Research Policy Special Issues and Special Sections

Notes for Proposers and Guest Editors

Research Policy publishes Special Issues and Special Sections consisting of original papers focused on a particular topic (e.g. vol. 39 (4), 2010 on Innovation and Sustainability Transitions) or vol. 39(5) 2010 on Government as Entrepreneur). Often in the past, these have made important contributions to the field and the Editors are keen to encourage new proposals.

The current editorial strategy is that Special Issues (about 12-15 papers) or Special Sections (about 8-10 papers) should only appear in two or so of the ten issues that make up the journal each year. Given the number of suggestions received, the Editors have to be quite selective in accepting ideas and topics that will make an important, timely and high quality contribution to the field.

There can be quite a long lead-time for publication of a Special Issue and, to help ensure appropriate timing of publication, the Editors welcome suggestions at an early stage in their development. In some cases initial contact may be made with any of the RP Editors for exploratory discussions, and these may lead to a proposal by the prospective Guest Editors. But Guest Editors may also proceed directly to submitting a proposal. This should usually consist of about 3-5 pages along the following lines – though variation around this structure will often be appropriate.

Proposal Outline

Basic Information

- Provisional title, proposed Guest Editors, date likely to be submitted, etc.

Overview

- Proposed topic, with outline scope and structure
- Academic rationale (contribution of the issue to the development of the field, etc.)
- Any special circumstances (conference, major research project, festschrift, etc.)
- Special Issue rationale (why a special issue as opposed to papers for normal issues of the journal?)

Possible contributors

- If known, a list of the potential authors plus topics
- If not known, the steps to be used to identify such a list

Process for reviewing papers

- Stages of submission, review and decision
- Mode of submission and review
- Role of any workshops, meetings, etc.
- Brief information about the editorial and related experience of the Guest Editors

Schedule

- Timing of the main steps and expected date of submission to the publishers

Proposals are reviewed by the journal Editors twice per year - in March and September, requiring submission by the 1st day of those months. One of the RP Editors will normally act as Lead Editor to work with the Guest Editors of the accepted proposal.

The Lead Editor will agree the main features with the Guest Editors. The respective roles of the Lead Editor and the Guest Editors will be clearly identified, and the latter will be provided with detailed information about the procedures for submission of material to the journal.