

1. Why should journals certify editors?

a. Ensure standard quality input to the journal

The language and tone can be standardized by sharing a common understanding of these aspects with the certified editors. Thus, all articles in the journals will reflect a standard quality.

If the language quality of the manuscript is good, it will save the peer reviewer the time and effort spent in pointing out such errors.

b. Improve manuscript processing speed

Since the editing quality is certified, there is a minimal chance of the peer reviewer or editor sending the manuscript back to the author to improve language. Delays in sending manuscripts for peer review can be avoided.

c. Support new authors

New authors typically search for editing services on the Internet or seek a word-of-mouth referral. Often, they may not have the time or know-how to assess an editor's skill and as a result are not able to select a good editor.

Thus, they will appreciate such assistance from journals.

d. Correct application of house style

This could have two implications: the editor knows what the typesetter will fix or change and will not waste time on it, or the editor can fix it and the typesetter's time can be saved. Preparing a set of documents on this will help in the long-term.

2. How to certify editors

a. Do they have a good combination of English language skills and subject matter expertise?

Check if they have corrected the grammar and punctuation, queried the author in case of ambiguous text or poor logic, applied the correct format to scientific text, and most importantly improved readability by eliminating wordy writing while retaining the original meaning—a difficult act to balance, but a mark of the best!

b. Is their quality good and consistent?

The best way to ascertain quality is to do a blinded sampling. That is, approach the editor(s) as an individual and not an institution. You can then judge their output in an unbiased manner.

c. Are they knowledgeable about the style and tone followed in your field of research?

Quiz them on their knowledge of existing style guides and what they follow or recommend for a subject. Look for such information on their website or in their service description.

d. What kind of an editing process do they employ?

Ask them how they manage the editing process. It's important to partner with an editor who shares a similar commitment to quality, not merely in thought, but in action too.

e. Are their services reliable and sustainable?

Since you are recommending them to your authors, it's important for you to be sure of the reliability of their services. That is, their ability to meet deadlines, experience in the business, association with clients or journals, and market reputation are some indicators of reliability. Think about whether establishing a long-term relationship with them seems possible because you wouldn't want to keep changing this list on your website too frequently.

3. Who should edit your journal?

The parameters listed in the table will help you to compare the type of editing solution you want to adopt (that is, internal vs. external). You can also use the table to evaluate an editor for certification.

Note: While it is simple to evaluate an in-house editing team and an external editing company, the assessment of freelancers varies a lot based on their skill, subject area knowledge, experience in editing, etc. Therefore, it is difficult to present a general evaluation as done for the other two options. You could evaluate freelancers using the parameters listed below.

	Internal	External	
	In-house editors	Freelance editors	Professional editing company
<i>Allows for good control over quality</i>	√		√
<i>Is reliable</i>	√		√
<i>Is economical</i>	x		√
<i>Offers good TAT</i>	x		√
<i>International exposure</i>	x		√
<i>Skill/subject expertise</i>	√		√
<i>Process flexibility</i>	√		x
<i>Journal resource involvement</i>	√		√

To maximize the benefits of editing, journals also need to share their goals and expectations.

Clarify the desired quality output

Share samples of desired quality output. Ask the editor to recommend ways in which that level of readability and quality can be achieved. Send the editor a few random manuscripts; they can assess the quality of the author's writing. It will also help to share with them referee comments on language or other presentation issues. They can edit accordingly.

Share your house style in detail

Similarly, specifics of house style should be shared in detail; this includes not only the information present in the author guidelines but also styles and formats that the typesetter applies. This could have two implications: the editor knows what the typesetter will fix or change and will not waste time on it; or the editor can fix it and then the typesetter's time can be saved. Preparing a set of documents on this will help in the long term.

Well-established editing professionals could also help you prepare two kinds of checklists: one for the editing process and another for the typesetting process.