

IDS Bulletin Best Practice Guidelines and Terms of Reference

Introduction

The *IDS Bulletin* is the flagship publication of IDS, and has been published continually since 1968. The Bulletin aims to transform development knowledge through its unique thematic issues developed by global learning partnerships that bridge academic, practice and policy discourse. The Bulletin has a unique reputation for intellectually rigorous articles on emerging and evolving development issues; these are based on robust research, presented in an accessible manner, and often co-constructed with partners and stakeholders. It is this engaged scholarship between academic and policy communities in the North and the South that is the Bulletin's distinctive contribution to the field. It brings together the latest cutting edge thinking and research from programmes and events involving the IDS community, partners and others, and presents them in special themed issues to an audience of development practitioners, policymakers and researchers.

Since January 2016 the *IDS Bulletin* has been published as an IDS in-house Gold Open Access publication, with articles free to download and available for re-use through Creative Commons licences. Unlike many other Open Access journals the Bulletin will not levy Article Processing Charges from authors but instead continue to charge a fixed sum per issue to projects or commissioning editors.

IDS members should note that publishing in the *IDS Bulletin* is an addition to, not a substitute for, publishing in more conventional academic journals.

About the terms of reference

These terms of reference set out the decision-making processes and production details of the *IDS Bulletin* from January 2016 onwards. They have been primarily designed to inform IDS members interested in editing an issue of the Bulletin, external co-editors and article contributors; although specific guidelines will be made available to authors and peer reviewers.

Currently six issues are published each calendar year, in January, March, May, July, September and November, comprising one volume. From January 2019 a minimum of four issues will be published per year in January, April, July and October (with a maximum of six issues if there is demand).

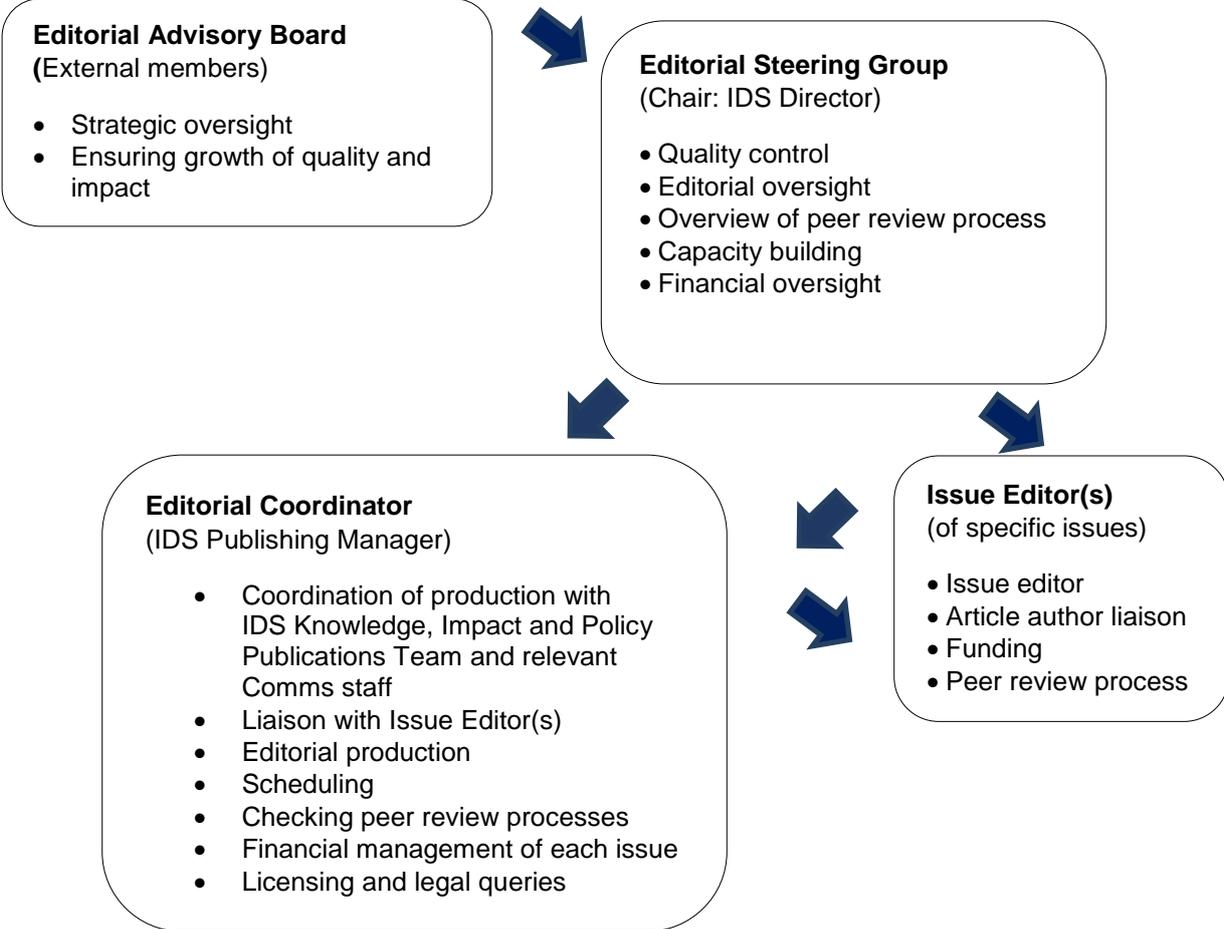
Also, additional Bulletin issues may be produced at unspecified, policy-relevant times during the calendar year. These extra issues may comprise of new material or a mixture of archive and new material. IDS will also periodically release Bulletin Archive Collections drawing together archive articles on particular themes or by particular authors to coincide with an event, and have a new introductory piece by the Issue Editors explaining the relevance of the articles and how they may be used to move debates forward.

