

The BELS Letter

Board of Editors in the Life Sciences

Promoting editorial proficiency in the life sciences

From the President

Are you ready to level up your editing status? If you passed the ELS examination more than 2 years ago and have at least 6 years of documented editorial experience, you're eligible to become a candidate for diplomate status. The BELS diplomate program is designed to demonstrate exceptional editorial proficiency.



Join us for this month's virtual get-together on October 28 to learn more about the program and how

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The BELS Letter

Karen Stanwood, ELS
(with Evee)
Managing Editor



Alex Rudie
Publications Coordinator

From the President

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to achieve the next level in your professional development. The session will be led by a recently awarded diplomate, Erica A.W. Goodoff, ELS(D), as well as Jane Krauhs, PhD, ELS(D), Chair of the Diplomate Examination Development Committee. Learn from Erica what she prepared and how and hear from Jane how the evaluation process works.

Also this month, BELS is launching its first computer-based testing option for the ELS certification. I want to thank all of the volunteers who helped make this possible. See the article by Naomi L. Ruff, PhD, ELS, chair of the Certification Examination Development committee, on page 3 for the complete list of volunteers and the process they used this past year to keep the exam up to date and ensure it's always improving.

*Kristina Wasson-Blader, PhD, ELS
BELS President*

Volunteer on a BELS Committee

Want to get more involved with BELS? Consider volunteering for one of our committees that are taking on new, exciting initiatives!

Committees include:

- Budget and finance
- Membership and marketing
- Certification exam development
- Diplomate exam development
- Exam administration

Explore the committees and submit an interest form [here](#).



Send in Your Poll Questions!



The monthly poll questions are often posed by Jane Krauhs, PhD, ELS(D), but any BELS member can send them in. In fact, our October question (posted [here](#)) comes from Jean Marie Cassidy, ELS. Thank you, Jean!

We welcome YOUR editing-related question for a future poll! Check out past questions [here](#) and email yours to Jane at jmkrauhs@comcast.net.

ELS Exam News

Exam Development Update

*by Naomi L. Ruff, PhD, ELS
Chair, Certification Examination Development*

The BELS exam has been around for almost 30 years, but it is not static—updating it is an ongoing process. The past year has been even busier than usual for exam development activities, which fall into 5 major categories:

1. Jobs analysis
2. Question evaluation
3. Writing new questions
4. Reviewing questions
5. Quality control and computer-based testing

Jobs Analysis

The goal of the Jobs Analysis was to revisit what is critical for an editor in the life sciences to know; that is, what should be on the exam. In late 2019, BELS worked with a vendor, Schroeder Measurement Technologies, Inc. (SMT), to review source materials about editing in the life sciences and to interview editors who work in a range of environments, have expertise in various life sciences fields, and have different amounts of experience. This information was used to draft a new content outline for the exam, which a group of BELS-certified editors (subject-matter experts, SMEs) then vigorously discussed and revised. The new outline, which was finalized in early 2020, can be found on the BELS website and in the updated [Study Guide](#).

Question Evaluation

To ensure that the BELS exam remains both challenging and fair, we review how test takers (as a group) perform on each question. If the question's statistics are outside of the expected range, we review it to identify any problems that could explain the results. As appropriate, we then improve the question, set it aside for a major overhaul, or discard it altogether.

This year, we also needed to ensure that all active questions matched up with the new content outline. Each question was assigned to a domain or subdomain in the outline, and the assignments were reviewed and approved by a group of SMEs.

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ELS Exam News

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Writing New Questions

Writing new questions is an ongoing process for BELS and is usually handled by a standing Examination Development Committee. This year we had a bigger push, and involved more writers, to ensure that our question database covered every subdomain of the new outline.

Reviewing Questions

We review all questions in multiple rounds to confirm that they are reasonable, actually test what we intend for them to test, adhere to best practices for multiple-choice questions, and meet our additional standards for the BELS exam. For example, although some questions are based on text from a particular field within the life sciences, no question should require field-specific knowledge to arrive at the correct answer. Similarly, no knowledge of any specific style should be needed, and we avoid any kind of trick or “gotcha” questions. SMEs from a range of backgrounds participate in the reviews so that the exam is seen from a variety of perspectives.

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COMING THIS MONTH!

Beginning **October 15**, the BELS certification exam will be available to take online. If your application for candidacy has already been accepted, all you need to do is register to sit for the exam on the BELS website. If you've not yet applied, [click here](#) to learn more!

ELS Exam News

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Quality Control and Computer-Based Testing

Before publication, the exam is reviewed to check that it does not contain redundant items or questions that cue each other (that is, give away the answer). It is then copyedited and reviewed for any inconsistencies that might be distracting to test takers. With the introduction of computer-based testing this year, several of us also walked through the online version to make sure that the system works as we expect it to.

Note that, while we have logistical support from an association management company (Association Development Services) and our testing vendor (SMT), the bulk of this work has been done by BELS-certified volunteers, some of whom have put in many hours of work over multiple rounds of review. At this time, I would like to recognize and extend my deepest gratitude to all of the volunteers who have contributed to exam development over the past year.



