

A Letter from the Managing Editor

Dear Readers and Authors,

Since its inception, some 18 years ago, our journal has aimed at the rapid publication of 'essentially *complete* final reports'. In this endeavour, thanks to the dedication of all the members of the Editorial Board, and particularly of its past Managing Editor, Professor S.P. Datta, it has been unusually successful. You, dear Reader and potential Author, can help us to increase the efficiency of our, i.e. 'your', journal.

From the experience of my first six months in office as the new Managing Editor, and on the occasion of the publication of Volume 200, I would like to draw your attention to some points in our '*Notes to Authors*' (which, it seems to me, do not enjoy the vast readership they deserve).

(1) We publish essentially *complete* reports of work, i.e. the policy of our journal is that of encouraging the publication of *compact*, 'meaty' (and of course, significant) papers, not the splitting of papers into fragments, which are often not viable alone. One of the most frequent grounds of rejection is that of 'insufficient advance in knowledge'. Our journal now receives far more papers than it can reasonably publish. When you submit a paper to us, you are thus competing with others for the space available (in much the same way as you compete for grants). FEBS Letters has now reached almost 6000 pages in 16 volumes of 32 issues per year; it simply cannot increase indefinitely in size. Therefore, you are requested to invest every possible effort in ensuring that your report is complete, concise, and prepared carefully following the *Notes to Authors* in each issue. The entire manuscript should be no longer than about six pages. The Editors will only accept longer papers when there are compelling reasons.

(2) *Language*: Authors who do not have a full command of the English language are advised to consult a native English-speaking colleague before submitting their paper.

(3) We want your papers to appear as rapidly as possible. Towards this goal you can help us significantly. Send your paper *to that member of the Editorial Board who is the closest to your field of interest*. The editor can then deal with it directly, without the delay involved in forwarding it to another, more appropriate board member. (Much too often, the 'reviewing time' is, in fact, 'postal time'!) If in doubt as to which editor to choose, first ask any board member for a suggestion at an early stage. Before submitting your manuscript, read the *Notes to Authors* again. And remember that well-written, 'obviously' first-class papers are easy – and thus fast – to review!

(4) *Proofs*: As a rule, proofs are *not* sent to authors because, again, this speeds up publication. They are checked within Elsevier by competent specialists. However, if you do want to check them, indicate this clearly *on the top page* of your manuscript at the time of submission.

(5) Finally, we all welcome suggestions which you deem may improve our journal!

Yours,

Giorgio Semenza
Zurich, March 1986