Policy & Politics

Special issue guidance

Policy & Politics views special issues as an important element of scholarly activity and publishes one a year. The journal receives a large number of enquiries and proposals and the aim of this document is to set out the procedure for reviewing proposals, supporting guest editors and moving to final publication.

What are we looking for from a *Policy & Politics* special issue?

The aim of a special edition is to bring together a set of cutting-edge research articles that attempts to reframe or develop a specific debate or topic. This may include a mixture of theoretical, conceptual and empirical cases but must very clearly take forward an area of the discipline. This is a critical point. There is an expectation that *Policy & Politics* special issues will make a significant and lasting contribution to the field. Special issues of this significance generally take at least eighteen months to two years from the acceptance of a proposal through to final publication.

All special issues are eligible for consideration for publication in book form, in the [*Policy & Politics* series](#) published by Policy Press.

What should a special issue proposal look like?

A special issue proposal will include the following sections:

1. **Title** This should clearly reflect the field and content of the special issue.
2. **Details of guest editors** Basic contact details, affiliation and no more than 150 words for each editor on their academic profile.
3. **Descriptor** This should be a 500-word statement about the main intellectual 'hook' of the proposal, how the content of the proposed special issue engages with a set of significant issues, and its contribution to the field. Elements of distinctive 'added value' (theoretically, comparatively, etc.) should also be highlighted.
4. **Draft contents page** This should set out the structure of the special issue with a very clear statement of whether the named contributors are confirmed or speculative. An 150-word abstract for each of the articles included in the collection must also be provided. (Special issues are generally a collection of

nine papers of 8,000 words each. One of these papers should be the editors' introduction.)

5. **Planning statement** The timetable for initial submission, review, re-submission, copy-editing, etc. This might also include ideas for reviewers or meetings.

Maximising impact

Please consider how you intend to promote and disseminate this special issue (blogs, events, conferences, other social media, etc.). An editorial statement outlining ten useful 'top tips for impact' is available at
http://policypress.co.uk/asset/2665/editorial-guidelines-on-maximising-impact.pdf

How are proposals assessed?

The team of Co-editors will review all initial proposals and come to a collective decision on whether they feel each project is viable. If a proposal is deemed by the editors to stand little chance of acceptance, the proposers will be advised of this immediately to enable them to approach other journals (or book publishers) without undue delay. In assessing proposals the following criteria are important.

1) Intellectual significance, originality and rigour

Questions that help inform this dimension include: How does this proposal seek to challenge dominant assumptions? How might this special issue set the agenda in terms of future debates? Does the proposal have particularly novel, timely or innovative dimensions? Is it attempting to fill a significant gap in the current literature? Will it have international appeal?

2) Profile of contributors

Policy & Politics is committed to supporting scholars from all backgrounds, disciplines and parts of the world. Therefore a special issue proposal might consider the following questions: Does this proposal contain a mixture of established scholars and 'rising stars' of the profession? Does it offer an appropriate gender balance? Is the proposal internationally inclusive?

3) Editorial leadership

Special issues are not an 'easy option'. They are a challenging and yet potentially rewarding form of intellectual output. The editors of *Policy & Politics* will therefore consider the following questions in coming to a decision about a proposal: Are the proposed editors experts in the field? Do they have a track record in producing cutting-edge research? Is the timetable realistic? Is there evidence that the editors will play a proactive role in steering and managing the project? At a more basic level, do the proposed editors have the time and capacity to dedicate the required level of attention to this project?

If the editors feel that a proposal fulfils the criteria listed above it will then be sent out to review to at least two specialists in the field.

The editorial process

Once a proposal is accepted, a clear time-line and memorandum of agreement will be established based on previous successful best practice and experience. The guest editors will normally manage the process of:

1. initially considering papers;
2. identifying reviewers and sending the papers out to review, in consultation with the editors of *Policy & Politics*;
3. communicating reviewers' comments to the authors;
4. deciding whether revised papers need to be reviewed again; and
5. making a *provisional* decision to accept or reject.

However, the Co-editors reserve the right to make final decisions on all accepted articles for any special issue. While they will work closely with the guest editor/s in a supportive and constructive manner, the final decision rests with them.

Policy & Politics uses [Editorial Manager](), an online submission system to manage the peer-review process. We will provide full training to use this system. In terms of the final transition towards acceptances and publication the co-editors underline the fact that the final decisions to accept the articles lies with them. They have agreed *in principle* to a special edition but may decide to:

1.   Run the special edition in a later issue than originally planned.
2.   Accept only a few of the papers and put them instead in a themed issue, which also includes one or two papers from elsewhere.
3.   Accept only one or two papers and present them as regular contributions to the journal.
4.   Determine that none of the papers meets either the quality standards or targeted content of the journal.

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