

A dynamic editorial board to bridge the gap between early career researchers and scientific publishing

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A new collaborative initiative between the European Physical Journal (EPJ), the European Physical Society (EPS), and the EPS Young Minds Programme (EPS-YM) aims at bridging the gap between early career researchers and the world of scientific publishing.

Early career researchers (ECRs) usually approach scientific publishing taking the role of authors. Indeed, it is common that their only interaction with journals is responding to the referees' comments and implementing the changes they suggest. Some years later (sometimes as senior PhD students, more often as postdocs) they may act as referees, which often opens up a new perspective to them on how publishing really works. However, the trajectory of an ECR in publishing often finishes here: editorial board positions and participation in other decision-making bodies are generally restricted to senior and well-established researchers. At this stage of their career, they usually have a lot more responsibilities and, without previous experience, they might not accept these relevant positions in journals, resulting in a critical knowledge gap in a key sector of the scientific endeavour.

To bridge this gap, EPS, EPJ and EPS-YM have launched a joint enterprise to renew the editorial board (EB) of the international peer reviewed open access journal EPJ Techniques and Instrumentations (EPJ T&I). The new editorial board will be composed of a combination of both early career researchers, serving as associate editors (AEs), and respected and highly experienced editors-in-chief (EiCs). The early career associate editors will be selected by the initiative stakeholders through an active open call available on the journal's webpage (deadline 1st August). Eligible candidates are either senior PhD students (in their third year or beyond) or postdoctoral researchers within six

years of receiving their PhD, not holding a permanent position. The selected associate editors will join the editorial board together with the newly appointed editors-in-chief: Giorgio Benedeck (Emeritus Professor at University of Milan Bicocca), Luisa Cifarelli (Emeritus Professor at University of Bologna), Antigone Marino (Researcher at National Research Council) and Günter Reiter (Professor at Freiburg University).

This initiative traces back to 2023, when the Action Committee of the EPS Young Minds Programme was invited to participate in the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) of EPJ with a talk on the perspective of early career researchers on scientific publishing (reported in EPN 54/3). That intervention was warmly received and, since that moment, the Young Minds Programme

was invited to have a permanent position in the SAC of EPJ. During the last two years, Young Minds has been intensively working alongside other SAC members and EPJ publishers, namely EDP Sciences, Italian Physical Society (SIF) and Springer-Nature, on a way to more effectively integrate ECRs in all the stages of scientific publishing.

EPJ T&I is a journal indexed in all major citation databases, including Web of Science, and being part of its editorial board is a great opportunity for professional development for ECRs. The journal publishes a broad range of articles related to novel experimental and computational techniques and methodologies, which means that early career scientists with an extremely wide range of research backgrounds can fit within the editorial board. Under the supervision of the EiC in charge of a submitted article, the early career associate editors will take the lead on handling the peer-review process for manuscripts in their respective fields, following the whole editorial cycle, from paper submission to its definitive publication in the journal. This includes selecting appropriate referees for the works in question, evaluating their reports, maintaining correspondence with the author and, finally, recommending publication decisions to the editor-in-chief. The position is remunerated and EPJ publishers will offer specialized training to the appointed associate editors to perform their duties.

The possibility of working under the guidance of experienced EiCs and as part of an international EB will not only expand the network of the involved ECRs, but will also foster the development of

▼ **FIG. 1:** EPJ T&I cover, an open access journal indexed in all major citation databases (2024 Journal Impact Factor: 1.9).





▲ FIG. 2: Last Joint Meeting of EPJ Steering Committee and SAC, held in May 2025 at Niels Bohr Institute, Copenhagen.

soft and technical skills necessary in their future career as researchers such as writing, organizational, and interpersonal abilities. Indeed, since established researchers are often asked to partake in the editorial effort, either as reviewers or as members of Editorial Board, this initiative kickstarts the inclusion of ECRs in this world.

In conclusion, this innovative project powered by EPS, EPS Young Minds and EPJ is an excellent opportunity for emerging scientists to engage directly with scientific publishing, contribute to the scientific community, and build editorial experience and might pave the way for more initiatives aiming at bridging the gap between the ECRs and senior positions in scientific publishing. ■

▼ FIG. 3: The EPS Young Minds representative at the EPJ SAC, Carlos Damián Rodríguez Fernández, presenting this project to their colleagues at the Copenhagen meeting.



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