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# YORK POLICY REVIEW

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What follows the original proposal for the launch of a student-run, peer reviewed publication at the University of York, with a focus on social and public policy issues.

In short, the *York Policy Review* aims to disseminate (1) Open Access, high-quality research in these fields from across disciplines, (2) from researchers overseas and at home, and (3) from more experienced scholars to those publishing for the first time. In order to set itself apart from other policy-focused journals and utilise its student-edited structure, it strives to provide innovative mechanisms for groups usually excluded from publishing their research to be able to do so – such as undergraduate students, or those at early stages of postgraduate study – and to promote wider objectives, such as the ‘widening participation’ agenda.

This proposal is not designed to be an exhaustive document or to serve as the Journal’s constitution. Rather, it provides an indication of the governance structure and associated procedures for the running of the Journal for the purposes of its first issue. It is subject to change and revision by the Editorial Board.

## Structure

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# Aims and Purpose

The York Policy Review has five principle aims:

1. Disseminate high quality social and public policy research (1) more quickly than 'traditional' journal environments, and (2) which may not fit the focus of more narrow, subject specialist journals.
2. To provide free, open access to academic material on policy issues to as wide an audience as possible.
3. To provide mechanisms for groups who may not otherwise have the chance to gain experience of peer-review publication to do so (for instance, by providing opportunities to groups often excluded from mainstream publications, such as undergraduate students).
4. To promote the activity of social science researchers at the University of York, and both the Research Centre for Social Sciences and the Department for Social Policy and Social Work.
5. To encourage and facilitate inter-disciplinary research on policy issues across departments and between universities.

This is a non-exhaustive list. There is the potential for a number of spin-off activities, including using the journal to further the University's Widening Participation Strategy, and or to work in parallel with the strategic aims of the White Rose Doctoral Training Centre.

## Governance

1. Though the journal operates in co-ordination with the Department for Social Policy and Social Work, this is purely to provide an administrative home for various functions associated with the running of the journal (for instance, a mechanism for receiving sponsorship monies through the department account). The department retains no direct control or representation on the Editorial Board.
2. All decisions relating to the strategic direction of the journal, the admissibility of submissions, finance and budgeting, and associated activity (such as launch events) will be taken by the Editorial board.
3. For the 2014/15 academic year, membership of the editorial board will be:
  - Darren Baxter
  - Laura Bainbridge
  - Siobhan Callaghan
  - Eppie Rose Leishman
  - Kelly McDonald
  - Jed Meers
4. At the end of the 2014/15 academic year, or in the event that one of the above members have to leave their position, York postgraduate students in social science

departments will be invited to submit applications for membership, and the current members will decide on the successful candidate.

5. Each member of the editorial board possesses one vote, and decisions will be made by a simple majority.

#### **Reviewers**

6. In addition to editorial board members, the journal will also have a bank of reviewers to assist with the peer-review process of submissions.
7. Reviewers will be recruited via applications to the editorial board, which will decide on their admissibility.
8. Though reviewers may be invited to attend editorial meetings at the discretion of the board, they will not have a vote.

#### **Advisory Group**

9. It is anticipated that an advisory group will be formed of academics, external parties and an undergraduate student representative who would be willing to advise the editorial board on the strategic direction of the journal. Invitations or recruitment of this group will be determined by the Editorial Board.

## **Publication**

1. It is anticipated there will be two issues published every calendar year, with one falling in Spring, and another in Autumn.
2. Pending sponsorship, the journal will be published (and archived) online.
3. If adequate sponsorship is attained, a redacted journal will be published in print form, which will be:
  - a. Distributed across the York campus.
  - b. Archived in the University Library.
  - c. Used as promotional material at events such as Open Days.
4. It is anticipated that, following the publication of the first issue, the journal will be listed in academic search databases.

## **Submission Procedure**

1. At the start of each academic term, a call for papers will be issued. This call will be disseminated across social science departments both at the University of York, across other Universities, and online.
2. Submissions will be welcome from any student, academic or practitioner working at any institution.
3. Acceptance of submissions rests entirely at the discretion of the Editorial Board, and the board need not give reasons for rejection if they do not wish to do so.
4. There are three principle submission types:
  - a. Journal Papers
    - i. These will be papers of approximately 5,000 to 8,000 (not including references), which take the form of 'stand-alone' research articles detailing the output of social science research. They must be original

pieces (i.e. not word-for-word submissions of submitted academic work) and must detail research findings.

- b. 'Methods in Practice' articles
  - i. These articles of approximately 1,500 to 2,000 words are for online-only publication, and take the form of an outline of methodological problems faced by research students, or the dissemination of interim findings or conclusions drawn about research methods. This format is designed to publicise research currently underway by Phd students, who have made research findings, but are not currently in a position to provide a full paper for publication. It also allows for the dissemination of academic material on methods, which is difficult for postgraduate students to attain in different outlets.
- c. 'Policy Analysis' articles
  - i. These articles of approximately 1,500 words and for online publication only, are designed to provide a mechanism for undergraduate students to gain experience of writing for publication, and to become involved in the journal. They will focus on providing a short analysis or comment on certain policy issue or proposed policy change. They cannot be the submission of any course-focused academic work (for example, part of an undergraduate module essay).

## Peer-Review Procedure

1. All research papers will be subject to peer review.
2. 'Research Focus' pieces and 'Policy Analysis' pieces will be subject to peer review at the discretion of the editorial board.
3. The peer-review procedure will consist of three stages:
  - a. Initial review by the editorial board.
  - b. Submission to appropriate reviewers with knowledge of the subject area.
  - c. Return of the reviewer comments for summary by the editorial board.
4. The Editorial Board retain sole control of final decisions over what submissions are published.
5. Criteria for selection will include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Suitability of subject matter to the focus of journal.
  - b. Robustness of methodology and research findings.
  - c. Quality of written English.
  - d. Whether publication of the submission advances the aims of the journal.
  - e. Whether the submission is adequately or accurately referenced.
  - f. The presence of inappropriate assertions, such as defamatory material.
  - g. Any other reason the Editorial Board deem relevant.