehensive, evidence-informed evaluations aligned with INFORMS values. Committees should apply these criteria with professional judgment, recognizing that not all domains may be equally applicable depending on the journal's size, scope, or community.

1. Scholarly Standing and Intellectual Leadership

Assess the candidate's or incumbent's academic reputation and leadership within the field.

- Does the individual have a strong and influential research record within the publication's domain?
- Are they recognized by peers as a thought leader or innovator in their discipline?
- Have they demonstrated intellectual breadth that reflects the evolving landscape of the field?

2. Editorial Vision and Experience

Evaluate the candidate's or incumbent's editorial philosophy, prior experience, and capacity to lead the publication forward.

- Does the individual offer a compelling and feasible editorial vision aligned with the journal's mission?
- Have they served effectively in previous editorial roles (for example, associate editor or special issue editor)?
- Are they equipped to adapt editorial scope, structure, or policies to emerging community needs?

3. Process Management and Decision-Making

Assess the candidate's or incumbent's ability to ensure efficient, fair, and rigorous editorial operations.

- Is there evidence of timely and transparent decision-making?
- How are peer review, special issues, desk rejections, and appeals handled?
- Are they comfortable navigating ScholarOne or similar editorial platforms?

4. Leadership and Team Coordination

Consider the candidate's or incumbent's ability to build, motivate, and collaborate with a diverse editorial board.

- Does the individual foster a collaborative and respectful editorial culture?
- Are roles and responsibilities clearly defined and well managed within the editorial team?
- Have they recruited, supported, and retained an engaged and effective board?

5. Inclusion, Equity, and Community Representation

Evaluate the candidate's or incumbent's efforts to promote inclusive participation and represent the breadth of the field.

- Has the individual demonstrated commitment to equity in author, reviewer, and editorial selection?
- Does the editorial board reflect a range of identities, geographies, career stages, and methodologies?
- Has the individual taken steps to ensure transparency in communication and decision-making?

6. Community and Institutional Engagement

Assess the candidate's or incumbent's relationship with the journal's stakeholder communities and their home institution.

- Are they responsive to feedback and transparent in editorial direction?
- Have they engaged with authors, reviewers, or affiliated INFORMS subdivisions effectively?
- Is there clear evidence of institutional support for the editor's time and responsibilities?

7. Innovation and Strategic Growth

Consider the candidate's or incumbent's ability to position the journal for future relevance and impact.

- Have they initiated or proposed new content types, features, or dissemination strategies?
- Are they attuned to shifts in disciplinary trends, publication models, or audience expectations?
- Do they demonstrate openness to change and a thoughtful approach to long-term development?

8. Professional Conduct and Policy Adherence

Assess the candidate's or incumbent's alignment with INFORMS publishing values, ethics, and administrative expectations.

- Has the individual complied with reporting obligations, policies, and board-approved procedures?
- Are staff and volunteer interactions professional and constructive?
- Have any concerns or violations arisen regarding editorial independence or conduct?

9. Availability and Time Commitment

Consider the candidate's or incumbent's availability during the transition period and term.

- Does the individual have any outstanding commitments that may interfere with their ability to effectively serve in this role? Does the individual have a good understanding of the time commitment involved?
- Is there adequate commitment/enthusiasm/support from the individual's dean or institution? Teaching relief?

For editor searches: Committees should use these domains to evaluate candidate fit and leadership readiness. Interview questions and vision statement prompts may be tailored accordingly, but should be applied commonly across all interviewed candidates.

For editor reviews: Committees should interpret these criteria in light of the editor's current term and context, identifying strengths as well as areas for potential improvement. In cases of concern, committees may recommend reappointment with conditions (probation) and outline expectations for corrective action.

Outcomes of the Evaluation Process

Following the completion of its charge, each Editorial Search or Review Committee must deliver a formal recommendation to the Vice President of Publications, supported by evidence and rationale (see "Committee Report and Documentation" below). The recommendation should clearly indicate one of the following outcomes:

1. Appointment or Reappointment

If the committee concludes that a candidate (in the case of a search) or sitting Editor-in-Chief (in the case of a review) is well-qualified and demonstrates strong alignment with INFORMS editorial standards and strategic priorities, it shall recommend appointment or reappointment.

- Search Outcome: INFORMS policy requires that Search Committees recommend only one candidate. Co-Editors-in-Chief are not permitted. If committee discussions raise the possibility of a co-leadership model, Search Committees are encouraged to instead recommend a restructured editorial board, incorporating Area Editors, Department Editors, or other senior editorial roles that support distributed decision-making under a single Editor-in-Chief. This structure enables delegation of workload and subject-matter expertise while preserving a unified editorial vision and clear line of accountability.
- Review Outcome: The committee may recommend reappointment based on the Editor-in-Chief's demonstrated leadership, operational effectiveness, and continued relevance to the journal's needs. The recommendation should affirm the editor's readiness for another full term.

2. Reappointment with Conditions (Probation)

If the committee finds that the sitting Editor-in-Chief has met some expectations but exhibits areas of concern or underperformance, it shall recommend reappointment with specific conditions to be monitored over a defined probationary period.

- The committee report must clearly outline the areas requiring improvement and the rationale for probation rather than non-reappointment.
- The Vice President of Publications, in consultation with the Director of Publications and the Publications Committee, will work with the editor to develop a written plan and timeline for addressing the conditions.
- In most cases, a new Editorial Review Committee should be convened to conduct a follow-up evaluation at the midpoint or end of the probation period to determine whether expectations have been met. If the concerns were narrow in scope and evidence of resolution is readily available through operational data or reporting, the Vice President of Publications, in consultation with the Publications

Committee, may determine that a full re-review is not required. This decision should be documented in the Vice President's next report to the INFORMS Board to support consistency and transparency across journals.

Probation is intended to support constructive improvement and should be recommended only when the committee believes the editor is capable of integrating feedback and sustaining effective leadership.

3. Non-Reappointment or Replacement

If the committee determines that the sitting Editor-in-Chief is unable to meet the expectations of the role, or that new leadership is needed to align the journal with INFORMS' strategic goals, it shall recommend non-reappointment.

- The committee's report must present a clear justification for this recommendation, grounded in performance concerns or strategic misalignment.
- Following acceptance of the recommendation by the Publications Committee and INFORMS Board, the Vice President of Publications will initiate a search for a new Editor-in-Chief.
- The existing committee may be asked to continue as a Search Committee or may be reconstituted, depending on timing, composition, and appropriateness. If continuity is under consideration, the Vice President of Publications will review the committee's composition to ensure fairness and avoid potential conflicts of interest. Individual Review Committee members may also request recusal from continued service. In either case, new members will be appointed following the procedures outlined above in "Committee Composition, Appointment, and Approval."
- The Board may additionally charge the Vice President to produce an abbreviated version of the Review Committee report in order to share the most relevant information with the shortlisted candidates selected by the Search Committee for consideration as the incoming Editor-in-Chief.

Search Committees created in response to non-reappointment may not revisit or re-litigate the recommendation to remove the sitting editor.

Deadlocks

If the Editorial Search or Review Committee reaches an impasse and cannot deliver a consensus recommendation, the Chair must report the deadlock to the Vice President of Publications within 5 days of recognizing the impasse. The committee may not defer this notification until its final report deadline.

