

The Scientist as Editor: A perspective from Cell Press

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Charlotte Wang, PhD
Editor, *Cell Metabolism*
Executive Editor, *Molecular Medicine*
Cell Press



Overview

- Introduction: Dr. Charlotte Wang
- Cell and the Cell Press family of journals
- The role of the editorial team & the life cycle of a paper at Cell Press
- Tips for authors: Picking a journal, and aims & scope
- Tips for authors: The decision letter, and responding to reviewers
- Language help and final tips

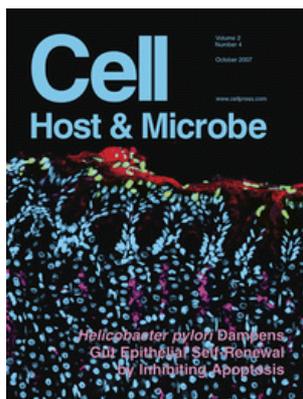
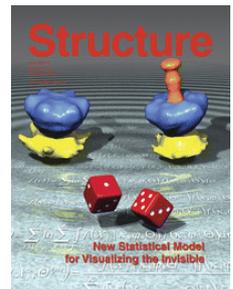
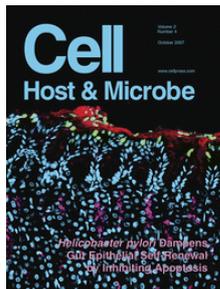
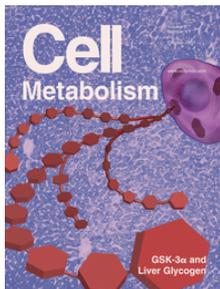
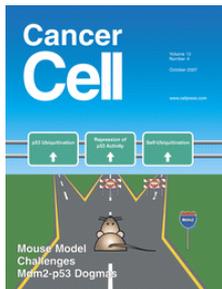
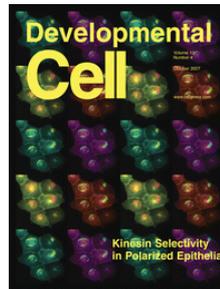
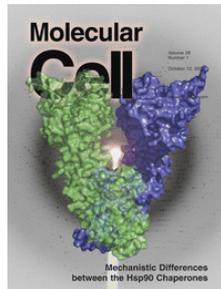
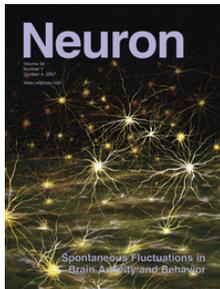
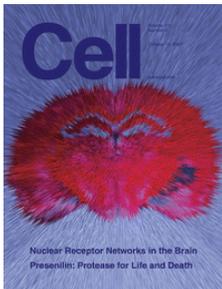
Brief bio – Charlotte Wang, Ph.D.



- A.B. University of California, Berkeley (Major: Biochemistry)
- PhD M.I.T., Biology (thesis work: developmental genetics of *Drosophila*)
- Hometown: San Francisco
- 7 years in science publishing; at Cell Press since 2004
- Editor, *Cell Metabolism* and Executive Editor, *Molecular Medicine*
- Responsible for content of *Cell Metabolism*, including scope, editorial board, editorial decisions. Also oversee 2 additional review-format journals. Total PhD staff: 4.

Introduction to Cell Press: overview

- The Cell Press family of journals
- Editorial structure
- Facts and figures: *Cell*, *Cell Metabolism*
- Published articles from China



- *Cell Host & Microbe*
 - Integrative microbial biology, including microbe-microbe, -host, and -environment interactions
- *Cell Stem Cell*
 - In affiliation with the International Society for Stem Cell Research

Cell Press Impact Factors

Journal	Impact Factor, 2006
Cell	29.2
Cancer Cell	24.1
Molecular Cell	14.0
Immunity	18.3
Developmental Cell	13.5
Neuron	13.9
Current Biology	11.0
Chemistry & Biology	6.7
Structure	5.7
Cell Metabolism (preliminary)	16.7

