

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE: Head of publishing (Updated Jan 2025)

THE REGIONAL STUDIES ASSOCIATION

The RSA is the global community for regional and urban research, development and policy. As a learned society for regional studies, it provides an authoritative voice for researchers, students and practitioners from disciplines including economics, geography, political science, planning, urban sociology, transport planning and other fields. The RSA delivers its charitable aims through knowledge exchange and policy engagement activities, its portfolio of journals and publications, its programme of conferences and events and its worldwide territorial and research networks. The RSA also runs a grant funding programme and recognises good practice in regional studies through its awards. It is an inclusive, diverse and environmentally responsible organisation.

OVERALL PURPOSE OF THE POST

To work with the Association's stakeholders including other RSA staff, Journals and Publications Committees, journal editorial boards, members and external partners to deliver and develop a highly regarded publishing programme comprising six academic journals and two book series, published with external partners. To contribute to the development of regional studies by shaping the publishing programme in collaboration with the community and in response to emerging trends in publishing and the field.

LINE MANAGEMENT

Responsible to and line managed by the Chief Executive. This position does not carry any line management responsibilities.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1. Publishing programme leadership:** developing the RSA publishing programme, upholding the portfolio's reputation for academic quality and innovation, establishing and maintaining effective systems, contracting editors and managing budgets. To include:
 - Developing and implementing financial and operational plans for the publishing programme in alignment with the RSA's strategy, mission and values.
 - Pro-actively developing and maintaining relationships with internal and external partners and stakeholders.
 - Establishing and maintaining systems to ensure all publishing processes and practices are documented, reviewed and in accordance with best practice.
 - Issuing editorial contracts and leading on the review of contracts from time to time to ensure they remain fit for purpose and represent the RSA's best interests.
 - Managing budgets for the publishing programme.
 - Dealing with copyright permissions queries for use of RSA content by third parties and providing advice on copyright permissions matters.
 - Upholding the programme's reputation for academic quality and innovation through upholding the scholarly independence of journal editorial teams while keeping abreast of trends in the social sciences more widely with a focus on the implications for the RSA's publishing programme, its editors and wider community.

- Positioning the RSA to seize publishing opportunities by maintaining industry knowledge, awareness of market trends, innovations and evolving customer needs and developments in journals and books publishing.
 - Contributing to RSA's overall marketing and communication plans, providing content for RSA channels as required. Ensuring opportunities for cross promotion of services is maximised.
2. **Journal portfolio management:** supporting the journal editors-in-chief and their editorial boards, managing publishing partnerships and developing strategies for the journals portfolio in line with the RSA's wider strategy.
- Building influential relationships with Editors-in-Chief, Editorial teams and Editorial Advisory Board members and the wider research community, to help drive effective change through the journals and wider organisation.
 - Supporting the journal editors-in-chief and their editorial boards, including assisting with editorial recruitment and selection.
 - Liaising with journal partners (the [British and Irish Section](#) of the Regional Science Association International and the [Financial Geography](#) network) and publishers on editorial appointments.
 - Managing EAB membership including reviewing expectations of EAB members, assisting editorial teams with the diversity of their EABs and issuing letters of appointment to EAB members.
 - Contracting editorial positions and welcoming editors to the RSA community.
 - Reviewing RSA support across its journals and ensuring it effectively supports journal portfolio aims and organisational strategy.
 - Providing and managing support for editors including monitoring their use of editorial support funds, and helping to deliver special initiatives, as appropriate.
 - Managing publishing partnerships through communicating and meeting regularly with key staff at the publisher and editorial offices, including production and marketing teams.
 - Working closely with the Chief Executive and Journals Committee to develop strategies for the journals portfolio in line with the RSA's wider strategy, including future-proofing the journal portfolio in response to new developments in the publishing landscape.
 - Contributing to the negotiation of the RSA's journal publishing contracts.
3. **Book series management:** supporting the editors of RSA book series, managing publishing partnerships and developing existing book series and any launched in the future, in line with the RSA's wider strategy.
- Building influential relationships with the editors of the Policy Impact and Regions and Cities book series and supporting the editors in their roles, to ensure a pipeline of quality authors and book ideas in development.
 - Reviewing and providing feedback drafts of book proposals ahead of submission to the publisher.
 - Managing publishing partnerships through communicating and meeting regularly with key staff at the publisher including production and marketing teams.

- Working closely with the Chief Executive and Publications Committee to develop strategies for the book series in line with the RSA's wider strategy.
 - Contributing to the negotiation of the RSA's book series publishing contracts.
4. **Supporting good governance:** supporting the Chief Executive and contributing to the relevant sub-Committees of the RSA Board that relate to the publishing programme.
- Supporting the Chief Executive in the governance and management of the publishing programme, ensuring effective governance and management arrangements are in place.
 - Supporting and contributing to the relevant sub-Committees of the RSA Board that relate to the publishing programme.
 - Working with Journals Committee Chair and Publications Committee Chairs to produce committee papers and summary reports for the RSA Board.

OTHER DUTIES

- Contributing to RSA internal publications including Regions eZine, the Annual Report and others as necessary
- As part of the RSA management team, contributing to the RSA's overall operations, planning and development.
- Contributing to working group and other project work and deputising for the Chief Executive as required.
- Following best practice in all activities and communications when representing the RSA.
- Represent the RSA, including by travelling to attend meetings with occasional overnight stays. Travel would be mainly UK based with occasional international visits.
- Any other duties as may reasonably be required within the remit of this post.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

EDUCATION AND TRAINING:

Educated to degree level or equivalent experience	Essential
Post -graduate or management qualification in business or related discipline	Desirable

EXPERIENCE:

Demonstrable publishing and content management experience, ideally in academic publishing	Essential
Experience of delivering complex print and digital publishing projects with multiple stakeholders	Essential
Proven success in contract negotiations and management	Essential

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS:

Ability to identify issues and drive through resolution using strong influencing and management skills	Essential
Expert knowledge of intellectual property rights, copyright and permissions, and the implications for RSA and its members across regions	Essential
Negotiation, commercial and contract management skills	Essential
Excellent verbal and written communication skills	Essential
Analytical and budgeting skills	Essential
Good knowledge of the scholarly publishing and research sectors	Desirable

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES:

Convincing advocate and representative for the RSA, able to provide thought leadership across the scholarly and policy community	Essential
Highly organised, proactive and flexible	Essential
Collaboration, partnership working and networking skills	Essential