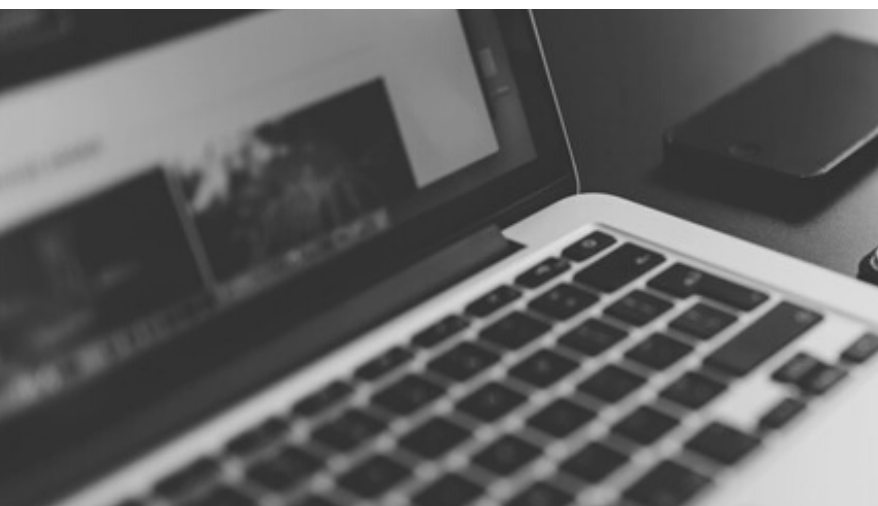


The BELS Letter

Board of Editors in the Life Sciences



Maintaining and promoting editorial proficiency in the life sciences



From the President

This is a big month indeed for BELS news! I hope by now you've had a chance to read the email Tom Gegeny and I recently sent introducing certification maintenance. The board voted unanimously to move in this direction as we seek to match industry standards for credentialing programs and to continue to uphold the rigor and value of the ELS certification.

Please take time to read the article about this step elsewhere in this issue, which we hope will answer many of the questions you may have. Other important resources, including [FAQs](#), also can be found online at bels.org.

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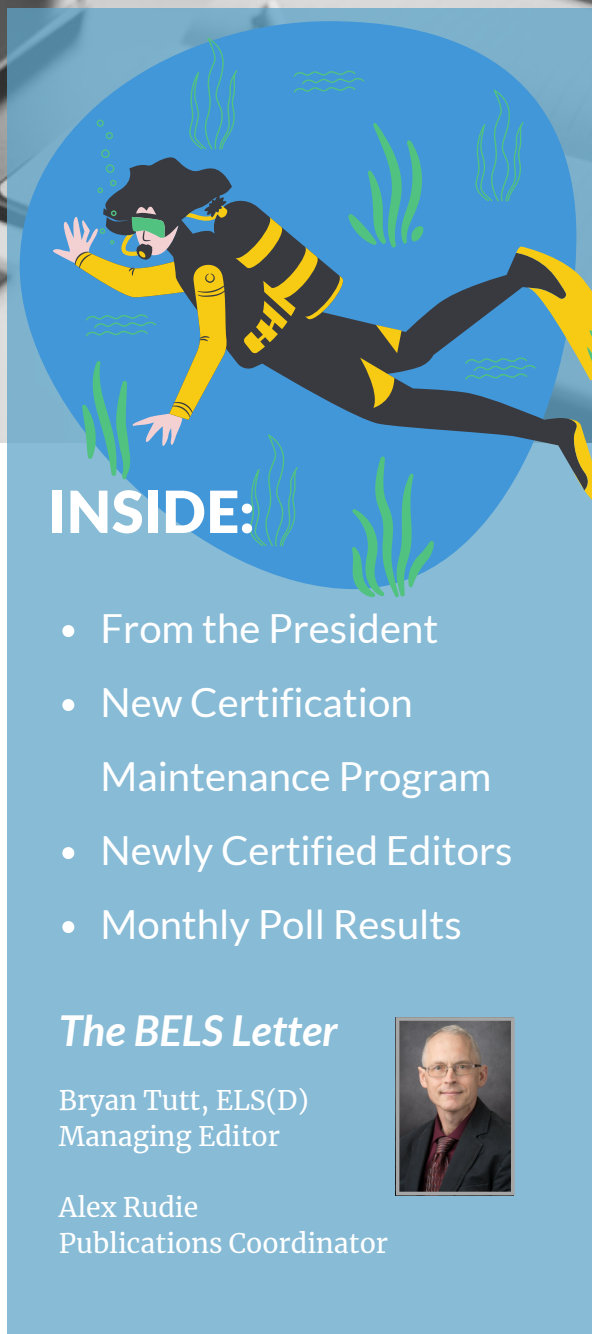
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- From the President
- New Certification Maintenance Program
- Newly Certified Editors
- Monthly Poll Results