Editorial Structure

- Contributors:
 - Authors
 - Reviewers
 - Editorial Board
 - Editors
 - Publisher

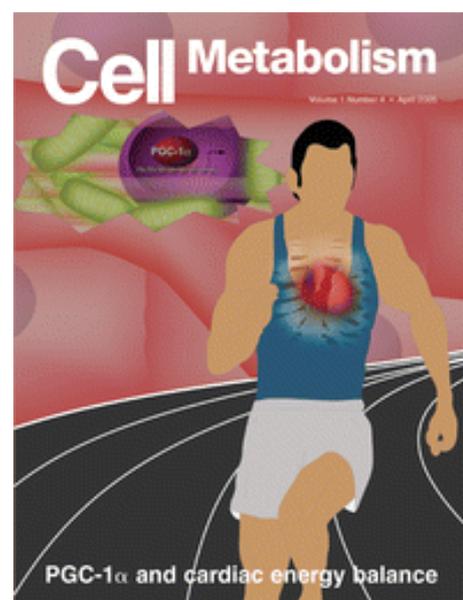
The journal is a *collaborative* effort between all of these. The overall goal is to serve the scientific community by disseminating important advances and promoting interdisciplinary research.

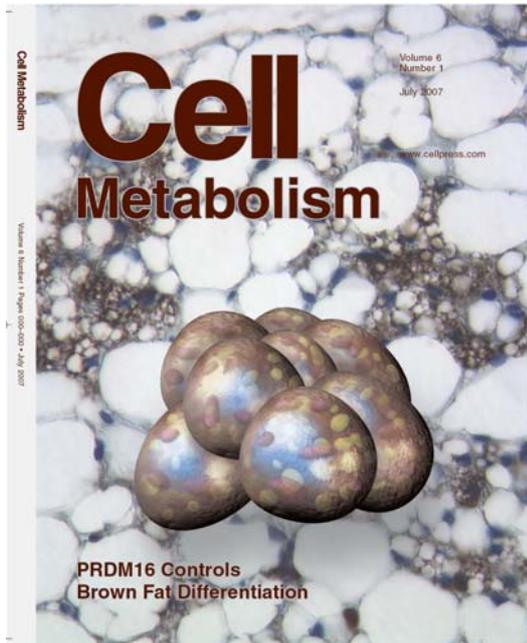
Cell: Flagship of Cell Press

- ~20 editorial and production staff
 - 8 editors focusing on research articles
 - 3 editors for Leading Edge
 - 6 production staff/editors
 - 2 scientific illustrators
 - 1 editorial assistant
- About 5,000 active reviewers. In 2005, 1,460 of these reviewed manuscripts

A few numbers from Cell Metabolism

- 2.5 PhD editors; half-time reviews/commentary editor
- Cell Metabolism receives 40-50 submissions/month
- About half of these are sent out for peer review
- Of these, less than half are eventually published.
- Overall acceptance rate: about 20%





For 2006-2007, acceptance rate of Chinese manuscripts is excellent:

4 papers published of 18 submissions (22% acceptance rate)



Cell Metabolism

Volume 5, Issue 1, January 2007, Pages 47-57

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Article

Dissecting Multiple Steps of GLUT4 Trafficking and Identifying the Sites of Insulin Action

Li Bai^{1,4}, Yan Wang^{1,4}, Junmei Fan^{1,4}, Yu Chen¹, Wei Ji¹, Anlian Ou², Pingyong Xu¹,   David E. James³ and Tao Xu^{1,2},  

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Cell Metabolism

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Short Article

Munc13-1 is required for the sustained release of insulin from pancreatic β cells

Lijun Kang^{1,4}, Zixuan He^{2,4}, Pingyong Xu², Junmei Fan¹, Andrea Betz³, Nils Brose³ and Tao Xu^{1,2},  

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- What sort of person makes a good editor?
- Daily tasks & editorial routine
- What we look for in papers
- How we deal with problems of language or differences of opinion

