

*The Journal of the Undergraduate Linguistics Association of
Britain*

Constitution



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1 Background and Aims

The Journal of the Undergraduate Linguistics Association of Britain (JoULAB) was established by the National Committee of the Undergraduate Linguistics Association of Britain (ULAB) in July 2020, during the global SARS-CoV-2 (coronavirus) pandemic in an attempt to provide as many opportunities to undergraduate students of linguistics across the world as possible. It was initially founded with four Committee positions: Editor, Head of the *Editorial Board* (now *Board of Reviewers*), Associate Editor, and Copyeditor.

The aims of JoULAB are as follows:

- (1) To uphold the aims of ULAB as set out in its Constitution;
- (2) To ensure that top-quality undergraduate research in linguistics be given a platform for wider publication;
- (3) And to publish at least two issues of the Journal for any 12-month period;

2 Responsibilities of the Editorial Committee

2.1 Editor

The Editor of the Journal is ultimately responsible for the smooth operation of all aspects of the Journal. As an elected position on the National Committee of the ULAB for an undergraduate in a year no earlier than the third of a degree including linguistics at the time of election, the Editor of JoULAB has many specific roles. They review abstracts for approval according to the Approval Criteria (see Section 5.1); lead interviews with prospective reviewers, secretaries, copyeditors, and associate copyeditors; assist the Head of the Board of Reviewers with awarding papers' final designations; adjudicate over any potential designation dispute once the Head of the Board of Reviewers comes to know the names of authors; ultimately decide whether works recommended for publication by the Board of Reviewers should be included in any issue by awarding a Final Acceptance (see Section 5.3); and, with the Copyeditor, complete the Issue Copyedit (see Section 6.2) and compile copyedited manuscripts into issue form.

2.2 Head of the Board of Reviewers

The Head of the Board of Reviewers is a permanent role held by a PhD student or candidate held for no longer than three years. To be considered for the post, an individual must be about to start or currently undertaking a PhD involving linguistics. Tenure of the role expires either after three years from acquiring the position, upon the completion of their concurrent PhD programme, or any earlier at the incumbent's discretion.

The Head of the Board of Reviewers is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the reviewing process. They ensure that papers approved for review be distributed to members of the Board of Reviewers in accordance with their areas of expertise, that reviews be completed in a timely fashion and to a sufficient level for undergraduate authors, coordinate the return of reviewed manuscripts to authors with the Secretary, and act as a point of contact for all reviewers. They also share the role of approving abstracts (see Section 4.1) and determining the details for a paper's Final Acceptance (see Section 5.3) with the Editor.

2.3 Associate Editor

The Associate Editor is a position on the Editorial Committee held for the National Chair of ULAB. Their primary function as a member of the Committee is to ensure the smooth operation of JoULAB in accordance with the goals of ULAB; that is, assisting in interviews, administration, or book-keeping wherever necessary (as the Editor and Committee may see fit) just so members of ULAB (authors, for example) have the best possible experience of JoULAB.

2.4 Secretary

The Secretary is a position on the Committee whose tenure expires upon the end of the concurrent Editor's tenure; and as such, it is a position for which recruitment, led by the Editor, should be undertaken annually. To be considered for the role, an applicant must be an undergraduate student studying for a degree involving linguistics at the time of recruitment.

The Secretary of JoULAB is ultimately responsible for overseeing all administrative tasks pertaining to the Journal's day-to-day function. This may include answering email queries from authors, anonymising .docx or .pdf files submitted by authors to the Journal, organising spreadsheets with corresponding reviewer or author information, or sending out reviewed manuscripts to authors in liaison with the Head of the Board of Reviewers.

2.5 Copyeditor

The Copyeditor is a position on the Committee whose tenure expires upon the end of the concurrent Editor's tenure; and as such, it is a position for which recruitment, led by the Editor, should be undertaken annually. To be considered for the role, an applicant must be a student (undergraduate or postgraduate) studying for a degree involving linguistics at the time of recruitment.

The Copyeditor of JoULAB is ultimately responsible for ensuring, with the Editor, that any issue published of the Journal is up to the highest editorial, formatting, and styling standards. This will include overseeing the Copyediting Procedure (see Section 6) and maintaining, updating, and reviewing the JoULAB Formatting and Styling Guide. The Copyeditor is also responsible, with the Editor, for overseeing the recruitment of three Associate Copyeditors.

