'Social Research Practice' journal - author guidelines
July 2019 v8

Introduction

'Social Research Practice' is the journal of the Social Research Association (SRA). There are two issues a year, containing around four articles of 2,500-4,000 words. The journal is free and available online on the SRA website.

The journal comprises articles about practice-based research. Articles need to be well-written and easy-to-read. We are planning a 'best paper' award each year to encourage this. There are two issues a year, containing around four articles of 2,500-4,000 words as well as shorter Research Notes.

The readership is diverse, including new and experienced researchers and those who use research from many social research fields and disciplines.

Editorial aims and policy

The journal is for anyone working in social research or social policy, whether they are a producer or a user of research. The aims of the journal are to:

- Cover practice-based, rather than pure academic, research (accepting that this distinction is a loose one)
- Focus mainly, but not exclusively, on methodological matters, but also present findings themselves if these are likely to be of wide interest
- Feature applications and case studies which have practical value for research colleagues, rather than discussing philosophical principles and theory
- Highlight the impact of research on practice and on policy
- Show innovative techniques, but without excluding useful research based on more traditional methods
- Cover the full range of approaches – quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods, and so on
- Encourage openness from authors – honest admission of problems encountered, and learning from mistakes
- Encourage and promote high standards of social research for public benefit

The overall aim of the journal is to encourage and promote high standards of social research for public benefit.

Policy for members of the SRA
We do not provide Social Research Practice solely to SRA members. However, it could not exist without their membership fees and support. So, as a broad principle, we give priority to submissions from SRA members, while ensuring quality standards are paramount. This means that when there are submissions of comparable quality, those from SRA members have priority.

Editor and editorial board

Social Research Practice is managed by the editor, **Richard Bartholomew**. Richard is an independent researcher and consultant. Until 2013 he was Chief Research Officer for the Department for Education (DfE), responsible for research on children, young people and families as well as representing its wider research interests. Richard was also joint head of the Government Social Research (GSR) service, the professional body which represents over 1,000 social researchers working in government departments. Richard is a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences, and is Chair of the Strategic Advisory Board of the Centre for Longitudinal Studies at the Institute of Education, University College London.

There also is an **editorial board** consisting of 30 senior figures in social research. The role of board members is to source submissions and to review articles at the editor's request. The board comprises practising researchers from various disciplines and settings. Current board members are listed below – please note that they are not representing their organisations in this role.

Name	Organisation
Alison Park	CLOSER, IoE
Angela Ellis Paine	Third Sector Research Centre
Bev Bishop	Health and Safety Executive
Bob Erens	London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
Catherine Owens	College of Policing
Clarissa White	Independent consultant
Danna-Mechelle Lewis	Home Office
David Johnson	Department for Energy and Climate Change
Debbie Collins	NatCen Social Research
Dr Liz Brewster	Leicester University
Dr Paula Mayock	Trinity College Dublin
Emma Wallace	National Children's Bureau
Gerry Nicolaas	Ipsos MORI
Isabella Pereira	Ipsos MORI

Joel Williams	TNS BMRB
Jon Burton	ISER, University of Essex
Jouni Kuha	London School of Economics
Justin Davis-Smith	National Council for Voluntary Organisations
Kandy Woodfield	The Higher Education Academy
Kevin Pickering	Ipsos MORI
Lisa Calderwood	Institute of Education, University College London
Matt Barnard	NSPCC
Nick Moon	GfK NOP
Patten Smith	Ipsos MORI
Sam Clemens	Ipsos MORI
Simon Anderson	Independent consultant
Siobhan Campbell	Department of Energy and Climate Change
Stephen Morris	Department for Communities and Local Government
Susan Purdon	Bryson Purdon Social Research
Suzanne Hall	Ipsos MORI

Submissions

If you are not sure if your proposal is suitable for the journal, please send an outline or summary to the editor and we will get back to you. Please email: admin@the-sra.org.uk with 'Social Research Practice' in the subject header.