- PhD, nearly always with postdoctoral experience
- able to think about a broad range of topics
- interested in communication of broadly appealing scientific stories
- able and willing to work under deadline
- primary responsibility is to evaluate manuscripts, oversee peer review, and synthesize all that information to make an editorial decision

The Daily Editorial Meeting

- Cell Metabolism team is 2.5 editors: Nikla Emambokus, Nicole Fox-Tapper and myself
- The team meets every afternoon
- We survey new submissions and assign to an editor; discuss any editorial decisions; plan commissioned reviews and essays



Evaluating & Reviewing Submissions

The editor:

- Reads it carefully, along with other published literature in the field.
- Decides: Send out for review, or not?
- All decisions are discussed with the team
- Returns some papers to authors with an explanation
- Sends out strong papers to 2-3 reviewers
- I personally take charge of ~20 papers per month



What are we looking for?

- Is the paper within our topical scope?
- Does it address an interesting and important question?
- Are the experiments logically designed? Do the data tell a story? Are the experiments well-controlled?
- Do the data provide compelling support for the main conclusions?
- How do the findings advance the field beyond what was previously known in the literature?

More of what we look for...

- Do the data change the way we think about a biological problem?
- Do the findings open up new avenues of research, or provide definitive answers to a long-standing debate?
- Will the findings be of interest to those outside the immediate field?

Writing Style & Language: What we do

- No paper is ever rejected solely because of language problems
- Editors evaluate the science even in an awkwardly-worded paper
- If a paper seems strong scientifically, but the language is awkward, editors may ask the author to ask a native English speaker to help rewrite
- We strongly encourage authors to have a native speaker review their papers before submission

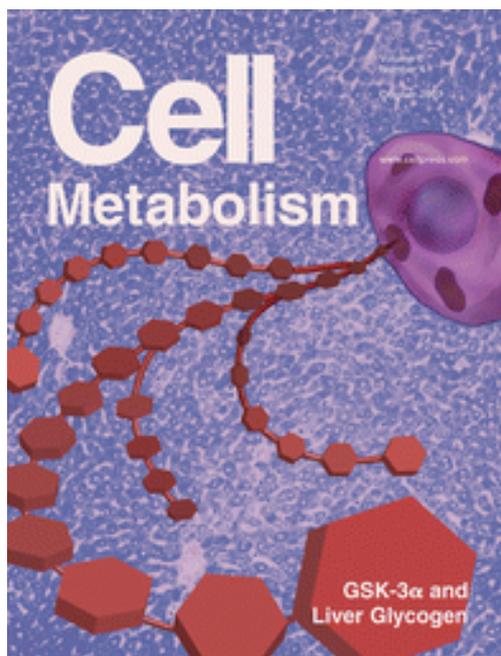
When Reviewers Disagree

- Reviewers don't always agree ---the ultimate decision is not a simple count of votes "*for*" and "*against*"
- The editors evaluate the reviewers' comments in much the same way they evaluate the original manuscripts.
- Editors weigh in with their own opinions about the article.
- As editors, we must communicate the decision and the reason clearly and constructively to the authors clearly and constructively.

