

The Royal Society of Biology

Research Communications Newsletter

A collection of online information and opinion pieces.

October 2024

This newsletter provides links to published news articles. Views or opinions presented are those of the original author(s) and do not necessarily represent the views of the Royal Society of Biology.

Royal Society of Biology news

[CEO of the Royal Society of Biology to retire](#)

Dr Mark Downs PhD DSc (Hon) CSci CBiol FRSB, Chief Executive of the Royal Society of Biology, has announced he will retire in September 2025.

[Royal Society of Biology launches digital series showcasing biosciences as key to sustainable future](#)

The Royal Society of Biology (RSB) has launched '[Biology for a Better Tomorrow](#)', a digital series produced in partnership with Content With Purpose (CWP). This series highlights the vital role of biosciences in tackling sustainability challenges through stories of innovative research and real-world solutions. With themes inspired by the UN Sustainable Development Goals, it features contributions from leading biologists and organisations. The series highlights how biology is driving progress in climate action, biodiversity, clean energy, and more while inspiring new generations to see biosciences as a force for change.

[The Royal Society of Biology Policy Resource Library online](#)

The Royal Society of Biology (RSB) has created a searchable, digital library of more than 800 statements, responses, briefings and other policy resources produced by the RSB and our Member Organisations across the biosciences. This collection is freely and openly accessible to everyone, including members and non-members, through the [mySociety portal](#) (no registration necessary).

Opportunities

[Editorial Board Member for the Journal of Biological Education](#)

The Royal Society of Biology seeks a new Editorial Board member for the Journal of Biological Education, with particular expertise in biological education within early years and/or primary education; informal learning; or medical education. In this voluntary role, the successful applicant(s) will manage submission and review of at least two manuscripts each month and make recommendations to the Editor-in-Chief regarding publication.

More information can be found [here](#). **Applications close at 23.59 on 15th November.**

[Series Editor for the Oxford Biology Primers series, Human Health and Disease](#)

The Royal Society of Biology seeks a new Series Editor for the Oxford Biology Primers series, with particular expertise in human health and disease. In this discretionary role, the successful applicant will determine the approach and coverage of the Human Health and Disease strand of the Oxford Biology Primer series, in collaboration with Oxford University Press. This will involve recommending and approaching authors to write content for the series and supporting them to develop proposals and manuscripts that reflect the aims of the series, with assistance from the Publisher. More information can be found [here](#). **Applications close at 23:59 on 15th November.**

[Higher Education Bioscience Teacher of the Year Award](#)

Now open for nominations, this award aims to identify the UK's leading bioscience higher education (HE) teachers, recognising the invaluable role they play in educating and inspiring the next generation of biologists. If you know a bioscience lecturer who deserves recognition for their passion and ideas, encourage them to submit an application this year. **Nominations close at 23:59 on 31st January 2025.**

[Royal Society of Biology travel grants](#)

AMRSB and early-career MRSB members of the Royal Society of Biology can now apply for a travel grant of up to £1,000 to support future travel in connection with biological study, teaching or research. Learn new lab and field techniques, gain professional development skills, and network with academics with the support of a travel grant. Visit the [website](#) for further information and to read reports from [previous grant recipients](#). **Applications close at 23:59 on 24th January 2025.**

Spotlight on open access

[cOAlition S announces the release of an independent study on the impact of Plan S](#)

cOAlition S has announced the release of an independent, comprehensive study assessing the impact of Plan S on the scholarly communication landscape five years after its launch.

Publication policy and debate

[Springer Nature hires new chief digital officer to 'drive AI and digital transformation'](#)

Springer Nature has created the new role of chief digital officer to "drive AI and digital transformation for [the] research community", reports The Bookseller. Saskia Steinacker will join Springer Nature from Bayer on 1st November 2024 in the newly created role. The company said this was the latest step in its "wider commitment to using sustainable and innovative technology to develop new products, platforms and services for the community".

International publishing

[Time for a major shakeup of how the EU funds research, expert group says](#)

A group of experts tasked with advising the European Commission on the next Framework Programme for research and innovation is recommending a major overhaul of EU funding instruments, reports Science Business.

[Open Access Partnerships Key to Increasing the Global Impact of African Research](#)

This theme was explored by leading librarians and researchers at recent 'Academic Allies' events, hosted in Johannesburg and Cape Town by Taylor & Francis, reports STM Publishing News. Delegates emphasised the particularly transformative effect of 'Read and Publish' OA agreements, which are now offering Southern African researchers increased visibility and influence on the global stage. 'Read and Publish' agreements enable institutions to cover the costs of OA publishing, allowing many more researchers to choose open access.

[The US is the world's science superpower — but for how long?](#)

This year's pivotal election will shape the future of US science, writes Nature News. Rising international competition and domestic concerns are also at play.

Metrics

[eLife to lose Impact Factor due to peer review change](#)

The independent, non-profit research journal eLife is to lose its Impact Factor, reports Research Professional News. In January 2023, eLife started publishing all the submitted papers it sent for review, rather than publishing only papers recommended for publication by reviewers. This includes papers judged inadequate or incomplete. At about the same time the eLife change came into effect, in response to such moves gaining momentum in academic publishing, Clarivate, the provider of the Web

of Science platform, said it would not provide Impact Factors to journals that publish papers not recommended for publication by reviewers. Nor would it index all such journals' content.

Publication ethics

[Journals with high rates of suspicious papers flagged by science-integrity start-up](#)

Which scientific publishers and journals are worst affected by fraudulent or dubious research papers, and which have done least to clean up their portfolio? A technology start-up founded to help publishers spot potentially problematic papers says that it has some answers, and has shared its early findings with Nature News. The science-integrity website Argos, which was launched in September by Scitility, a technology firm headquartered in Sparks, Nevada, gives papers a risk score on the basis of their authors' publication records, and on whether the paper heavily cites already-retracted research.

[Google Scholar is not broken \(yet\), but there are alternatives](#)

For many, Google Scholar has become a critical piece of research infrastructure. Yet, revelations in the manipulability of its metrics and its inclusion of AI generated papers have led some to ask, is it still functional? University of Nottingham Research Intelligence Librarian Kirsten Elliott argues on the LSE Impact Blog that rather than being broken, these issues reflect the limitations of any academic search tool, but for those done with the platform there are alternatives.

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