

Guidelines for Organizing *Interpretation* Special Sections

24 May 2016

How to Organize a Special Section

- Complete a “[Call for Papers](#)” form
 - Brief title
 - Short paragraph introduction
 - A few bullet points defining the scope
 - List of candidates for co-editors
- Recruit co-editors
 - The co-editors’ primary responsibility is to invite authors to contribute to the special section. Editorial invitations have been key to the successful special sections.
 - Co-editors serve as Associate Editors (or AE) in peer review.
- Serve as Assistant Editor (or ASE) in peer review
- Write a brief introduction piece for the publication of the special section.
 - In addition to introducing the special section, the short piece to be authored by the organizer and co-editors also serves as a way of acknowledging their contributions.
 - The introduction includes two-sentence summaries collected from the authors.

Special-section editor responsibilities

- Inviting authors to contribute to the special section. This is the most important responsibility.
 - As soon as the call for papers is published, the editor should start inviting authors, the earlier the better so the authors have enough time to develop their papers by the submission deadline. Technical luncheons, workshops, conferences, project meetings, and workplace are good places to extend an informal invitation.
 - Personalized author invitations is the most effective way of generating submissions. Individuals are less obligated to reply to group emails and are less likely to use a group email to seek permission for publication.
 - The month of the first announcement is critical for inviting authors or they will not have enough time to seek permissions and develop a paper.
 - An inviting editor has some flexibility in extending the submission deadline. The system allows late submissions without need of intervention. The actual amount of small extension is between the authors and the organizer/editor with one caveat: The time from initial submission deadline to the final review completion is fixed, roughly 5 months. This is adequate for a one-pass review-revision of most, but not all, papers submitted on time. (The median full-review turnaround is two months. We give two months for a moderate revision.) We usually have to rush a little bit for papers that take two passes of review or require a non-minor revision. Papers are not reviewed in time for the targeted special sections will be considered as general technical papers for later issues. When you consider giving a small extension to an individual author, ask for a target submission date. Both authors and authors' management approving the submission need a deadline or there will not be a submission.
- Serving as the Associate Editor(AE) in peer review of manuscripts.
 - When the papers are submitted, 5~6 months from the initial call for paper (a few days around the submission deadline), Barbara Cartwright at the SEG will assign the papers to Assistant Editor (ASE). The ASE distributes the papers among the coeditors (Associate Editors, AEs). Each AE gets a few papers if the section is very successful – not a heavy editorial load for a half-year period. (A GEOPHYSICS AE can handle 12 papers a year.) Barbara also assigns AE if the author of a paper mentions the inviting editor. So a co-editor may not have any papers to edit if no author mentions the editor as the inviting editor when submitting the paper. You team do not have to worry about any reviewers at this point. The AE invites reviewers specifically for each paper based the subject area of the paper.”

Special Section Roles

Manuscript
assignment sequence

Author



Staff



Assistant Editor
(ASE)



Associate Editor (AE)



Reviewers (SMEs)

The special section **organizer**

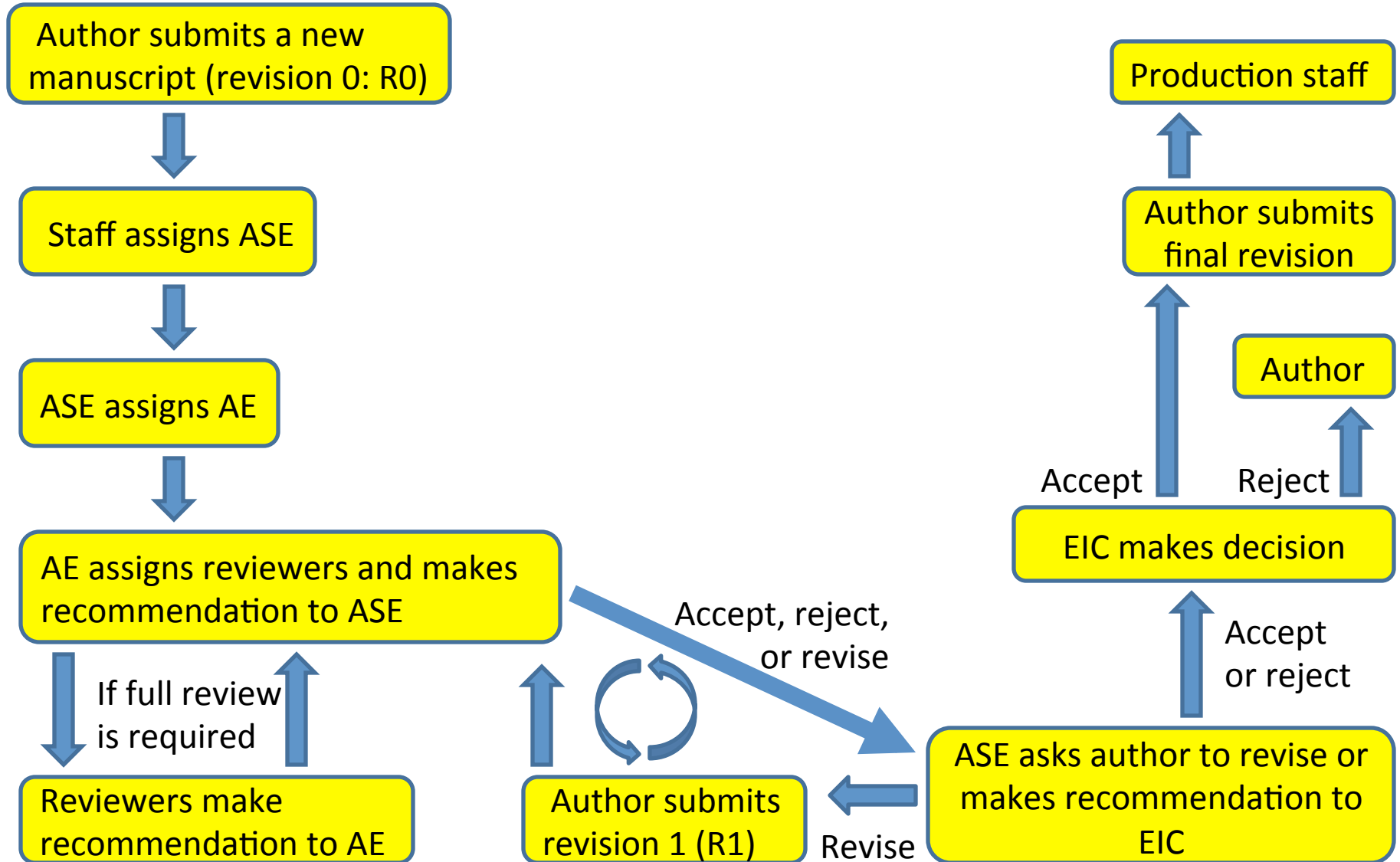
1. recruits a team of **editors** and
2. serves as the ASE and the lead editor of the special section.



