



Manuscript transfer: practices and pitfalls

Kirsty McCormack

Publishing Services Manager

The Company of Biologists



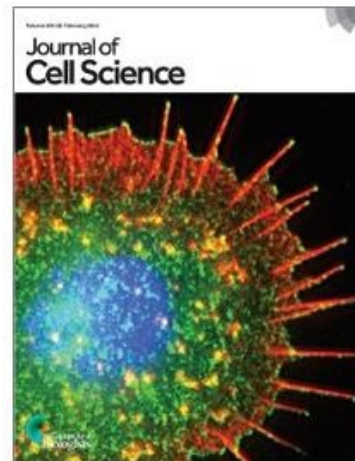
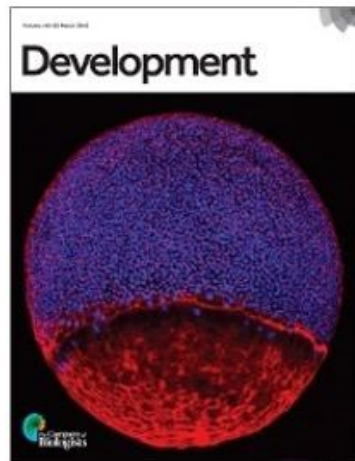
The Company of Biologists, Cambridge





About The Company of Biologists

Our journals



Transfer papers between preprint servers and journals

Journal-to-bioRxiv (J2B)

bioRxiv-to-journal (B2J)

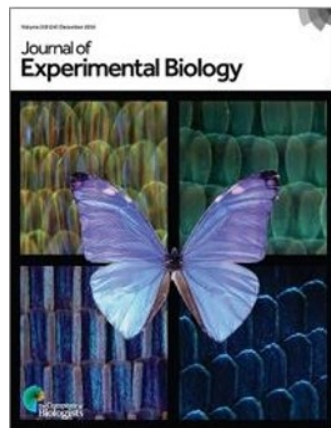
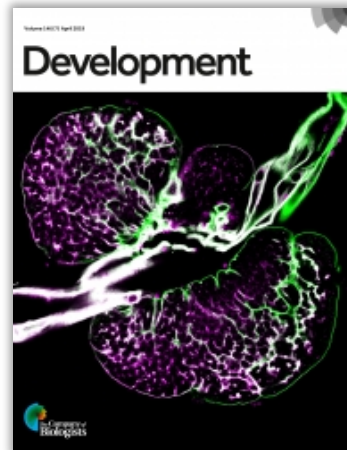
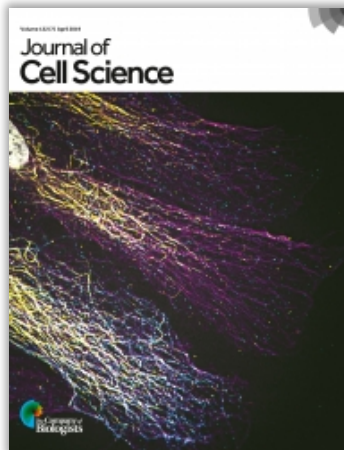


