Chapter 4. Publishing regularity

Do you publish regularly, on time, and with minimal delays for authors? Although a seemingly simple question, there are different criteria which need to be checked – see how you do against the following list:

	Yes	Could be clearer	No
1. Do you publish the print journal issues (if you have a printed journal) either on or before the scheduled month (or week)?			
2. Do you publish the online journal issues (if you have an online journal) either on or before the scheduled month (or week)?			
3. Do you despatch the printed journal (if you have a printed journal) either on or before the scheduled month (or week)?			
4. Do you create an annual schedule for the journal?			
5. Is your publication schedule clearly stated on your website (if you have one)?			
6. Is your publication schedule clearly stated in your printed journal (if you have one)?			

Online resources and references

In addition to the following resources these websites and references may be useful:

Campbell, R, Pentz, E, Borthwick, I (eds) (2012) *Academic and Professional Publishing*. Oxford: Chandos Publishing.

Cope, B and Phillips, A (eds) (2014) *The Future of the Academic Journal*, 2nd Edition. Elsevier.

Cox, J and Cox, L (2009) Scholarly Publishing Practice 3: Academic Journals Publishers. *Learned Publishing* 22, 75–77.

Morris, S, Barnas, E, LaFrenier, D and Reich, M (2013) *The Handbook of Journal Publishing*. Cambridge University Press.

NFAIS (2009) Best Practices for Publishing Journal Articles. www.nfais.org/best-practices (accessed February 2017).

Smart, P, Maisonneuve, H and Polderman, A (2013) *Science Editors' Handbook*, 2nd edn. European Association of Science Editors. www.ease.co.uk

Resource 4A: Scheduling for journal production

Summary: A basic guide on setting up a schedule for journal (and book) publishing.

It is very important that journals have a production schedule. This serves several purposes:

- It ensures that you are in the office at critical times!

- It plans around public holidays

- It plans around busy times of year

- It allows the journal to see how it is progressing – before it is too late to do anything about it!

Journal scheduling

Conceptually, journals have two distinct stages:

- Editorial submission and peer review

- Production after article acceptance

It is not usual to have schedules for stage 1 – because the date for submission and the time for review/revisions cannot be easily anticipated.

However, it is vital that it has a schedule for stage 2 – the production of the issues.

Editorial stages

The stages that occur during the editorial process are outlined in the flow chart below. Because of the frequent need for revision, it is impossible to place exact dates on these stages, but generally-accepted times are as follows:
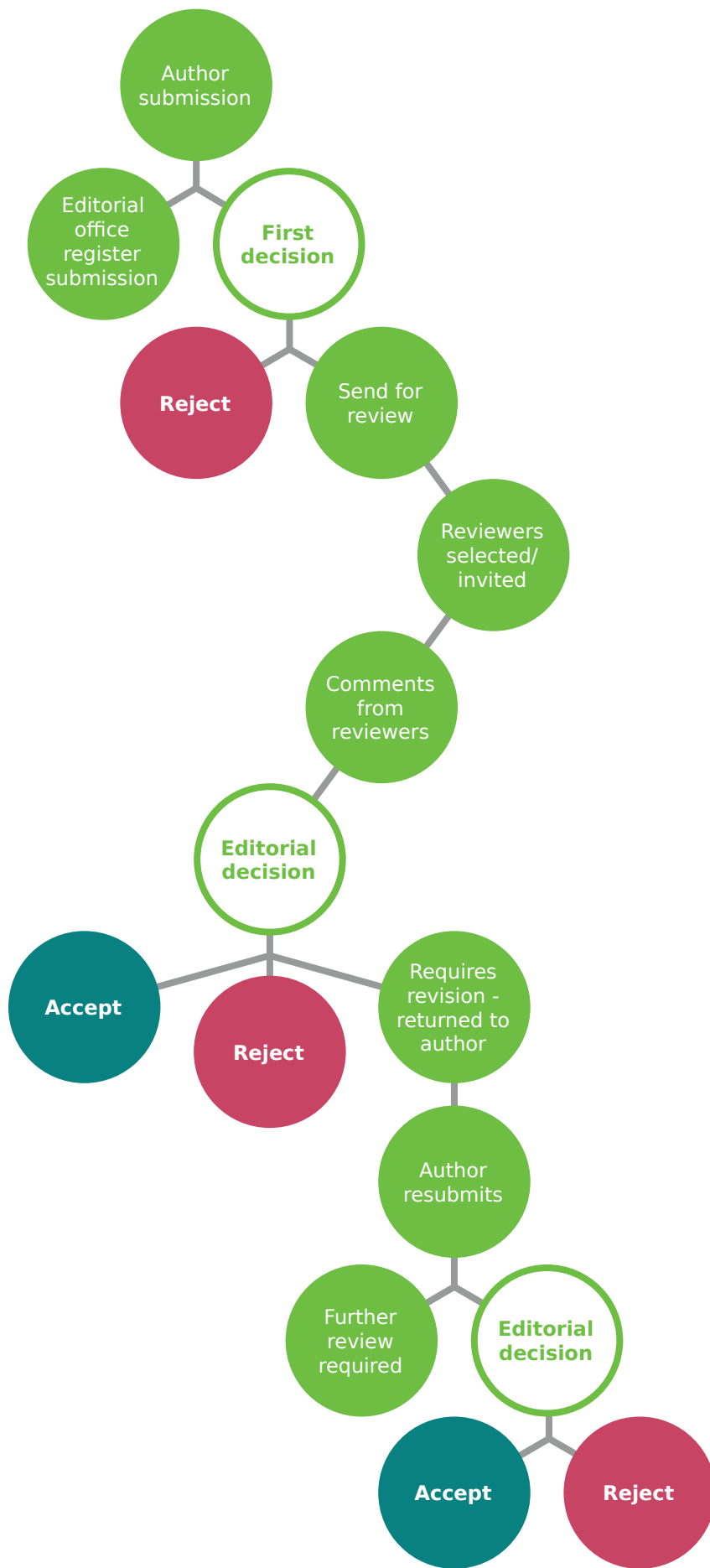
From submission to first decision	1-2 weeks
Time for reviewing to editorial decision	3-12 weeks
Time for author to correct	1 week – 6 months depending on what is required
Time for final decision	1-2 weeks (if no further review is needed)

