

Conditions for Special Issue Submissions

1. **Event/Theme-Based Manuscripts:** The special issue will focus on manuscripts related to specific events, conferences, or thematic areas relevant to the field. Submissions must pertain to recent advances, case studies, or innovations discussed at these events or align with the broader theme.
2. **Thematic Focus Areas:** Manuscripts that align with designated themes within physiotherapy and occupational therapy, such as rheumatoid arthritis, neurological rehabilitation, paediatric therapy, geriatric care, or post-surgical rehabilitation, are highly encouraged. The issue will cater to both research-based and clinical perspectives, emphasizing evidence-based approaches and multidisciplinary collaboration.

The editorial board will select an editorial team at their discretion to oversee the special issue, ensuring the highest standards of quality and relevance to the theme.

Stage 1 - Initial Proposal and Manuscript Selection

When submitting proposals for special issues, Editors must ensure that the proposal aligns with the aims, scope, and key areas of the journal.

The format and sequence for submitting a Special Issue Proposal should include:

1. Journal Name (IJPOT)
2. Special Issue Title
3. Details of Guest Editors (names, qualifications, affiliations, contact information, and topics they will cover)
4. Submission Deadline
5. Issue Release Deadline
6. List of Potential Authors (names, qualifications, affiliations, contact information, and topics they will address)
7. Overview of the proposed Special Issue

Once designated as a Special Issue Editor, editors may formally invite colleagues or other potential authors to contribute their manuscripts. For this purpose, the editorial office can provide official email accounts upon request. Editors may also seek the assistance of the IJPOT editorial office to contact and invite authors.

Stage 2 - Review and Revision of the Special Issue

When a manuscript is submitted for a Special Issue, it is reviewed by the Special Issue Editors/Guest Editors, alongside the IJPOT editorial quality team. This ensures that the manuscripts meet the journal's academic standards, align with the theme, and are suitable for peer review.

The Lead Guest Editor will check for any conflict of interest before evaluating the manuscript. The manuscript will then be assigned to guest editors and external reviewers for evaluation and potential revisions.

Based on the guest editors' reports, the Special Issue Editor will make one of the following decisions:

1. The manuscript is suitable for publication without modification.
 2. The manuscript requires minor modifications before publication.
 3. The manuscript requires major revisions before it can be considered for publication.
 4. The manuscript does not meet the journal's standards and is rejected.
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Stage 3 - Final Decision-Making After Peer Review Process

The IJPOT editorial team confers decision-making authority on the Guest Editors throughout the review and revision process. However, decisions must align with the journal's established guidelines, including the Editorial Policy, Code of Ethics, Contributor Instructions, Reviewer Guidelines, and style guide. The IJPOT editorial team works closely with Guest Editors to refine the proposal, Call for Papers, and finalize the editorial team for the special issue.

Stage 4 - Special Issue Publication or Rejection

Once manuscripts are accepted, it is at the discretion of the IJPOT editorial team whether they will be included in the Special Issue or a regular issue. The final decision on publication, timing, or rejection of manuscripts will be communicated to authors by the editorial team.

Additional Responsibilities of Special Issue Editors/Guest Editors

As a Special Issue Editor or Guest Editor, you are required to provide the following details to the editorial office:

- Submit at least one manuscript for the special issue.
- Provide a list of potential authors or, if not available, create a blueprint for the issue and share it with the editorial office.
- Aim to release the special issue with a minimum of ten articles.
- Assume responsibility for the entire peer-review process. If expert reviewers are difficult to find, the editorial office can assist.
- Inform the editorial office within 24 hours of any changes to your job location or contact information to keep the database updated.
- Finalize submission and release deadlines for the special issue with the editorial office's approval. Once set, deadlines cannot be altered, and work must be completed on schedule.
- Plan the release of the special issue within a maximum timeline of 6 months
- Promote your special issue among colleagues and potential future guest editors.

- Perform rigorous cross-checking of all manuscripts to ensure high-quality publications.
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Benefits to Special Issue Editors/Guest Editors

- You can publish one article free of publication fees if funding resources are unavailable. IJPOT may offer discounts on future publications.
- Successful completion of a Special Issue can lead to membership in the editorial board
- The Lead Guest Editor will have the flexibility to personalize their space on the IJPOT website
- If the Special Issue publishes more than 10 papers, it may be printed as a book, with each Guest Editor receiving a free hardcopy and a discount on additional copies

Guest Editor Responsibilities and Ethics for IJPOT

Key responsibilities include:

