



The BSA JOURNALS: TERMS OF REFERENCE

These Terms of Reference apply to journals *Cultural Sociology*, *Sociological Research Online*, *Sociology and Work*, *Employment and Society*

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The British Sociological Association (BSA), working through the Board of Trustees, is responsible for the legal, strategic and policy-related aspects of the BSA journals:

1. Members of staff in the BSA office provide editorial assistance and administrative support.
2. Through the subsidiary company, BSA Publications Ltd, the BSA works with publishers and negotiates contracts to produce and market its journals, providing a legal framework for journal production.
3. Annual operating budgets are provided to support the editors and journal activities.
4. Opportunities to participate in BSA publications through the editorial process or authoring content are promoted to BSA members and the wider sociological community.
5. Journal policies, including the Terms of Reference, are provided and updated, in addition to all other journal policies, in accordance with good practice in academic publishing.

The BSA, via the Board of Trustees is responsible for strategic and policy-related decisions concerning the organisation of the journals, including but not limited to, the confirmation of appointment of Editors, Chairs and members of journal boards. The size, practice and rules of membership also come under the remit of the BSA. The BSA sets general policies in terms of publishing ethics for contributors and members included in the publishing process. These policies are available on the BSA website. The responsibilities of the BSA additionally include operational aspects of the journals such making decisions on how journals form part of the membership benefits package and issues of typography, and design.



The BSA Journals are members of COPE ([Committee on Publication Ethics](#)). COPE provides advice to editors and publishers on all aspects of publication ethics. They also offer guidelines for [editors, peer reviewers and authors](#).

1. Conflicts of Interest

- i) A conflict of interest is any situation in which an individual's personal interests/loyalties or interests/loyalties that they owe to another individual or body may (or may appear) to influence or affect the individual's decision making. For example, decisions relating to the work of a family member, current or recent student, or a close colleague would constitute a potential conflict of interest. Even the appearance of a conflict of interest can damage the journal's reputation so real or perceived conflicts will be managed carefully.
- ii) Where a conflict of interest is identified, the individual(s) concerned will declare the conflict and refrain from decision making in the case.
- iii) If a conflict of interest is declared, the appropriate individual(s) should be notified – see Sections 3. xiii, 5. xviii, 6. xviii. Should the appropriate individual not be apparent, the Publications and Membership Manager (PMM) should be notified. The PMM will take appropriate steps to clarify and seek an alternative.

2. Editors

- i) All Editors will be members of the BSA when first nominated and throughout the term of office.
- ii) Editors will be responsible for ensuring that the journal adheres to BSA Journal Terms of Reference and other policies and for ensuring that authors do likewise.
- iii) The Editors have final authority on decisions about the academic content of the journal. The BSA journals function on the basis of editorial independence in accordance with best practice.
- iv) Editors are able to reject without peer review any manuscripts that are not suitable for publication in the journal.
- v) When manuscripts are sent to peer review, the Editors are responsible for selecting a minimum of two peer reviewers for each manuscript, with Editors having final authority on acceptance of all manuscripts.
- vi) The Editors are responsible for ensuring that double blind peer review will be used.
- vii) The term of office of an Editorial Team is three years with the possibility of up to three additional years. The term of office should not coincide with that of the Chair of the Editorial Board to ensure continuity in the handover to a new Editorial Team.



- viii) The term of office can be terminated by the Board of Trustees.
- ix) BSA Journals may choose to have a process by which submissions from Editors will be handled to ensure unbiased, double-blind peer review and editing to highest standards expected of BSA journals. Where a journal chooses to adopt such a policy, it must be agreed by the Editorial Board and Board of Trustees and made public so that it is transparent to all readers of the journal. Cultural Sociology does not currently have a policy in place and for the avoidance of doubt, editors of journals where there is not such a process may not submit to the journal in question.

WES and Sociology process for handling submissions from Editors

Editors may submit manuscripts for consideration in the journal. In order to ensure transparent and impartial treatment of these manuscripts, they will be subject to the following:

- 1) Manuscripts submitted by an Editor will be edited by the Chair of the Editorial Board;
- 2) Editor manuscripts will be subject to the double blind peer review and Editors will not have access to information regarding their papers beyond that available to all authors;
- 3) Editor manuscripts will be reviewed by a minimum of 2 or 3 peer reviewers (2 for Sociology and 3 for WES), in line with journal policy; however, at least 1 of the reviewers will be an external (non-Board) reviewer;
- 4) Editor manuscripts are treated as all submissions to the journal and may be subject to the full range of editorial decisions: reject without peer review, multiple revisions, reject after revision and/or accept;
- 5) If accepted, Editor manuscripts will carry a note to the reader detailing the process above.

