

## **Technical and Associate Editors** *ASA, CSSA, and SSSA Position Descriptions*

**Technical Editors.** For those journals that have them, technical editors work under the direction of the editor and are responsible for the technical and intellectual content of the journal in their assigned areas. They direct the work of assigned associate editors in reviewing and evaluating the worthiness of manuscripts submitted to the journal.

Technical editors also are responsible for taking an active interest in assisting the editor to define the journal's aims, policies, and editorial coverage, and in recruiting members for the editorial board.

Technical editors delegate to associate editors the responsibility of obtaining additional reviews from qualified peer scientists, working with papers to make needed revisions, and making the decision whether to accept or reject the paper. The technical editor oversees the work of the associate editors. The technical editor thus retains the overall responsibility for determining that in-depth and timely reviews are obtained from knowledgeable scientists and for maintaining the professional integrity of the review process.

**Associate Editors.** Under the direction of the editor or a technical editor (depending on the journal), associate editors are responsible for evaluating in a timely manner the technical and intellectual content and suitability of manuscripts assigned to them. Associate editors seek the services of qualified peer reviewers who may or may not be members of the same editorial board. The associate editor obtains at least two reviews for each paper, one of which would normally be done by the associate editor him/herself.

Editors or technical editors usually delegate to associate editors the responsibility of corresponding and working with authors to obtain revisions as needed. As such, associate editors are responsible for monitoring the status of a paper during review and revision, for ensuring that the journal's standards for timeliness are met for each manuscript, and for maintaining the professional integrity of the review process.

Associate editors recommend acceptance or release of manuscripts (to the editor or technical editor, depending on the structure of a particular editorial board). Depending on the structure of the board, associate editors may be authorized to accept papers for publication. In addition, associate editors assist the editor in defining the journal's aims, policies, and editorial coverage, and in recruiting members for the editorial board.

**Communications Editor.** The Communications Editor identifies key research and science concepts coming out of his/her journal that could be used to develop stories for Society magazines (*CSA News*, *Crops & Soils*, and *Soil Horizons*) and Society websites to help the Societies promote their sciences and the work of their members to broader audiences. The Communications Editor carefully monitors the papers coming into the journal and makes recommendations to the Headquarters staff as to which papers (or aspects of papers) could be promoted to various audiences (scientists, practitioners, policymakers, science journalists, and the general public). The Communications Editor helps staff understand what is new and novel about the research and how it may be of interest to broader audiences beyond journal readership.

### **Guidelines for Professional and Ethical Conduct of the Review Process of ASA, CSSA, and SSSA Journals**

Scientists agree that peer review is a cornerstone of scientific progress. As such, participating in the peer review process of ASA, CSSA, and SSSA journals is a privilege and a responsibility. A professional, objective, and thorough review process will benefit us as publishing researchers, improve the professionalism of our community, and enhance the quality of our published research. In agreeing to serve, one agrees to the following code of conduct, with the understanding that failure to serve in this capacity may lead to dismissal:

- I will take responsibility for understanding the function of my office and executing to the best of my ability all tasks that are within my area of responsibility.

- In my capacity I will work to maintain the integrity of the peer review process to ensure that the manuscript receives a thorough, quality review in accordance with the high scientific standards of the journal.
- I will handle my share of manuscripts, understanding that this is an obligation of the peer review process.
- I agree it is my responsibility to handle those manuscripts in the areas of my expertise and assist in finding persons qualified to handle papers in those areas outside my expertise.
- I will execute my role within the specified schedule of the journal, understanding that failure to do so would detract from the quality of the journal and retard the professional development of the authors affected by a delay.
- I will communicate with authors only in the capacity as defined by my role.
- I will communicate with authors in a respectful and professional manner, including substantiating comments with published sources and understanding that I represent the journal and the Society(ies) through my tone and attitude. I understand that criticism of a manuscript should not extend to personal criticism of the author(s).
- I will review each manuscript with impartiality, without regard to gender, race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, institutional affiliation, or other similar bias.
- I will evaluate manuscripts on the basis of scientific merit, with the understanding that there may be many acceptable ways to prove a hypothesis. I will respect the independence of authors and their creativity and understand that differences of opinion can be addressed in published comments within the journal as a forum for scientific debate.
- I will treat the manuscript in review as a confidential document, and neither disclose its contents outside the context of the review process, nor use its contents in my own work.
- I will avoid conflicts of interest and the appearance of conflicts of interest stemming from my relationship with the author or professional and financial circumstances that may bias my approach to a manuscript.