

# **The principles of AGUC scientific journal**

## **1 Introductory provision**

Acta Geographica Universitatis Comenianae (AGUC) is a reviewed scientific, geographical journal published by the Geographical Section of the Faculty of Natural Sciences, Comenius University in Bratislava, since 1959. The objective is to substantially contribute to the development of geography as a scientific discipline in Slovakia, present Geographical Section to the wide research community at Comenius University, offer scientists from around the world an option to present scientific results in a respected journal, and joint to the significant scientific periodicals of geographical orientation in Central Europe.

The journal publishes original theoretical, empirical and comprehensive reviews particularly from physical geography, human geography, regional geography and geoinformatics. It is open to contributions from a wide range of related disciplines such as geo-ecology, geomorphology, cartography, remote sensing, demographics, planning, spatial economics, environmental science, sociology, ethnology, and the like.

AGUC accepts contributions representing significant scientific results and having a standard structure of scientific study. After the introduction, the theme under study is appropriately situated to the framework of the existing scientific literature, with analysis of the theoretical background. The present paper must have formulated methodological bases, clearly stated methodology for research and well developed empirical part. Research results are appropriately presented, documented by attachments and interpreted. It is expected that discussion, conclusion and rich list of references will form the final part of the article itself. The further requisites of the article include - abstract, keywords, acknowledgement and summary.

English and Slovak are the official languages of the journal. The journal accepts contributions in Slovak, Czech and English, regardless of the author's nationality. Communication for the needs of the magazine is exclusively electronically (e-mail, including communication with authors and reviewers), selected documents in print are kept in the archive by the executive Editor. Apart from this section, information on the peer-review process is also stated in "Instructions for Authors".

AGUC is published twice a year - in June and December. Journal publishing is financed by the resources of departments within the Geographical Section, and other available resources.

## **2 Principles for issuing and editors of the journal**

Journal publishing is managed by Editor in Chief, in cooperation with the editorial board. Issuing processes are also supported by the editorial team consisting of executive Editor, graphics editor and webmaster of the journal.

The Committee of Geographical Section appoints Editor in Chief. Editor in Chief is a renowned professor or associate professor working at the Geographical Section of the faculty. Editor in Chief is

responsible for the journal profiling and its quality, objective assessment of manuscripts and confidentiality of related processes, as well as its periodic publication. Editor in Chief convenes editorial board as necessary, but at least twice (alternatively four times) a year.

Members of the Editorial Board are appointed by the Council of Geographical Section on a proposal of Editor in Chief, existing members of the Editorial Board and Heads of geography departments.

Executive Editor, graphics editor and webmaster of the journal are appointed by the Editorial Board, based on a proposal of Editor in Chief, and after consultation within the Council of Geographical Section.

Executive Editor is primarily responsible for communication with the authors and reviewers. He works closely with the Editor in chief and stores archive of the journal papers.

The graphics editor is responsible for prepress preparation of particular issues. In cooperation with the Executive Editor, discusses potential technical and graphic aspects of contributions with the authors. Along with the Editor in Chief and Executive Editor, is responsible for proofreading and correctness of the individual issues.

Journal webmaster is responsible for the website of the journal and its updating. The structure of the website and its content coordinates the Executive Editor, in cooperation with the Editor in Chief and the Editorial Board.

The Editorial Board and the Editor in Chief proceed vigorously against attempts on parallel publishing, multiple publishing, plagiarism (self-plagiarism included), or publishing of articles already issued in different language versions.

### **3 Manuscript submitting**

The journal accepts only original, unpublished scientific work. Reviews, scientific reports and reports on conferences cannot be accepted. Contributions are collected continuously, but in electronic form only (if applicable editors may request a printed form of the contribution). The editorial team deals only with the complete contributions submitted under the instructions for authors.

Executive Editor (or Editor in Chief) is authorised for collecting of all manuscripts. Manuscript delivery is confirmed electronically by the Executive Editor within one week after contribution's submitting.

Immediately upon delivery, Executive Editor inspects the completeness of submitted manuscript in accordance with the instructions for authors. In the case of incompleteness, a necessary complement is requested from the author, within the electronic message confirming the manuscript delivery.

Statement on originality and authorship of contribution as well as declaration denying multiple publishing of the contribution constitute an inevitable part of the submission process related to manuscript offered for publication in AGUC. The declaration form is available on the journal webpage.

If the contribution is complete, Executive Editor delivers Editor in Chief manuscript for initial evaluation.

#### **4 Initial editorial evaluation on contribution**

Initial evaluation on the quality of submitted manuscripts is carried out by Editor in Chief within one month after its delivery to the editors. Editor in Chief may reject the manuscript if: does not meet the journal professional profile, is of poor quality, has a considerable formal and language deficiency, or does not adhere to requirements on contribution extent. This decision can be made when the manuscript is delivered for the first time when considering possible improvements during the review process or under reevaluation. Editorial Board is informed on such a decision, with a brief explanation. Executive Editor informs the author(s) whether or not the manuscript has been accepted for the peer review process no later than one month since its delivery to the editors.