A special section **editor**

1. recruits authors and
2. serves as an AE (recruiting reviewers) for submitted papers.

Manuscript Review Flowchart



Writing the Introduction to the Special Section

- Two months before the schedule issue of the special section, the editors are asked to write an introduction for the special section. This serves two purposes: providing opportunity for the editors as technical experts to share their wisdom/insights on the topic and giving credit to editors who makes the special section possible. There is not a rigid format or length restrictions. The technical content should be introductory and tutorial in nature.
 - The SEG collects two-sentence summaries from the authors and provide them to the editors for inclusion when requesting the introduction.
 - Although the editors can suggest “the order for reading the papers” in the special section, it is not practical for the editors to decide the order of the publication online or in print. (See next slide for the explanations.) The papers are published online as soon as they accepted and produced. The order in print are the same as online because the page numbers are used in reference citations and thus must be the same online and in print. This should not prevent the editors discussing the papers in any order or grouping the papers by subtopics
- Here are examples from the first issues. You are welcome to explore new ways of write an informative and effective introductory piece of any reasonable length.
 - Stratigraphy:
 - Introduction: <http://library.seg.org/doi/abs/10.1190/INT2013-0614-SPSEIN.1>
 - Introductory or tutorial paper (submitted and peer reviewed early, before the section closes, like other papers) <http://library.seg.org/doi/abs/10.1190/INT-2013-0049.1>
 - Unconventional resources:
 - <http://library.seg.org/doi/abs/10.1190/INT2013-0930-SPSEIN.1>
 - Attributes:
 - <http://library.seg.org/doi/abs/10.1190/INT2013-1218-SPSEINTRO.1>

Can organizer/editors of a special section decide the order of papers in printed issues of the journal? (No)

- The time span between the initial call for the papers and the review completion of a special section is typically 10 months. Reviews of some papers take as little as a few weeks and the review for some may not complete by the final review deadline. The time difference between the early and late acceptance can easily range 3~6 months. The papers are published online as they are produced, without waiting for other papers.
- The benefit of timely publication of accepted papers and a streamline staff workflow outweigh the benefit of ordering papers (online or in print) in a special section. Here are a few factors:
 - • Ordering papers would mean that no papers in the special section can be published online until all the papers in the section are accepted.
 - • Buffering the papers for ordering would create uneven work load for the production staff.
 - • The publication of the entire section might be held off by tardy authors or non-performing AEs.
 - The authors of different papers in the same issue usually do not coordinate the content of their papers. Coordination among authors is also impractical because the acceptance of the papers is decided by the reviewers and editors, not by authors. Except for multi-part papers, the content of the papers should not depend on that of other papers in the same issue. So benefit of ordering the papers should not be critical.
 - The organizer/editor can suggest order of reading the papers in the introduction.

Statistics for special sections (first 4 issues)

- Stratigraphy: 3 editors, 13 submissions, 8 accepted
- Unconventional resources: 4 editors, 23 submitted, 10 accepted
- Attributes: 7 editors, 25 submitted, 17 accepted
- Pore pressure: 3 editors, 7 accepted
- AVO: 7 editors, 6 accepted
- Well-tie: 4 editors, 3 accepted
- Multi-component: 10 editors, 12 accepted

Papers not reviewed in time to be included in a special will be considered for publication in a later issue as general technical submissions. Some topics above such attributes and unconventional resources are topics of broad appeal and thus received large number of submissions. Some topics are more specialized with only a small number of submissions.

Interpretation web pages

- INTERPRETATION home page
 - <https://library.seg.org/journal/inteio>
- Special sections
 - <https://library.seg.org/INT-special-sections>
- Tutorial for Associate Editors
 - <https://library.seg.org/INT-AE-tutorial>
- Tutorial for Assistant Editors
 - <https://library.seg.org/INT-ASE-tutorial>
- Information for authors
 - <https://library.seg.org/INT-instructions>
- Online submission
 - <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/interpretation>
- Manuscript template
 - <https://library.seg.org/INT-ms-template>