If demand for issues during the calendar year outstrips our capacity we can offer 'Special Collections' as an alternative output to those unable to make it into the Bulletin publishing schedule in the time frame required by their programme's log frames. These would be priced individually based on length and complexity and charged at cost.

The Editorial Advisory Board and Editorial Steering Group oversee the running of the journal, and it is managed, published and distributed by the IDS Knowledge, Impact and Policy Publications Team (coordinated by the Editorial Coordinator and liaising with Communications Officers, the IDS Marketing and Production Officer, and external freelances).

The following rights and responsibilities should be noted by contributors, peer reviewers, Issue Editors, the Editorial Advisory Board, the Editorial Steering Group and the IDS Knowledge, Impact and Policy Publications Team.

Management structure and roles/responsibilities



Contributors

Contributors must abide by high standards of rigorous and robust research integrity and good scholarship in writing their Bulletin article, after being commissioned to do so by the Issue Editor(s). It is the contributor's responsibility to submit well-written, factually correct articles, to seek advice if English is not their first language (if necessary), to elaborate on unique and new content, and to acknowledge the contributions of others, especially third-party copyrighted material.

Contributors must state whether the article is simultaneously under consideration with another journal. They must agree to be in correspondence with the Issue Editor(s) regarding amendments following peer review. Multiple authors should allocate one spokesperson for communication with the Issue Editor(s).

If a Bulletin article is written jointly by more than one author, the level of authorship credit should be mutually decided at the beginning of the collaboration process, based upon: expectation, specific ability, and specific tasks in the writing. Allow for renegotiation in case the article needs to be revised after the first draft. To be listed as an author the collaborator should provide a creative and intellectual piece that is integral to the article: it should have an overarching perspective on the subject. To decide level of credit, points could be mutually agreed, with the collaborator reaching a certain number to guarantee inclusion. However, these points should be awarded for level of scholarly importance rather than amount of comments made.

If agreement cannot be reached on authorship, the Editorial Steering Group will be brought in to arbitrate.

The *IDS Bulletin* is intended for academics, policymakers and students, and articles may vary in tone from technically academic (while retaining clarity of language) to a more concise, accessible style within any given issue and across volumes as a whole.