2.6 Associate Copyeditors

The three Associate Copyeditors working under the guidance of the Copyeditor and the Editor hold positions on the Committee whose tenures expire upon the end of the concurrent Editor's tenure; and as such, they are positions for which recruitment, led by the Editor and the Copyeditor, should be undertaken annually. To be considered for one of the roles of Associate Copyeditor, an applicant must be a student (undergraduate or postgraduate) studying for a degree involving linguistics at the time of recruitment.

The Associate Copyeditors' only role is to serve as the copyeditor for either 'Copyedit 1' or 'Copyedit 2' for each manuscript following its review by the Board of Reviewers, in accordance with the Copyediting Procedure.

2.7 Board of Reviewers

The Board of Reviewers consists of doctoral students and candidates from across the world who represent a wide range of areas of expertise. All members of the Board of Reviewers are responsible for providing critical and insightful comments and criticism to papers of abstracts approved by the Editor and Head of the Board of Reviewers, in accordance with the broad Reviewing Criteria (see Section 5.2). They should liaise with the Head of the Board of Reviewers to give back reviewed submissions in a timely fashion.

At any reviewer's discretion, they can pass on comments (deanonymised) to authors through the Head of the Board of Reviewers should they desire to do so, and assuming authors consent to receive it and become deanonymised.

3 Submissions

3.1 Eligibility

Anyone shall be eligible to submit to JoULAB so long as their work was carried out (or the bulk of it was carried out) when they were an undergraduate student of linguistics or a related discipline, and so long as their undergraduate studies were completed no more than three years prior to submitting the abstract.

Any undergraduate research that falls within the discipline of linguistics, or associated subfields, will be considered by reviewers for acceptance to JoULAB. Works previously published are ineligible for consideration.

3.2 Timelines

Two methods of receiving submissions to the Journal are available for the Committee to select: rolling and deadline. Each method will be more suitable in accordance with surrounding circumstances, and they may both be relevant simultaneously, so selection is left up to the Committee's discretion.

3.2.1 Rolling Submissions

The rolling submissions method is defined here as involving an indefinitely-described period of time within which authors may submit manuscripts for review. As this method is indefinite, no deadline should be given, and thus only by ceasing the employment of this method can acceptance of submissions be halted.

3.2.2 Deadline Submissions

The deadline submissions method is defined here as involving a definitely-described period of time within which authors may submit manuscripts for review; as such, the employment of a this method involves giving a deadline after which submissions will be closed. It should be noted that deadline submissions can co-occur with rolling submissions, but only in the case of, for example, opening submissions for a themed or special issue (where the deadline exists for receipt of themed or special articles).

3.2 Format of Manuscripts

All manuscripts should be requested to be submitted in accordance with the JoULAB Formatting and Styling Guide, and received in either .pdf or .docx form. Depending on circumstances, such as whether the manuscript will be sent to reviewers for comments or associate copyeditors for copyediting, either .pdf or .docx file types will be most appropriate. It is most convenient simply to ask for both types at all various stages of receipt of manuscripts from authors.

3.3 Anonymisation

As the Journal employs a double-blind review process in principle, any revealing or personal information contained within any document submitted to JoULAB that might end up jeopardising the unbiased position of a reviewer or member of the Editorial Committee must be redacted (though not deleted). The responsibility for this section of the Submission Procedure falls to the Secretary, and it is at their discretion to determine how best to achieve this year-on-year.

3.4 Multiple Authors

As ensuring the undergraduate (first-) authorship of papers is central to the Journal's integrity, it is essential that the identities of second, third (and so on) authors be established. To this end, submissions with multiple authors must have in writing the signed affirmation of extents of contributions by all various authors, meeting certain conditions.

3.4.1 Contributions and Conditions

For JoULAB, a 'contribution' to a work's completion comes in multiple forms, such as, for example, writing, research, or data collection. In such cases of multiple contributors, a number of conditions must be met. These are the following:

- (1) The primary contributor (i.e., the first author listed in the submission; the person who contributed the most) must have completed their work (or the bulk of their work) for the article during their time as an undergraduate student, which must not have ended longer than three years prior to submission;
- (2) At least half of contributors to the submission must have completed their work (or the bulk of their work) for the article during their time as an undergraduate student, which must not have ended longer than three years prior to submission;
- (3) And, all persons involved in the production of the article must be listed in the submission and in the Undergraduate Authorship Agreement in order of their respective contributions to its completion.

To demonstrate that, in cases of multiple contributors, authors understand and accept the above conditions, they will be required to send a signed and completed Undergraduate Authorship Agreement. This should be attached to the original submission.