Contentious cases are assessed by Editor in Chief, along with an appropriately selected member of the Editorial Board. They take up a clear stance of either refusal or moving forward to the next stage of peer-review process. If they fail to agree, the contribution goes to the next stage automatically.

Manuscripts (electronic copies) of rejected contributions are available at executive Editor.

#### **5 Regular double-blind peer-review process**

After a positive initial editorial evaluation, Editor in Chief in collaboration with the editorial board selects two appropriate reviewers (until the end of 2013, there had been only one to review), on the basis of their scientific expertise in the area, which submitted contribution concerns. Editor in Chief takes into consideration potential conflicts of interest and personal ties (joint authorship between reviewer and author, common workplace). Elaboration of review opinion is not remunerated. Editorial Board publishes a list of the reviewers on the journal website each second year (for papers submitted during the previous two years).

The reviewer is asked to deliver a review opinion under the standardised form within one month after manuscript delivery. Editors require him to declare on acceptance or rejection of the opinion elaboration within one week when the contribution is delivered to him. Manuscript, cover letter and review sheet are sent to reviewers electronically by executive Editor. Opinion composed by reviewers is sent to the Executive Editor.

The peer-review process is strictly anonymous and confidential for all participants. The confidentiality of the whole process is overseen primarily by Editor in Chief and Executive Editor. While the contribution is not published, handling must be treated as confidential. It must not be accessible to third parties.

The peer-review process must be objective and equal access must be guaranteed to all authors. Editor in Chief, Editorial Board members and other members of the editorial team are not allowed to comment on contributions delivered to the journal in public, their content, or evaluation process.

Manuscripts sent to reviewers must not contain any elements allowing to identify the authors. Similarly, review opinions ratings must not contain any elements allowing the identification of the reviewers when delivering to the author. Executive Editor removes identifiable elements of electronic files.

Any author's objections to the style and content of review opinions (e.g. inadequate comments, etc.)

are solved by Editor in Chief, in cooperation with the editorial board.

## **6 Course and outcome of peer-review process**

After delivery of review opinions, Editor in Chief will familiarise with them. Contributions recommended by both reviewers (without comments) for publishing are placed by Editor in Chief to the list proposed for publication, which is subsequently submitted to the Editorial Board. Manuscripts rejected by both reviewers are placed by Editor in Chief to the list of contributions to be designed for refusal, which is subsequently submitted to the editorial board. In justified cases, when Editor in Chief has objections to the one or both review opinions, he can ask the editorial board to propose a third reviewer.

If one or both reviewers suggest contribution for publishing only after adjustments, review opinions are sent to the author(-s) with a request for revision of the paper in light of the comments mentioned in the opinion(-s). If the review opinions are in their conclusions in opposition, Editor in Chief asks the Editorial Board to suggest the third reviewer.

The outcome of the peer review process is delivered to the author(s) no later than three months after their initial manuscript submission. Usual outcomes of the review process are: accepted, minor revision required, major revision required, and rejection of the manuscript. If a substantial revision is required, resubmission is also an option.

The authors must send adjusted contribution with a written commentary. The revised contribution is reviewed by Editor in Chief who also decides if the adjustments are made sufficiently or not. If objections are rejected, not incorporated, or rejecting stand of the author to the comments of the reviewer is unexplained, Editor in Chief can return contribution to further adjustment again or reject it (e.g. in case of fundamental disagreement of the author with the observations of the reviewers). Editorial board is informed on this.

If the contribution is sufficiently adjusted, Editor in Chief may propose Editor Board for publishing without reviewers' reevaluation (reviewers are informed on this by him/her; moreover they must explicitly agree with). If there is a relatively large adjustment made, Editor in chief returns contribution to one or both reviewers to evaluate the adequacy of changes.

Editor in Chief suggests a decision on final acceptance or rejection to the Editorial Board. The decision on acceptance for publication is delivered to the author after consultation within Editorial Board **no later than two months after the revised version of the manuscript is submitted**. Any author's objections to the refusal can be addressed to the editorial board.

## **7 Pre-production and distribution**

Editor in Chief submits the final composition of each journal issue consisted of articles accepted for publication to the editorial board for approval. Editor in Chief, along with Executive Editor and graphics editor, is responsible for print preparation and printing the individual issues of the journal.

After approval of the given journal number and its composition, graphics editor prepares it for the press. Individual articles ready for printing is sent to author(-s) for proofreading. After the return of the articles, graphics editor conducts final corrections. After proofreading and corrections made, journal number is rechecked by Editor in Chief and Executive Editor. Then the journal number is sent

to print.

After printing, AGUC articles are also available in electronic form on the journal webpage. In printed form, they are distributed to selected geographical departments and other institutions according to the decision of the editorial board. They are also sent to the selected libraries in Slovakia (under the Act on Required Copies of Periodicals, Non-Periodicals and Audiovisual Copies, Regulation No. 212/1997 Coll.) and abroad. On request, issues are available in hard copy at the Executive Editor (while stocks last, an interested person pays postal charge and packing). On the journal website, there is an archive of older numbers in an electronic format available (.pdf).

Approved by the Editorial Board of AGUC, in Bratislava on March 31<sup>st</sup> 2013.