How we handle rebuttals

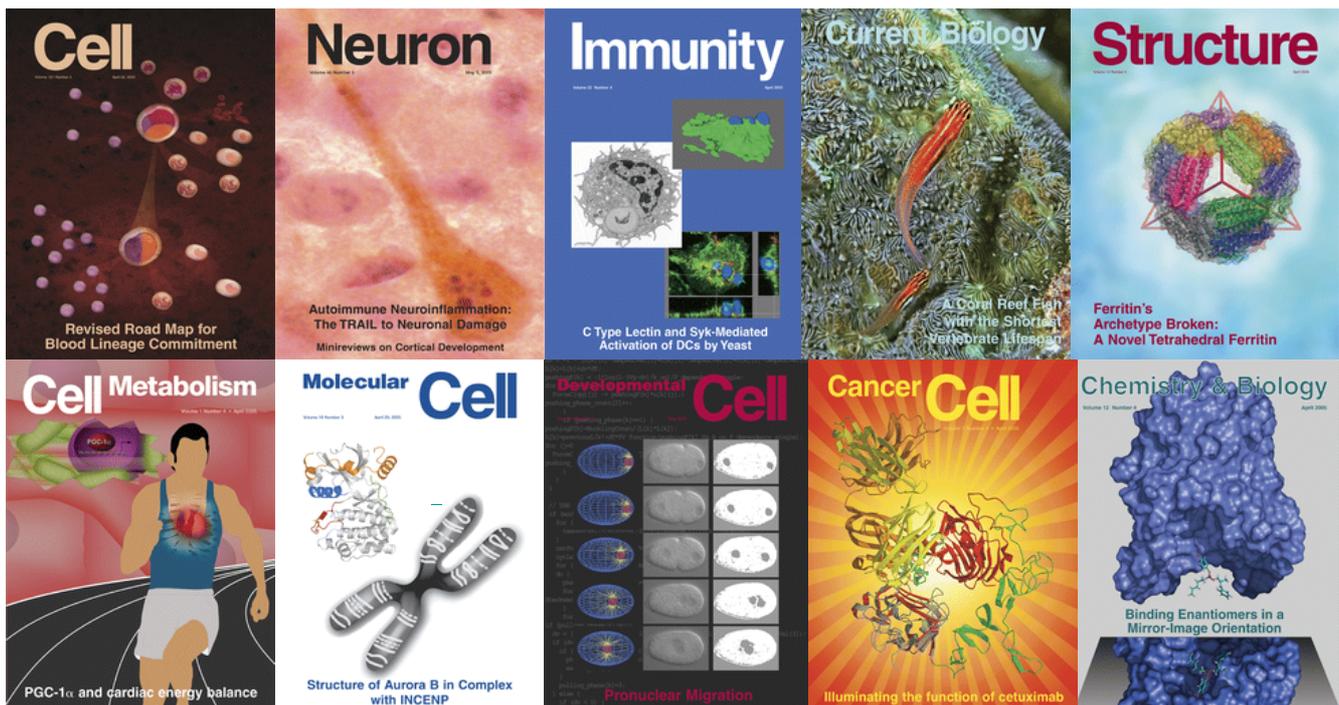
- Authors often feel the decision is in error
- At Cell Metabolism, we are open to considering appeals when there is a legitimate claim that a key aspect of the work has been misunderstood
- Authors should read the decision letters and reviews carefully, focus on scientific issues and send the editor a clear and concise explanation of the relevant points and how they plan to address them experimentally
- The editors may then consult additional reviewers, contact the original reviewers for further advice or stand by the original editorial decision.

Publishing Papers



- Cell Metabolism papers are typically published within 4-8 weeks of acceptance.
- Our goal: provide highest-quality production and figure reproduction.
- Production editors copy-edit for grammar, Cell Press style and formatting
- Cover is selected from authors' submissions
- Online opportunities (Immediate Early Publication and Featured Articles)
- Annotated table of contents are emailed when the issue comes out.

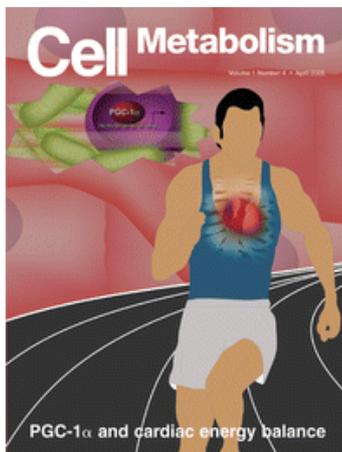
- Submitting your paper: aims & scope
- The decision letter, communicating with editors and responding to reviewers
- Ethics for authors
- Help with language issues
- Final tips



Journal Aims & Scope

- Every journal has its own scope, readership, and style – study the aims & scope, and read a few issues
- Cell Metabolism theme: homeostasis and underlying mechanisms, with emphasis on whole-body physiology
- Common Cell Metab “story types”: “genetic animal model + metabolic phenotype + some mechanism”, or “detailed molecular insight into a key homeostatic process”
- Topics not in the journal mainstream can fall into a grey area, where editorial discretion plays a role – example, IBP Cell Metab papers – very quantitative & in vitro, but high scientific quality, and the underlying process is key to glucose homeostasis
- Editorially, we aim to develop a clear theme and be consistent in our decisions