Articles must not have been previously published, and or be in submission to any other e-journal.

Software
Please send us your article in the MS Word document template provided on the SRA website.

Title
This should be no longer than 15 words. It should give the reader a good idea of the subject.

Abstract
We require a concise and factual abstract. It should summarise your article as clearly as possible, without jargon, abbreviations, links or references. It should be no longer than 150 words.

Literature review
We do not need a literature review.   But we expect the article to include some context-setting and justification of the paper's importance. This should include background information such as the policy context, why the research is significant, and how it came about.

Article length
The article should be between 2,500 and 4,000 words, although we will consider shorter articles. You need to supply a word count.

We are also introducing a series of shorter **Research Notes** of between 1,000 and 1,500 words. Research Notes are suitable, for example, for short reports on work in progress or specific innovations and experiments which, although not yet fully trialled, may be of interest to other researchers. The Notes may lead to fuller articles in due course or may simply report points of interest which would not be suitable for a longer article.

Funding acknowledgement
If you are writing about funded research, please give the name of the funders.

Payment
SRA does not pay for articles. The journal is available free on the SRA website.

Editorial process and timetable
We will acknowledge receipt of your article and forward it to the editor. We will then let you know whether or not the editor has decided that your article is suitable and ready for peer review. If not, we will give you the reasons, and we may ask you for revisions and re-submission. An article that is suitable will be sent out for peer review, which could take up to six weeks or more depending on the availability of reviewers. The possible outcomes are:

1. Accepted, without need for significant revision. Please note that the article may have been lightly edited by this stage, for example minor style changes. It will be sent for copy-editing and you may receive queries – please answer these without delay to avoid holding up the process. We will send you the final version of your article and ask you to confirm that it can be published.

2. Needs revision. We will provide details.

3. Not accepted. We will give reasons.

Peer review

Papers which the editor considers potentially suitable for Social Research Practice will be reviewed, usually by one or two members of the editorial board. The editor will make the final decision about publication.

We are keen to support authors. We encourage submissions from new writers, whether they are early career researchers or others who have not previously written for a journal. We will maintain high standards. We will notify peer reviewers when a paper is written by a novice author and expect them to be encouraging in their comments, whether those comments are favourable or otherwise.

Peer reviewers will see the author's name. The editor has the discretion about whether or not to pass their comments to the author, but you will not be told the identity of reviewers.

Reviewers are asked:

- To treat the article and reviewing process as confidential
- To ensure they have the editor's permission if they want to get a colleague's opinion
- Not to use any information in the article for personal, intellectual or commercial advantage or for the advantage of any organisation

Copyright

The author(s) holds copyright of their material. As Social Research Practice is freely available on the SRA website we do not need to license your article. You are free to use the article elsewhere but we ask that you do this at least six months after publication with the SRA, and let us know if you are planning to do this. We would like an acknowledgement that it was first published in Social Research Practice.

The SRA holds copyright of each journal issue as a whole.

How to submit an article

Please write your article directly into the MS Word document template provided on the SRA website: http://the-sra.org.uk/journal-social-research-practice/   We can only accept articles submitted in this document.

Style guide

Please use the following style guide.

Readability
Social Research Practice is an online-only journal. Please write in short sentences and paragraphs to help the online reader.

Format of articles
- Single spaced
- A4, portrait orientation, with standard margins (around 2.5cm) left and right
- Align text to the left
- Do not justify text to the right
- Font colour – black only
- Font: Please use Arial size 12 (if unavailable, Times New Roman size 12)
- For emphasis use **bold**, not italics or underline
- Use 'single quotation marks' if referring to a document
- Numbered or bullet-pointed lists are fine, but avoid creating lists with tabs
- Do not use the 'Review' function in Word to insert Comments in the text
- Do not add to the 'header' section of the document
- In the footer, insert page numbering (plain number, bottom right) but no text
- In general, avoid any but the most basic formatting

Headings
In bold, Arial, font size 14. Please do not number headings.
Do not use the 'Styles' function in Word to create, number or format headings or sub-headings.

