

## Experience of taking the first Korea Manuscript Editors Certification examination

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### Introduction

On November 19, 2016, the first Korea Manuscript Editors Certification (KMEC) examination was held in Hallym Hall, Hallym University of Graduate Studies, Seoul, Korea. The KMEC is a manuscript editor (ME) certification system adopted by the Korean Council of Science Editors. Only those who have a bachelor's degree or higher, more than a year of manuscript editing experience, and more than 20 credits of relevant education within the past 3 years are qualified to take the examination. I had worked as a ME for approximately 5 years, met the criteria, and had the chance to take the test. Fortunately, I passed the first KMEC examination. In this essay, I would like to introduce my experience of preparing for and taking the test.

### Experience of preparing for and taking the Korea Manuscript Editors Certification examination

Working with the title of an ME, I have always been dedicated to be as professional as possible in serving the journals that I was in charge of. I believe this would be the case for any ME. However, since there was no way to objectively guarantee my expertise, it was both exciting and stressful to hear about the implementation of the KMEC. Even though I went through the sample questions provided by the committee, it was not easy to guess what type of questions would be asked or how high a passing grade would be. Therefore, I took the test with a resolved attitude, as if I was taking the Korean Scholastic Aptitude Test. The test consisted of 100 multiple choice questions, of which none were easy. It lasted for 2 and half hours and the questions covered a wide range of topics. As soon as I encountered a question asking "What kind of work does an ME do?", I sensed that the test required a profound understanding of the various subjects related to working as an ME.

Having to prepare for the test while working, I did not have much time to solely concentrate on my studies. However, I tried to make up for the relative lack of study time by directing a special focus towards the technical aspects of my work, such as punctuation, capitalization, italicization, and abbreviations. I obtained a clear understanding of table and figure editing rules and statistics by actively searching for guidelines whenever I had any doubts. Thankfully, the KMEC examination was more focused on evaluating practical skills rather than theoretical

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knowledge.

Questions regarding publication ethics and copyright, as well as those about new digital publication techniques, were the most confusing questions because I did not come across them often during my preparation. Additionally, the varieties and characteristics of representative databases and citation indices have always been tricky concepts for me, but I came to fully understand them while preparing for the test. Similarly to the other examinees, I spent the greatest amount of time answering questions on English comprehension and grammar correction. In addition, questions involving the understanding of scientific articles and other basic manuscript editing knowledge were also included, making the test time barely manageable.

Since I took the Board of Editors in the Life Sciences (BELS) certification test in 2014, I was able to see the differences between the two tests. The BELS test focuses on very detailed grammar and editing skills regarding statistics, tables, and figures. Although the KMEC also asks such questions, they are only a small proportion of the various domains of the test. As I noted above, the KMEC requires a wide understanding of editing practices. Therefore, the test not only evaluates one's proofreading ability, but also one's knowledge of the actual journal format and international standards. Fortunately, I passed the test. In addition to the excitement of passing the exam, learning and mastering more knowledge relevant to my work as an ME was deeply satisfying.

## Conclusion

Since the primary hurdle to add journals to international literature indexing databases is the completeness of style and format, the demand for MEs will increase continuously. Beginning with the first implementation of the KMEC, I expect manuscript editing to gain more public attention and to be stabilized as a professional field through systematic training. I also believe the KMEC will be recognized as a professional certification in Korea, such as the BELS certification; furthermore, it will contribute to the promotion of scholarly journals to international level.

## Conflict of Interest

No potential conflict of interest relevant to this article was reported.

**Editor's note:** Ms. Sun-Im Ryu, MEDrang Inc., Seoul, Korea got the best score out of 50 examinees who took the first Korea Manuscript Editors Certification examination. Korean Council of Science Editors applauds her for her hard work. Her manuscript was commissioned to record her outstanding performance.

Kihong Kim, Editor