Before finalising their article the contributor and Issue Editor should consider:

- Is my article based on sound methodologies?
- Is my work relevant for policy or practice?
- Have I used accessible style and language?
- Does the article contain sufficient new material?
- Does the article respond sufficiently to the criteria/topic set by the Issue Editor?
- Is the discussion relevant, concise and well documented?
- Are the conclusions supported by the data presented?
- Does the issue as a whole contain a diversity of viewpoints on the topic?
- Are figures and tables adequate and well designed, is any information duplicated?
- Has permission been sought to re-use any third-party copyrighted material?
- Are all references cited in the text included in the references list and vice versa?

Issue Editor's introduction

Issue Editors are asked to make explicit reference in their introduction to how the content has met the above robust criteria and in particular to highlight the diversity of perspectives.

Peer review process

Once contributors send their articles to the Issue Editor(s) they have the right to a considered, timely and unbiased peer review through a minimum of two reviews by reviewers of the Issue Editor(s)' choosing, at least one of which is a blind review from a reviewer outside IDS. Contributors will see anonymised referees' reports together with an editorial view summarising the decision of the reviewers (reject, or revise and resubmit, or minor revisions, or accept as stands). The Issue Editor(s) have discretion on how they interpret and guide responses to reviews.

The *IDS Bulletin* presents engaged scholarship intended for academics, policymakers and students, and articles may vary in tone from technically academic (while retaining clarity of language) to a more concise, accessible style within any given issue and across volumes as a whole. The abstract of the article will make clear the nature of the contribution, and the

sources of evidence on which it draws. Reviewers should take into account the intention of both the particular article and of the Bulletin as a whole when providing their assessment, while ensuring that the article presents an intellectually rigorous and coherent argument.

External reviewers will be contacted by the Issue Editor(s) with up to two review cycles taking place over an 8–10 week period (up to 16 weeks maximum). This fast turnaround assists the Bulletin's unique selling point of producing issues on cutting edge topics.

The Editorial Coordinator and administrative staff will support the review process, ensuring that article revisions are completed, and overseeing the peer review process of the issue as a whole. They will also keep track of time taken from reviewers and follow-up where necessary to ensure timely responses.

Peer reviewers

Researchers and policy actors who benefit from academic and practitioner/policy literature and make their own contributions also have a general collegial obligation to participate in peer review processes. This process is an opportunity to provide positive guidance to a contributor, and while there is no obligation for this, it is recommended as a valuable contribution to an author's career.

Peer reviewers have the right to remain anonymous.

Refusals to a peer review request should be made within one week, in order for the Issue Editor(s) to find another peer reviewer.

Peer reviewers should disclose any circumstances which may compromise their ability to provide an unbiased review.

On agreement to undertake peer review, the reviewer should adhere to the schedule agreed with the Issue Editor(s), including revisions. If unable to meet the suggested schedule the reviewer should notify the Issue Editor(s) and indicate when the review will realistically be completed.

Peer reviewers must act with integrity.

Reviewers should familiarise themselves with previous issues of the *IDS Bulletin* in order to meet the expectations of the Bulletin regarding engaged, accessible scholarship. They should also respect any specific guidelines offered by the Issue Editor(s) regarding the intentions of the issue, or the particular article.

Reviewers should respect confidentiality, and must not disclose the fact that an article has been submitted to them or that they have been asked to review it; nor should any non-public content be disclosed or used for their own purposes.

Should a peer reviewer wish to seek opinions of colleagues on the submitted article they must first seek permission from the Issue Editor(s) to do so.

All comments must adhere to rules of transparency, in order for the Issue Editor(s) to pass them on to the contributor. However a space for separate confidential comments for the Issue Editor(s)' attention may be permitted where necessary.

Peer reviewers are acting as expert advisors to the Issue Editor(s) in order to maintain the *IDS Bulletin's* high standards. However, despite the reviewer's opinion on factual

correctness, it is ultimately the responsibility of the contributor to submit the correct information.

On completion of review the reviewer's report must state the next step for the article:

- Accept as stands
- Minor revisions
- Revise and resubmit
- Reject.