Cell Press Journals & Scopes



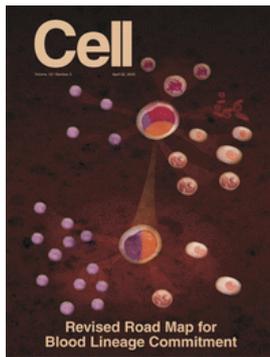
Cell Metabolism publishes reports of novel results in any area of metabolic biology, from molecular and cellular biology to translational studies. The unifying theme is homeostatic mechanisms in health and disease, from simpler model systems all the way to the clinic. Published work should not only be of exceptional significance within its field, but also of interest to researchers outside the immediate area.

Impact factor of this journal
2006: 16.710



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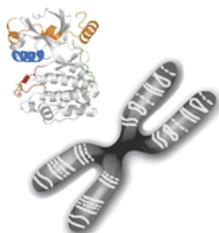


Cell Published biweekly, *Cell* includes original research articles of exceptional significance in areas including molecular biology, biochemistry, cancer research, cell biology, developmental biology, genetics, immunology, microbiology, neurobiology, plant biology, structural biology and virology. Submitted articles are reviewed rapidly for both technical quality and general interest, and, if accepted, are published within eight weeks

Impact factor of this journal

2006: 29.194

Molecular Cell



Molecular Cell defines the field of molecular biology with a relatively small number of significant papers, up to 15 articles per issue. Coverage will extend from structure to human diseases, concentrating on molecular analyses.

Impact factor of this journal

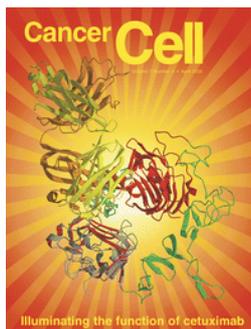
2006: 14.033

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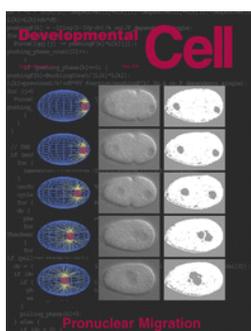
Cell Press Journals & Scopes



Cancer Cell publishes reports of novel results in any area of cancer research, from molecular and cellular biology to clinical oncology. The work should be not only of exceptional significance within its field but also of interest to researchers outside the immediate area. In addition, *Cancer Cell* findings in cancer research, diagnosis and treatment

Impact factor of this journal

2006: 24.077



Developmental Cell will consider papers in any area of cell biology and developmental biology. Examples of these include cell proliferation, intracellular targeting, cell polarity, membrane traffic, cell migration, stem cell biology, morphogenesis, developmental roles of genes or pathways and differentiation. The primary criterion for publication in *Developmental Cell*, as for all [Cell Press](#) journals, is new biological insight.

Impact factor of this journal

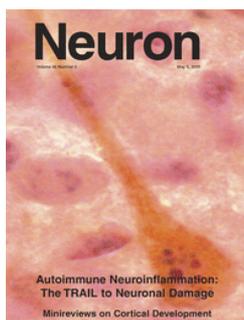
2006: 13.523

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Neuron The editors embrace interdisciplinary strategies which integrate biophysical, cellular, developmental, and molecular approaches with a systems approach to sensory, motor, and higher-order cognitive functions. *Neuron* serves as one of the premier intellectual forums of the entire neuroscience community.

Impact factor of this journal

2006: 13.894



Current Biology The journal delivers exciting primary research from all areas of biology, from molecular biology to evolution. *Current Biology* also features timely Dispatches - commentary by leading experts on the latest advances - as well as valuable full-length reviews and a vibrant magazine section that includes news, analysis and opinion, profiles of leading scientists and institutions, and informative, accessible guides to notable topics in biology.

