Aquatic microbiology as a corporate science is defined as the study of aquatic processes effected by microorganisms. This includes the study of the agents themselves. However, aquatic microorganisms – algae, protozoa, fungi, heterotrophic and autotrophic bacteria and viruses – are so heterogeneous an assemblage that the unity of aquatic microbiology is only apparent in the context of aquatic biology as a whole.

Microbiological disciplines have been various and fragmented so that their contributions to aquatic science have often been overlooked. While the primary aim in these volumes will be to draw together the numerous threads, an exclusively integrative approach would narrow the field unduly. Therefore, in addition to articles of broad interest it is intended to give space for discussion of more specialized topics, particularly those that are developing rapidly. The series shall not be confined to aquatic microbiology when new techniques or new ideas from outside hold promise.