If an impasse arises between two equally acceptable candidates and no clear majority can be reached, the Vice President may authorize the Chair — who is a voting member of the committee — to cast the deciding vote. This provision may be invoked even if the Chair has already participated in earlier votes, in order to ensure that a single recommendation can be advanced to the Publications Committee and Board. The Publications Committee may not serve as a tie-breaking vote in order to advance a recommendation from a deadlocked committee.

However, if, in the opinion of the Vice President — in consultation with the Publications Committee liaison and staff representative — the deadlock reflects deeper disagreement or concerns that cannot be reconciled, the Vice President will consult with the INFORMS President and may recommend that a new committee be authorized and formed, consistent with these policies and procedures.

To prevent disruption to journal operations, the Board may, in consultation with the Vice President of Publications, approve a one-year extension for an outgoing Editor-in-Chief or appoint an interim Editor-in-Chief for a one-year term (see P&P Section 13.7 for additional guidance on temporary editorial appointments). The Board retains the authority to act in all matters of editorial appointment. As a governance best practice, however, the Board typically does not directly appoint alternate candidates; rather, it relies on the established search and review processes to ensure fairness, transparency, and consistency.

Committee Report and Documentation

At the conclusion of its work, each Editorial Search or Review Committee must submit a formal report to the Vice President of Publications. This report serves as the committee's official recommendation. Committee reports should be addressed to the Vice President of Publications, with a copy to the Director of Publications. All reports and supporting materials must be treated as confidential and are subject to INFORMS' policies on data privacy and ethical conduct.

While committees are encouraged to strive for consensus, the integrity of the process is strengthened by transparent documentation of divergent views. If one or more committee members do not support the final recommendation, they may request to submit a brief dissenting statement to accompany the report. The Chair and staff representative will work with the member(s) to ensure that the statement is professional, relevant, and appropriately concise. Dissenting statements are appended to the report but do not alter the committee's official recommendation.

Purpose of the Report

The report provides a transparent account of the committee's process, findings, and rationale. It ensures that the recommendation is well-supported by evidence, reflects community input, and adheres to the policies and values of INFORMS.

Core Report Elements

Each report should include the following:

- Statement of Charge: A brief summary of the committee's mandate (for example, to conduct a review or search and to assess the health of the publication).
- Committee Membership: The names and affiliations of all committee members, including designation of the Chair, the Publications Committee liaison, and the INFORMS staff representative.
- Process Summary: A concise description of how the committee conducted its work, including meeting cadence, stakeholder consultation methods (for example, surveys, interviews, focus groups), and materials reviewed.
- Findings:
    - For Publication Reviews: A summary of findings organized according to the evaluation criteria outlined in this policy (editorial scope, board composition, scholarly standing, etc.).
    - For Editor Searches: An account of the position description development, nomination and recruitment efforts, shortlist development, and interview process.
    - For Editor Reviews: An assessment of the editor's performance across leadership, process, community engagement, inclusion, innovation, and professionalism.
- Recommendation:
    - For Publication Reviews: A recommendation for continuation, continuation with conditions, or sunsetting; may include concrete recommendations for the incoming or reappointed Editor-in-Chief to consider for implementation during their term.
    - For Editor Searches: A clear recommendation of a single candidate for appointment, with a rationale tied to the evaluation criteria.
    - For Editor Reviews: A clear recommendation for reappointment, reappointment with conditions (probation), or non-reappointment.
- Supporting Rationale: A narrative explaining how the committee arrived at its recommendation, including consideration of stakeholder input and evidence from operational data.
- Appendices (as needed):
    - Survey instruments and anonymized summary data
    - Summary of stakeholder feedback (for example, editorial board, authors, reviewers)

- For Editor Searches: A summary of the outgoing Editor-in-Chief's exit interview; candidate editorial vision statements and curricula vitaes
- For Editor Reviews: The Editor-in-Chief's self-evaluation

When stakeholder surveys or consultation are used, committee reports should summarize response rates, anonymization procedures (if applicable), and any known limitations in the data. Committees should weigh stakeholder input alongside operational metrics and apply professional judgment in their interpretation.

Final committee reports are treated as confidential documents but are shared with the Publications Committee and INFORMS Board of Directors, and are also available, upon request, to sitting, incoming, or outgoing Editors-in-Chief. Material that must remain confidential (for example, deliberative notes or individual candidate evaluations) should not be included in the final report but retained by the staff representative in accordance with INFORMS data handling practices. The Vice President of Publications may review and request revisions to report language to ensure professionalism and discretion. In accordance with INFORMS governance practice, final reports are included in Board meeting materials when editorial appointments or reviews are under consideration. They are also archived in the Board's secure document repository. Community members seeking access to a report may submit a request to the Vice President of Publications, who will determine whether and how the report may be shared in accordance with INFORMS policy.

Publications Committee Review

The Vice President of Publications will forward the Editorial Search or Review Committee's final report and recommendation to the Publications Committee for review.

The Publications Committee will evaluate whether the Editorial Search or Review Committee followed the policies and procedures set forth in this document, and will assess the extent to which the committee's recommendations appear to be fairly reached. The Publications Committee is not charged with reevaluating the qualifications of the nominated candidate.

If the Publications Committee finds that there were significant inconsistencies, errors, biases in the search process, or other material concerns — such as potential institutional risk or misalignment with INFORMS' strategic goals — it may withhold endorsement and return the recommendation to the committee for clarification or reconsideration. If, in the judgement of the Vice President of Publications, the identified issue cannot be adequately resolved by the standing Editorial Search or Review Committee, they may dissolve the committee and work with the INFORMS President to impanel a new one, consistent with these policies and procedures.

Upon receiving the Publication Committee's endorsement of an Editorial Search or Review Committee's recommendation, the Vice President of Publications will present the recommendation and supporting materials to the INFORMS Board for final action.

If, during review of a Review Committee recommendation to replace an Editor-in-Chief, the Publications Committee or the INFORMS Board rejects the recommendation to replace the Editor-in-Chief, the Editor-in-Chief will be considered to be in probation and subject to a follow-up review after one year to determine whether sufficient progress has been made in resolving the problems identified in the review. In most cases, a new Review Committee should be selected and appointed following the procedures outlined above in "Committee Composition, Appointment, and Approval" to conduct the follow-up review; however, the Vice President may exercise discretion if sufficient progress (or lack thereof) obviates the need for a full re-review.

Board Review

While the INFORMS Board of Directors cannot cede legal authority or its fiduciary duties related to all activities of INFORMS, including editorial appointments, term renewals, and publication decisions, through these policies and procedures, the Board has delegated both publication and candidate evaluation to Editorial Search and Review Committees, operating under the supervision of the Vice President of Publications and the Publications Committee. These committees are asked to carry out their work independently and free from real or perceived conflicts or undue influence to safeguard editorial integrity, credibility, and fairness.

While the Board typically does not independently select editorial appointees, it retains full authority to approve or reject committee recommendations for legitimate reasons (for example, procedural integrity, substantive judgment, or other material considerations). If the Board does not approve a recommendation, the rationale will be documented so it can be communicated by the Vice President of Publications or the President, and the recommendation may be returned to the originating committee for further review or clarification. If substantial concerns remain, the President may authorize the formation of a new committee, consistent with these policies and procedures. As a matter of best practice, the Board generally should not directly appoint an alternate candidate. The Board's decisions are final and not subject to internal appeal; as a best-practice expectation, they should be grounded in material concerns such as process irregularities, institutional risk, or misalignment with INFORMS strategic goals.

