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Environmental Science: Advances – four years of diverse and holistic visions

Kevin C. Jones,^a Célia Manaia^b and Zongwei Cai^c

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Environmental Science: Advances was launched by the Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC) in 2021. The beginning of a new year (2025), as we enter our fifth year and a new volume of the journal, is a time to reflect on our progress.

Our intention when we established the journal was to position ourselves with rather different *Aims and Scope* from other RSC journals. We want to publish high-quality papers, in any discipline, which present findings that help to *advance environmental sustainability*. This could be work that improves our understanding of the environment and offers solutions or improvements to building a cleaner, safer, healthier, more sustainable and equitable world. Fundamental environmental research is welcomed, alongside modelling, fieldwork, applied studies, policy work and studies at the environmental and social science interface. Studies and visions that enhance, question or disrupt the current understanding of environmental science, for example, by connecting different environmental compartments, linking to human health and wellbeing, and joining up other disciplines, are particularly welcome. Truly interdisciplinary, the journal welcomes research from any field related to the environmental sciences,

global environmental change, and sustainability science. Inclusive collaboration across research disciplines is important for scientific advancement and, as such, we welcome studies from a broad range of topics including: biosciences, engineering, ecology, hydrology, soil science, geoscience, atmospheric science, agricultural science, climate science, and the social science interface. Studies that advance our understanding of the physical environment, environmental health, and environmental sustainability, or provide solutions to challenges in these areas, are particularly welcome. All submitted manuscripts will be judged on their quality, interest, and potential impact, to ensure we publish novel and significant contributions.

With any new journal, it takes time to set the path, receive suitable high-quality manuscripts, establish an audience and receive the metrics which enable the success and positioning of the journal to be evaluated. So, as the journal enters its fifth year, we want to take stock of our progress.

We have reached a number of milestones!

In 2024 *Environmental Science: Advances* received its 1000th submission and published its 300th article. We received its first impact factor, a healthy 3.5. At the time of writing (late November

2024) we have recorded the following metrics:

- Number of articles published: 321.
- Acceptance rate: 28%.
- Review content: 24%.
- Average time to first decision (all decisions): 21 days.
- Average time to first decision (peer reviewed only): 55 days.
- Articles published from 34 different countries.
- Submissions and publications continue to grow year-on-year despite the introduction of APCs.

The RSC confirm that these are impressive statistics for a new journal and provide us with a solid platform to attract more high-quality submissions to the journal and to further increase our visibility and influence in the future.

We are always happy to receive proposals for other timely and topical themed collections. We recently published one on:

- Methods for early warning of chemicals of emerging concern (<https://pubs.rsc.org/en/journals/articlecollectionlanding?sercode=va&themeid=d4aa07d6-e3f6-4fea-9701-8f8eacd48c90>).

We have launched two new themed collections, both now open for submissions:

- Battery material mining and recycling: environmental impacts, challenges and green solutions.

^aLancaster University, UK

^bUniversidade Católica Portuguesa, Portugal

^cHong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong, China



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- Soil protection and regeneration.

And we have also launched a further themed collection that will be published later in 2025:

- Environmental photocatalysis in the context of carbon neutralisation.

Details of all open themed collections can be found at <https://www.rsc.org/journals-books-databases/about-journals/calls-for-papers/environmental/#va>.

Environmental Science: Advances was also featured in the following cross-journal collections:

- Celebrating the 200th anniversary of the University of Manchester.
- Celebrating the 2024 Nobel Prize in Physics.

- Preservation of the ozone layer.

- Protecting our water.

Every day, our news brings fresh concerns about the environment, with governments worldwide, international agencies, businesses, enterprises and the public constantly challenged to help address these challenges. Ultimately, this relies on informed, high-quality research to help us reach the right decisions, and to try to deliver a more environmentally sustainable world.

This year, for example, an *Environmental Sciences: Advances* article by Allred *et al.* (<https://doi.org/10.1039/D4VA00015C>) on using nitrogen isotopes to identify historical/changing

sources of pollution to a major river system was featured on the UK's BBC News, both on live television and online: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/czrr10xd9wjo>.

For these reasons, we believe that *Environmental Science: Advances* is performing a valuable function to the wide international community of researchers, scholars and practitioners engaged in advancing environmental sustainability. We are looking forward positively to the future for the journal, working together to attract and publish high-quality, relevant and useful research.

