

Guidelines for Proposing Special Issues

1. All proposals *must* be sanctioned by the Editor-in-Chief of the journal, pending official approval of the proposal and the suitability of the guest editors. A special issue *must not be* advertised until OSA informs you of the proposal's approval.
2. Potential Guest Editors must provide a one- or two-page proposal that describes the purpose, objectives and scope of the special issue (see this [previous feature announcement](#) for guidance on how to write an effective proposal) and identifies the proposed guest editors. Complete CVs (with publication lists) of all the guest editors should also be sent to the Editor-in-Chief. If any of the guest editors are currently Associate or Topical Editors for OSA journals his or her CV is not required. The proposal should explain how papers will be solicited for the special issue and give an estimated number of submissions that are expected. Note: Papers designated as "Invited" are typically mini-review articles or high-quality research articles from leaders in the community. This designation should not be used for normal solicited papers. The Editor-in-Chief must approve a list of Invited papers before authors are contacted.
3. When choosing guest editors, please keep in mind that geographical diversity is highly desirable. If the proposal is based on a specific conference, then some or all of the guest editors would ideally be conference chairs or committee members for that conference.
4. One of the guest editors will be designated Lead Guest Editor. This editor should be identified in the proposal. The Lead Guest Editor will be responsible for assigning all submissions the other guest editors and himself, and will have access to the peer review process for all papers submitted to the special issue. The other editors will have access only to those papers they are assigned.
5. Setting the special issue schedule - Typically, special issues in the traditional journals follow a five month schedule once submissions open; express journals follow a four month schedule. The following dates are for purpose of example only:
 - Special issue announced online: Jan 1
 - Submissions open: Mar 1
 - Submission deadline: Apr 1
 - All papers peer reviewed, revised, and accepted: July 1
 - Payments received, papers published, issue completed: Sept 1

If the special issue is based on material presented at a conference, it is suggested to set the submission deadline one month after the meeting. This will give potential authors time to finalize their manuscript.

6. If this special issue revolves around a conference, please be sure to remind potential authors that unchanged copies of their meeting presentations will not be considered and that substantive new material must be added before submission.
7. The guest editors will be primarily responsible for advertising the upcoming special issue amongst their peers, though OSA staff would be happy to help when appropriate.
8. The standard article processing charges apply to special issues for the Express journals. Overlength charges and color figure charges apply to special issues in the print journals.
9. After the papers are accepted, the guest editors will be expected to write an introduction to the special issue that will appear with the final published work. Examples of this can be found in any of the special issues listed on the journal's Feature Issue page.
10. Guest editors are encouraged to nominate one paper for [Spotlight on Optics](#).

Timeline after Submission of Proposal:

1. Two weeks for Board of Editors approval
2. Two months between approval and opening for submissions
3. One to 1.5 month submission window
4. 2 – 3 months for peer review
5. 1 – 2 months for production