



Journal Terms of Reference

British Educational Research Association

Company Limited by Guarantee

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BERA Journals: Terms of Reference for Editors and Editorial Boards

About BERA and BERA Journals

The British Educational Research Association (BERA) is the owner of four journals (the *British Educational Research Journal*, the *British Journal of Educational Technology*, *Review of Education* and the *Curriculum Journal*). BERA appoints a publisher that is contracted to publish and distribute the journals on the terms set out in a separate contract.

BERA Council is BERA's governing body. BERA Council delegates authority for contractual and day-to-day management of the journals and publishing relationship(s) to the Executive Director and Publications Manager ('the BERA Office'), and for academic and strategic oversight of the journal portfolio to BERA's Publications Committee. The Chair of the Publications Committee is responsible for submitting regular reports to Council of all publishing activities and issues including those related to the journals. In turn, the Editors and Editorial Boards of each Journal report to, and are held to account by, Publications Committee in the first instance. The term 'BERA' below refers to this structure generally rather than any specific body or individual within it.

All work undertaken by Editors, Editorial Boards (and any auxiliary bodies such as International Advisory Boards) is on behalf of BERA.

BERA Support for the journals

BERA commits itself to the following.

1. Supplying appropriate publishing assistance through the BERA Office.
2. Providing a legal framework for journal production.
3. Negotiating contracts with publishers to produce and market journals.
4. Organising, maintaining, auditing and reporting on journal accounts.
5. Allocating annual editorial support funds for journals and their Editors.
6. Operating all its Journals in a spirit of transparency and accountability.

BERA responsibilities towards the journals

BERA is responsible for the following.

7. Confirmation of the appointment of Editors, Chairs and members of Editorial Boards and ultimately the right of dismissal.
8. Monitoring journal activities and expenditure.
9. Approval of the constitution of Editorial Boards, including their size, practice and rules of membership.
10. Considering and approving changes to the aims and scope of the journal.

11. Setting general policies in terms of language and ethics for contributors and members involved in the editorial process.
12. Making decisions on how Journals are to be part of the benefits package afforded to BERA members.
13. Ensuring there is sufficient administrative support for Editorial Teams.
14. Final decisions on matters of typography and design.
15. Acting as arbiter in any complaints made about the journals, and as final arbiter of any disputes arising within or between Editorial Teams, Editorial Boards and/or International Advisory Boards, where those complaints or disputes cannot otherwise be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties.
16. Such deliberations, decisions and roles shall normally be the responsibility of Publications Committee unless it specifically delegates these to the BERA Office.

Editorial Teams: requirements and conduct

17. Editors and other members of the Editorial Team will be members of the Association when first nominated and are responsible for continuing their membership while operating as Editors.
18. The Editors will perform the editorial duties set out in the memorandum of understanding between BERA and Editors (see appendix) and any other duties as reasonably required by BERA.
19. The Editors have final authority on decisions about the academic content of the journal not the Chair or members of the Editorial Board.
20. The term of office of an Editorial Team is normally four years, renewable for a further two years.
21. The term of office can be terminated by BERA Council on grounds outlined in the Editorial Contract.
22. If an Editor or Chair of the Board submits an article for consideration during the tenure of their office, they will have no involvement in the editorial processing and peer review of that article.
23. The Editorial Team shall have the opportunity if they wish to publish special issues of, or special sections within, the Journal during their period of tenure, refereed in the normal way, provided that the frequency and content of all special issues and sections are congruent with the stated and agreed aims and scope of the journal.
24. The Editorial Team are required to treat as confidential all material, submissions and discussions of the Board, and all other meetings relating to journal activity.
25. The Editorial Team are required to observe all aspects of BERA's policies regarding

honoraria and the use of editorial support funds (see appendix), including BERA's general expenses policy.

26. One Editor from within each Journals' Editorial Team is expected to attend one meeting of Publications Committee annually, normally held in February, in order to present an annual report to the Committee covering all aspects of their Journal's performance, processes, future plans and so on, and to respond to any questions that the Committee may have. This should include information about membership, composition (in terms of geography, specialism, etc.) and succession planning of the Editorial Board (see below).
27. More generally, Editors should respond promptly to any queries raised by the Publications Committee outside of this annual meeting cycle.

Appointment of Editorial Teams

28. The search for and nomination of new Editors are the responsibility of BERA, with appropriate advice from the Editorial Board.
29. BERA will advertise the appointment openly with clear details of the process, timetable and criteria by which selection will be made.
30. The selection panel will be comprised of representatives determined by BERA.
31. The evaluation of bids will be based on criteria supplied by BERA.
32. The Editorial Board will be consulted upon the criteria by which selection will be made and on the final recommendation before it is ratified by BERA Council. Where there are strong objections raised from Board members, these will be communicated, together with the nominated bid, to BERA Council.

Editorial boards: the role, conduct and appointment of the membership

33. The primary function of Editorial Boards is to advise and hold to account the Editors, offering diverse perspectives and extensive experience in order to enhance the Journal in all respects and advance its aims and objectives.
34. Editorial Boards should, to the fullest possible extent, reflect the diversity of the journal's field(s), in terms of expertise, opinion, methodological stance, geographical location, and demographic characteristics (including but not limited to race/ethnicity and gender).
35. Members of Editorial Boards must be or become a member of BERA upon joining the Editorial Board of a BERA journal, with the exception of members of the International Advisory Board (where relevant) and international members of the Board, who should be encouraged to join.
36. The number of Editorial Board members will normally be at the discretion of the Editors and other members of the Board, with agreement from BERA. The number of members required for Editorial Boards to function effectively will vary for each

journal according to, for example, where and how often it proposes to meet. BERA reserves the right to limit the frequency and attendance of physical (as opposed to online/remote meetings) of Boards for financial reasons (e.g. room hire, travel expenses). Editors and the Board should advise BERA of any gaps in Board membership (both numerically and in terms of the characteristics described in paragraph 35 above), to inform calls for nominations.

