

Editorial Guidelines on Acceptance: Ten Tips

As a leading international journal *Policy & Politics* receives far more submissions than it can ever publish. In recent years the increase in the number of submissions means that in order to reduce both the length of the publication pipeline and also the pressure on reviewers we must now review all manuscripts internally with a view to only sending the very strongest out to review. The aim of this document is to provide some general tips and advice to potential authors which seek to explain what factors generally help underpin a successful (internal and external) review process.

- 1. Do your homework:** *Policy & Politics* welcomes scholarship that examines democratic governance, the policy-making process, public administration and institutional analysis that is both timely and relevant to a broad readership. Submissions that adopt an inter-disciplinary or comparative perspective are particularly welcome but authors should examine recent issues, look at the journal's website and read through the Aims and Scope in an attempt to ensure their work fits within the general auspices of the journal.
- 2. Think about added value:** *Policy & Politics* publishes articles that present ground-breaking new research, offer new theoretical or methodological insights or which challenge dominant assumptions within the discipline. In essence, writing up the findings of a standard research project is unlikely – on its own – to reach the standards necessary for publication. Potential authors might therefore think about the added value of their manuscript and then seek to bring those dimensions to the fore.
- 3. Clarity counts:** *Policy & Politics* is based on the principle of 'engaged scholarship'. This means that articles are accessible to a broad readership while at the same time engaging with theoretically complex or intellectually challenging issues. While some level of technical or esoteric language might therefore be unavoidable, potential authors are strongly encouraged to avoid unnecessarily verbose or jargon filled styles of writing. Be clear about what you are trying to say.
- 4. Significance, originality and rigour:** lots of manuscripts have the potential to become excellent articles but they never realise this potential because the author(s) fail to state clearly (1) *why* this manuscript is significant, (2) *how* it makes an original contribution to the field, or (3) detail the methodological rigour underlying the research findings. The abstract and the introduction should give the reader a very clear and explicit account of the significance, originality and rigour.
- 5. 'Think Big':** Descriptive single-case studies are – on their own – very unlikely to be accepted unless they are in some way located within the contours of much broader debates and themes, so as to draw out the wider implications of the single case.
- 6. Embrace globalisation:** Although *Policy & Politics* is a UK based journal it is by no means focused on British politics in terms of its content or ambitions. The journal

welcomes articles that examine debates and issues in North America, Continental Europe, East Asia and all parts of the globe.

7. **Avoid the obvious:** Over a century of political science and policy studies has demonstrated that the implementation of public policy is complex. More recent scholarship has emphasised the transition 'from government to governance'; while other studies have revealed institutional reforms that have been interpreted as elements of 'filling in the hollowing out'. Globalisation also makes the management of certain policies more challenging.... Avoid well trodden terrain.
8. **Look for gaps:** One way of submitting a manuscript that has a good chance of acceptance is to try and identify an important topic or theme that has so far been overlooked in the wider literature. This might focus on a social trend, a technological or scientific breakthrough or the emergence of a 'new' social risk.
9. **Stay close to the editors:** If you have an idea for a manuscript but are unsure as to whether it fits within the general aims and ambitions of the journal, then please feel free to email the editors. This can often produce new opportunities. A manuscript that reviews a field of scholarship in order to pose new questions and insights is unlikely to be published as an Original Article but might make an excellent Thematic review.
10. **Don't rush:** Writing world-class research-based academic articles generally takes a long time and this is not a process that can be rushed. Authors are strongly encouraged to test their ideas and research findings in a range of arenas prior to submission. They are also encouraged to 'let the ink dry' in the sense of setting the work aside for some time so that they can read it afresh prior to submission. At a more basic level, there is nothing more guaranteed to lead to rejection than to submit a manuscript that is poorly written, full of typos and not presented in the correct journal-style.

Policy & Politics is a vibrant journal that plays a major role in setting agendas and shaping debates. We hope the advice set out above helps you craft a submission that is accepted and published in the journal in the future.

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Editors
Policy & Politics