Notifications

Once the INFORMS Board has acted on a recommendation — whether for appointment, reappointment, probation, non-reappointment, or sunsetting — the Vice President of Publications, in coordination with the Director of Publications, is responsible for initiating and managing the notification process. This ensures timely, consistent, and respectful communication with all relevant parties, and prevents the premature release of sensitive decisions.

Order of Notification

To protect confidentiality and promote fairness, notifications should occur in the following sequence:

1. Editor-in-Chief (Sitting, Incoming, or Outgoing)
    - The Editor-in-Chief under review (in the case of a review) or the selected candidate and outgoing Editor-in-Chief (in the case of a search) must be notified first.
    - In cases of reappointment with conditions (probation) or non-reappointment, the communication will include the rationale; probationary reappointment communications will also outline conditions of reappointment and a timeline for follow-up review.
2. Editorial Search or Review Committee Chair and Members
    - Once the Editor-in-Chief has been informed, the Vice President of Publications will formally notify the Committee Chair and members that the Board has taken action on their recommendation and thank them for their service.
    - When applicable, such as in cases of reappointment with conditions or non-reappointment, this communication shall include a short summary of the outcome and any next steps and timeline.
3. Non-Selected Candidates
    - Once the Editorial Search or Review Committee has been informed, the Committee Chair will formally notify the non-selected candidates.
4. Publications Committee
    - The Publications Committee, having previously reviewed and endorsed the recommendation earlier in the process, will be formally informed of the Board's final decision.
5. INFORMS Community Leadership (as applicable)

- For journals directly affiliated with specific societies, sections, or forums, relevant community leaders (for example, current Chair or President) will be notified, especially in cases where the search or review was undertaken in coordination with the community.

6. General Announcement
    - A public announcement may be coordinated by INFORMS staff following internal notifications. This typically includes a formal notice on the journal's website and dedicated communication platforms, plus the INFORMS website and member communications platforms.
    - In cases of non-reappointment or sunsetting, language and timing of the announcement will be managed with care, in consultation with the INFORMS Board.

All notifications should reinforce the expectation that committee deliberations and candidate evaluations remain confidential. Only the final outcome — not the voting breakdown, deliberative commentary, or content of internal discussions — should be shared.

Appeals

A non-reappointed Editor-in-Chief may refer concerns regarding procedural fairness to the Vice President of Publications, who will consult with the Director of Publications, Executive Director, and INFORMS President to determine an appropriate response. Appeals will only be considered when they raise credible concerns about process integrity; disagreement with committee's conclusions is not sufficient grounds for appeal.

An appeal must be submitted in writing within 30 days of receipt of the non-reappointment decision and should clearly outline the alleged procedural deviation. A written response will be issued within 30 days of receipt of the appeal, following collective review by the above leadership. This response will either affirm the original outcome or determine that a material procedural error occurred.

If a procedural error is found, the outcome will be revised to a conditional reappointment with probation, and a follow-up evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the procedures for probationary reappointment (see "Reappointment with Conditions (Probation)" above). This ensures that the Editor-in-Chief receives feedback and opportunity for corrective action with a structured and transparent framework.

The final decision of the INFORMS President, Executive Director, Vice President of Publications, and Director of Publications is not subject to further appeal. The outcome of any appeal will be reported to the INFORMS Board as part of the official governance record, but the Board does not serve as an appellate body in such matters.

Editor Transitions

Following the nominee's approval by the Board and official notification by the Vice President of Publications, the Director of Publications will initiate communication with the incoming Editor-in-Chief to schedule an orientation on INFORMS' policies and procedures and begin working on the transition with the outgoing Editor-in-Chief. Incoming and outgoing Editors-in-Chief shall coordinate with the Director of Publications and the journal's assigned managing editor and establish mutually agreed-upon dates for all phases of the transition.

Timetable

Editorial Search and Review Committees should complete their work within a timetable that enables the INFORMS Board to vote on appointments and re-appointments during its summer Board meeting. For editor searches, this timing also supports a five-month transition period between incoming and outgoing Editors-in-Chief.

The draft schedules presented below serve as planning tools and reflect typical committee workflows and deliverables. In practice, milestone dates may shift due to committee availability, candidate response timelines, stakeholder engagement, or other operational factors. The staff liaison will monitor committee progress and coordinate any necessary adjustments in consultation with the Vice President of Publications. The Vice President will keep the Publications Committee and INFORMS Board informed through routine governance reporting. If a committee is unable to deliver its recommendation in time for the summer Board meeting, efforts will be made to align the timeline with the next available Board meeting.

(In rare instances where a delayed recommendation could affect continuity of editorial leadership, the Board may consider temporary measures as outlined in P&P Section 13.7.)

Editor Search Draft Schedule

Director of Publications notifies Vice President of Publications of needed Search Committees for the upcoming year	November 1
Vice President notifies outgoing Editor-in-Chief of upcoming search	November 1
Vice President identifies and submits Committee Chair to INFORMS President for approval	November 15
Vice President submits committee roster (developed in coordination with the Committee Chair) to INFORMS President for approval	December 15
Committee convenes to discuss committee charge and develop action plan	January 15
Committee develops and circulates stakeholder survey and Call for Nominations	February 1
Committee schedules interview with outgoing Editor-in-Chief	March
Deadline for survey results and submission of nominations	April 1
Committee convenes to review survey responses, shortlist candidates, and develop interview questions	April 15
Shortlisted candidate editorial vision statements received	May 1
Candidate interviews	May 2 – May 30
Committee convenes to discuss interviews and determine recommendation	June 11
Committee final report due to Vice President	June 15
Committee report reviewed and approved by Publication Committee	July 1
Committee recommendation reviewed and approved by INFORMS Board	Summer Board meeting (typically late July)
New Editor-in-Chief orientation	September
New Editor-in-Chief's term begins	January 1

Editor Review Draft Schedule

Director of Publications notifies Vice President of Publications of needed Review Committees for the upcoming year	November 1
Vice President notifies sitting Editor-in-Chief of upcoming review	November 1
Vice President identifies and submits Committee Chair to INFORMS President for approval	November 15
Vice President submits committee roster (developed in coordination with the Committee Chair) to INFORMS President for approval	December 15
Committee convenes to discuss committee charge and develop action plan	January 15
Committee develops and circulates stakeholder survey	February 1
Deadline for survey results	April 1
Committee convenes to review survey responses and develop interview questions	April 15
Editor-in-Chief interview	May 1 – May 30
Committee convenes to discuss interview and determine recommendation	June 11
Committee final report due to Vice President	June 15
Committee report reviewed and approved by Publication Committee	July 1
Committee recommendation reviewed and approved by INFORMS Board	Summer Board meeting (typically late July)
Editor-in-Chief's second term begins	January 1

RELATED DOCUMENTS

INFORMS Policies and Procedures Manual, Section 2.4, Code of Conduct
INFORMS Policies and Procedures Manual, Section 13.4, Editors-in-Chief
INFORMS Policies and Procedures Manual, Section 13.5, Editorial Boards
INFORMS Policies and Procedures Manual, Section 13.7, Mid-Term Editorial Vacancies and Temporary Appointments
INFORMS Policies and Procedures Manual, Section 13.8, Publication Ethics

NUMBER 13.7: MID-TERM EDITORIAL VACANCIES AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

APPROVED: FEBRUARY 2005
REVISED: OCTOBER 2025

POLICY

INFORMS Editors-in-Chief are generally appointed for a three-year term, with an option of renewal for a second three-year term following formal review in the final year of their first term (see P&P Sections 13.5 and 13.6).

