

Book Review

The Scientific Journal: Editorial Policies and Practices: Guidelines for Editors, Reviewers, and Authors—Lois DeBaKey (St. Louis: The C.V. Mosby Co., 1976, 129 pages, cloth, \$9.95).

From 1968 to 1975, the Committee on Editorial Policy of the Council of Biology Editors met several times a year to discuss editorial guidelines for scientific journals. *The Scientific Journal: Editorial Policies and Practices* summarizes the Committee's answers to editorial problems. In this reference book, author Lois DeBaKey advises editors how to decide which policies and practices will suit their journals best and how reviewers and authors can judge a manuscript's readiness for publication in the journals.

After defining the purpose of scientific journals and the role of their editors, the book divides into two parts—editorial policies and editorial practices. In part one, DeBaKey explains guidelines for reviewers, the ethics of duplicate reviewing, multiple publication, bylines for assistants versus acknowledgment of their help, dating as an index of priority, advertisement, and the editor's mechanism for determining whether the research mentioned on humans and animals was based on ethical experimentation. Then DeBaKey distinguishes among policies for editorials, abstracts, transactions (proceedings, minutes, symposia papers), news items, solicited and remunerated manuscripts, letters to the editor criticizing articles in the same issue, and book reviews.

In part two, DeBaKey emphasizes the need for a journal to publish author's guidelines, explains copyright laws (including "fair use" in photocopying), and recommends placements of correction notices (errata). Elaborations follow on how references should be cited, who is responsible for their accuracy, what the copy editor does, what format an editor should choose (such as for the cover, masthead, and indexes), and how he can publish issues anticipating binding by volume.

The experience of Chairman DeBaKey and her seven collaborators on the Committee firmly supports these guidelines. DeBaKey is a professor of scientific communication at the Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, TX. All the committee members have doctoral degrees in medicine or philosophy and are editors of prestigious biological journals: F. Peter

Woodford, Paul F. Cranefield, Ayodhya P. Gupta, Franz J. Ingelfinger, Robert J. Levine, Robert H. Moser, and J. Roger Porter.

This book will help all editors of American scientific journals who want to clarify their editorial policies and practices. It points out those decisions which editors need to make. Finding all these topics within one volume is rare among writings on the preparation of scholarly journals. Moreover, the book presents various options for decision and the reasons behind each option.

For example, in chapter 10 on publication of dates for manuscripts as an index of priority, reasons are given for the editor to decide whether or not to accept the date of (1) the original idea, (2) the author's completion of his first definitive experiment, (3) the author's completion of his work, (4) circulation of his preprint to colleagues, (5) his letter of submission, (6) the letter's postmark, (7) the manuscript's arrival at the editorial office, (8) the manuscript's firm acceptance, (9) receipt of the revision, (10) receipt of the essentially acceptable version, (11) the version actually published, (12) changes made in proof, (13) addenda to the manuscript, (14) the cover of the journal issue with the published manuscript, (15) the actual publication date of the journal issue, or (16) the subscriber's receipt of the journal.

DeBaKey is thorough; her language is clear, direct, and grammatical; and her writing format is consistent. Her index is accurate for my two-percent sampling of 25 items. Only 15 cm × 23 cm, the book can be stashed on a shelf or in a drawer; its red cloth binding will catch the prospective reader's eye. The thick pages are obviously meant to hold up under constant rereading.

My only complaint is the small font. Probably the publisher hoped that the small font size would force the reader to slow down and think. But the even smaller font used for the appendix forces the reader to bend over and squint. This book's contents warrant more space. The revision would benefit by larger type.

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