Sociological Research Online process for handling submissions from Editors

The Editor(s) may occasionally submit their own manuscripts for possible publication in the journal. In these cases, the peer review process will be managed by alternative members of the Board and the submitting Editor will have no involvement in the decision making process.

- x) BSA journals may choose to publish special issues. Any Special Issue to be published in the Journal will usually be agreed in discussion between the Editors and Editorial Board although each journal may choose to have a different internal process.

When a Special Issue proposal has been approved, the Editors will work closely with the Special Issue Guest Editors to produce the issue. This may include, but is not limited to, providing advice on Journal processes and systems, advising on suitable reviewers at the peer review stage and discussing suitable articles for the special issue with the Guest Editors.

During their term the Editors will have the option of editing a Special Issue under their own remit subject to the same approval process described above. Discussions between the Editors and the Editorial Board should take into account the strategic aims of a Special Issue, the page budget, the breadth of topics that the Journal aims to publish as well as editing and peer review workloads.

- xi) In Editorial and Associate Board elections and other journal activities which require a vote, Editors will have one individual vote, if they choose to take part.



- xii) The Editorial Team is required to treat as confidential all material, submissions and discussions of the Board, and all other meetings relating to journal activity.
- xiii) Where a member of the Editorial team may have a potential/perceived conflict of interest (see section 1) in editing a paper, the advice of the Chair of the Editorial Board shall be sought.
- xiv) Formal appeals against editorial decisions (see section 8) shall be addressed to the Chair of the Editorial Board.
- xv) Editorial Teams may propose a change to team membership mid-term by submitting a proposal to the BSA Publications Trustees. Majority approval for this change will be sought from the Editorial Board and will be subject to ratification by the full Board of Trustees. Proposals should include the name of the proposed individual, their CV, and rationale for the change of team membership.

3. Appointment of Editors

- i) The search for and nomination of new Editors involves the Editorial Board and the BSA Board of Trustees. The Recruitment Committee will be appointed by the BSA Board of Trustees, with appropriate advice from the Chair of the Editorial Board.
- ii) The Recruitment Committee will comprise the Chair of the Editorial Board and one other member nominated by the Board (to assess academic content of the bids), two trustees of the Board of Trustees (to represent the views of the BSA) and an eminent scholar with a reputation in the field(s) the journal serves, who will act as Chair. The eminent scholar is not to be a member of the Editorial Board or a current trustee and is to be appointed following agreement between the Board of Trustees and the Chair of the Editorial Board.
- iii) The role of the Recruitment Committee is to search for and encourage bids on behalf of the Editorial Board, to respond to queries from prospective applicants, to evaluate bids and to report these evaluations to both the Board of Trustees and the Editorial Board.
- iv) The Recruitment Committee's evaluation of bids will be based on criteria supplied to them by the Board of Trustees in consultation with the Editorial Board Chair.
- v) The Board of Trustees will receive the Recruitment Committee report, which it will then forward to the Editorial Board. The Editorial Board will be asked to discuss the report and recommend a bid to the Recruitment Committee who will then take this recommendation to the Board of Trustees.
- vi) The voting members of the Board of Trustees will be asked to ratify the bid, ensuring that it is consistent with the stipulated criteria and appoint the new Editors, who will take up their office subject to their signing the Editorial Contract and Terms of Reference.



4. Editorial Boards: the role and conduct of the Chair and Deputy Chair

- i) Editorial Boards will have an independent Chair. The role is an active one involving a variety of responsibilities described below. The Chair is required to maintain autonomy and will liaise with the Publications Directors and the Editors on journal matters.
- ii) Journal Editorial Boards may choose to have a deputy chair, at their discretion. The Deputy Chair will provide support for the activities of the Chair of the Board if s/he is unavailable for any reason. The activities of the Deputy Chair include, but are not limited, to chairing Editorial Board meetings, editing submissions from members of the Editorial Team and reviewing complaints/appeals against editorial decisions.
- iii) The Chair and Deputy Chair will be a senior academic with extensive journal experience.
- iv) The Chair and Deputy Chair will be members of the BSA and of the journal Editorial Board.
- v) At the discretion of the Editorial Board, journals may choose to seek nominations for the role of Chair and Deputy Chair from the wider community or solely from members of the Editorial Board according to the needs of the journal. Significant previous involvement with the journal will be considered as an important criterion for eligibility. Both roles will be selected by means of secret ballot.
- vi) The term of office of the Chair of the Editorial Board will be four years, but should be flexible so as not to coincide with the Editorial Team term of office, to ensure continuity in the hand over to the new Editorial Team. The term of office may be lengthened or shortened as suitable in the interests of continuity. This term of four years is independent of any time previously served as an Editorial Board member.
- vii) The term of office of the Deputy Chair will be 3 years; however the role should not change in the same year as the Chair to provide continuity. The term may be shortened or lengthened as suitable in the interests of continuity. This term of three years is independent of any time previously served as an Editorial Board member.
- viii) The term of office can be terminated by the Board of Trustees on grounds of misconduct, failure to fulfill their obligations, unprofessional behaviour or by mutual agreement.
- ix) The Chair of the Editorial Board is responsible for the organisation and conduct of the meetings of the Editorial Board.
- x) The Chair of the Editorial Board may arrange a reduced reviewing workload with the Editorial Team.
- xi) The Chair and Deputy Chair will seek to positively promote the journal.