However, mid-term editorial vacancies may arise for a variety of reasons. INFORMS manages such vacancies to ensure continuity of editorial leadership while upholding transparency, accountability, and editorial independence. These procedures are intended to preserve the stability and integrity of its publications, safeguard the peer-review process, and maintain the confidence of authors, reviewers, and the broader scholarly community.

The INFORMS Board of Directors retains final authority over editorial appointments and must authorize any interim arrangements. The Vice President of Publications, in consultation with the Director of Publications and INFORMS President, is responsible for managing interim arrangements and initiating appropriate follow-up actions, with the Executive Director consulted as appropriate on contractual or institutional matters.

In all cases, full-term appointments must follow the standard search and review procedures described in P&P Section 13.6. Unexpected or mid-term appointments are limited in scope and duration and exist only to provide continuity during unexpected vacancies.

PROCEDURES

Notification and Initial Assessment

If an Editor-in-Chief becomes unable or unwilling to continue their duties before completing their appointed term, the situation should be reported immediately to the Vice President of Publications.

Voluntary departures may include assumption of a major administrative role (for example, Dean, Provost, or Department Chair) or the emergence of a conflict of interest (such as appointment to an editorial role at a competing journal) that significantly limits the Editor-in-Chief's capacity to fulfill editorial responsibilities. If the departure is voluntary, the outgoing editor should provide as much advance notice as possible to support an orderly transition and, if feasible, assist in the onboarding of interim leadership.

Involuntary departures — such as extended medical or health-related inability, extended family leave, institutional or legal disruption, or professional or editorial misconduct (see P&P Section 2.5 for eligibility-related issues) — typically require immediate or time-sensitive intervention.

Upon receiving notification, the Vice President of Publications will confer with the Director of Publications and INFORMS President to assess the circumstances and determine whether interim editorial leadership is warranted. The INFORMS Board will be informed promptly by the Vice President.

If an Editor-in-Chief provides at least six months' notice before their planned departure date, the vacancy can ordinarily be resolved through the standard search process rather than requiring an interim appointment. In such cases, the Vice President should immediately notify the INFORMS President and initiate formation of an Editorial Search Committee in accordance with P&P Section 13.6. The pending departure and editorial search shall be documented in the Vice President's next Board report.

If, however, the Vice President and Director of Publications determine that the standard search timeline is unlikely to provide sufficient time to identify and confirm a successor — for example, due to calendar year timing or other operational constraints — the Vice President shall recommend that the Board authorize a temporary, interim appointment to safeguard continuity and, in consultation with the Director of Publications, will prepare a timeline and plan for launching a formal editor search in accordance with P&P Section 13.6.

Board-Initiated Vacancies

In the event of credible allegations of editorial misconduct (as defined in P&P Section 13.8: Publication Ethics) or gross dereliction of duty, the Board may authorize an immediate editorial review to determine whether suspension, probation, or removal is warranted. Such reviews will ordinarily be conducted through the procedures outlined in P&P Section 13.6, unless the Board determines that an alternative process is necessary given the circumstances.

If, in the Board's judgment, continued service by the Editor-in-Chief could cause sustained or irreparable harm to the reputation of the journal or INFORMS, the Board may suspend the editor during the course of the review. In such cases, the Vice President will initiate the procedures for appointing a temporary, interim Editor-in-Chief to safeguard editorial continuity until the review is complete and a final decision is reached.

Appointment of an Interim Editor-in-Chief

After notifying the INFORMS President of the need to appoint an interim Editor-in-Chief, the Vice President of Publications, in consultation with the Director of Publications, will quickly identify a slate of candidates to serve as interim Editor-in-Chief. Whenever possible, candidates should be drawn from senior members of the journal's editorial board. If appropriate to the circumstances, the Vice President and Director may seek recommendations from the outgoing Editor-in-Chief.

To inform the evaluation, and as time allows, the Vice President may request editorial performance data from the Director of Publications (for example, turnaround times and acceptance rates). Once the preliminary slate has been identified, the Vice President will confirm each candidate's willingness and ability to serve as interim Editor-in-Chief and then interview a shortlist of finalists. The Director of Publications should participate in the interviews to address operational questions. When feasible, at least two candidates should be interviewed; this minimum may be waived if, in the judgment of the Vice President and INFORMS President, circumstances require more immediate action. The Vice President shall regularly keep the President and Executive Director informed of the status and progress.

At the conclusion of the process, the Vice President will submit a candidate recommendation, along with a proposed term of service, to the INFORMS Board for approval at its next scheduled meeting. If action is required sooner, the Vice President may request a Board vote by email ballot.

Interim Editors-in-Chief must be INFORMS members in good standing, free of unresolved conflicts of interest at the time of appointment, and able to uphold the same editorial integrity, impartiality, and operational responsibilities as full-term editors (see P&P Section 13.4). In most cases, the interim appointment will run until the end of the predecessor's unexpired term. If that remaining term exceeds two years, the Board may limit the interim appointment to a shorter period, so long as the resulting appointment provides sufficient time to complete a search and confirm a full-term Editor-in-Chief appointment.

Individuals appointed as interim Editors-in-Chief remain eligible for full-term appointment but must undergo the same search process as any other candidate (see P&P Section 13.6). Service as an interim editor does not count toward the two-term limit for Editors-in-Chief.

Authority and Limitations

While in office, the interim Editor-in-Chief holds full editorial authority for the routine management of the journal but serves in a transitional capacity. Accordingly, they are empowered to:

- Manage peer review, editorial decision-making, and issue planning;
- Recommend routine updates to the editorial board (see P&P Section 13.5);
- Participate fully in strategic and operational discussions with the Vice President of Publications, Publications Committee, and INFORMS staff.

To preserve continuity and ensure major changes are vetted through regular governance channels, interim Editors-in-Chief may not:

- Initiate significant structural or policy changes to the journal;
- Appoint or remove senior editorial staff (for example, Department Editors or Area Editors) without prior approval from the Vice President of Publications.

Delayed or Withdrawn Incoming Appointments

On rare occasions, a newly appointed Editor-in-Chief may become unavailable prior to their planned start date, either temporarily (for example, health issue or professional conflict) or permanently (for example, withdrawal of acceptance).

If an incoming Editor-in-Chief is unable to begin their appointment as scheduled, the Vice President of Publications, in consultation with the Director of Publications and INFORMS President, may ask the outgoing Editor-in-Chief to extend their service for a limited period (typically no more than one year), provided the outgoing editor left in good standing and is both willing and able to continue. Any such extension must be approved by the Board.

If the outgoing editor is not available, declines, or departed under circumstances involving misconduct or loss of confidence, the Vice President will recommend that the Board appoint an interim Editor-in-Chief under the terms described above, and concurrently initiate a formal search in accordance with P&P Section 13.6.

