

Change of shift

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It is now 13 years that Helmut Günzler asked me to keep this journal's workflow going while he was in hospital. He was managing Accreditation and Quality Assurance (ACQUAL) since he had founded it together with Paul De Bièvre and Peter Enders of Springer. As sadly he passed away shortly after, my (mostly) post-retirement “re-tyre-ment,” as Paul would call it, commenced. Paul introduced me to Metrology in Chemistry, obliged me to VIM and added a lot to my metrological training, for instance by discussing his famous Editorials and Columns in great detail.

In recent years, I learnt from Hendrik Emons about the “hot topics” and their implications at an early stage, and heard about committees and working groups setting up frames of guidance and regulations. Hendrik's involvement in those allowed us to identify suitable reviewers and many of them agreed to review.

Now having reached a certain age, it appears time for a change of shift; younger colleagues, nevertheless old friends of ACQUAL and amidst the metrological development, will take over.

Metrology in Chemistry has an essential influence on everybody's health, food, environment and general well-being. The field is permanently evolving, yet not as fast as the journal's editors and publisher would wish. ACQUAL publishes elaborate statistical approaches and is known for these. However, the majority of readers will focus on the

competent applications of metrological concepts in practical work outlined in Practitioner's Reports: often read, less often cited as the readers rarely publish. To encourage authors who could report on original case studies, interesting aspects, applications in fields where an uncertainty budget is not yet common practice, ACQUAL's cooperation with Eurachem Workshops is a promising approach.

Apart from organizing the review process, my primary intention as editor was to secure clarity with the aim that even a cursory reader wouldn't be misled regarding the scientific message—or as one reviewer put it “I can guess, but a reader should not need guesswork.” Not only the scientific message of a paper must be sound, but also the presentation must be clear, what includes notation, terminology and language. Jargon may be handy within a team and “the insider will understand,” sloppy language may appear as elegant or professional, however, this is not appropriate for an article in a scientific journal addressing a wider, diversely specialized community.

Many practitioners must be reminded on the conventions outlined in worldwide accepted documents known as SI brochure, Green Book, VIM, GUM and the related ISO standards—as summarized at ACQUAL's homepage. Much to the authors' distress, the editor casting a first glance on symbols, units, italics, subscripts, etc. spots deviations easier than the author immersed in all the study details she or he wants to present.

For the majority of submissions, English is not the author's first language. Once and again, I regretfully observed how limited command of the language compromises the presentation of a fine approach. Technical issues such as singular/plural, tenses, punctuation marks can be corrected straightaway, while untangling complex sentences requires expertise in both the language and the field.

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For such an intervention, a climate of mutual understanding and confidence is necessary. I am very grateful to the many native English-speaking reviewers who provided detailed suggestions for language improvement!

On the whole, the value of the reviewer input cannot be overestimated, nor the time and the efforts they dedicated. Once and again, the reports deeply impressed me, whether by a rigorous overview placing the ideas of the manuscript into a wider intellectual context, or by showing how a Table could be better and more reader-friendly arranged or what specific literature was missing. Not to mention the re-

calculation of results which frequently reveals inconsistencies. I am grateful for the friendly yet critical collegiality and will miss it!

With sincere thanks to the various teams of Springer whose joint efforts make ACQUAL's online and print versions appear regularly, represented by the Editorial Director Steffen Pauly, I wish the new editors all possible success in strengthening and expanding ACQUAL!

Ernst-Heiner Korte

Editor-in-Chief and Managing Editor