The BELS Letter

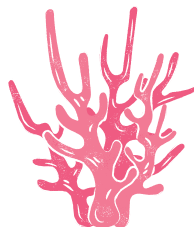
Bryan Tutt, ELS(D)
Managing Editor

Alex Rudie
Publications Coordinator



From the President

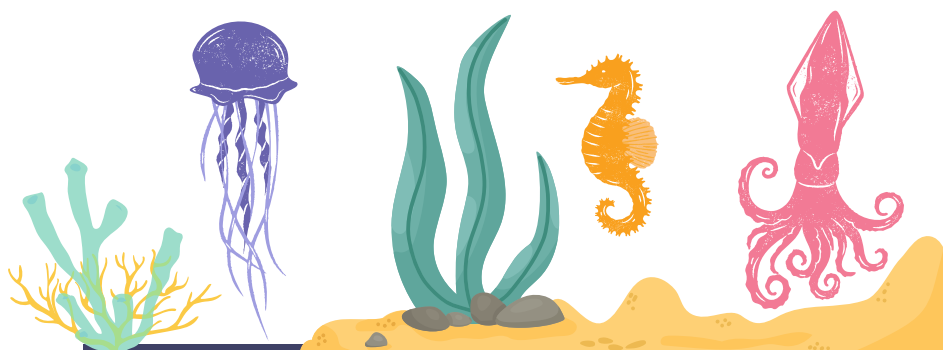
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Many of you are already involved in the activities that can be applied toward recertification. Our goal is to make this process as easy as possible. We plan to offer informational programs over the next several months. In the meantime, we are here to help in any way we can!

As I've shared previously, our DEI Task Force continues to explore ways to cultivate an accessible, diverse, and inclusive organization and has developed a survey to learn more about how BELS members use DEI-related resources in their work. The information collected from this survey will be used to compile beneficial resources, identify gaps and areas of need, and inform our future efforts to support BELS members. Look for the survey in your email inbox later this month.

Melanie Fridl Ross, MSJ, ELS
BELS President



BELS Member Discounts

BELS has partnered with resource providers to offer valuable members-only discounts on products and services that help make your job easier. These offers are exclusive to BELS members and should not be shared with any non-member.

BELS member discounts include a **30% discount** on a single license of PerfectIt software. PerfectIt improves consistency, ensures quality, and saves time. BELS members also receive a **20% discount** on reference books such as *Scientific Style and Format: The CSE Manual for Authors, Editors, and Publishers* and *The Chicago Manual of Style*. The discount can be applied to both online and print versions of these books. Visit bels.org and click on Member Resources to claim your discounts today!



**Scientific
Style and
Format**

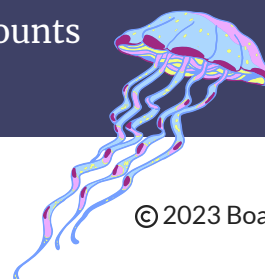
The CSE Manual for Authors,
Editors, and Publishers

8th Edition
Council of Science Editors

**The
Chicago
Manual of Style**

SEVENTEENTH EDITION

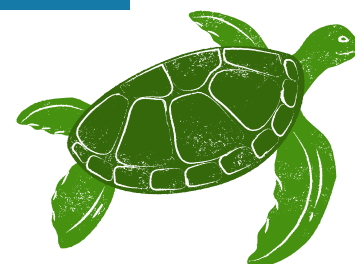
THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE
for Writers, Editors, and Publishers



Elevating the ELS: BELS Announces New Certification Maintenance Program



Thomas Gegeny, ELS
Chair, Certification Maintenance Committee



Background/Rationale:

In 1991, the newly founded Board of Editors in the Life Sciences began a first-of-its-kind program to certify editors in the life sciences. Qualified candidates who passed a multiple-choice certification examination were thereafter certified and could use the credential “ELS” as a professional designation to recognize their achievement. To bring our certification program in line with current best practices, we are introducing a program through which all ELS-certified editors will be able to maintain their certification over time.