Communication and Transition

The Vice President of Publications, in coordination with the INFORMS President, provides high-level communication to the Board, Publications Committee, and incoming and outgoing Editors-in-Chief regarding any changes in editorial leadership. The Vice President may also issue other strategic communications as needed to ensure transparency at the governance level.

The Director of Publications, working with the assigned Managing Editor and other INFORMS staff, is responsible for operational and stakeholder communication. This includes notifying the editorial board, Managing Editor, authors, reviewers, and relevant publishing partners of the change. The Director also oversees public updates such as website revisions or editorial announcements, ensuring they are handled with discretion and professionalism.

The Director of Publications further ensures that peer review and production workflows remain stable throughout the transition, minimizing disruption to authors, reviewers, and readers.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

INFORMS Policies and Procedures Manual, Section 2.5, INFORMS Eligibility
INFORMS Policies and Procedures Manual, Section 13.4, Editors-in-Chief
INFORMS Policies and Procedures Manual, Section 13.5, Editorial Boards
INFORMS Policies and Procedures Manual, Section 13.6, Editorial Search and Review Committees
INFORMS Policies and Procedures Manual, Section 13.8, Publication Ethics

NUMBER 13.8: PUBLICATION ETHICS

APPROVED: MAY 2009
REVISED: JULY 2016, JULY 2021, AUGUST 2025

POLICY

INFORMS is committed to fostering a scholarly publishing environment rooted in integrity, transparency, and respect for intellectual contributions. Upholding high ethical standards ensures public trust in scientific findings and properly allocates credit for ideas and results. All parties involved in the publishing process — including editors, peer reviewers, authors, and the publisher — must adhere to the ethical principles outlined herein.

Definitions of key terms used in this section are provided in the Glossary at the end of this policy.

Types of Ethical Violations (not exhaustive)

Concurrent or Multiple Publications

Authors must not submit or publish manuscripts based on substantially similar research in more than one journal or primary publication. If authors have used their own previously published work, or work that is currently under review, as the basis for a submitted manuscript, they are required to cite the previous work and indicate how their submitted manuscript offers novel contributions beyond those of the previous work. Concurrently submitting the same manuscript to more than one journal constitutes unethical behavior.

Plagiarism

It is a core value of INFORMS publications to disseminate research that clearly, accurately, and honestly represents the work of authors while recognizing the work of others by appropriate attribution. As a consequence, plagiarism is an unacceptable violation of publication ethics. INFORMS adopts the definition of plagiarism established by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), which includes:

- the use of others' ideas or expressions without citation;
- verbatim copying without quotation or attribution; and
- self-plagiarism without proper citation or disclosure.

Unless the information can be considered "common knowledge," proper attribution of an idea, algorithm, computational methodology, or experimental design is required even if a journal operates with double-anonymous review.

Manipulation or Falsification of Citations

The inclusion of citations for the primary purpose of artificially increasing citation counts to specific authors or journals is unethical and prohibited.

Authors are responsible for ensuring the accuracy of all citations included in a manuscript. The submission of references that cannot be verified, especially those generated via generative AI tools, constitutes unethical behavior, whether done intentionally or through negligence. Authors must validate all references against original sources before submission.

Data Falsification or Fabrication

Falsification or fabrication of data, results, methodology, or other components in any form — whether committed intentionally or through gross negligence — constitutes a severe breach of publication ethics and is prohibited.

Conflicts of Interest

Authors, reviewers, and editors must disclose any financial, professional, or personal interests that could influence the objectivity of their work. Failure to disclose conflicts of interest will be considered an ethical breach and is prohibited.

Authorship Misrepresentation

All listed authors must meet authorship criteria. INFORMS follows the authorship definition and principles outlined in its Authorship policy (https://pubsonline.informs.org/authorportal/authorship). Gift authorship, ghost authorship, and failure to include deserving contributors are prohibited.

Authors are permitted to use generative artificial intelligence (AI) in the preparation of their manuscripts. However, machine learning (ML) and AI tools may not be listed as authors. Authors take full responsibility for the accuracy, integrity, and originality of the submitted work, including any AI-generated content.

Any use of generative AI tools (e.g., for drafting text, translation, summarization, or data analysis) must be disclosed in the acknowledgements section, with details of the tool used and the nature of the assistance provided.

Failure to Address Retractions or Corrections

Authors and editors are responsible for issuing corrections or retractions when necessary. Withholding such action may be treated as an ethical infraction and is prohibited.

Editors-in-chief are responsible for initiating retraction and errata notices in coordination with the Publications Office following INFORMS procedures for handling Post-Publication Correction and Critiques (https://pubsonline.informs.org/authorportal/corrections).

PROCEDURES

Preliminary Review

An editor-in-chief (EIC), after being made aware of a suspected ethical violation, shall review all evidence and make a preliminary judgment regarding the claim. As part of the EIC's deliberation, the author(s) must be contacted and provided an opportunity to respond to the charge.

If the EIC finds sufficient grounds to support an investigation, the EIC shall forward all materials to the vice president of publications for formal review.

If the EIC finds insufficient grounds to support an investigation, the matter is dismissed. If the charge originates from an external party (for example, another author or researcher) and the EIC dismisses it, the complainant must be informed, by the EIC, of their right to request reconsideration by the vice president of publications. Requests for reconsideration must be received within 30 days of receipt of the EIC's notification of dismissal.

Reconsideration requests will be considered in cases where the complainant can provide:

- new evidence that was not available to the EIC at the time of their decision;
- a material factual or technical error in the EIC's assessment; or
- credible evidence of bias or a substantial procedural error.

Upon receiving a request for reconsideration, the vice president of publications will conduct a preliminary evaluation. If the vice president determines that sufficient cause exists to conduct a full investigation, they will initiate a formal review under this policy.

Formal Review

Upon receipt of materials detailing a claim of suspected ethical violations, or written request for reconsideration of the EIC's preliminary decision to dismiss a charge, the vice president of publications shall initiate a formal review by either (a) referring the case to the Publication Ethics Sub-Committee or (b) appointing an ad hoc sub-committee for formal review and adjudication of the charge. For the remainder of the policy, the term "Publication Ethics Sub-Committee" shall refer to both of these options unless otherwise specified.

Composition of the Sub-Committee

The committee will consist of a chair and at least three other individuals. All members of the sub-committee should possess a deep understanding of ethical considerations in scholarly publishing and sufficient proficiency in the research field/topic in question to understand any research or methodological nuances involved in the case. To avoid bias, the sub-committee should not include the EIC who presented the charge, anyone directly involved in the review of the material in question (e.g., senior, department, area, or associate editors or reviewers), or anyone who could be viewed to have a conflict of interest with the individuals or material in question. The director of publications (or their appointed designee) shall serve as a staff liaison to the sub-committee to guide the sub-committee on policy and procedure and provide access to material related to the charge, such as key dates for relevant activities as retrieved from INFORMS' peer review software platform. The staff liaison may advise the sub-committee on policy and procedures but shall have no official voice in the interpretation of evidence or determination of final judgment.

Members of the Publication Ethics Sub-Committee will be appointed by the vice president of publications from within the membership of the Publications Committee, which is nominated and approved according to the procedures outlined in P&P Section 13.3: Publications Committee. Provisions for the appointment of ad hoc sub-committee members are outlined in the following section.

