



Guidelines for Focus Issues in ECS Journals Structure, Oversight, and Procedures (as of 28 November 2018)

ECS is publishing focus issues in its archival journals in order to:

- call attention to and stake claims for content that is within the Society's technical domain, and
- attract new as well as established authors not currently publishing in, or reviewing for, ECS journals, nor participating in the Society's meetings.

Focus issues are expected to highlight scientific and technological areas of current interest and future promise where a field is expanding rapidly or has taken a new direction. These are areas in which ECS divisions are already, or are becoming, engaged. Focus issues therefore lead to more recognition of, and advertisement for, divisions, and thus improve already-strong symposia and Society meetings.

The total number of issues published in a volume must be decided each year by about April for the upcoming subscription year because libraries (for cataloging purposes) must know the number of issues they are acquiring with their subscription. The ECS staff will work with the editors on determining the number of issues and on scheduling the issues. The editors, technical editors (TEs), and guest editors must commit to the timetable defined for the publication date of the focus issue.

Identification of Topics

Topics proposed must be within the scope of ECS content, including new areas where the Society's constituency can have substantial impact. Specifically, the topics must be of current—and especially future—scientific or technological significance.

Technical editors are expected to generate ideas for focus issues covering their respective topical interest areas (TIAs), and should be active in soliciting ideas from symposium organizers, divisional leadership, and others who are active in their field but have not yet become active in ECS. Other possible sources are the guest editors and authors of special issues of *Interface*.

Best Practice:
Encourage ECS divisions and symposia organizers to identify topics for focus issues.

Proposals can originate from any member of ECS or nonmember, and are especially encouraged from the ECS divisions and from organizers of symposia that are sponsored or cosponsored by ECS. Ideas may also be brought to the relevant division or divisions, which can then offer guidance and assistance in developing the specific content to be included. It is hoped that symposium organizers for similar or related topics will be particularly active in this regard.

Proposal Formation

Ideas/proposals should be brought to the relevant TE in the appropriate TIA, or to the editor.

In order for ECS staff to coordinate a production schedule for the upcoming volume year, it is recommended that proposals be submitted to ECS by the spring biannual meeting. Those wishing to propose a focus issue must submit the ECS focus issue request form (https://www.electrochem.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/ecs_focus_issues_request_form.pdf). Proposals should contain:

1. a description of the specific topic,
2. the suggested guest editor(s) for the issue,
3. justification of the topic vis-à-vis the ECS technical domain and its timeliness/criticality,
4. a preliminary list of potential authors and general manuscript titles, with at least one review paper and one perspective paper identified, and
5. an estimated timeline for the call for papers and submission deadline.

Focus issues do not have to be constrained to one TIA. In cases where the focus issue crosses TIAs, the content is published in the cross disciplinary section. However, a focus issue must be constrained to a single journal. ECS is not able to publish cross-journal focus issues.

TEs will discuss proposals with the editor of their respective journal to ensure that the topic meets the scope of the ECS TIAs and that the proposed authors and guest editors meet the standards of quality found in the Society's journals. TEs and the editors may review the proposals with other TEs as needed. Feedback may be given to the proposer in a request for further refinement of the proposal.

Evaluation Procedures

After acceptance of the proposal, the guest editor(s) will supply a write-up describing the scope of the specific focus issue so that manuscripts in this area can be solicited from the scientific and technical community. The write-up will be reviewed by the journal editor and TE and upon their approval will be formatted into the call for papers.

Final selection of papers to be included in the focus issue rests with the TEs and associate editors, in consultation with the guest editor(s). The TE is responsible for deciding if a paper is out of scope for a focus issue. In such a case, based on the TE's decision, staff may contact the author to offer the option for publication in a regular issue of JES or JSS. Alternatively, the author may decide to completely withdraw the submission. On the other hand, a TE may see a paper submitted to a regular issue of the journal that is within the scope of a focus issue, in which case the author would be contacted with the offer to move the paper into the focus issue. In both cases, it is important that ECS staff be notified immediately so they can contact the authors and no time is lost.