In the more than three decades since the creation of BELS certification, much has happened in our profession. Technology has reshaped how we work and what skills are required; style guides, ethical guidance, and reporting guidelines have vastly expanded; scientific publication practices have evolved; and of course, scientific and medical advances have burgeoned to ever-astounding new heights. Editors have had to keep up with these advances to remain effective in their work. Since BELS was founded, other groups in medical communications have also developed similarly structured professional certification programs, including the MWC (Medical Writer Certified) credential from the American Medical Writers Association and the CMPP designation (Certified Medical Publication Professional) from the International Society for Medical Publication Professionals. These newer certification programs are aligned with current best practices in professional certification: the initial certification is valid for a designated period, after which the certificant must maintain the credential by demonstrating professional development and education through various qualifying activities (or by retaking the examination).

BELS has considered the possibility of certification maintenance for several years. A task force, and later a committee, conducted research on the certification programs of peer organizations and other professional groups. Their work resulted in the recommendation to the BELS Board of Directors that certification maintenance as a core component of the ELS certification program be adopted. This recommendation has now been approved, and BELS will launch a

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certification maintenance program based on a 5-year renewal cycle starting on January 1, 2024.

Certification maintenance will elevate the ELS credential by encouraging professionals to seek continuing education; to stay current with new trends, evolving guidelines, and best practices; and to be better engaged through demonstrated service and contributions where appropriate.

About the program:

Who: All ELS-certified individuals, regardless of the year of certification (past or future), with the exception of those who have retired from the profession (see below).

When: All individuals who certify in 2024 and beyond will be required to submit documentation of qualifying activities or retake the exam by the end of the fifth year following the year in which they earned their credential (i.e., December 2029 and beyond). Those who earned their credential before January 1, 2024, will be on track to renew their certification by the end of 2028.

What: Renewing certification will involve pursuing qualifying activities (e.g., attending webinars, workshops, and conferences; membership in professional societies; teaching and mentoring others). Such actions are grouped into the categories of Education and Professional Development, Service, Contributions, and Experience. Each activity has a point value (for example, a 1-hour educational activity is worth 1 point), and a total of 50 points will be required to renew certification for another 5 years.

How: Certificants will track their points and activities on the BELS website by using a simple form tied to their individual account. A variety of relevant activities will qualify for points within this system, and BELS will randomly audit 10% of certification maintenance applications to ensure compliance. Additionally, having earned Diplomate status—ELS(D)—will automatically count for the full 50 points for 1 renewal cycle; in subsequent cycles, the normal recertification system will apply.

Although BELS membership is not required to renew certification, BELS members can renew certification at a discounted rate. All individuals who maintain

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Elevating the ELS: BELS Announces New Certification Maintenance Program



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certification will be listed on the BELS website. Those who do not maintain certification will not be listed and should not continue to use the ELS credential. Individuals who retire from the profession can request that their names be listed under a special “Retired” category for ELS and ELS(D).

Conclusion:

Certification maintenance will elevate the ELS credential by aligning the BELS credentialing program with industry standards in professional certification, which already have been adopted by allied organizations. An [FAQ document](#) and other information about [certification maintenance](#) are now on the BELS website, located in the new “Certification Maintenance” portion of the website menu. Look for more information and announcements in the coming weeks and months, including resource documents, tutorials, and live programs with BELS leadership and staff to discuss certification maintenance and answer questions. Thank you for your support of the BELS mission to “maintain and promote a standard of proficiency in editing in the life sciences” —onward and upward!



Member Login

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Certification Maintenance

Certification Maintenance Requirements for the ELS Credential

Beginning in January 2024, individuals who are certified as Editors in the Life Sciences, ELS or ELS(D), by the Board of Editors in the Life Sciences (BELS) must renew their certification every 5 years. The renewal deadline will be December 31 of the fifth year from when the certification was earned or last renewed.

Certificants may renew their ELS/ELS(D) certification by earning credits for qualified professional development and related activities (documented with a credit tracker) OR by retaking and passing the BELS exam.