- xii) The Chair will be responsible for running elections for new journal Board members, with the support of the BSA.
- xiii) The Chair of the Board may be required to edit submissions to the journal from Editorial Team Members. (see 2.ix)
- xiv) The Chair and Deputy Chair may be asked to undertake other duties relevant to the journal and the Editorial Board.
- xv) The Chair should ensure that all new Board members are introduced to existing Board members, that their attention is drawn to the appropriate guidelines for the operation of the journal and that they are inducted into the remit of their role and responsibilities (i.e. participation in Board meetings and the associated work of the Board which includes ad hoc tasks as well as refereeing papers).
- xvi) The Chair and Deputy Chair should ensure that all editorial business is conducted in accordance with the BSA's ethical policies, practices and guidelines.
- xvii) The Chair has the casting vote on decisions brought before the Editorial Board and mediates in the event of journal disputes.
- xviii) The Chair and Deputy Chair is required to treat as confidential all material, submissions and discussions of the Board.
- xix) Journals may choose to have a process by which submissions from Editorial Team members and Chairs of the Board may be handled to ensure unbiased, double-blind peer review and editing to highest standards expected of BSA journals. Where a journal chooses to adopt such a policy, it must be agreed by the Editorial Board and Board of Trustees and made public so that it is transparent to all readers of the journal.

WES and Sociology process for handling submissions from the Chair of the Editorial Board

The Chair of the Editorial Board may submit manuscripts for consideration in the journal during his/her term of office. In order to ensure transparent and impartial treatment of these manuscripts, they will be subject to the following:

- Manuscripts submitted by the Chair of the Editorial Board will be edited by a member of the Editorial Team;
- The Chair's manuscripts will be subject to the double blind peer review and the Chair will not have access to information regarding his/her papers beyond that available to all authors;
- The Chair's manuscripts will be reviewed by a minimum of 2 or 3 peer reviewers (2 for Sociology; 3 for WES), in line with journal policy; however, at least 1 of the reviewers will be an external (non-Board) reviewer;



- The Chair's manuscripts are treated as all submissions to the journal and may be subject to the full range of editorial decisions: reject without peer review, multiple revisions, reject after revision and/or accept.
- xx) The Deputy Chair may submit papers to the journal during his/her term of office. These manuscripts will be edited according to journal policy. If refereed, at least one of the peer reviewers will be an external (non-Board) referee.
- xxi) The Chair shall receive and consider appeals against editorial decisions (see section 8).

5. Editorial Boards: the role and conduct of the membership

- i) Members of Editorial Boards must be or become members of the BSA upon joining the Editorial Board of a BSA journal.
- ii) The number of Editorial Board members will be between 20 and 30 (excluding the Chair of the Board), at the discretion of the Editorial Team.
- iii) Nominations shall be sought from the full membership of the BSA by means of calls in Network, online publicity and other means.
- iv) Membership of the Editorial Board is determined by the Editorial Board. Where the number of nominees is greater than that of the available places, the Editorial Board will hold an election by means of a secret ballot. Editors may participate in these elections and submit a vote each.
- v) In the event that vacancies on an Editorial Board remain unfilled or become vacant mid-term, the Editors shall have the power to co-opt Editorial Board members. The Editors will seek support for any co-opted member from the Editorial Board. The appointment of co-opted Editorial Board members is subject to ratification by the Board of Trustees, provided the Editorial Board has given majority support for the appointment. If a co-opted Editorial Board member has been chosen from a recent board election, this will only require support from the Editorial Board.
- vi) For appointment, members of Editorial Boards are expected to have experience of publication in peer review outlets (no less than three articles in refereed journals) and of previous refereeing (no less than five journal articles) suitable to the international academic standards of the journals. If there is any doubt about the suitability of an applicant's experience, the Chair of the Editorial Board will be consulted.
- vii) In addition to academic standing, it is expected that the election process for Board members will consider both the institutional spread of the Board and individual expertise amongst members of the Board. Consideration will be taken of coverage of sub-discipline expertise.



