

Negotiating Pay Rates on Freelance Assignments

The Open Notebook is exploring the habits of editors and freelancers in negotiating pay rates on assignments. This survey is for editors who work with freelancers on science, health, or environmental stories. Please answer the questions below. This survey should take fewer than 5 minutes.

All responses are anonymous.

Thank you!

* Required

1. **In your role at your publication, are you empowered to make decisions about increasing rates, as opposed to passing the request to a superior? ***

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
 No

2. **What is your typical approach when offering a pay rate to freelancers? (If you are not empowered to make decisions about rates, what is your publication's typical approach?) ***

Mark only one oval.

- Offer a standard per-word or per-project rate for your publication (same for all writers)
 Offer a rate based on the experience and/or expertise of the writer
 Other: _____

3. **As a general rule, do you believe it's reasonable for freelancers to ask for higher pay rates as a matter of course? (You will have an opportunity to add open-ended comments later.) ***

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
 No

4. **How often do freelancers for your publication ask for a higher pay rate on assignments? ***

Mark only one oval.

- Never
 Occasionally
 Often
 Always
 Don't know
 N/A

5. **If freelancers ask for a higher rate when they're offered an assignment, how does it affect your view of them? ***

Mark only one oval.

- Very negatively
- Slightly negatively
- No effect/neutral
- Slightly positively
- Very positively

6. **Have you ever retracted an assignment offer when a freelancer asked for higher pay? ***

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No
- N/A

7. **If you answered "yes," is there anything you would like to share about those circumstances?**

8. **What do you feel are the best approaches for freelancers to take when asking for a higher pay rate at the time of assignment? Please check all that apply. ***

Check all that apply.

- I don't think freelancers should ever ask for a higher pay rate when offered assignments, except in very unusual circumstances.
- Simply inquire whether a higher rate is possible (no rationale necessary)
- Indicate that they're unable to take the assignment for the offered rate
- Note their usual rate range
- Note what the anticipated hourly rate is for the offered rate
- Note their previous experience with the editor or publication
- Name other writers they know who are getting a higher rate at the same publication
- Note what their rate is when writing for specific other publications
- Note their length of experience as a science writer and/or expertise on the topic
- Acknowledge that the publication's budget is tight but say that it doesn't hurt to ask
- Note personal circumstances or financial stress
- Other: _____

9. **How often do you (or the person at your publication who makes decisions about rates) grant a writer's request for a higher pay rate? ***

Mark only one oval.

- Never
- Occasionally
- Often
- Always
- Don't know
- N/A

10. **What factors affect whether you (or the person at your publication who makes decisions about rates) agree to increase a writer's pay rate at the time of assignment? Please check all that apply. ***

Check all that apply.

- Budget constraints/availability of funds
- Experience of writer/expertise on topic
- Your knowledge of the writer's reputation
- Previous experience in working with that writer
- Rationale provided by writer
- Specific phrasing (e.g., politeness, eloquence) of the request
- Don't know
- N/A
- Other: _____

11. **How often do freelancers for your publication ask for a higher pay rate AFTER completing an assignment, if it turned out to require more work than anticipated? ***

Mark only one oval.

- Never
- Occasionally
- Often
- Always
- Don't know
- N/A

12. **How often do you (or the person at your publication who makes decisions about rates) grant freelancers' requests for a higher pay rate AFTER they have completed an assignment? ***

Mark only one oval.

- Never
- Occasionally
- Often
- Always
- Don't know
- N/A

13. **Is there anything you would like to share about the specific circumstances in which you do or don't grant requests for higher rates AFTER an assignment has been completed?**

14. **Is there anything else you would like to add about the subject of negotiating pay rates with freelancers?**

15. **How do you describe your gender?**

Mark only one oval.

- Female
- Male
- Non-binary
- Other: _____