Quick Links

[Member Resources](#)

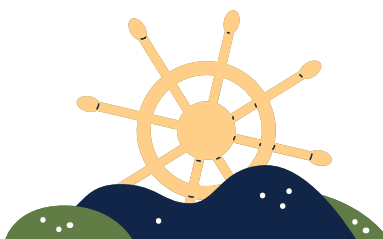
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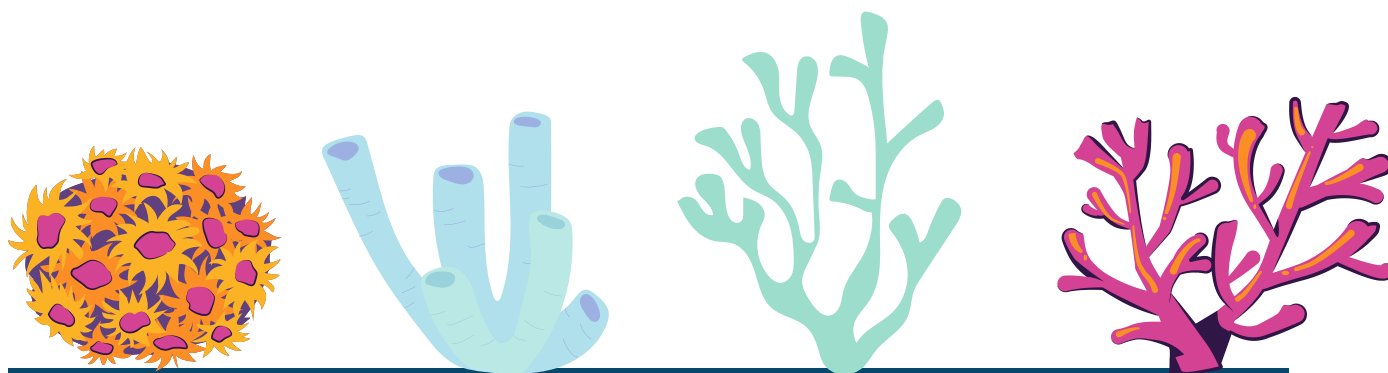
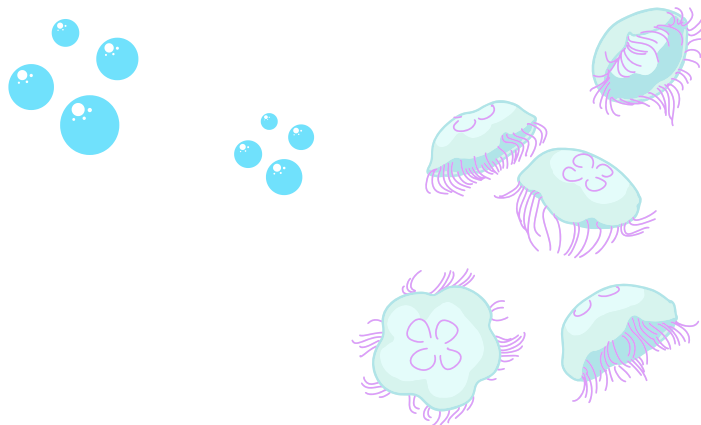
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Newly Certified Editors

Taiwo Ayeleso, ELS
Jessica Beifuss, ELS
Alison Danson, ELS
Diana Flynn, ELS
Amaritpal Kaur Hoonjan, MSc, ELS
Hazel O'Connor, PhD, ELS
Urvika Pawar, ELS
Peter Seeber, ELS
Kirby Snell, ELS



Be There With BELS On!

BELS branded merchandise is now available! Now you can proudly display the BELS logo on your tote bag, mug, travel tumbler, sweatshirt, laptop case, or mouse pad. They make great gifts for colleagues, employees, friends, family, and yourself! Please visit www.bels.org/store to order.