Editors: Advisory Board, Steering Group and Issue Editors

The Editorial Advisory Board, the Editorial Steering Group, and Issue Editor(s) have primary responsibility for guiding the standards and direction of the *IDS Bulletin*.

Editorial Advisory Board (EAB)

The EAB will provide broad oversight to the Bulletin, and through their formal association with it help to establish and maintain its academic credibility, policy relevance and adherence to engaged excellence.

Guidelines outlining the statement of the journal's vision and scope and production processes will be publicly available online; the EAB has responsibility for formulating, monitoring and updating these statements.

The EAB will meet virtually once per year to review the Bulletin's editorial processes, quality and impact. They are tasked specifically with:

- Advising on the development of the Bulletin to increase its impact
- Meeting the changing needs of users
- Supporting Open Access to research and supporting the IDS strategy
- Providing feedback to the Editorial Steering Group; thereby recommending any improvements which they consider necessary.

Editorial Steering Group (ESG)

The ESG is intended to provide guidance and direct support on the content of specific issues and the schedule as a whole. It will oversee quality control of the journal, ensuring that publishing and peer review processes are robust and that the Bulletin continues to reflect the values and strategy of IDS. The group will review the proposed production schedule twice yearly and may be asked to provide guidance on a range of matters such as editorial funding, strategic oversight and monitoring impact. Members of the team may be assigned to an issue of the Bulletin supporting the Issue Editor(s) and when necessary liaising with the Editorial Coordinator. Their role will be to provide advice and support, and in the case of Southern or less experienced Issue Editors, build their capacity.

The ESG will be Chaired by the IDS Director, with attendance and support from the Director of Research and the Director of Communications and Impact. It will be composed of members nominated and approved by the Research Strategy Committee and ensure that the Bulletin forms an integral part of Institute's intellectual output and reflects IDS' priority research areas and cross-cutting themes. The ESG is designed to champion the Bulletin and think strategically about its continued future effectiveness and impact.

Specific responsibilities for the ESG are to:

- Consider the overall Bulletin schedule and ensure that this flagship publication makes a significant contribution to our vision of engaged excellence.
- Identify and recommend themes which may offer strategic opportunities in line with the IDS strategy, projects/programmes, or particular external issues and moments.
- Oversee specific issue content, and where necessary identify and approach potential guest Issue Editors.
- Identify individuals from the development community who might contribute to an issue.
- Identify ethical issues that may impact on the editorial process.
- Directly support Issue Editor(s) on pre-submission matters (with potentially one ESG member assigned to each issue as appropriate).
- Assist with monitoring and reporting impact.
- Support the Editorial Coordinator, ensuring that adequate project funding streams are identified to cover Bulletin publication.
- Ensure that the Bulletin remains financially sustainable. This may be achieved through fundraising, reviews of pricing and business plan.

Issue Editors

Issue Editors may be IDS members or external contacts such as partners, alumni, or commissioned contacts. There are three primary responsibilities for Issue Editors: (1) commissioning articles, (2) overseeing the peer review process and (3) submitting material to the Editorial Coordinator.

- (1) **Commissioning articles.** IEs work closely with commissioned contributors to clarify details such as article word length, messages to convey, tone of writing.

Each issue may contain articles of varying types, such as 'editorial', 'original research', 'commentary', 'policy', 'forum/dialogue'. (The latter category encourages an exchange between two or more contributors and enhances the unique 'themed' issue aspect of the Bulletin.)

- (2) **Overseeing the peer review process,** ensuring its integrity and fairness. IEs should choose reviewers with sufficient expertise, but avoiding conflict of interest; and make decisions on final suitability of articles on objective grounds which are then communicated to contributors. Issue Editor(s) should also communicate clearly with both their reviewers and the Editorial Coordinator as necessary.

IE(s) should ensure that articles are reviewed according to the nature of a particular piece.

If IE(s) chose to reject articles even before sending to a peer reviewer, they must ensure that their own decisions are made fairly and objectively and are recorded in full, in case of an appeal from the contributor and subsequent re-decision process.