Ad Hoc Sub-Committee Members and Supplemental Ad Hoc Ethics Sub-Committees

To address potential conflicts of interest or augment subject-matter expertise, the chair of the Publication Ethics Sub-Committee, in consultation with the vice president of publications, may temporarily substitute one or more members of the sub-committee. Substitutions should be drawn preferentially from the membership of the Publications Committee but may include other qualified members of INFORMS if necessary.

In the event that multiple suspected ethics violations require investigation and adjudication simultaneously, the vice president of publications may empanel one or more supplemental ad hoc ethics sub-committees. These sub-committees shall be authorized to investigate and adjudicate additional cases in parallel with the standing Publication Ethics Sub-Committee. Members of any ad hoc ethics sub-committee are appointed by the vice president of publications and must be members of INFORMS.

All ad hoc sub-committees shall conform to the composition requirements described above (other than Publications Committee membership), including adherence to conflict-of-interest safeguards and the inclusion of a staff liaison.

Activities of the Sub-Committee

The sub-committee, acting under authority delegated by the vice president of publications, has the sole responsibility for adjudicating the charge and recommending appropriate sanctions. The vice president of publications retains sole authority to determine and impose any sanctions after the formal review.

Given the serious nature of a charge of plagiarism, data falsification/fabrication, or other ethical violation, it is required that confidentiality be maintained while deliberations and/or appeals are being considered. During this time, the charge and supporting materials are only to be made known to those persons who are involved in the review and adjudication process.

While investigation and consideration of different types of ethical violations may require different approaches, the process should include the following baseline tasks:

- formally notifying the author(s) and any coauthors of the charge, within 15 days of receipt;
- initiating additional investigation or evidence collection as needed;
- conducting a thorough review of collected evidence;
- reaching a determination regarding the charge and recommending sanctions; and
- providing a summary to the vice president of publications including evidence utilized, the process followed, the findings and recommended sanctions, and the rationale (see below).

Notification to stakeholders will be made by the vice president as outlined below.

In general, the sub-committee shall apply a "preponderance of the evidence" standard — meaning that a violation is deemed to have occurred if it is more likely than not, based on the available evidence — when evaluating whether a violation occurred. In cases where proposed sanctions are especially severe, the committee may require a higher standard of confidence before rendering judgment, and this shall be noted in the summary.

All formal notifications related to the investigation process — such as notification of the charge, requests for information, or preliminary findings — will be communicated by the sub-committee chair (or their designee) in writing to the vice president of publications. These communications will include a statement of rationale, supporting evidence, and reference to relevant sections of this policy. The vice president of publications is solely responsible for communicating the final decision and any sanction to the respondent. This final communication must be made in writing and copied to the editor-in-chief, sub-committee chair, director of publications, and president of INFORMS. Confidentiality will be maintained within this leadership group, consistent with the policy's confidentiality provisions.

Summary Judgment

If, in response to either the EIC's initial notification or to the sub-committee's formal notification, the author(s) do not contest the charges, the sub-committee may recommend a summary judgment.

If the author(s) fail to respond to either the EIC's initial notification or to the sub-committee's formal notification within 45 days, the sub-committee may recommend a summary judgment. However, all reasonable efforts must be made to confirm delivery and receipt of communications before such action is taken. Reasonable efforts include confirming email validity through journal systems or institutional faculty websites, reaching out via coauthors or ORCID contacts, and allowing a minimum of three contact attempts across a 45-day period.

Sanction Guidelines

Sanction recommendations are made at the sub-committee's discretion, based on factors including, but not limited to, severity, frequency, and context of the violation. In cases involving multiple authors, recommended sanctions may vary according to each individual's level of responsibility and any mitigating circumstances (such as student co-authors on advisor-submitted manuscripts), which the sub-committee shall take into account when recommending both the distribution and severity of sanctions. In cases involving particularly egregious or outrageous ethical violations, the sub-committee reserves the right to recommend additional or exceptional sanctions beyond those typically applied.

The following lists outline the typical types of sanctions that may be recommended in response to a given offense tier. The sub-committee may recommend one or more of these sanctions, as appropriate to the severity, context, and specifics of the case. Not all listed sanctions must be recommended in any given instance. Sanctions are intended to be proportional to the severity and frequency of the offense, and they may be recommended singly or in combination at the discretion of the sub-committee.

First Offense

- Immediate rejection of all in-process submissions within any INFORMS journal.
- Nullification of the decision to publish all accepted but not yet published submissions across all INFORMS journals.
- 2- to 3-year ban on submission to any INFORMS journal (resubmission of papers in revision may be allowed or disallowed at the discretion of the Publication Ethics Sub-Committee).
- Removal from all editorial board positions held on any INFORMS journal.
- Retraction and/or public notification to the readership if the paper has been already published.

Second Offense

May include any first-offense sanctions, plus:

- 5-year ban on submissions to any INFORMS journal (resubmission of papers in revision may be allowed at the discretion of the Publication Ethics Sub-Committee).

Third or Greater Offense

May include any of the above sanctions, plus:

- Lifetime ban on submissions to any INFORMS journal (resubmission of papers in revision may be allowed at the discretion of the Publication Ethics Sub-Committee).
- Notification of the author(s)' employer/dean.

Appeals

If the author(s) (or external complainant, when relevant) believe that they have strong reasons to seek reconsideration of the vice president's decision, they may file an appeal to the president of INFORMS.

Appeals will be considered under the following conditions:

- material factual or technical errors, or
- substantial procedural errors or violations, or
- the emergence of new evidence that could reasonably affect the outcome of the case and was not available during the original investigation.

Appeals must be made in writing to the INFORMS president within 45 days of receipt of the vice president's decision, barring exceptional circumstances. The appeal must unambiguously explain how at least one of the conditions stated above has been met. Upon receipt of an appeal, the president will appoint an independent appeals committee, which to avoid bias will exclude all previous sub-committee members, except the staff liaison who served as an advisor, who may advise the appeal committee, as needed, on policy and procedures.

The appeals committee will review the evidence, process, and conclusions of the Publication Ethics Sub-Committee and make a final recommendation of findings and sanctions if warranted to the INFORMS president. If relevant, the originally imposed sanctions will be stayed until the appeal process has concluded. After receiving materials from the appeals committee, the president will make the final decision and communicate it to the author(s) in writing within 90 days of receipt of the appeal request. The decision of the president will be considered final. The final decision will be archived by INFORMS and may be cited in the event of future ethical complaints.

Recordkeeping and Archiving

Findings of the Publication Ethics Sub-Committee will be retained by the Publications Office for recordkeeping and to inform future training or policy improvement. All records will be handled confidentially.

Fair Process Commitment (Rights of the Author)

INFORMS is committed to ensuring that all ethics investigations are conducted with fairness, transparency, and due regard for the rights of those involved. Authors under review for an alleged ethical violation are entitled to the following protections throughout the process.

Timely Review

Authors have the right to a timely resolution of allegations. Formal investigation shall be initiated within 15 days of referral from the editor-in-chief (or, where relevant, the vice president of publications), and the process will ordinarily conclude within 60 days of initiation, barring exceptional circumstances. Any appeals will be conducted in a timely manner as specified in this document, barring exceptional circumstances.

Notice of Allegation

Authors will receive written notification that includes the specific charge(s), the supporting evidence, and references to relevant sections of this policy.

Opportunity to Respond

Authors have the right to submit a written rebuttal, provide supporting evidence, and request clarification of the charge prior to any judgment being made.