Now available using MECA





Internal transfers



- Decision letter
- Reviewer comments
- Response to reviews
- All versions

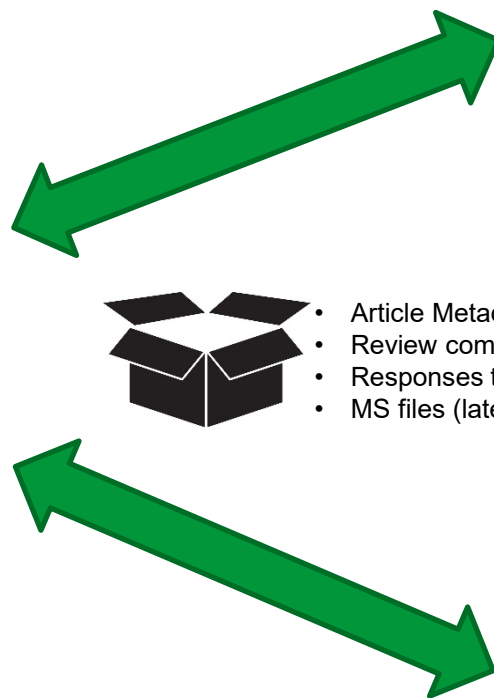




External transfer to other publishers

manuscript transfer

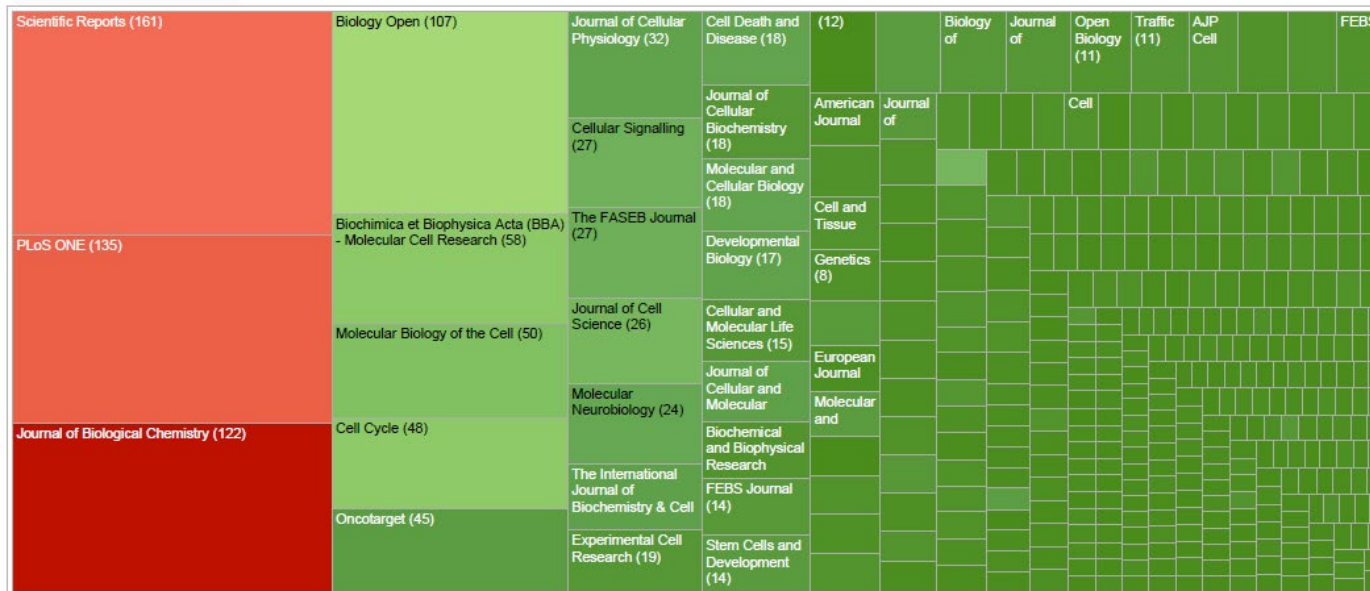
Journal of Cell Biology
Journal of Cell Science
Molecular Biology of the Cell