Production stages

Production of journals can be scheduled to run in one of two ways:

1. Wait until all articles for an issue have been accepted. Once all the articles for one issue have been accepted, they are sent for copyediting, then typesetting, etc. In this methodology the entire issue moves as one item. (This is often compared to book scheduling.)

2. Alternatively, deal with each article as it is accepted: allow each article to undergo its own sequence of actions (and on its own schedule) until it has reached the "held for press" stage (i.e. typeset, proof-checked and corrected, but not paginated). Once it has reached this point and been selected for inclusion within the issue, it will join the issue schedule, to ensure publication at the planned date

EDITORIAL STAGES: BASIC FLOWCHART

- Author submission
- Editorial office register submission
- **First decision**
  - **Reject**
  - Send for review
    - Reviewers selected/invited
      - Comments from reviewers
        - **Editorial decision**
          - **Accept**
          - **Reject**
          - Requires revision - returned to author
            - Author resubmits
              - Further review required
              - **Editorial decision**
                - **Accept**
                - **Reject**

Average times

It is very hard to approximate how long any activity should take: the following are general estimations from the UK industry.

To copyedit an article:	At a rate of approximately eight typewritten pages per hour – slower for complex, mathematical or highly referenced work, faster for simplistic, continuous text
Typesetting:	Usually allow one to two weeks for each article. (If the entire issue is sent at once you may need to allow a little extra time – but not much!)
Proofreading:	Authors are often given five working days
Proof correction (by typesetter):	Usually allow five to 10 days depending on amount of corrections (and different journals have different rules regarding what level of corrections they allow)
Issue selection	Usually allow four to five days for selecting the articles and final issue corrections (includi`ng setting up the table of contents, cover, etc.
Printing:	Usually allow three weeks
Distribution:	Frequently forgotten – but remember that postage takes time – and you need to allow for this when planning a schedule.

Providing schedule information

Most people do not need to know the detailed schedule, but only the parts that relate to them

For example, editors only need to know:

- The final date that articles must be accepted and given to the copyeditor to ensure inclusion in an issue

- When they will be required to select articles for the issue (if they do this)

- When the issue will be published

Your printers only need to know when to expect files/copy for printing

Tip: Do not give people too much information, as the more they receive, the less attention they are likely to pay to it.

Simultaneous schedules

In a standard schedule each article goes through its own stages. Then the articles for an issue come together to go through the final stages together. Simultaneous with this will be the need to ensure that the cover is set up and produced on time. That indexes are compiled on time to merge with the issue, and that any advertising or other materials are also planned so that they do not delay the issue production.

In the online environment, remember that to upload an issue may take some time, so if this needs to be published in advance of the print issue, this also needs to be planned. Sometimes the files for online issue are produced after the print-ready files, and the online issue can be delayed.

Setting the annual schedule

Setting up schedules should be done each year – and sufficiently in advance to ensure no delays at the start of the year.

Because the "start" date of the schedule is the publication date (e.g. March, June, September, December) the schedule needs to be worked backwards from this – for instance:

Arrival of issue with subscribers	March 15
Postage of issue	March 1
Printed copies ready	February 27
Issue to press	February 8
Cover to press	February 8
Issue proofs approved	February 7
Cover proof approved	February 7
Issue proofs received	February 5
Cover proof received	February 5
Issue selection	January 28

Working from the end-date backwards is counter-intuitive, and can lead to errors. Therefore, where possible, the use of Excel is recommended. Excel can calculate a schedule once it has been given a "start" date and the number of days for each action: i.e.

A	B	C	D
1	Schedule start	-1	
2	Articles selected for inclusion	-5	
3	Issue proof received	-2	
4	Proof back for final corrections	-1	
5	Proof OK'd for press	-1	
6	To Press	-10	
7	Print copies received	-2	
8	Copies distributed	0	30 August

Within this table, each of these boxes is a "cell" with a grid reference (the top letters and the numbers down the side) - so for example, the box with "To Press" is cell B6

In Cell D7, insert the calculation "=D8+C7" - this will give you the date of 28 August in cell D7.

However, this takes no account of weekends and is of limited use. Fortunately, Excel is able to calculate around weekends (it is called "WORKDAY" in Excel), to provide a more useful schedule.

KEY POINTS

Schedules are important!

Whilst the first schedule may take time to prepare, you can use it as a template for future years – so it is a good investment of time.

What happens when you publish late:

- It annoys authors
- It worries readers ("perhaps the journal is struggling")
- It annoys librarians ("where is my copy?")
- It leads to claims for missing issues (librarians will claim for printed copies not delivered – if they are late they will initiate a claim, and then get two – or more! – copies: that's expensive for the publisher)
- It looks bad on the website if it is March and the March issue is not there.