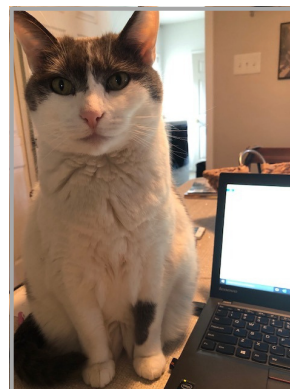
Thank You!

Louise Adam	Lisa Kisner
Susan Aiello	Jane Krauhs
Kim Berman	Laura Ninger
Melissa Bogen	Janet Novak
Stephen Bublitz	Nadine Odo
Linda Conheady	June Oshiro
Eloise DeHaan	Steve Palmer
Stephanie Deming	Ginger Peschke
Barbara Gastel	Colleen Sauber
Norman Grossblatt	Chris Small
Julie Hinds	

Work From Home Gallery



Deborah Bowman's granddaughter Tessa is thrilled to have her parents home with her, but her daddy (Deborah's son-in-law Jay) is a bit frustrated by Tessa's hands-on work style. We think Tessa is doing a great job!



"Looks like I need to have a meeting with my supervisor. I'll bet she wants to talk about my performance."
~ Karen Stanwood

(Brave is a bit of a micromanager.)



Anxious about the coronavirus, Eloise DeHaan started working from home in early March. She feels fortunate to have a comfortable setup but misses seeing colleagues and hearing their voices. "Meeting on Zoom and Teams isn't like chatting in the kitchenette with someone you don't actually work with but are happy to see."



Stephen Bublitz's coworker, Rossi, is fully embracing the open floor plan workspace.

BELS Featured Members



Julie

BELS
Board of Editors in the Life Sciences


MEMBER PROFILE

Julie Hinds, ELS

Scientific Publications Manager
American Society of Radiologic Technologists

Year of ELS certification:
2018

Grammar pet peeve:
incorrect use of ‘comprise’



Melissa

BELS
Board of Editors in the Life Sciences

MEMBER PROFILE

Melissa L. Bogen, ELS

Medical Editor and Owner
Bogen Editorial Services
www.linkedin.com/in/melissabogen

Year of ELS certification:
2001

Grammar pet peeve:
lack of serial commas

BELS Featured Members



BELS
Board of Editors in the Life Sciences

MEMBER PROFILE

Laura H. Brockway, ELS

Assistant Vice President of Marketing
Texas Medical Liability Trust
www.tmlt.org

Year of ELS certification:
2005

Grammar pet peeve:
capitalization of
non-proper nouns



BELS
Board of Editors in the Life Sciences

MEMBER PROFILE

Katharine O'Moore-Klopf, ELS

Owner, KOK Edit

Year of ELS certification:
2008

Grammar pet peeve:
when editors become so rigid
in following "rules" that they
ruin the author's voice and the
flow of the manuscript

Call for Nominations

BELS Is Seeking Nominations for President-Elect

Would you like to be an integral part of shaping the future of BELS, or do you know someone who would? Then send us your nominations for President-Elect!

The nominee must be a (dues-paying) member of BELS and willing to fulfill the duties of the office (see below).

To submit a nomination, please complete the online [Nomination form](#) no later than **midnight on October 23**. Questions? Please contact Nominations and Elections Committee Chair Stephen Palmer, PhD, ELS, at spalmer@texasheart.org.

What the Office of President-Elect Entails

The term begins on **January 1, 2021**.

During the **first year**, the President-Elect assists the current President and gains experience in BELS activities. This is in preparation to step into the role of President for the next 2 years, followed by an additional year as Immediate Past President. The President-Elect is trained and mentored by the current President, with other Board members providing additional support throughout the term.

The President-Elect helps the President with planning BELS meetings and events; supports membership engagement and retention efforts; and helps with recruitment of committee volunteers. The President-Elect serves on the Board of Directors, advises the President, and serves as a backup for the President's duties.

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Call for Nominations

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In the **second and third years** in office, the President-Elect assumes the role of President. Specific duties include:

- Overseeing the general management of BELS
- Acting as the primary liaison with the association management service
- Setting the dates and agendas of meetings and presiding over them
- Appointing committee chairs and non-elected members of the Board of Directors
- Ensuring that the decisions of the Board of Directors are carried out
- Responding to queries (not related to exams) from members and others
- Representing BELS to the larger scientific and publishing communities

In the **fourth year**, the President will move into the position of Immediate Past President, supporting and advising the new President while serving a final year on the Board of Directors.

Although most BELS business is conducted remotely through email and online meetings, one or two in-person meetings are held each year (when able), traditionally in conjunction with the Council of Science Editors or American Medical Writers Association conferences.



Officers

Kristina Wasson-Blader, PhD, ELS
President

Lisa Kisner, ELS, CAE
Secretary

Christine F. Wogan, MS, ELS
Treasurer

Thomas P. Gegeny, MS, ELS
Past President

Board of Directors

Jane Krauhs, PhD, ELS(D)
Chair, Diplomate Examination Development

Leslie E. Neistadt, ELS
Chair, Registrar and Examination
Administration

Stephen N. Palmer, PhD, ELS
Chair, Nominations and Elections

Naomi L. Ruff, PhD, ELS
Chair, Certification Examination
Development

Karen Stanwood, ELS
Chair, Membership and Marketing

Stephen Bublitz, ELS
Board Member at Large

John D. McDonald, MA, DTM, ELS
Board Member at Large

Non-voting Board Member
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.