



Guidance on what to include in your special issue proposal

Policy & Politics views special issues as an important element of scholarly activity and publishes one a year. The aim of this document is to set out our procedure for reviewing proposals, selecting the strongest, and supporting guest editors in the development of the issue to final publication.

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

The aim of a special issue 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 to develop from the acceptance of a proposal through to final publication.

All special issues are also eligible for consideration for publication in book form around two years after initial publication in the [Policy & Politics series](#) published by Policy Press.

A special issue proposal must include the following sections:

1. **Title** This should accurately reflect the subject and content of the special issue. Keep it short (8-10 words), literal and ensure it includes the key terms that researchers would use to search on.
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 include a marketing plan telling us how you intend to promote this special issue (blogs, events, conferences, other social media, etc.). To help you to articulate your plans, we ask you to complete our special issue marketing questionnaire and return it to us with your special issue proposal.

Please also read through our [top ten tips to maximise impact](http://bristoluniversitypress.co.uk/asset/6234/editorial-guidelines-on-maximising-impact-2018.pdf) for your main research messages at <http://bristoluniversitypress.co.uk/asset/6234/editorial-guidelines-on-maximising-impact-2018.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 milestone dates 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.



Special Issue Marketing Questionnaire

Please complete our special issue marketing questionnaire and return it to us with your proposal. We view this as an integral part of your special issue proposal, so we regret we cannot consider proposals without this form completed.

Our experience shows that input from guest editors and authors is crucial to the success of our special issues. You are usually in the best position to advise us of the main interest groups and networks who will be interested in your issue, and the main influencers who can really help us to promote your ideas. Ideally your suggestions should **be as international as possible so please do** consult your authors to tap into their networks before returning this form or give us permission to approach them.

Please return to our Journal Manager at sarah.brown@bristol.ac.uk

Title of Special Issue:.....

Name of corresponding guest editor:.....

E-mail marketing

Please give details of any networks whose members would be interested in your Special Issue, specifically:

- research networks/email groups/
- listservs/jiscmail groups
- special interest group/standing group convenors.

Publications

- Please list up to 6 key journals, newsletters or professional magazines that are likely to be interested in reviewing your Special Issue.

Conferences

- Please list the 3 most important conferences which your Special Issue is relevant for.

Organisations and Associations

Please list the following whose members would be interested in your Special Issue:

- professional organisations
- professional networks
- societies
- government bodies

Are there any particular universities and/or research centres we should target with your Special Issue?

Websites and Social Media

Please ensure that you send us a blog for each article in your Special Issue at least 2 weeks before publication.

Please ensure that we have twitter handle(s) for all authors and editors at least 2 weeks before publication.

- Please list the top five influencers on Twitter who will be interested in your Special Issue
- Please list the main blogs most relevant for your Special Issue.
- Please consider producing a vodcast by the guest editors summarizing in 2-3 minutes why your special issue is important

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- Are there any particular articles in your Special Issue which are particularly newsworthy or topical?

Other information

- Do you have any other information that may be useful for promotional purposes?