



Migration Politics
Instructions for Editors in Charge
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Tasks

The editor in charge (EIC) has three main responsibilities:

- 1) Soliciting reviewers
- 2) Making a decision
- 3) Writing decision recommendations

Soliciting Reviewers

EiCs should procure a minimum of three reviews for every manuscript.

When and how to approach reviewers

- You should start soliciting reviews as soon as you accept the role of lead editor for a submission.
- As it is common for invited reviewers to reject an invitation, or not reply at all, we recommend you make a list of 5-7 reviewers to start with. You can enter the first three reviewers into the SciPost system and send out invitation. Reviewers entered into the SciPost system will receive an invite straight away. Please regularly (every 5-10 days) check the status of the invites until the target number of reviewers has been reached: if a reviewer declines, invite another one from your list straight away. If people do not reply to an invite within 7-10 days we strongly recommend inviting additional reviewers (and withdrawing the invitation to the non-responding reviewers). General experience is that people reply within a week or not at all.

Who should be asked to review?

- The reviewers should collectively possess a broad range of expertise on the topic of the paper. We recommend that EICs search for 1 specialist in the area of theoretical interest, 1 specialist in the area of empirical/ methodological interest & 1 generalist in the field.
- These reviewers should not have an obvious conflict of interest. For example, they should not be based at the same institution as the author, have co-authored with the author, be a current or former mentor/ supervisor mentee/ employee of the author.

- In line with the philosophy of Migration Politics, lead editors are encouraged to actively promote diversity (in terms of gender, ethnicity, race, affiliation etc.) when deciding from whom to solicit reviews.
- You may consult with the editors or Editorial College for advice on who to approach for reviews.

Further information

- Guidelines for reviewers can be found at <https://scipost.org/MigPol/refereeing>.
- Note that in addition to invited review reports, SciPost allows the submission of unsolicited reviews by registered users of SciPost.

Making a Decision:

Once three substantial review reports have been submitted, you can write the Editorial Recommendation and decision letter. The Editor-in-Charge can recommend

- Publication
- Revision (there is no distinction between “major” and “minor”)
- Rejection.

What to base a decision on?

The recommendation should be based on, the invited Reports, any contributed Reports and/or Comments received on the current and previous drafts, the author’s responses, and the Editor-in-Charge's own assessment of the Submission based on thorough reading all versions of the manuscript.

Invited or contributed review reports of insufficient quality, e.g. very short, indicating a lack of effort in reading the paper, aggressive and/or otherwise non-constructive do not count as ‘substantive’ reports. These reports should be disregarded when determining the editorial recommendation and writing the decision letter, but will nonetheless be shared with the authors and kept on the website for reasons of transparency.

The EIC should make the decision that is most likely to lead the author’s work becoming a high quality publication. Crucially, this may mean that in cases where the content of the paper is not ideally suited to Migration Politics, a rejection letter that includes advice regarding alternate publication venues, may be the best method of achieving this outcome.

EICs may use their own expertise and discretion, but not introduce their own agenda or aims. They should regard the reviewers comments as ‘expert opinions’ and not the votes of a jury. They may, for example decide to give opinions offered by one reviewer more weight than others. They may discount specific points made by reviewers, particularly if they are countered or neutralised by points made by other reviewers. They may identify areas for improvement which the reviewers have not adequately identified, particularly if these areas align with the core mandate of Migration Politics. However, EICs should avoid, guiding the authors to contribute to their own topics of interest, lines of theoretical / empirical concern, or direct engagements with their own work.

Here are our general criteria for reaching these three decisions:

- *Accept decisions*: the manuscript and attending cover letters should have addressed all of the concerns identified by the reviewers, including explaining to the editors satisfaction why they have not addressed or taken up specific suggestions /comments, and leave only typographical/ spelling/ grammar issues that can be resolved in the copy-editing phase.
- *Revisions decisions*: the editor is able to identify a ‘pathway to publication’: a set of instructions which, if followed by the author(s) will transform the manuscript into a high quality publication that engages with the Migration Politics agenda. These changes should not require further extensive empirical work or a complete re-write of the manuscript. Note that what some journals would call a “conditional accept” in the SciPost system is regarded as a “revision”.
- *Reject decisions*: the editor is unable to identify a pathway to publication and/or is able to identify an alternate publication venue which is more likely to assist the author in developing a high quality publication

Writing Decision Recommendations:

The main work of the EIC will involve writing decision recommendations. Migration Politics places a high premium on intensive editorial curation. It is our explicit goal to not simply ‘out-source’ decisions to reviewers. Hence, we expect that the decision letter accompanying the Editorial Recommendation should be approximately .5 - 1 page long. It should briefly address what the lead editor sees as the core strength and - any - weaknesses of the paper. It should support the editorial recommendation. When the recommendation is revisions, the letter ideally consists of a limited number (3-6) of suggestions as to how the author(s) should change the manuscript. These suggestions should synthesise and/ or balance specific comments and suggestions raised by the reviewers. These recommendations should, more so than the individual reviews, provide the criteria for adjudicating whether the authors have rigorously and in good faith, sought to follow editorial guidance. Subsequent letters should avoid introducing additional issues which the reviewers and editors had the opportunity to identify in previous rounds.

What happens next

If the recommendation is to accept (publication) or reject, the editorial recommendation is put to a vote in the editorial college. If the recommendation is to revise, there is no vote in the editorial college.

Timeline

- The first week after submission the editors will approach editorial college fellows whose expertise matches the submission to take on the editorial lead.
- In the second week the editorial lead should solicit reviews.
- Reviews are expected to be in within four weeks after submission
- The editorial recommendation and decision letter should be written in the 7th week and submitted to the editorial college.
- The Editorial College votes in the 8th week.
- Authors receive the decision letter and all reviews.