37. Nominations shall normally be sought, in the first instance, from the full membership of BERA by means of calls in the newsletter, publicity on the web and other means. However, it is recognised that this will not always be possible where, for example, Board members are purposively being sought from specific countries or regions, or on the basis of specific expertise and/or experience. Any recruitment to a Board should be run in a spirit of openness and transparency.
38. Editorial Board members are not paid for their work on the journal but do receive benefits in terms of their professional standing and access to research findings in advance of their wider publication.
39. Membership of Editorial Boards is by recommendation from the Editors and Editorial Board to BERA, and is subject to confirmation by BERA. Where the number of nominees is greater than that of the available places, the Editorial Board may hold an election by means of a secret ballot.
40. For appointment, members of Editorial Boards are normally expected to have experience of publication in peer review outlets and of previous refereeing suitable to the international academic standards of the journals. Exceptions may be considered if, for example, Boards are seeking to improve the representation of early-career researchers among their number (see point 43 below).
41. In addition to academic standing, it is expected that the election process for Board members will consider both the institutional spread of the Board and individual expertise amongst members of the Board. Consideration will be taken of coverage of sub-discipline expertise.
42. Board membership must be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure succession planning and fresh impetus and perspectives. Boards may choose to specify the length of the terms that its members should serve (ideally with their end-dates staggered to ensure continuity), whether and how these can be renewed, and the process for how members can be elected and/or co-opted; BERA Staff can assist in this process. An annual update on Board composition and succession planning will be provided to the Publications Committee.
43. Editorial Boards should include at least one early-career researcher among their membership. BERA's definition of 'early career researcher' is someone who is in the process of completing a master's degree, doctorate or EdD in education (or a related field), or has completed such studies within the past five years.
44. Members of the Board are expected to do all they can to promote the journal. They are expected to contribute to the work, profile and ongoing success of the journal by

carrying out duties that include, but are not limited to, the following.

- Acting as a reviewer of papers submitted to the journal.
 - Encouraging submissions of high quality from (for example) colleagues, PhD students and contacts made at conferences.
 - Choosing the journal as their first choice for submission of their own work whenever appropriate.
 - Submitting ideas to the Editor for special issues/sections, virtual issues (online compilations of existing journal content) and review articles and recommending possible guest editors / authors.
 - Serving as a guest editor for a special issue/section, as appropriate.
 - Advise the editors on special issue proposals etc., as appropriate.
 - Encouraging their students and colleagues to read the journal and encouraging their institution to take a subscription if they do not already.
45. Where meetings of the Editorial Board are held, the most recent reports from the Publisher and Editorial Office shall be circulated, alongside other material mutually agreed by the Editors, Board members and BERA, for discussion. Agendas and papers should be prepared and circulated according to a process established and agreed by the Editors and Editorial Board, with BERA's approval. Where Boards have Chairs, these responsibilities should normally be that of the Chair, in consultation with the Editors and with input from other Board members and BERA as required.
46. Where appropriate, members of Editorial Boards are expected to regularly contribute to meetings of the full board. When members are unable to attend a meeting, they are expected to send apologies in advance to the Editor and the BERA Office, read the agenda and reports (which will be circulated in advance) and provide feedback or comments ahead of the meeting. All Board members are sent minutes after each meeting, and are expected to read these and send comments to the Editor as appropriate.
47. Members of the Editorial Board and all other referees are required to treat as confidential all material, submissions and discussions of the Board.
48. Membership of the Board can be terminated by the BERA Council on grounds of misconduct, failure to fulfil their obligations, unprofessional behaviour or by mutual agreement.
49. Members of Editorial Boards are expected to return comments on any material circulated to them for comment in a timely fashion and in accordance with the Journal's wish for constructive feedback.

50. Where members feel there may be a conflict of interest in reviewing a piece of work, they should declare this to the Editors.
51. It is not expected that members of the Editorial Board will be appointed from the same department as the Editorial Team.
52. The Board should ensure that all editorial business is conducted in accordance with the Association's ethical policies, practices and guidelines.

Editorial Boards: The role and conduct of the Chair

BERA recognises that the Editorial Boards of different journals operate in different ways. Editors and the Editorial Board may choose to have an independent Chair, elected by and from among Board members, who will co-ordinate the Board's work and chair its meetings. Where Editors and/or Editorial Boards have reached a mutual decision to create, amend or remove the office of the Chair (as opposed to the person appointed as Chair), this decision is subject to the approval of BERA's Publications Committee.

If a Chair is appointed to co-ordinate the Board's work, then the following points apply.

53. The Chair of the Board will be drawn from full members of the Board and be selected by means of a ballot of existing full members of the Board and confirmed by BERA.
54. The term of office of the Chair of the Editorial Board will be coterminous with her/his term on the Board.
55. The Chair's term of office can be terminated by BERA Council on grounds of misconduct, failure to fulfil their obligations, unprofessional behaviour or by mutual agreement.
56. Part of the Chair's role is to ensure that all new Board members are introduced to existing Board members, that they are inducted into the remit of their role and responsibilities (i.e. participation in Board meetings and the associated work of the Board which includes ad hoc tasks as well as refereeing papers).