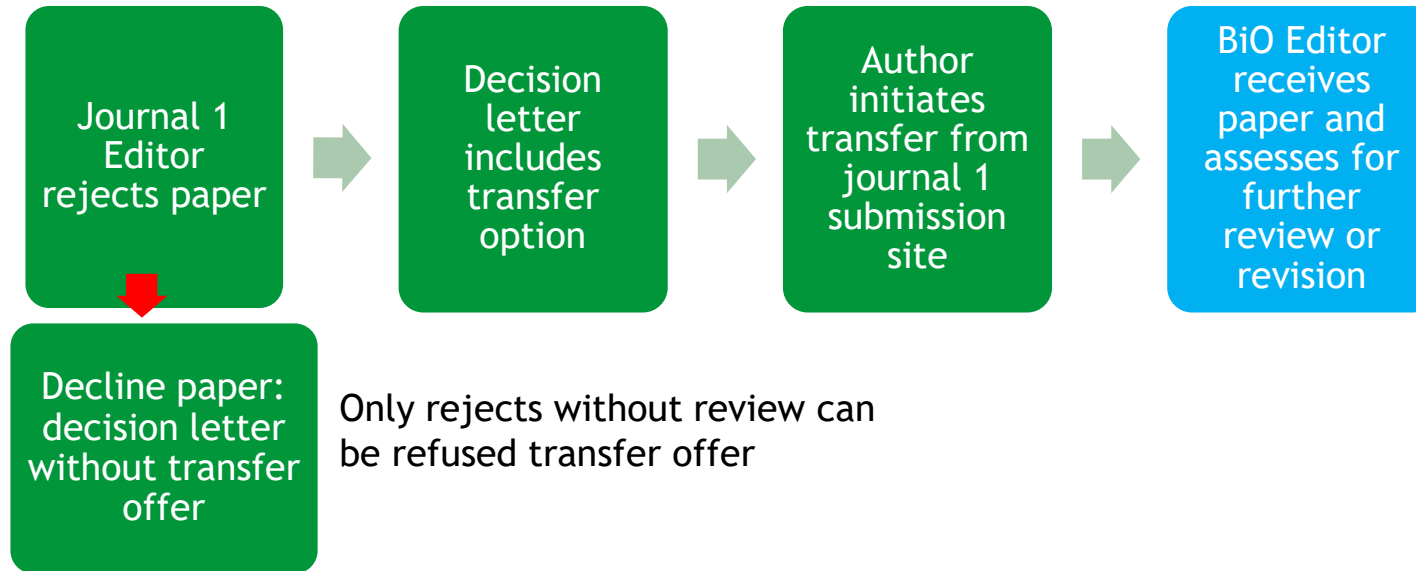


Why transfer?

- Reduce author pain to publish from multiple resubmissions (rejected papers are being transferred already via manual route)
- Limit reviewer fatigue
- Reduce time to publication from further rounds of review
- We reject a lot of good papers - have used Impact Vizor RAT to track



Internal workflow - transfer to Biology Open



Transfer to Biology Open

Although I do not find the paper well suited to Development, you may wish to consider transferring your article to [Biology Open](#) (BiO), the online-only Open Access journal from the same stable of journals as Development, for editorial review. The Editors of BiO make their editorial decisions independently of Development and the criteria for acceptance are very different. The quick decision time might be an incentive if timely publication is now a factor. For more information about transferring your paper from Development to Biology Open, please click [here](#).

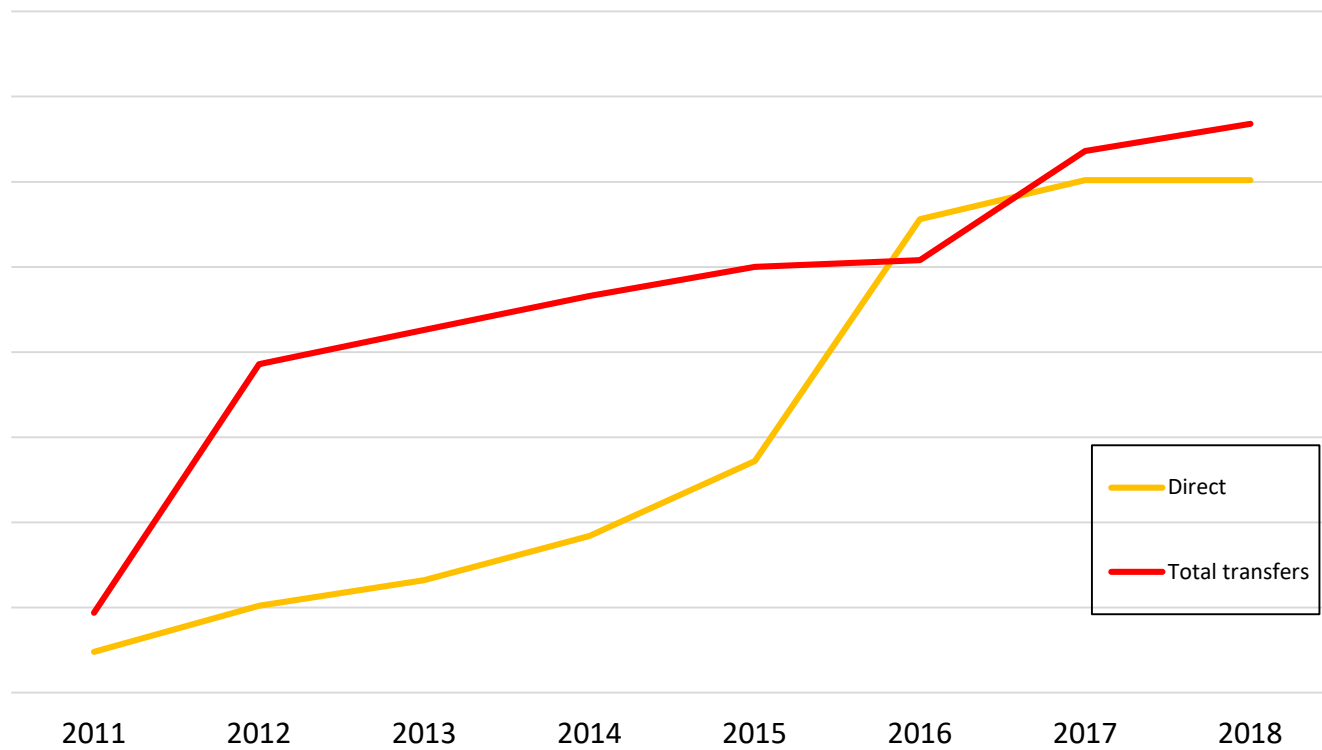
To request transfer to Biology Open, please reply to this email or click on the link below and select the Accept transfer link.

