Career Profile of Journal Editor, Jan McColm, PhD

What is your current title and how long have you worked in your current job?
Managing Editor, 4 ½ years for the journal Genetics in Medicine

Where did you get your PhD and what discipline was it in?
University of Edinburgh, Scotland in Immunology

Did you do a postdoc? Where?
Yes. One at University of Edinburgh and then one at UNC

What are your main daily responsibilities?
Ensuring manuscripts are tracked and flow from submission to acceptance or rejection.
Keeping author, editors and reviewers on track
On a monthly basis: Recording and editing podcasts, writing and editing highlights, editing features, finding cover art for the journal,
Other: checking manuscripts for formatting to journal style, checking and editing proofs, editing English for non-native speakers. Commissioning authors to write reviews or commentaries. Preparing Editorial Board reports on journal performance.

What are the keys to success in your career field?
Time management, detail-oriented, diplomacy.

What were the most important factors in choosing your career path?
I wanted to remain in science but not on the bench, having a defined project that was completed every month, working regular hours, working from home.

What 1 or 2 pieces of advice do you have for people who want to land a job like yours?
Get some writing or editing experience, understand the workflow of a journal after submission, get involved in some of the local societies that are for editors and writers: NASW, AMWA and ISMTE for example, to network, use the career services of your institution – they have helped a lot of people transition.

Links for more information on this career path:
Full interview with Jan McColm:

The Many Hats of a Managing Editor
http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/career_magazine/previous_issues/articles/2002_02_01/noDOI.4676235326620629014