3.5 Receipt of Submissions

The receipt of submitted manuscripts from authors will involve a procedure decided upon by the Committee ad hoc to reflect the best of their capacities and most efficient use of time. This may involve

employing the JoULAB email, setting up an online form, or creating a way of running submissions directly through the ULAB website.

4 Reviewing Procedure

4.1 Abstract Approval

Upon the receipt of a submission, the Associate Editor will anonymise and forward the abstract of the paper in question to one of the Editor or the Head of the Board of Reviewers. This abstract will be subject to scrutiny in accordance with the Approval Criteria (see Section XXX), and subsequently approved or rejected **within one week** of its receipt. Any rejection will contain feedback as to whether resubmission would be advised on the basis of certain changes.

4.2. Reviewing Process

Following abstract approval by the Editorial Committee, the Head of the Board of Reviewers will coordinate between the topic of a paper and the research interests of two members of the Board of Reviewers to send the paper in question for review. Two reviewers will work separately for each round of reviewing, and no alternate two reviewers shall be reassigned to any paper for later rounds.

Once a reviewer is satisfied that a paper is of a sufficient standard, and does not require further alteration, they are requested to offer their recommendation to the Head of the Board of Reviewers that the paper be accepted for publication.

4.2.1 *Review Designations and Rounds of Reviewing*

The number of rounds of reviewing to which all papers will be subject will depend on the designations the two reviewers award to that paper following a review in accordance with the Reviewing Criteria (see Section 5.2). These are the four designations that reviewers can suggest:

- (1) Accepted with Minor Corrections
- (2) Accepted with Major Corrections
- (3) Revise and Resubmit
- (4) Rejection

These designations correspond to the following consequences for reviewing rounds:

- (1) No further rounds of review are required, and the submission can be deemed to have received a contingent final acceptance. Reviewers will be asked to assure the requested minor corrections have been made, and then offer their recommendation for publication.
- (2) One further round of review may be required, but the submission should be considered to have received a contingent final acceptance. Reviewers will be asked to assure the requested major corrections have been made, and either then adjust their designation to (1) or offer their recommendation for publication.
- (3) At least one further round of review is required. Should the author choose to resubmit their paper after substantial rewrites (according to reviewers' comments), reviewers will be asked to review the paper for a second time and then adjust their designation to (1), (2), or (4).

- (4) No further rounds are required.

Should the two reviewers disagree on the designation of a paper, the Editorial Committee will act upon the more pessimistic of the two. Note that a ‘contingent final acceptance’ effectively indicates that, barring extraordinary circumstances, the submission will be published by the Journal. Thus, no designation rejecting the paper in later rounds can then be awarded to a paper that was initially given designations (1) or (2).

If, upon second reading or review, previously requested corrections (that reviewers deem significant) have not been made by an author to a paper, reviewers are asked to award designation (1) or (3) depending on the extent of the corrections required. If an author fails to make the originally requested corrections a second time, reviewers are asked to award designation (3) or (4) unless they believe the extent of the corrections required does not merit discounting; in which case they should then award designation (1).

In later rounds of reviews, should reviewers disagree as to the designation of the paper in question to an extent that no resolution between them can be found (where such resolution would be coordinated between the two reviewers by the Head of the Board of Reviewers), the Editor will come in as a third reviewer to offer their own comments and provide their own designation whilst keeping the decisions of the reviewers in mind.

4.2.2 *Reviewing Timeline*

To ensure that the Journal can operate as efficiently as possible, the Board of Reviewers is kindly asked to complete each review of each paper given to them by the Head of the Board of Reviewers **within three weeks** of receipt, or to complete all reviews of a single paper **within two months** of the first receipt, regardless of overlap of review requests (i.e., regardless of how many papers a reviewer has been sent for review).

If a reviewer cannot, or does not, meet the three-week deadline for a particular paper, or if a reviewer does not feel comfortable in their capacity to review a paper for other reasons (e.g., insufficient expertise in paper’s subfield), an alternate reviewer in the same subfield (where possible) shall be assigned to review the paper instead (for whom the three-week timeline is restarted).

4.2.3 *Format of Reviews*

To ensure brevity and consistency, reviewers are requested to submit their reviews primarily in the form of annotated manuscripts, where comments and highlights can be left using PDF editing software. Reviewers should ensure that a paragraph summarising their overall thoughts on a submission be included within their comments. This paragraph would do well to contain both a justification for the awarded designation (where applicable) and in-depth criticism. This particular format of review has been selected so that authors can receive their feedback in the most accessible way possible. Should reviewers desire to leave more detailed feedback for authors, they may also produce word-processed, longer-form reviews that will be sent to authors along with an annotated manuscript.