Contributors have the right to be informed for the grounds of acceptance or rejection of their article, with access to relevant peer review comments (the only exception being if the article contain libellous remarks or sensitive information). However, editorial discretion should not allow suppression of inconvenient comments (i.e. if a peer reviewer accepts for publication but the IE(s) do not).

IE(s) should be aware of plagiarism, and self-plagiarism and take action to ensure that offending text is not published.

- (3) Issue Editor(s) are responsible for substantive editing of articles before **submission to the Editorial Coordinator**. One IE only should be selected to submit work.

Where the same article is submitted more than once, or conflicting instructions are received from IEs, the Bulletin Editorial Coordinator will return articles and/or not begin work on them until all instructions are clarified.

IEs should be aware that where conflicting submissions and/or instructions are received, the extra time incurred in clarifying these may cause a delay to the advised schedule.

All submitted articles should have accompanying copyright permissions cleared, where necessary.

IDS Knowledge, Impact and Policy Publications Team

The Editorial Advisory Board and Editorial Steering Group oversee commissioning and quality control of the *IDS Bulletin*, but the day-to-day production of each issue rests with the IDS Knowledge, Impact and Policy Publications Team.

It is the responsibility of members of the Publications Team along with relevant communications staff in Hubs and programmes, with guidance by the Bulletin's Editorial Coordinator, to produce, publish and disseminate the submitted articles in the Bulletin format to the highest standards, and adhere to the principles of integrity, transparency and timeliness. The Publications Team will ensure that published articles are available through Open Access in a form which can be simply located, referenced and downloaded.

Standard lead-in time for Bulletin production – from receipt of submitted articles to official publication – is approximately 10–12 weeks. This breaks down into two to four weeks for copy-editing (including working with Issue Editors and contributors in dealing with editorial queries which arise), two weeks for design layout (including redrawing tables, figures and diagrams, and searching for issue 'cover' photo), two weeks for proofreading and a further two weeks for printing (if printed copies are required for launch).

Where Issue Editors and/or contributors respond to queries from the Publishing Team in the timeframes advised, the lead-in time is shorter than when production needs to pause while awaiting responses. Also, production timescales take longer when content is not delivered on the due submission date, as timings start from this date.

The timeline and proposed charge for each issue, which will be supplied to Issue Editors by the Editorial Coordinator, are dependent upon the given word count for type of issue (**all text** including table of contents, acknowledgements, biographies, abstracts, main body content, endnotes and references). Significantly longer text may incur a longer lead-in time, dependent on amount of editorial work required to the submitted text.

Production and support tasks:

- Ensuring continuation of good brand reputation and keeping up-to-date with publishing trends
- Monitoring production systems, reviewing them regularly and making improvements where necessary
- Guidance on licensing allocation
- Management of freelance suppliers
- Tracking progress of articles throughout production; arranging editorial production meetings; copy-editing, typesetting and online formatting of edited text, including arranging redrawing of graphic content

- Online hosting and archiving; online coding, including tagging of metadata
- DOI (Digital Object Identifier) registration
- Search engine optimisation
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Platform upgrades and migrations
- Managing and protecting subscriber records
- Managing and protecting peer review records
- Product development in relation to technological changes

Ethical best practice

IDS is committed to promoting and upholding the highest ethical standards in our research as part of our commitment to engaged research excellence. All parties concerned with production of the *IDS Bulletin* should ensure ethical best practice, adhering to IDS' existing research ethics policy.

The objective of this policy is *to expand our good relationships* by acting with integrity, taking others' needs and wishes into account, and *using moral deliberation imaginatively and with good effect*. The IDS research ethics policy aims to provide a framework for supporting this objective.

Essential principles are that our research:

- avoids doing harm,
- seeks informed and voluntary consent from those taking part,
- respects confidentiality and anonymity, and
- where there is risk, takes adequate steps to minimise it.

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Alison Norwood, IDS Knowledge, Impact and Policy Publications Team