

# ***Good Practice Guidelines on the Relationship Between the Royal College of Radiologists and the Editor, Clinical Radiology***

## ***Introduction***

The Editor of the College Journal *Clinical Radiology* has an important role in the Royal College of Radiologists (RCR) in underpinning education and research. In a recent review of the roles and responsibilities of Honorary Officers and College appointments, which came into effect with the revision of the College Charter and Regulations in 2002, the role of Editor was seen to require a degree of independence from College supervisory and administrative structures, and the Editor was no longer established as an Officer of the College, Officers being Trustees of the Charity. Following this decision, the framework for support, indemnity and governance issues is being developed. These guidelines are therefore intended to provide guidance about the relationships with the RCR and with the Publisher of the Journal, with a view to providing such a framework. The RCR aims to support the Editor in his/her role at all times, whilst recognising the necessity for editorial independence, and the requirement for communication with the Faculty of Clinical Radiology, usually through the Dean, in order to provide appropriate support for the proper operation of the Journal.

These guidelines are based in part on recommendations on good practice provided by organisations such as the Council of Science Editors and the World Association of Medical Editors.

## ***Background Information***

The Regulations of the College determine terms for the functions of the Editor and the Editorial Board (<http://www.rcr.ac.uk/index.asp?PageID=26#23>). The Editor is a UK College Fellow in good standing and is appointed by the Board of the Faculty of Clinical Radiology, under a process agreed by the Board in February 2003. He or she should report at least annually in writing and in person to the Board of the Faculty and should attend regularly. The Editor's period of office is for four College years, and in this instance will run from the AGM in September 2006 until the AGM in 2010.

## ***Editor's Remit***

The remit is as set out in the terms of reference for the Editorial Board.

## ***The Publisher***

*Clinical Radiology* is published by Elsevier Limited, under a contract with the RCR, which currently runs until December 2011. The Publisher of the Journal is responsible for presentation, positioning of the Journal in relation to other products or services, production and fulfilment. Under its contract with the RCR, the Publisher provides a financial contribution to the RCR towards the expenses incurred in running the Editorial Office of the Journal, and £2,500 for statistical review of manuscripts. The RCR reimburses direct travel expenses incurred by the Editor. No honorarium or other payments are made to the Editor. The RCRs' contract with the Publisher allows for renegotiation of the editorial expenses for the journal on replacement of the Editor.

## ***Review, Contact and Communication***

In addition to attendance at Faculty Board meetings and links with Special Interest Groups, the RCR will ensure that there is an open channel of communication between the Editor and the College. The Editor and the Dean of the Faculty of Clinical Radiology will meet at least once per year to generally discuss working relationships and to review these Editorial guidelines.

In the unlikely event that disagreements arise during the Editor's tenure, it is expected that these will be resolved between the Dean and the Editor. If disagreement or conflict cannot be solved by mutual agreement, the issues will be considered by the elected members of Faculty Board who will make recommendations for resolution. In exceptional circumstances, Faculty Board will have the right to determine that it is not in the best interests of the Editor, the Journal or the RCR for the Editor to remain in post.

## ***Demands on the Editor's Time and Support Provided***

It has previously been estimated that at least 2 sessions per week are required to fulfill the duties of Editor (with the introduction of electronic manuscript management it is less easy to determine the time needed for editorial duties on a "sessional" basis), but a significant time commitment will be necessary. The Editor is supported by an Editorial Assistant who runs the office functions, including the on-line submission arrangements, required for *Clinical Radiology*. Currently this is a service provided under contract arrangements to the College. The contract is overseen and regularly reviewed by a College senior manager.

## ***Risks and Liabilities***

The RCR is the owner of the trademark rights and copyright in and for the Journal and in its constituent articles in print and electronic forms. Under the RCRs' contract with the Publisher, each issue of the Journal includes a disclaimer to the effect that:

"to the extent permissible under applicable laws, no responsibility is assumed by Publisher nor by the College for any injury and/or damage to persons or property as a result of any actual or alleged libellous statements, infringement of intellectual property or privacy rights, or products liability, whether resulting from negligence or other use, or from any use or operation of any ideas, instructions, procedures, products or methods contained in the material therein."

The College's Charity Trustees' Indemnity and Professional Indemnity insurance provides cover to the Editor in relation to the Editor's liabilities, provided any act "is committed in good faith in connection with the College's business".

The Editor has personal responsibilities in relation to confidentiality and the Data Protection Act and must comply with the Data Protection Act 1998, and in particular Section 4, which covers data which might be given to the editor in whatever format (including images).

The Editor should not disclose confidential information unless authorised by the source of that information, or there are allegations of misconduct that require access to that confidential information for proper investigation, or the Editor is required by law to disclose that information.

Under the terms of the RCRs' contract with the Publisher, the Editor must formally give consent to the RCR for his/her personal data and photographic images to be supplied to the Publisher.

## ***General Editorial Responsibilities***

Both the RCR and the Publisher recognise the Journal's need to maintain the scientific integrity and accept the principle of editorial independence of the Editor. The Editor has total authority and accountability, on behalf of the RCR, for editorial content of the journal. The Editor is free to authorise publication of peer-reviewed and other appropriate research reports, as well as RCR news, appropriate advertising and other materials. He or she is expected to act professionally without prejudice or conflict of interest and to maintain professional autonomy associated with publication of peer-reviewed reports. The Editor should not allow his/her editorial judgement to be influenced by political, commercial and other considerations that are beyond the scope of each scientific report and analysis of possible impacts and applications. The Editor should not use confidential information for personal gain, and must take reasonable steps to ensure that such information is not used for the advantage of other parties. The Editor should inform the RCR and/or Publisher of any political, commercial or other concerns regarding potential conflicts of interest that could impair the scientific credibility of the publication, and take measures necessary to ensure that such incidents do not affect decisions, which s/he may be called upon to make.

The Editor should ensure that peer review and other related publication assignments are undertaken by qualified specialists as necessary, and that these specialists disclose conflicts of interest with any of the Editor, the submitting authors, the Publisher or the RCR. The Editor should work with the Publisher and RCR to ensure that services and products of contractors, vendors, and other commercial interests required for proper publication are selected on the basis of merit.

The Editor can be called upon to assist in the education and training of new editors and in processes to identify new publishers.