- viii) The period of membership is three years. It can be extended to four years with mutual agreement between the Editors, Chair and Board Member to permit the retention of scarce skills should that be in the best interests of the journal.
- ix) Editorial Board members may serve a consecutive second term after which they must take a two year break before re-standing. Journal Editorial Boards will make public the process by which Board members may take up a second consecutive term:
 - a. *Sociology*: Editorial Board members may express interest in serving a second term; the second term is subject to the ratification of the Chair of the Board and the Editors.
 - b. *Work, Employment and Society*: Editorial Board members may stand for re-election and if elected, serve a consecutive second term after which they must take a two year break before re-standing.
- x) Editorial Board members may submit papers to the journal during their terms of office. These manuscripts will be edited according to journal policy and may be desk rejected or sent out for peer review (see 2.iv and 2.v). When sent for peer review, Board members' papers will have at least one external (non-Board) referee.
- xi) An individual cannot be a member of the Editorial Boards of *Sociology* and WES at the same time.
- xii) Members of the Board are expected to do all they can to positively promote the journal.
- xiii) Editorial Board members are expected to conduct business as members of the Board in accordance with BSA ethical policies and practices and COPE guidelines.
- xiv) Members of Editorial Boards are expected to regularly attend meetings of the full Board and fully participate in the democratic processes of the journal.
- xv) Members of the Editorial Board and all other referees are required to treat as confidential all material, submissions and discussions of the Board.
- xvi) Membership of the Board can be terminated by the Board of Trustees on grounds of misconduct, failure to fulfil their obligations, unprofessional behaviour or by mutual agreement.
- xvii) Members of Editorial Boards are expected to return comments as required, timely and in accordance with the journals' wish for constructive feedback.
- xviii) Where members feel there may be a conflict of interest in reviewing a piece of work, they should declare this to the Editors.



- xix) It is not expected that more than two members of the Editorial Board, including the Chair, will be from the same institution.
- xx) Members of the Editorial Board will not be appointed from the same institution as the Editors during their term.

6. Associate Boards: the role and conduct of the membership

- i) Journals may opt to have an Associate Board to provide an expanded range of expertise areas, assist with the reviewing for the journal and help scholars develop their reviewing skills.
- ii) Members of Associate Boards must be or become members of the BSA upon joining the Associate Board of a BSA journal. Where members are based internationally, membership is preferred but not essential. It is expected that these individuals will be members of a parallel organisation.
- iii) The number of Associate Board members will be between 20 and 30, at the discretion of the Editorial Team.
- iv) Nominations shall be sought from the full membership of the Association by means of calls in Network, online publicity and other means.
- v) Membership of Associate Boards is determined by the Editorial Board. Where the number of nominees is greater than that of the available places, the Editorial Board will hold an election by means of a secret ballot.
- vi) In the event that vacancies on an Associate Board remain unfilled, the Editors shall have the power to co-opt Associate Board members. The appointment of co-opted Board members is subject to ratification by the Board of Trustees.
- vii) It is expected that the Editors and Editorial Board of a journal will provide support and guidance for Associate Board members wishing to develop their reviewing skills. The form of this guidance is at the discretion of the Editors and Editorial Board.
- viii) For appointment, members of Associate Boards are expected to possess, at a minimum, a PhD in Sociology (or a cognate social science discipline) or at least 2 years' teaching/research experience of sociology (or a cognate subject) in Higher Education and experience of peer review publication. The exact criteria for appointment are at the discretion of the Editorial Board and should take into account the developmental potential of the Associate Board and the inclusion of some junior members.
- ix) In addition to academic standing, it is expected that the selection process for Associate Board members will consider both the institutional spread of the Board and individual expertise amongst



members of the Board. Consideration will be taken of coverage of sub-discipline expertise.

- x) The period of membership is three years.
- xi) The policy regarding re-election to the Associate Board is at the discretion of the Editorial Board. Should the Editorial Board accept re-applications, Associate Board members may stand for re-election and serve a consecutive second term after which they must take a two year break before re-standing.
- xii) Members of the Board are expected to do all they can to positively promote the journal.
- xiii) Associate Board members are expected to conduct business as members of the Board in accordance with BSA ethical policies and practices and COPE guidelines.
- xiv) The Associate Board is a virtual board and members are not expected to attend meetings.
- xv) Members of the Associate Board and all other referees are required to treat as confidential all material, submissions and discussions of the Board.
- xvi) Membership of the Board can be terminated by the Board of Trustees on grounds of misconduct, failure to fulfil their obligations, unprofessional behaviour or by mutual agreement.
- xvii) Members of Associate Boards are expected to return comments as required, timely and in accordance with the journals' wish for constructive feedback.
- xviii) Where members feel there may be a conflict of interest (see Section 1) in reviewing a piece of work, they should declare this to the Editors.
- xix) It is not expected that more than two members of the Associate Board will be from the same institution.