4.2.4 *Software*

As all submissions will be in .pdf form, reviewers are requested to use common PDF editing software in their reviewing process (such as Adobe Acrobat Reader). They may also choose to use any word

processing software (such as Word or LaTeX) should they desire to leave longer feedback than any ‘comment’ feature feasibly permits in their PDF software.

4.3 Recommendation of Publication

Once a reviewer is satisfied that a paper is of a sufficient standard, and does not require further alteration, they are requested to offer their recommendation to the Head of the Board of Reviewers that the paper be accepted for publication.

5 Reviewing Guidelines

5.1 Approval Criteria

Abstracts will be approved by the Editorial Committee (the Editor and the Head of the Board of Reviewers) in accordance with the following criteria:

- (1) relevance of research to linguistics or associated fields;
- (2) appropriateness of content to academic publication;
- (3) and accordance with submission guidelines (e.g., concerning undergraduate status of author or prior publication).

5.2 Reviewing Criteria

In deciding a designation for a particular paper (see Section 4.2.1), the Editorial Committee kindly requests that reviewers take into consideration the following criteria that will determine the strength and suitability of submissions for the Journal. These criteria should be used to evaluate both the quality and need for correction of papers in the reviewing process.

- (1) Novelty or originality of approach, analysis, or methods;
- (2) importance of the research’s impact;
- (3) relevance of the paper to pressing issues in its field;
- (4) scope for future work following the article’s conclusions;
- (5) and impressiveness, given undergraduate authorship.

5.3 Final Acceptance

Following the recommendation of publication by two members of the Board of Reviewers for a particular paper, both the Editor and the Head of the Board of Reviewers will meet to discuss the finer details for its publication. In this, a paper’s Final Acceptance is given by the Journal, whereupon it is decided in which issue it will feature, where it might be placed within that issue, etc. As such, only once a submission has received a Final Acceptance is the Journal unconditionally committed to publishing it.

6 Copyediting Procedure

Supervised by the Copyeditor, the responsibility for completing the legwork of copyediting all submissions that have received a Final Acceptance (see Section 5.3) falls to the three Associate Copyeditors. In the Copyediting Procedure, there are two distinct stages.

6.1 The First and Second Copyedits

The Copyediting Procedure can be split up into what is known as the ‘First Copyedit’ and ‘Second Copyedit’. For each manuscript ready for copyediting, two of the three Associate Copyeditors will be assigned by the Copyeditor to complete either the First or Second Copyedit in accordance with the preferences or availability of each Associate Copyeditor.

In the First Copyedit, the assigned Associate Copyeditor makes as many corrections as they can see to make, and in the Second Copyedit, the assigned Associate Copyeditor acts as a kind of guard against any small things missed.

In this manner, First may be quite broad-brush (and possibly quite radical in changes necessary; e.g., correcting title pages, font sizes, paragraph indents, etc.), whereas the Second may be much more fine-grained with more attention to detail required (e.g., small things that might fall through the cracks, such as commas after ‘e.g.’, British English spellings, in-text citation formatting, etc.).

In each stage, the Associate Copyeditor should work individually for the most part, but each manuscript benefits from the keen eye of two copyeditors overall to ensure readiness for final publication.

6.2 The Issue Copyedit

Once the Associate Copyeditors have done as much as they can see to do with regards to copyediting a particular set of manuscripts for a particular issue of the Journal, they are passed on to the Editor and the Copyeditor for final checks and to determine the details of the next issue. This process will include cover-to-cover formatting and design work, determining the order of articles in the issue, and ensuring the file type of the issue is suitable for publication.

7 Publication

Issues of JoULAB are to be released on the ULAB website in .pdf form and published on the website ‘Zenodo’, ensuring they are hosted there with a DOI.

7.1 Volumes and Issues

The volume to which each published issue of the Journal pertains is contingent upon the tenure of the concurrent Editorial Committee during which its publication is finalised. That is, each volume of JoULAB corresponds to each Editorial Committee (and as such Volume 1 contains all of the first Editorial Committee’s issues, Volume 2 contains all of the second Committee’s issues, etc.). There should be no set number of issues each volume is expected to contain.

8 Amendments

Any changes made to this constitution must be ratified by a quorum of at least two-thirds of the JoULAB Editorial Committee (where both the Editor and the Associate Editor were present) at any meeting of the Committee, and by a vote of at least two-thirds of those present at that meeting.