It is expected that focus issues will have a minimum of 12 papers. It is highly recommended to have confirmation from at least 15 authors who will submit to the issue. Because of the continuous publication process at ECS, it is critical to determine whether or not there will be enough papers for a focus issue *before the first paper is accepted*. ECS publishes a paper as soon as it is ready and does not wait for an entire issue to be completed. Once the first paper of a focus issue is published, there is the expectation that the issue will have the minimum 12 papers in it and the editors/guest editors will be committed to obtaining that minimum.

Best Practice:
*Line up at least
15 authors who
agree to submit
to the issue.*

Guest Editor Responsibilities

The guest editors will be responsible for identifying potential authors and focus issue content to ensure appropriate coverage of the topic, reviewing manuscripts, promoting the focus issue, and assisting in the drafting of the preface to the focus issue.

Guest editors will act as dedicated reviewers for papers submitted to focus issues. Guest editors will *not* act in the same capacity as associate editors within the manuscript submission/review system (Exp). They will *not* assign reviewers directly, nor make final decisions on submitted manuscripts.

Promotion

ECS will promote focus issues in various ways. One way is through a series of emails. The first email will be the initial call for papers and will be sent to either the entire ECS constituent database or to a select group as per the accepted proposal. The second email may be a final call for papers or may be a message to say the deadline has been extended, depending on the need. A third email may be sent as a final call for papers if needed.

The focus issue information will be included on the overall focus issues page of the ECS publications site (<https://www.electrochem.org/publications/focus-issues>). Plus, a page will be created for the call for papers for each specific focus issue (e.g., <https://www.electrochem.org/publications/cfp-gallium>).

A full-page flyer will be created for each focus issue. These flyers will be displayed at ECS biannual meetings, ECS-sponsored meetings, and other industry-related meetings. The flyers will be

provided as electronic (PDF) files to the issue editors for promotion as they see fit.

Each weekly ECS eNews email sent will include links to the calls for papers for focus issues open for submissions. Once a focus issue is completed, the eNews may include an item about the issue with links to a related ECS Redcat Blog post and/or to the online table of contents. Monthly student eNews emails may also contain links and/or information about focus issues. The ECS Digital Library weekly digest emails, specific to each TIA, may include mentions of the focus issues and links to the calls for papers and/or to the online table of contents.

ECS may promote focus issues related to specific symposia utilizing the communications sent to meeting presenters.

ECS may run banner ads in the digital library or use the ECS slide carousels on pages on its corporate site (www.electrochem.org and www.electrochem.org/publications) to promote focus issues.

Best Practice:
Promote focus issues by including links to calls for papers and/or tables of contents in one's email signature.

Each issue of *Interface* includes a Focus on Focus Issues write-up that highlights recently published issues, issues currently in production, issues that are open for submissions, and issues that are coming soon. The write-up includes a link to the overall focus issues page on the ECS publications site (<https://www.electrochem.org/publications/focus-issues>).

It is highly recommended that the guest editors include a message and/or links to the calls for papers and/or table of contents in their own email signatures in addition to any other promotion they do.

Reviewing

Manuscripts submitted to a focus issue will undergo the Society's standard, rigorous, peer review process. Guest editors should be highly involved in the process, reviewing manuscripts themselves or recommending reviewers to assist with the process.

It is a best practice to use the Minor Revisions Only letter template in the ExP system regardless of the level of revisions requested. This letter specifies a two-week time frame for revisions, which is necessary to ensure focus issue papers meet the final decision deadline.

If a manuscript has been submitted by one of the guest editors, TEs must evaluate each situation with respect to how the review can be handled most effectively and appropriately considering the authors of the submission. TEs are responsible for ensuring quality and unbiased reviews, and this is especially the case when a guest editor is an author. For example, if a paper for a focus issue has been written by one of the guest editors, it is recommended that, if at all possible, the review should be handled by the TE, not another guest editor. If the TE submits a paper, the review can be handled by an associate editor in the related TIA, or, in the case where there is no associate editor, then either a different TE or the journal editor.