Impact factor of this journal

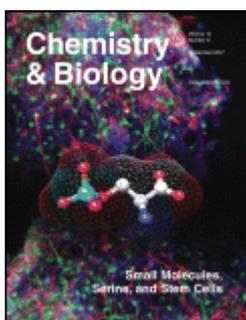
2006: 10.988

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Cell Press Journals & Scopes



Chemistry & Biology publishes reports of novel investigations in all areas at the interface of chemistry and biology. *Chemistry & Biology* strongly encourages submission of articles in which chemical tools are used to provide unique insight into biological function and mechanism.

Impact factor of this journal

2006: 6.677



Immunity follows the example of *Cell* in defining criteria for general interest that are just as important as technical quality in deciding on the acceptability of submissions. The area of interest is defined broadly beyond the obvious characterization of immune genes and cells, effectively including any and all research that contributes to understanding of infection and host defenses.

Impact factor of this journal

2006: 18.306

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The Decision Letter

- Read it carefully. These letters are written in a somewhat stereotyped, but not always obvious, way.
- If the possibility of resubmission is not mentioned at all (or if it is a “final decision”), the paper has been declined.
- If resubmission is hinted at or left as a possible option, then very substantial revision is a possibility.

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The Decision Letter, continued

- If revision is explicitly invited, then you are in good shape – but be sure to respond substantively to all reviewer and editor comments
- If the paper is accepted – congratulations!
- Don't forget to read the letter **VERY CAREFULLY!** Put it aside for a day or two, then go back and read it again.

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Point-by-point response

If you are submitting a revised version, be sure to include a detailed, point-by-point response of how you have responded to the reviewers' (and editor's, if relevant) comments.

You may

- Provide the requested data or make the correction
- Clarify or better discuss the point being raised
- (less frequent) – state that the point has already been addressed, the reviewer has made a factual error, or the requested data are outside the scope of the paper (need to justify this)

Example author responses

Reviewer: “How is mtGTP doing its job stimulating GSIS? Are we dealing with extracellular or intracellular Ca²⁺ stores and once that is clarified the actual mechanisms should be provided. How is mitochondrial membrane potential changing under the various experimental conditions?”

Author: The additional experiments added to this revised edition identify that the mtGTP signal appears to act via regulation of mitochondrial energy utilization and may shift metabolism from ATP production to mitochondrial calcium export.

- Extra-cellular calcium is essential for the mtGTP signal (Fig. 5a).
- Intramitochondrial calcium is trapped within the matrix in the absence of mtGTP (Fig. 7b)
- The mitochondrial membrane potential is spent when mtGTP is high and unspent when mtGTP is low (Fig. 6c).

Reviewer: “...the Ca²⁺ signal looks rather delayed as well as modest and it is difficult to reconcile such a response with the pronounced effect on insulin release.”

Author: The calcium signal looks delayed in the kinetic studies because, as mentioned, these experiments were performed at room temperature and not in a thermostated environment.

More example author responses

Reviewer: “The value of this paper would be greatly enhanced by additional phenotyping of the mice. The results show that TAG, DAG and ceramide levels are increased in livers with *GENEQ* overexpression. In addition to the foregoing metabolites, long chain acyl-CoAs have drawn considerable attention as potential mediators of insulin resistance. Genotype-related changes in these metabolites should be reported.”

Author: To address long chain fatty acyl CoAs, we have now collaborated with Dr. XXX and researchers at XX University. The levels of the most abundant species (C16:1, C18:1, C18:2) are higher in Liv-*GENEQ* mice than in WT mice. The other acyl CoA species are either unchanged or almost undetectable (see results section). These results indicate that increases in hepatic unsaturated long-chain acyl CoAs do not induce insulin resistance in our model. These data have been added to the revised manuscript. We also added to the discussion speculation that increases in saturated, rather than unsaturated, fatty acyl CoAs might provoke insulin resistance, since saturated fatty acyl CoAs were not increased in Liv-*GENEQ* mice.

Reviewer: “The data in Fig 6 is, however, very hard to see.”