Right to Appeal

Authors may appeal a dismissal or a determination by the sub-committee, in accordance with the timelines and procedural grounds described in this policy.

Impartial Evaluation

Authors are entitled to a fair and impartial review. The sub-committee shall be free of conflicts of interest and possess adequate subject-matter expertise.

Confidentiality

Authors have the right to a process that protects their confidentiality to the extent consistent with the need for a fair and complete review. Communications, deliberations, and outcomes will be handled in accordance with the confidentiality and recordkeeping provisions outlined in this policy.

Acknowledgement

This policy and associated procedures are informed by the Committee on Publications Ethics (COPE) Core Practices and Guidelines[1] on:

- Guidelines on Good Publication Practice
- Retraction Guidelines
- Flowcharts for managing misconduct cases

Additional resources and case studies are available on COPE's website at https://publicationethics.org.

GLOSSARY

Brief definitions are included below for key terms referenced in this policy.

authorship — An individual listed as an author must have made a substantial intellectual contribution to the work, participated in drafting or revising it, approved the final version, and agreed to be accountable for its

[1] Accessed April 2025.

accuracy and integrity. **Source:** Council of Science Editors (CSE) Authorship Task Force Report (2012); INFORMS Authorship Guidelines.

common knowledge — Something that most people know, have learned, or accept as truth from experience or everyday life, rather than from research or study. In the context of avoiding plagiarism, INFORMS will follow the University of Pennsylvania's extended definition as "any information that the average, educated reader would accept as reliable without having to look it up." **Source:** *Oxford English Dictionary*; University of Pennsylvania Code of Academic Integrity (1996).

conflict of interest — A situation in which an individual's personal, professional, or financial relationships could inappropriately influence, or appear to influence, their judgment or objectivity in the conduct, review, or communication of research. The existence of a conflict does not imply wrongdoing but must be disclosed and appropriately managed to maintain transparency and trust in the publication process. **Source:** COPE Core Practices; ICMJE Recommendations (2023); National Science Foundation Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures.

concurrent (or duplicate) submission — Submission of a manuscript that is under review or published elsewhere without appropriate disclosure or permission. Such redundancy is unethical unless explicitly permitted and justified. **Source:** COPE Guidelines on Redundant Publication.

data falsification — Manipulating research materials, equipment, processes, or changing/omitting data or results so that the research is not accurately represented. **Source:** COPE Guidelines; U.S. Office of Research Integrity (ORI), definition of research misconduct (42 CFR Part 93).

data fabrication — Making up data or results and recording or reporting them as if they were real. **Source:** COPE Guidelines; ORI, definition of research misconduct (42 CFR Part 93).

exceptional circumstances — Situations that reasonably prevent a party from complying with standard deadlines or procedures, such as serious illness, natural disaster, or other unforeseen and unavoidable disruptions. Requests for exceptions will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the responsible INFORMS officer. **Source:** ORI Case Handling Manual; COPE Case Handling Framework.

ghost authorship — Omitting individuals who made substantial contributions to a manuscript, typically by failing to list them as authors or properly acknowledge them. **Source:** COPE Discussion Document: How to Handle Authorship Disputes.

gift (or honorary) authorship — Listing individuals as authors who did not meet the required authorship criteria, often as a courtesy or due to seniority. **Source:** CSE Recommendations; COPE Case Studies.

gross negligence — A severe degree of negligence representing a reckless disregard for the duty of care owed to others. It involves conduct that goes beyond ordinary carelessness or failure to exercise reasonable judgment, and instead reflects a blatant indifference to the consequences of one's actions or omissions. **Source:** *Black's Law Dictionary*, 11th ed. (2019).

material factual error — An error involving a key fact that, if known or corrected at the time of deliberation, could reasonably have changed the outcome of the investigation or decision. Examples include incorrect dates, identities, authorship claims, or documented actions relevant to the case, including misattribution of responsibility for the alleged violation. **Source:** ORI Case Handling Manual.

ORCID (Open Researcher and Contributor ID) — A non-profit organization that provides researchers with a unique, persistent digital identifier (an ORCID iD) to distinguish their scholarly work from that of others. ORCID iDs are used to link authors to their publications, affiliations, and contributions across systems and platforms. **Source:** ORCID (https://orcid.org).

plagiarism — The use of another's ideas, processes, results, or words without proper acknowledgment, including direct copying, paraphrasing, or presenting someone else's work as one's own. Self-plagiarism, or text recycling, without citation is also considered a violation. **Source:** COPE Core Practices; U.S. Federal Research Misconduct Policy.

preponderance of the evidence — A standard of proof meaning that, based on the available evidence, it is more likely than not that the alleged violation occurred. This is the typical burden of proof used in civil proceedings and ethical adjudication processes. **Source:** ORI, definition of research misconduct (42 CFR Part 93).

retraction — A public statement issued to withdraw a published article due to major errors or ethical violations (e.g., plagiarism, fabrication, or authorship disputes). Retractions should follow clear guidelines and be visible to readers. **Source:** COPE Retraction Guidelines.

self-plagiarism — The reuse of one's own previously published content—text, figures, data—without citation or acknowledgment. It includes "text recycling" and republishing the same data set or results across multiple articles. **Source:** COPE Text Recycling Guidelines.

summary judgment — A procedural conclusion reached when an author fails to respond to allegations or communications within a defined time period (typically 45 days), allowing the committee to rule on the case based on available evidence. **Source:** COPE Case Handling Framework.

technical error — A significant mistake in the application or interpretation of data, research methods, or evaluation standards that materially impacts the validity of the investigation or decision. This may include misinterpretation of methodological issues or misclassification of evidence. **Source:** COPE Case Handling Framework.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

INFORMS Policies and Procedures Manual, P&P Section 13.3: Publications Committee

NUMBER 13.9: OPEN ACCESS

APPROVED: JANUARY 2015
REVISED: OCTOBER 2025

POLICY

INFORMS recognizes open access (OA) as the unrestricted public access to, and reuse of, peer reviewed, accepted, and published manuscripts. By enabling wider dissemination, OA supports INFORMS' mission to advance the science and technology of decision making and elevate its impact. INFORMS acknowledges both the opportunities and responsibilities of open access to promote broad sharing and use of its published knowledge among members, practitioners, policymakers, and the public. Because OA is a dynamic area of scholarly publishing, INFORMS is committed to periodic review of these policies to ensure they uphold the following three principles in pursuit of maintaining publication quality, sustainability, and inclusivity:

1. The revenue generated from INFORMS' subscription-based model enables INFORMS to publish journals of the highest standards, supporting its mission to lead in the development, dissemination, and application of knowledge in operations research, management science, analytics, and related fields.
2. Efforts to expand OA must not compromise the quality, integrity, or reputation of INFORMS' publications.
3. INFORMS has historically maintained highly competitive subscription prices to ensure accessibility to members, institutions, and the public. This traditional subscription model will continue alongside OA, provided this coexistence does not destabilize journal revenue.

The INFORMS Board of Directors retains final authority over OA policy. Operational implementation — including license frameworks, pricing tiers, and fee adjustments — is delegated to the Director of Publications and Executive Director, and will be reviewed at least annually for competitiveness and sustainability.

PROCEDURES

In support of its commitment to support OA, INFORMS offers both "green" and "gold" OA options to its authors as detailed below. Authors are responsible for ensuring that their selected OA option complies with funder or institutional requirements.