Note that only the corresponding author can approve article transfer.

https://submit-dev.biologists.org/submission/queue?queueName=portal_delivery_waiting_author



BiO transfers vs direct submissions





How to improve transfer uptake

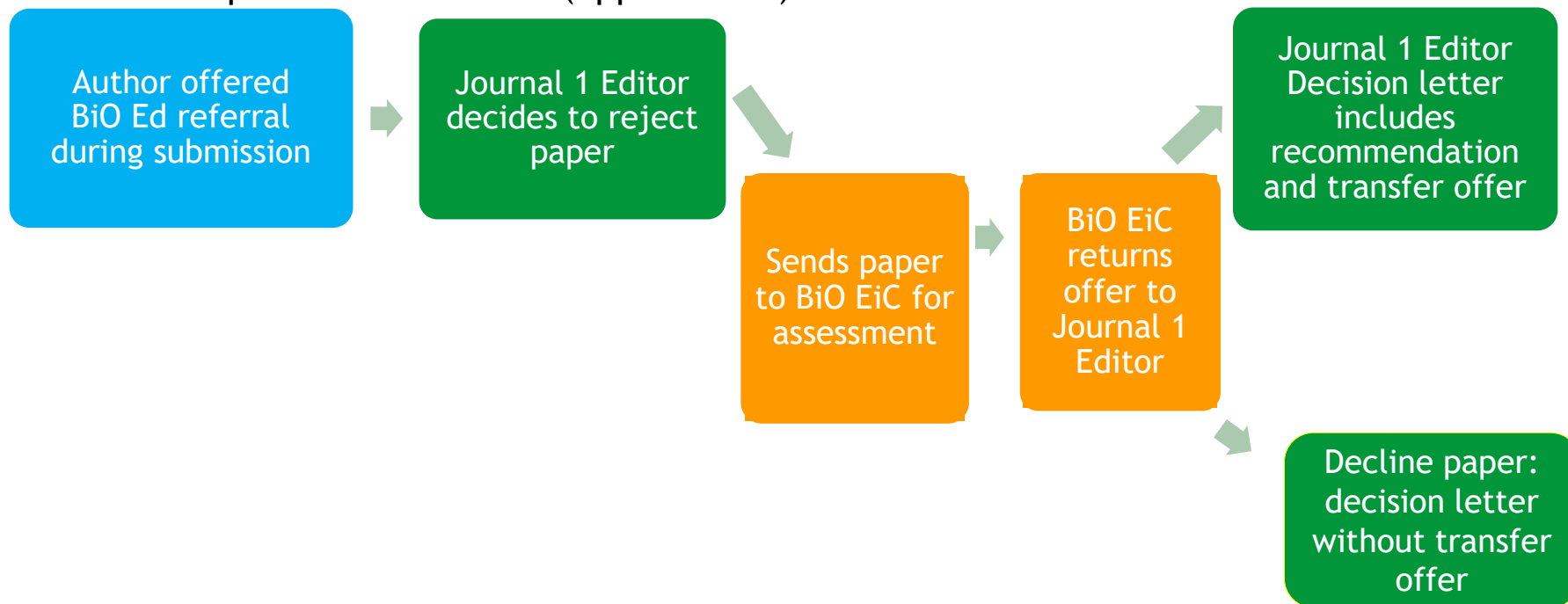
- Marketing to authors to increase awareness of journal and transfer option
- Provide guarantee of peer review on BiO for papers rejected before review (usually out of scope) - too many poor papers were transferred
- Reduce APCs??
- Improved messaging around revision submissions - authors were keen to revise their paper before transfer