Author: We have made an effort to improve the quality of these images.

Ethics for authors

- Multiple submissions
- Redundant publications
- Plagiarism
- Data fabrication and falsification
- Improper use of human subjects and animals in research
- Improper author contribution

Adherence to these guidelines is **ESSENTIAL**, as they underlie the integrity of peer-reviewed scientific work.

Language Editing Service

Recommend language editing companies

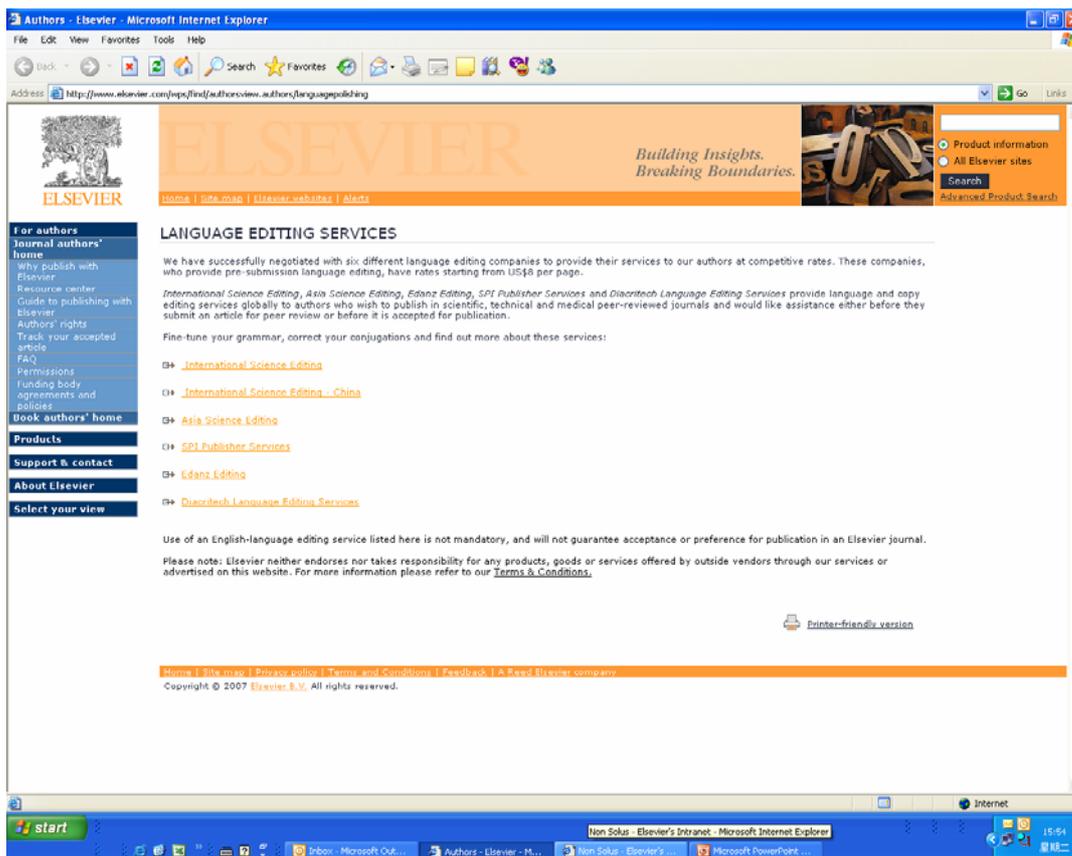
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<http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/authorsview.authors/languagepolishing>

Price rates starts from \$8/page

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Elsevier website for recommend language editing companies



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Some final tips

- Take the time when planning your project to think about what question you are asking, and what the best way is to ask it.
- For this task, it's important to read the existing literature, and equally important to stay atop the current literature.
- Journals are looking for STORIES that advance our knowledge.
- Don't write your paper in "chronological" order.
- Be sure to include a well-researched introduction, and insightful discussion.
- If your paper is in a "small" field, or is on the fringes of the scope of a journal, suggesting qualified reviewers can be helpful.

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Thank you

Questions?

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