Green Open Access

Green OA provides a no-cost pathway for compliance with funder mandates and broad community access. Under this model, all INFORMS-published authors automatically retain the right to post the author accepted manuscript (AAM) version of their papers to personal websites, scholarly collaboration networks, or non-commercial institutional repositories immediately upon acceptance, without embargo. Posted AAMs must include the DOI link[2] to the final published version or record (VOR) and a statement that this is the author accepted manuscript, not the version of record. Authors may not post their final published VOR unless authorized under an INFORMS Open Option license as detailed below under "Gold Open Access."

[2] A DOI, or Digital Object Identifier, is a persistent, unique alphanumeric string assigned to a digital object, such as a journal article or dataset. It provides a stable, permanent link to the object's online location, even if the underlying URL changes.

Gold Open Access

Gold OA is available through INFORMS Open Option (IOO). Under this model, authors retain copyright and grant INFORMS a non-exclusive, non- revocable license to publish and distribute the work. The author's final published VOR will be made freely available and reusable under the terms of the selected Creative Commons license (for example, CC-BY 4.0). Authors selecting IOO are responsible for a one-time article processing charge (APC).

APC pricing is set by the Director of Publications and Executive Director. The APC pricing schedule will be reviewed at least annually to ensure fees remain aligned with market conditions and community expectations while supporting INFORMS' publishing standards. Any material changes to APC pricing or license frameworks require prior notice to the INFORMS Board (through the Vice President of Publication) before implementation.

While authors may be asked to indicate whether they intend to select IOO during submission, the author's decision in this regard will have no impact on any aspect of the peer-review process or on an editor's ultimate decision regarding publication. Authors will not be invoiced for their IOO APC until after a manuscript has been accepted for publication, and their IOO APC must be remitted to INFORMS prior to publication.

Authors selecting to publish their articles under IOO remain responsible for adhering to INFORMS' policies and procedures related to publication ethics (see P&P Section 13.8), including but not limited to:

- Multiple, Redundant, or Concurrent Publication: Authors must attest that their manuscript has not been published, accepted for publication, or submitted for publication elsewhere, nor will be for the duration of its consideration for publication in the journal to which the work has been submitted. IOO submission does not negate this policy, violation of which is considered a breach of publishing ethics and is subject to penalties and sanctions.
- Related Works: Authors must disclose (in their cover letter and in any related submission questions) all of their work (for example, prior publications, conference proceedings, book chapters, papers submitted to other journals, thesis/dissertations) having substantial overlap with any portion of the submitted manuscript.
- Proper Citation: Authors must properly cite any and all previous work authored by themselves, their co-authors, or others, in English or any other language, that is significantly related to the submitted work.
- Reproduction of Previously Published Materials: Authors must ensure that they have acquired permission to republish any and all previously published portions of their submitted work for which copyright is now held by a party other than the author. All previously published material that is copyrighted by another party must be clearly noted in the article to ensure that the open access status of the submitted article is not mistakenly implied to extend to the republished copyrighted work.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

INFORMS Policies and Procedures Manual, Section 13.8, Publication Ethics

NUMBER 13.10: NEW JOURNALS

APPROVED: JANUARY 2016

As operations research, management science, and related fields evolve, the subject matter covered by INFORMS journals may not extend to new or emerging areas of interest to the membership. To reconcile this mismatch, INFORMS members are encouraged to propose new journals that will complement and add value to the collection of existing journals.

In general, one or more INFORMS subdivisions should take the lead in initiating a new journal. To some extent, this will demonstrate interest and support among the membership. The steps in the proposal process are as follows:

1. When a perceived need for a new journal is identified, an INFORMS member or a committee whose majority are INFORMS members may write a preliminary proposal and submit it to the Vice President of Publications. The preliminary proposal should summarize the proposed journal's concept and how it will promote the core purpose, mission, and values of INFORMS.
2. The Vice President of Publications shall submit the preliminary proposal to the Publications Committee for their recommendation, which may be either to return the proposal to the proposal committee for clarification, accept it and advise the proposal committee to write a full proposal, or reject it.
3. Upon receiving the Publications Committee's recommendation to accept or reject a proposal, the vice president of publications shall make his or her recommendation to the Board of Directors at the next scheduled quarterly Board of Directors meeting. This recommendation shall be submitted as a motion for the Board to either accept the preliminary proposal and ask the proposal committee to write a full proposal or reject it thus ending the process.
4. The Board, in deciding to accept a preliminary proposal, may request clarification or deliver feedback/instruction to the proposal committee that must be addressed in the full proposal.
5. When further clarification is requested, the proposal committee may decide to take no further action and withdraw the proposal. Proposal withdrawals should be submitted to the Vice President of Publications in writing within 90 days of the Board decision to invite a full proposal.
6. The full proposal should be written and submitted to the Vice President of Publications within one year of the date that the Board approved the preliminary proposal. The full proposal must answer any questions raised by the Board during the preliminary evaluation, as well as provide a detailed business plan for the editorial and fiscal operation of the new journal through its first five years of publication.
7. When the Vice President of Publications receives the full proposal, the same steps taken in evaluating the preliminary proposal shall be followed.
8. When evaluating the full proposal, the Board of Directors can either accept the full proposal and instruct the INFORMS Director of Publications to initiate the new journal, reject the full proposal, or request clarification, thereby tabling the motion until a subsequent Board meeting. The Board has final say in whether or not INFORMS will go forward with the new journal.

The Vice President of Publications and INFORMS Director of Publications will maintain forms to provide guidance to proposal committees in their completion of preliminary and full journal proposals. These forms may be obtained from the INFORMS Director of Publications.

Selecting the Editor-in-Chief

The full proposal form shall ask the proposal committee to provide a list of candidates for the position of Editor-in-Chief (EIC) of the new journal. Should the Board of Directors give its approval for the new journal, the Vice President of Publications will pursue one of two options for the selection of the EIC.

1. As described in P&P Section 13.6, a Search Committee will be appointed by the Vice President of Publications to evaluate the list of candidates and make a recommendation on the initial EIC to the Board of Directors.
2. In the event that the proposal is being presented by/with its chosen EIC, the Vice President of Publications, in consultation with the Publications Committee, may recommend this individual to the Board of Directors without a prior search committee. If the Board votes to approve this candidate, he or she will be officially notified by the INFORMS President; if the Board votes to reject this candidate, the Board shall request that the Vice President of Publications form a Search Committee as noted in the first option above.

In the event that the proposed journal is a pre-existing publication seeking to become an INFORMS publication, it is explicitly understood that the incoming EIC will be subject to the tenure, search, and review procedures outlined in P&P Section 13.6. Unless otherwise noted, the incoming EIC's term will be considered his/her first term and he/she will be eligible for reappointment after completion of his/her three-year term.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

INFORMS Policies and Procedures Manual, Section 13.6, Editorial Search and Review Committees
INFORMS New Journal Preliminary Proposal Form (available upon request from Director of Publications)
INFORMS New Journal Full Proposal Form (available upon request from Director of Publications)

NUMBER 13.11 MAGAZINE EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

MOVED TO SECTION 9: MARKETING, COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH, 2024 SUMMER BOARD MEETING

NUMBER 13.12: SPRINGER BOOK SERIES

SUNSET MARCH 2025