



Name: Emily White, PhD

Position: Senior Editor

Affiliation: Nature Microbiology

Location: London, UK

Pronouns: She/Her

Please briefly describe your current role in your position

I handle microbiome and symbiosis research at the journal from submission through to acceptance.

What is your terminal and/or current position in academia?

PhD student

How did you hear about your current position? Was it a career option that you were aware about during your educational process?

Through a Google search! I was initially looking at post docs whilst writing up my thesis but I came across this job and felt it was a much better fit for me. It wasn't on my radar before then.

How did you end up working at your current affiliation?

After my productive Google search, I applied and then went through multiple rounds of interviews. I started as an associate editor at the end of 2016.

How long have you been working at your current affiliation?

6+ years

What type of position is your current job?

Hybrid (Remote & In-Person)

Is your role more a managerial or individual contributor role?

Mix of individual contributor and team work

What are your day to day tasks that you perform in your position?

Decision making! Reading papers, reviewer reports and rebuttals, communicating with authors, commissioning content, writing editorials and attending conferences or visiting labs. And lots of emails.

What do you like best about your job?

Reading some of the best microbiology research before anyone else, helping to publish great papers and improve them in the process, interacting with researchers and learning something new every day.

What do you dislike about your job?

Lots of decision making, a lot of negative decisions (unfortunately we reject a lot of papers) and the workload is high.



ISME

Career Choices for Microbial Ecologists



If your job is outside of academia, what is similar and what is different about your current job and your terminal position in academia?

I no longer work on my own research project and so my knowledge of the field needs to be much broader. You learn a little bit of everything instead of being an expert in one thing. However, there are similarities: problem solving, reading the literature, attending conferences and interacting with researchers at all levels.

How did your microbial ecology education prepare you for your current position?

Having a good background knowledge in the microbiome and various methods has been essential, as it can be a steep learning curve as a new editor.

What skills do you wish you learned during your educational process that would better prepare you for your current role (e.g. machine learning, management skills, etc.)?

More training on anything to do with 'omics and computational biology, as well as time and project management. You are juggling many things at once as an editor.

Do you have any recommendation and/or tips for early career microbial ecologists looking for jobs similar to yours?

Read widely, be curious and interested about research outside of your immediate areas, look out for job ads, follow journals on Twitter, and talk to editors at conferences! We're a friendly bunch.