Internal transfer with Editor Predecision

In April, introduced editorial consultations for manuscripts rejected after review: BiO EiC provides authors with a decision in advance of transfer

Authors can opt-out and most do (approx. 60%)

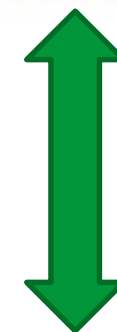
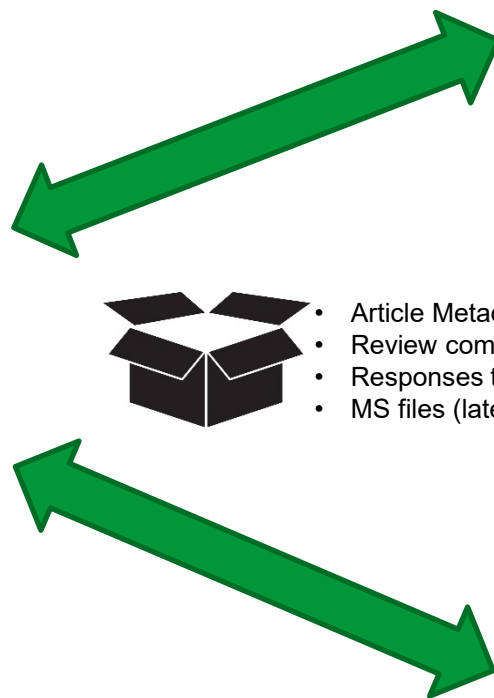