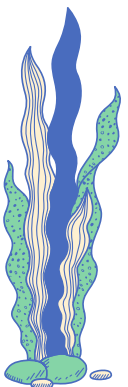
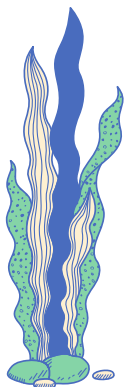
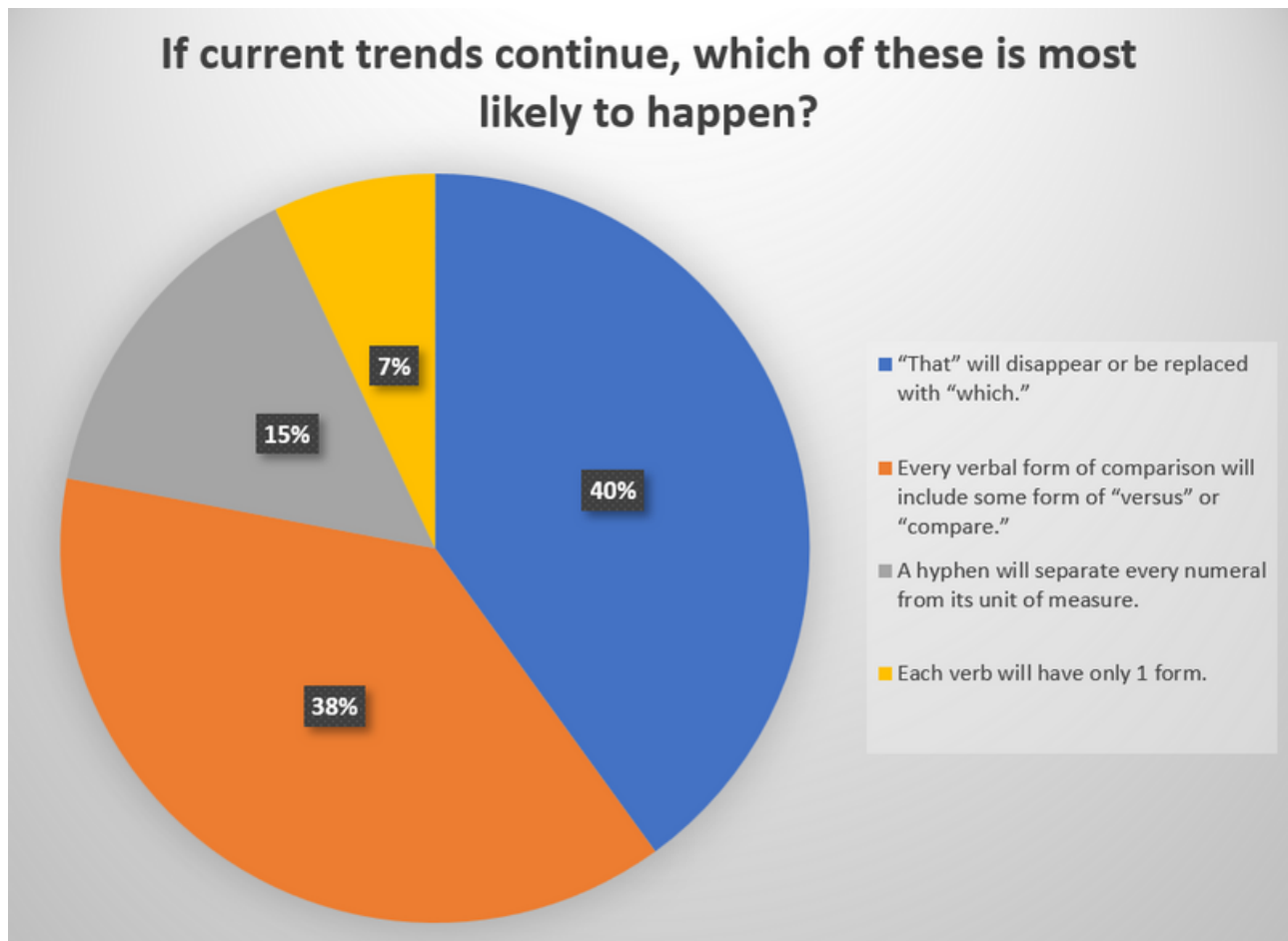
Monthly Poll Results



July's poll asked BELS members to predict changes in the English language. The most popular answer was, "'That' will disappear or be replaced with 'which,'" followed closely by, "Every verbal form of comparison will include some form of 'versus' or 'compare.'"

Least popular was, "Each verb will have only 1 form." Although this would make English easier to learn, most of us agree that it's not likely to happen.

Visit bels.org to participate in this month's poll, in which you can vent about which aspect of headings bothers you most.



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Sheryle Hazard, CAE
Executive Director

The Board of Editors in the Life Sciences (BELS) was founded in 1991 to evaluate the proficiency of manuscript editors in the life sciences and to award credentials similar to those obtainable in other professions.

Potential employers and clients of manuscript editors usually have no objective way to assess the proficiency of editors. For their part, editors are frustrated by the difficulty of demonstrating their ability. That is why both employers and editors so often resort to personal references or ad hoc tests, not always with satisfactory results. The need for an objective test of editorial skill has long been recognized.

To meet that need, BELS developed a process for testing and evaluating proficiency in editing in the life sciences. The Board administers two examinations—one for certification and one for diplomate status. The examinations, written by senior life-science editors assisted by testing experts, focus on the principles and practices of scientific editing in English.