Sub-headings
In bold, Arial, font size 12.

Charts, tables, images and figures
- Include these within the text, placed where you want them to appear. Use a logical numbering sequence
- Charts that originate in Excel need to be recreated by our designer, so please use them sparingly to illustrate key issues.
- Images such as photos must be saved at no less than 100 dpi resolution before you insert them in the document
- For any image you use, if you are not the copyright holder, you **must** get permission from the owner to use the photo in our publication, and you are responsible for any consequences if you have not done this correctly. Add 'OWNER NAME, reproduced with permission' immediately below it

Lists
- Should be auto-numbered or bullet-pointed, but please do not create lists with tabs or spaces
- First word in upper case
- No 'or', 'and' or full stop at the end of a bullet

Capital letters
Keep to a minimum, as this increases readability. Use for the names of people, places and organisations. We use lower case for job titles.

For headings and sub headings: upper case at first word only unless it is a name or 'proper' noun.

Numbers
- Spell out one to ten. Use numerals for 11 and above
- For dates, use 1 and 2 rather than 1st and 2nd
- Use % rather than percent.

Verbatim quotes
Ensure that the quoted words of research subjects could not be used to identify individuals. If you are not sure, do not use them. For lengthy quotes, ensure you have permission to use them and add 'quoted with permission'.

Formatting: if the quote runs over more than two lines, make it a separate paragraph, indented once from the left. Identify direct or paraphrased speech by 'single quotes'.

Formulas
Please keep mathematical formulae as simple as possible. Is there another way of expressing the information, as many readers will not read or understand formulae?

Abbreviations and acronyms
Spell out in full at first use, with the acronym in brackets, such as Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC). Thereafter just use the acronym. There is no need to spell out an acronym which is widely familiar, eg UK, MP.

Spelling

Use UK spelling. Check that your Word program is not set to US spelling.

Check spelling of people's names, book titles, government departments and so on.

Print off and read through your article before you send it to us because your spell-checker will not pick up on words which are incorrect but are correctly spelled.

Footnotes
Use these sparingly and keep them short.

References to books, reports and journal articles

We discourage excessive references to other published work.

In your text, please cite by surname and year, as in these examples: (Jones, 2012) or (Smith et al, 2012). Please use 'et al' if there is more than one author.

At the end of your article, please list the books and journals cited in your article. You should only include references that are cited in your text. Please do not use the 'footnotes' or 'endnotes' options in your word-processing program (eg. Word). Just make a list at the end of the references you have cited.

The list should be in alphabetical order by (first) surname. Some examples:

References to books and reports:
Surname, N., Surname, N., and Surname, N. (year of publication) Title of book. Where published: Publishing organisation.

Example:
Knight, P. (2004) Reducing uncertainty. York: Higher Education Academy.

References to Journal articles:
Surname, N., Surname, N., and Surname, N. (year of publication) 'Title of article'. Title of journal Issue/n: pagination.

Example:
Ettelt, S., Mays, N. and Allen, P. (2015a) 'The multiple purposes of policy piloting and their consequences: three examples from national health and social care policy in England'. Journal of Social Policy 44 (2): 319-337.

In the 'References' section you can add weblinks to the books and articles listed, but please link to a webpage featuring a document, rather than directly to an open PDF online. Links which fail after publication cannot be updated. Start at 'www' (not 'http//' unless there is no 'www'). Links should follow the reference, in brackets. Please test links before you send us the article.

Links in the text
When referencing a book, report or journal article, do not add a link to it in the main text (only do this in the 'References' section, see above). But if your article references an item on the web which is **not** published in a book or journal, add a weblink in brackets after the text, for example 'in her blog post' (weblink). Start at 'www' (not 'http//' unless there is no 'www'). Please test links before you send us the article. Links which fail after publication cannot be updated.

Please do not add any internal hyperlinks to other parts of your article or references.

Acknowledgements
Put any acknowledgements in a separate section at the very end of the article.

Social Research Association

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