External transfer to other publishers

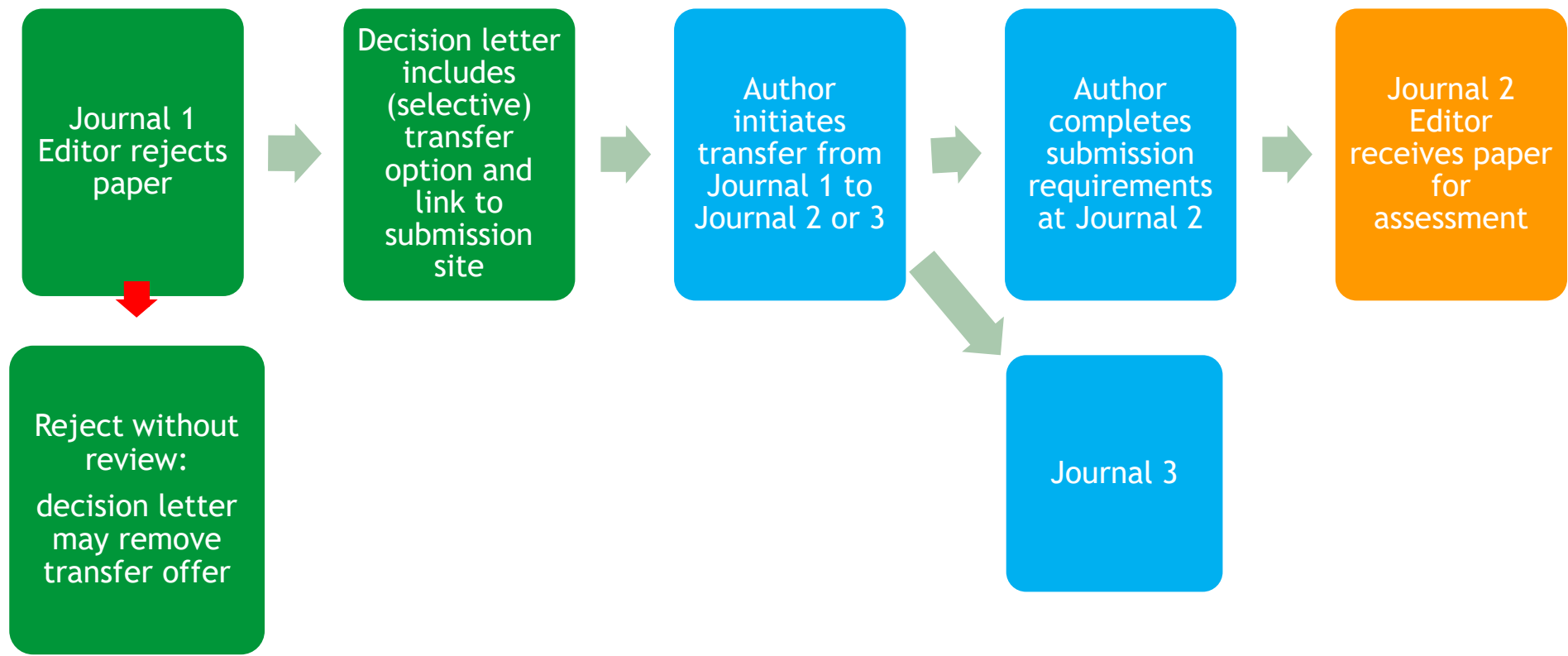
manuscript transfer

Journal of Cell Biology
Journal of Cell Science
Molecular Biology of the Cell





External transfer workflow





What is transferred?

Internal transfer

- If journals use same submission system, files and JATS metadata can be transferred easily
- Standardize submission questions where appropriate to allow data matching

External transfer

- Author metadata - author names, affiliations, email addresses, ORCID, CRediT
- Manuscript metadata - journal name, article type, title, key words, abstract
- Cover letter
- Submission questions e.g. funding, conflict of interest, open access
- Reviewer comments to author - all versions; and reviewer identities where consent given
- Author response to reviewers
- Files: manuscript, figures, converted PDF, supp data (most-recent versions)
- Final decision letters (including name of Handling Editor)

Authors can update any the above, and complete additional Qs before approving submission to the next journal

****JATS DTD/tagging must match for each element****



GDPR

Internal transfer

- Easier - covered by publisher privacy policy
- Reviewer identities can be shared with other journals within the company
Provide clear information to reviewers; can decline review if any objections

External transfer

- Author personal data is shared with another publisher
- Data may be transferred outside European Economic Area
- Update Privacy Policy to include manuscript transfer process
- Include details of what data is shared, in decision letter and at point of transfer approval
- Reviewer personal data may be shared - name, institute, email address
- Add checkbox for reviewers to consent to their names being shared with Editors

(Reviewers are always anonymous to the authors and other reviewers unless they choose to sign their report)



Which manuscripts are eligible for transfer?

Internal transfer: High-quality specialist journals to lower impact archival journal = 1 route

Filter by article type e.g. research, not reviews

Rejects before or after review: before review, Editor decides whether paper is suitable;
after review, all papers receive transfer option

External transfer: larger networks may include horizontal and vertical transfers

Editors may wish to avoid perception of journal hierarchy?

Allow authors choice or provide Editor recommendation?

Allow selection by topic or scope?

Selective transfer is more complicated for Editors as more choice:

Editorial rejects with or without review:

- with transfer to A + B + C or A + B or B + C or A + C

Each transfer offer requires different email text



Transfer considerations

- **When is transfer available?** Transfer within 1 month, 1 year, or leave open?
How long are manuscript files available for rejected papers?
Do you send authors a reminder if they haven't initiated transfer?
- **Can authors revise manuscript before transfer?**
- **Who can approve transfer?** Accidental transfers ! Limit to corresponding author only
- **Ensure authors cannot deliver the same ms to more than one journal**
- **Formatting requirements:** allow format-neutral submissions
- **Check file-size restrictions for all parties** - different limits may apply
- **Delivery/Ingest notifications** - who needs to know?



Reporting

- Numbers of papers delivered/ingested
- Originating journal of transfers
- Date of transfer
- Editorial outcomes for transfers - % acceptance
- % Peer reviewed again
- Speed to decision
- Survey authors who did/not transfer



Allow time for legal agreements

- Term/termination
- Editorial process (format-free submissions; minimum no. of reviews)
- Fee structure for transfers
- Data protection



Have transfers met our expectations?

- ✓✓✓ Reduce time to publication - difficult to be quick with peer review but quick with articles transferred with reviews
- ✓✓ Reduce author pain to publish - many authors choose to transfer
- ✓ Limit reviewer fatigue - has reduced the number of rounds of review for papers transferred with reviews

Still experimenting: encouraging more transfer of rejects after review (Predecision)
considering reducing APCs for articles transferred after review



Thank you for listening!

Any questions?