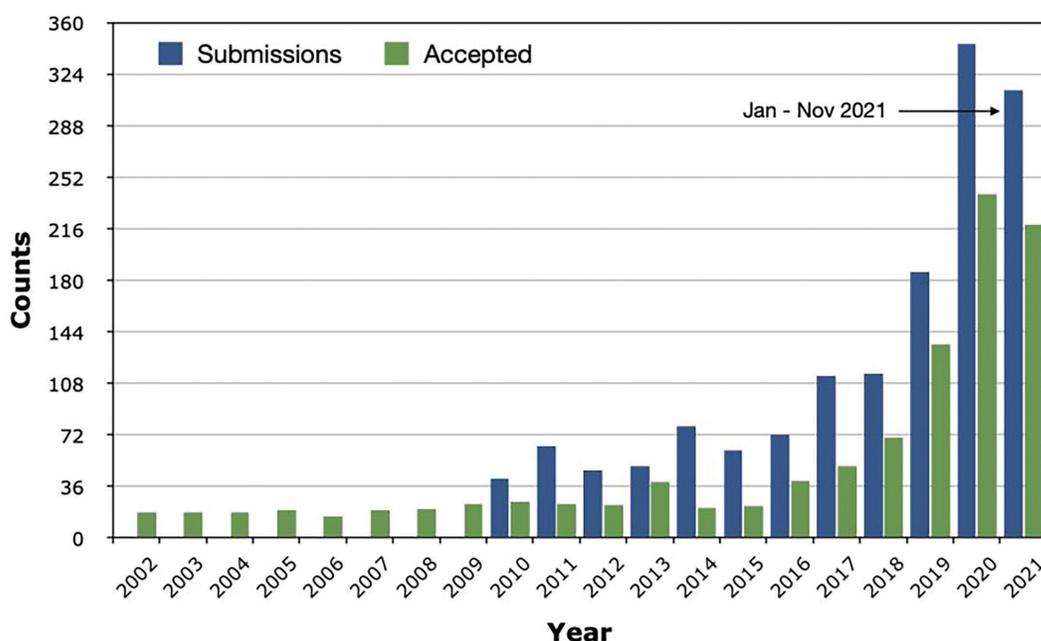


Journal Status Report 2021

Manuscript submissions to the Philippine Journal of Science (PJS; philjournalsci.dost.gov.ph) in the first eleven months of 2021 were at the rate of 28.45 ± 11.60 per month, which is comparable to that (28.75 ± 12.64) in 2020. The acceptance rates in 2020 and 2021 were at 69.89 and 69.51%, respectively. Presented below are the annual figures of submitted (blue) and accepted (green) manuscripts from the year 2002 to the first eleven months of 2021.



Submissions became 5.75 times higher in 2020 as compared to those (5.00 per month) in 2015, while the average yearly acceptance rate remained stable at $66.27 \pm 4.21\%$. Without exception, the Editorial Office subjects every submission to a single-blind review process involving at least two independent expert-evaluators, and an editorial decision is rendered immediately after the first round when major manuscript revision is unanimously recommended. In most cases, the final decision is made on publication suitability after two rounds of evaluation—a policy that has been adapted to allow the concerned corresponding authors to resubmit their research findings elsewhere without undue delay. The PJS peer-review policy also safeguards the journal publisher—the Department of Science and Technology (DOST)—from potential conflict of interest in the implementation of its publicly-funded programs and initiatives. The DOST is a leading provider of research and development (R&D) grants and financial assistance to qualified members of the Philippine science community.

Duration of peer-review process. The average length of peer-review was reduced by an average rate of 8.6 weeks per year to 10.72 weeks in 2020 from 62.3 weeks in 2015. The steady reduction was achieved over time despite the almost six-fold increase in the number of submissions from 2015–2020. Review duration is reckoned from manuscript receipt date to the time that a decision is communicated to the corresponding author by the Editor-in-Chief concerning its publication suitability.

Submissions by discipline. The PJS is a multidisciplinary journal, and the following areas were the top three contributors accounting for 62.3% of all submissions in 2020: Biology (113 out of 345 or 32.8%); Agriculture & Forestry

(18%); and Nutrition, Food Science & Technology (11.6%). In 2019, the three leading contributors were Biology (26.3%); Agriculture & Forestry (22%); and Nutrition, Food Science & Technology (11.3%)—in 2018 they were Agriculture & Forestry (27%); Nutrition, Food Science & Technology (21.7%); and Biology (14.8%). Collectively, their combined share represents 62.3% of all submissions from 2017–2019. In the first eleven months of 2021, Biology (27.8%); Agriculture & Forestry (21.7%); and Nutrition, Food Science & Technology (10.54%) together contributed 60.1% of the total submissions (313).

The figures indicate that the palpable rise in submissions in recent years was not driven by a few dominant research areas but by a proportionate increase in productive research activity across a broad spectrum. The PJS has maintained its multidisciplinary character with no apparent tendency to evolve into a specialized journal.

Affiliation of corresponding authors. More than seventy-eight percent (78.3%) of corresponding authors in the first eleven months of 2021 were affiliated with Philippine-based institutions, which is lower than that (87.2%) in 2020. The average annual share of local corresponding authors from 2015–2020 was $79.76\% \pm 9\%$. In 2015, only 67% of the 60 corresponding authors were working in the country.