7. International Advisory Boards: the role and conduct of the membership

- i) It is preferred but not essential that members of the International Advisory Board will become BSA members upon joining the Board. It is expected that these individuals will be members of a parallel organisation.
- ii) The number of International Advisory Board members will be 16-30 at the discretion of the Editors.
- iii) Nomination and selection process is at the discretion of the Editors and Editorial Board. It is expected that the members will be based at international institutions and have connections to international networks.



- iv) Membership of International Advisory Boards is determined by the Editors and Editorial Board.
- v) In the event that vacancies on an International Advisory Board remain unfilled, the Editors shall have the power to co-opt International Advisory Board Members. The appointment of co-opted Board Members is subject to ratification by the Board of Trustees.
- vi) Criteria for International Advisory Board membership is at the discretion of the Editors and Editorial Board.
- vii) It is expected that the selection process for the International Advisory Board members will consider both the institutional spread and individual expertise amongst members. Coverage of sub-discipline expertise will be considered.
- viii) The period of membership of Board Members is 3-5 years at the discretion of the Editorial Board, but can be extended with mutual agreement.
- ix) Members of the Board are requested to do all they can to positively promote the journal.
- x) International Advisory Board members are expected to conduct business as members of the Board in accordance with BSA ethical policies and practices and COPE guidelines.
- xi) The International Advisory Board is a virtual body and members are not expected to attend meetings.
- xii) Members of the International Advisory Board are required to treat as confidential all material, submissions and discussions of the Board.
- xiii) Membership of the Board can be terminated by the Board of Trustees on grounds of misconduct, failure to fulfill their obligations, unprofessional behaviour or by mutual agreement.
- xiv) Members of International Advisory Boards may be occasionally requested to review. If a member has agreed to review, s/he is expected to return comments as required, timely and in accordance with the journals' wish for constructive feedback.
- xv) Where members feel there may be a conflict of interest in reviewing a piece of work, they should declare this to the Editors.
- xvi) It is not expected that more than two members of the International Advisory Board will be from the same institution.

8. Appeals against Editorial Decisions

- i) Queries regarding editorial decisions should be addressed to the Editors in the first instance. The



Editors for each journal will have an internal policy for addressing/reviewing author queries on editorial decisions. Each team of Editors will make this policy public when they take up the editorship of the journal.

In general, authors are asked to address any queries about decisions with the Editor responsible in the first instance. Should a satisfactory outcome not be achieved, the query will be passed to one of the Co-Editors-in-Chief.

- ii) Formal appeals of editorial decisions shall be addressed in writing to the Chair of the appropriate Editorial Board;
- iii) Formal appeals against editorial decisions/peer reviews will be considered on the following grounds:
 - a. Due process has not been followed
 - b. An apparent conflict of interest exists
 - c. Decision has been made based on a factual error
- iv) If the Chair is unable to review an appeal due to a conflict of interest (see Section 1), the appeal shall be referred to the Chief Executive via the Publications and Membership Manager.

9. Complaints

- i) Complaints (excluding appeals against editorial decisions as addressed in Section 8) relating to the BSA journals should be submitted in writing to the Chief Executive via the Publications and Membership Manager (publications@britsoc.org.uk), who will institute the BSA Journal Formal Complaint Protocols.

10. Editorial Boards: public documents

From January 2005 it is a requirement for the boards to have public documents that include the following:

- i) A statement of the selection procedures and criteria for election of the Editors, members of the Editorial Board members, Associate Board members and International Advisory Board members;
- ii) A statement of the roles and responsibilities of the Editors, the Editorial Board, Associate Board and the International Advisory Board; and
- iii) Guidelines for both internal and external referees.

The guidelines for reviewers can be found on the BSA website:

<https://www.britsoc.co.uk/publications/sociology-journal/>

<https://www.britsoc.co.uk/publications/work-employment-and-society-journal/>

<https://britsoc.co.uk/publications/sociological-research-online/>



The Public Documents make the procedures set out in the editorial contract and BSA Terms of Reference accessible to members of the public and so ensure that journal practices are transparent and accountable.

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