Best Practice:
Use the Minor Revisions Only decision letter in ExP.

Production and Publishing Procedures

The issue dates for focus issues must be chosen carefully, as ECS must hold very firmly to a deadline for the TEs to complete the final acceptance of all the manuscripts that will go into the focus issue. Due to the nature of how journal issues are numbered, there will be no option to delay the focus issue. If ECS fails to meet that deadline, there will be serious consequences for the year's issue schedule, indexing, and the journal's lagtime.

Staff will work closely with the editors to put together a working schedule. The call for papers is usually sent out 90 days in advance of the advertised/"soft" submission deadline. The actual/"hard" deadline is set a month and a half after the soft deadline and is not generally advertised, except in cases where it is publicized as an extended deadline, recognizing that authors often request deadline extensions. The final acceptance deadline is set about 3 months after the hard submission deadline; this deadline cannot be changed once it is set. The total time it takes from initial call for papers to final paper published is about 8 and a half months. The dates chosen for sending the calls for papers must be strictly adhered to because there is very little flexibility in the ECS communication schedule. Once a focus issue

is in production, ECS staff sends out weekly status emails to the TE and guest editors of the issue.

A focus issue will be built online in the same manner as all other issues, that is, article-by-article through the continuous publication production process. As soon as the first article is accepted for the focus issue, that article will be put into production and, when ready for publication, the issue will open online in the ECS Digital Library. Immediately upon publication each paper is fully citable with volume, issue, and final page numbers that are not subject to change later. The standard lagtime from acceptance to publication in an ECS journal is 10 days or less. The issue will remain open until the last paper accepted by the final decision deadline is published. Preceding and subsequent issues can be open online at the same time as the focus issue.

Best Practice:
Be mindful of the deadlines, especially the final acceptance deadline.

Pages in the focus issue will use the same alphanumeric page numbering associated with the TIA section under which the focus issue falls. In order to avoid duplicate page numbers in any one volume, the focus issues will begin on page A5001, B3001, or C3001, etc., depending on the section.

As part of the journal submission process, authors must indicate when they submit to a focus issue. TEs may suggest a submission be moved either into a focus issue or out of a focus issue, but the decision resides with the author. In either case, staff must be notified as soon as possible of the potential for moving a paper into or out of a focus issue.

Best Practice:
Notify ECS staff promptly if a paper should be moved into or out of a focus issue.

Each focus issue must include a preface/introduction written by the TE and/or guest editor(s).

Scheduling Focus Issues

There should be no more than 6 focus issues in a volume of either JES or JSS. If the volume is going to have 6 focus issues, then there will be 10 regular issues for a total of 16 issues (10 regular/6 focus). If there will be 5 focus issues, then there will be 9 regular issues in the volume for a total of 14 issues (9 regular/5 focus). If there will be 4 focus issues, then there will be either 14 or 12 total issues in the volume depending on the journal: JES will have 10 regular issues and 4 focus issues for a total of 14 issues; JSS will have 8 regular issues and 4 focus issues for a total of 12 issues. If there will be 3 or fewer focus issues in a volume of either JES or JSS, then there will be a total of 12 issues in the volume.

Division Revenue Sharing

For a division to receive revenue from a focus issue, a number of contributions are required. Specifically, the division must:

- Provide the name of at least one potential guest editor who will be actively involved in the issue. That guest editor should be indicated on the focus issue application form.
- Provide a minimum of 5 authors who have committed to providing manuscripts, which end up being published in the focus issue.
- Provide a minimum of 5 people who will serve as peer reviewers for the issue.
- Ensure that the guest editors the division recommends meet the deadlines, including submission, review period, etc.
- Work with the guest editors to ensure that at least one review paper is included in the issue. Review papers are often more highly cited than regular papers.
- Work with the guest editors to obtain a perspective paper. Perspective papers will contribute to the overall richness of the focus issue.
- Assist with ideas and recommendations to assist the staff with developing communications for reaching prospective authors, and, after publication, readers as well.

Best Practice:
Include at least one review paper and one perspective paper in the issue.