- **Manuscript Review and Selection:** You oversee the peer review process, ensuring that it is conducted in accordance with the journal's usual review standards. You are responsible for making preliminary decisions on all manuscripts, following the journal's peer-review protocols. The final decision on acceptance or rejection will involve the Journal Editor and, if necessary, the Editorial Board.
- **Content Relevance and Quality:** Ensure that all published content aligns with the Special Issue's scope and maintains the same level of quality as regularly contributed manuscripts. Manuscripts should adhere to the journal's high ethical and research standards.
- **Ethical Standards:** You are required to maintain strict confidentiality regarding all manuscript submissions and adhere to IJPOT's editorial policies, which include compliance with COPE guidelines on ethics in publishing. All authors must declare any competing interests, and full disclosure of the origins of the Special Issue, including sponsorship, must be provided.
- **Citation Practices:** Guest Editors should avoid encouraging authors to include citations that serve only to boost the visibility of their own work, the journal, or any related publications. References should be relevant and contribute to the research. In line with best practices, direct quotations should be clearly marked with quotation marks and properly cited, including references to the author's own work.
- **Editor's Submission:** While Guest Editors may contribute their own work to the Special Issue, such submissions should be limited to promote diversity in authorship. Any submission by a Guest Editor will be managed by a member of the Editorial Board to maintain impartiality.
- **Conflict of Interest:** You are responsible for declaring any actual or potential conflicts of interest before your appointment and updating them as necessary. Any conflicts that may interfere with the objectivity of the review process must be disclosed.
- **Confidentiality and Data Protection:** As a Guest Editor, you must protect the confidentiality of all information related to the Special Issue, including manuscripts and communications. This responsibility extends to the handling of third-party material, ensuring all necessary permissions are obtained.

- **Submission and Publication Process:** Manuscripts will be submitted through the journal's electronic system, and you will manage the workflow. You must adhere to the agreed deadlines for submission and final decisions on manuscripts to ensure timely publication. Delays may result in the inclusion of manuscripts in regular issues instead of the Special Issue.
- **Manuscript Integrity:** You are responsible for ensuring the integrity of the scientific content published in the Special Issue. This includes reviewing for plagiarism using industry-standard software and maintaining transparency in research and peer-review practices.
- **Promotion of the Special Issue:** You are encouraged to promote the Special Issue at academic events, on social media, and other platforms to maximize visibility and attract high-quality submissions.
- **Independence:** As a Guest Editor, you act as an independent contractor and not an employee or agent of the journal or publisher. Your decisions and actions should reflect the journal's editorial standards and ethical practices without influence from external sponsors or financial interests.

By fulfilling these responsibilities with due diligence and integrity, you help uphold the quality and reputation of the journal, ensuring that the Special Issue contributes meaningfully to the academic community.

A successful Special Issue typically contains 10 or more papers, along with an optional editorial written by the Guest Editor. To ensure the issue's success, it is recommended to invite more than 10 contributors, as some papers may not pass peer review.

Guest Editors may include early career researchers in their teams, but the final responsibility for the peer review process rests with the Guest Editor.

Promoting the Special Issue

Promoting the Special Issue is crucial for attracting submissions. Effective strategies include:

- Adding the title and URL of the Special Issue to your email signature.
- Sharing the Special Issue on social media platforms like Twitter, LinkedIn, and ResearchGate.
- Announcing the Special Issue at academic events or including it in conference presentations.

Editorial Procedure of Submissions

All submissions to a Special Issue undergo peer review. Guest Editors can choose to accept, reject, request revisions, or seek additional reviews based on the feedback from peer reviewers. In cases of plagiarism concerns, the editorial team will use plagiarism detection software to recheck the content.

Guest Editors' decisions are guided by reviewer reports, and the journal's Editorial Board or Editor-in-Chief may step in if necessary to ensure the integrity of the process.

Editorial Procedure for Submissions to the Special Issue (IJPOT)

Submissions to a Special Issue undergo a rigorous peer review process. Guest Editors are responsible for overseeing this process and making decisions about submissions, which can include accepting, rejecting, requesting revisions, or seeking an additional reviewer. During this process, the Guest Editor is expected to:

Pre-Check:

- Ensure that the manuscript aligns with the journal's focus, section, and Special Issue theme.
- Confirm the manuscript meets high standards for research quality and ethical practices.
- Verify that the research demonstrates sufficient rigor to proceed with further review.

First or Final Decision:

- Assess the suitability of selected reviewers.
- Evaluate the quality of reviewer feedback and the author's response to it.
- Determine the overall scientific merit of the paper.

If there are concerns about potential plagiarism, the editorial team will recheck the manuscript using plagiarism detection tools.

The final decision on manuscript acceptance or rejection is based on reviewer reports. In some cases, the Editor-in-Chief or members of the Editorial Board may be involved in the decision-making process to ensure the integrity and quality of the Special Issue.

Additional Guidelines:

- If a conflict of interest arises between the Guest Editor(s) and authors, or if the Guest Editor becomes unresponsive regarding key decisions, another Editor from the journal's Editorial Board with the appropriate expertise will be invited to step in.
- If the Guest Editor recommends accepting a manuscript despite a reviewer's suggestion to reject, the journal will seek a second opinion from an Editorial Board member or the Editor-in-Chief before making a final decision.
- Any article submitted by the Guest Editor(s) will be handled by another Editorial Board member to maintain fairness.

Special Issue Publication Process (IJPOT)

Special Issues follow a 'Virtual Special Issue' workflow to streamline the publication process.

- Manuscripts are submitted through the Special Issue portal and proceed through the standard peer review process.
- Once a manuscript is accepted, it enters production and is published in the online Special Issue.