In 2021, 44.41% of submissions resulted from successful collaborations of authors from two or more higher education institutions (HEIs) or research centers. The figure is almost ten percentage points higher than the yearly average of $34.88\% \pm 2.47\%$ in the last five years ending 2020. The average number of authors per manuscript in 2021 is 4.35, which is slightly higher to the average of 4.11 ± 0.42 in the last six years ending 2020.

Corresponding authors from three Philippine HEIs—University of the Philippines (UP) Los Baños (6.1%), UP Diliman (4.79%), and UP Manila (1.28%)—contributed 12.14% of all manuscripts (313) that were received so far in 2021. Those from 14 other HEIs contributed another 17.57% to the total. In 2016, 17 HEIs already accounted for 68.1% of the total submissions, and the recent figures mean that scientists and researchers from more HEIs and research centers in the country are opting to publish their valuable research findings in the PJS.

In AY 2019–2020, the Commission on Higher Education (ched.gov.ph) accredited a total of 1,975 HEIs (87.5% private)—including one national university (UP), 111 other nationally funded state universities and colleges (SUCs), and 121 public institutions that are financed by local government units (LCUs). A total of 362 HEIs were accredited with the highest status of Level IV in terms of the quality of the faculty, services, and facilities. In AY 2018–2019, there were 1,963 accredited HEIs (87.7% private), including 111 SUCs and 118 LCUs.

Less than 1% of HEIs were offering tenable Ph.D. degree programs in science, technology, engineering sciences, and mathematics due to the lack of qualified Ph.D. faculty to handle advanced graduate courses and to supervise the dissertation research of Ph.D. students. In AY 2019–2020, the percentage of faculty with doctoral degrees was 15%, which is lower than that (17%) in the previous academic year.

Provenance of peer-reviewers. More than five hundred and fifty (567) experts generously served as independent reviewers so far in 2021, with 43.2% of them based in the Philippines. Their corresponding numbers were 684 (local: 52.8%) and 412 (47.3%) in 2020 and 2019, respectively. From 2016–2020, foreign reviewers represented $49.16\% \pm 5.39\%$ per year. The expert advice and professional vigilance of our reviewers have been critical in improving steadily the scientific content and presentation quality of PJS publications. Even for unsuccessful submissions, the constructive criticisms that the PJS provides to the concerned authors are helpful in enhancing the quality of their work.

The PJS has been able to enlarge its pool of local reviewers and strengthen the practice of self-regulation and meaningful participation of more members of the Philippine science community. In 2016, only 45.12% (74) of the 164 reviewers were based in the country. On the other hand, the incisive criticisms provided by foreign reviewers is an efficient and less costly means of transferring advanced scientific knowledge and cutting-edge technical skills to Filipino researchers while keeping them working in the country. The PJS strives to maintain a healthy balance between the number of local and foreign reviewers in evaluating publication suitability.

Other publication issues. In 2021, the PJS published a total of six bimonthly regular issues starting in February 2021. In the previous year, a total of six issues were published, including a special issue on nuclear science and technology in January 2020. The PJS has also increased its presence in social media to broadcast and highlight the vetted findings of Filipino scientists and researchers to a wider audience.

The Special Issue on Philippine Biodiversity Conservation was also published in May 2021, containing 44 articles representing 77.19% of the total number of submissions; 42 of them featured local corresponding authors. One hundred thirty-three (133) reviewers (local: 44.36%) generously shared their valuable time and expertise in the evaluation process. The average duration of review was 15.85 weeks.

The publisher continues to waive journal publication charges for accepted articles, which are fully accessible online without subscription restriction. Due to budgetary constraints, however, the PJS only produces printed copies of the four regular quarterly issues per volume while publishing only the focused (special) and supplementary issues online.

Editorial Board updates. The PJS community mourns the untimely passing of Professor Dr. Consolacion Ragasa (28 August 1955–15 April 2021), who served on the Editorial Board for more than 10 years. She will be greatly missed.

Professor Dr. Fortunato Sevilla III has been appointed by DOST Secretary Fortunato de la Peña upon the recommendation of the Editor-in-Chief and the Editorial Board to serve as a new Board Member for a period of three years starting in January 2022. He is a member of the National Academy of Science and Technology Philippines and a professor emeritus of the University of Santo Tomas in Manila. His field of specialization is instrumentation and sensor chemistry.

Shared sense of purpose. The PJS is a peer-reviewed journal that publishes research articles satisfying the criteria of originality, novelty, and scientific merit. Its distinct role as a Philippine-based publication is to serve as a veritable source of information about the current state of scientific R&D in the country, including the existential task of producing the next generation of competent and independent Filipino scientists and researchers. The PJS also functions as an instrument for strengthening the practice of self-regulation and metric-based decision-making in the domestic science community and the society at large.

The PJS has been proactive and vigilant in implementing the provisions of the Republic Act (RA) 9147 and RA 10631 in the conduct and reporting of R&D investigations within the Philippine archipelago. RA 9147 is also known as an Act Providing for the Conservation and Protection of Wildlife Resources and their Habitats, Appropriating Funds therefore and for Other Purposes, while RA 10631 is an amendment of RA 8485 also known as the Animal Welfare Act of 1998. In applicable cases, the corresponding authors are required to show proof that the conduct of their research investigations complies with the implementing rules and regulations of RA 9147 and RA 10631.

We emphasize that the critical milestones that have been accomplished in the past decade of the 21st century were hard-earned and made possible only by the sustained contributions and critical support of many stakeholders—from the journal readers, authors, reviewers, editorial board members, publisher, and technical staff at the PJS Editorial Office and the DOST–Science & Technology Information Institute.

CAESAR SALOMA
Editor-in-Chief