Aims and scope

Palgrave Communications is an open access online-only journal dedicated to publishing high quality original research. The scope of the journal reflects Palgrave Macmillan’s strengths in the humanities, the social sciences and business. In addition to our multidisciplinary position, we particularly welcome interdisciplinary research, which fosters interaction, creativity and reflection between the rich disciplines that our project encompasses.

We aspire to be the definitive peer-reviewed outlet for open access academic research in and between our subjects. Palgrave Communications is open to all theoretical and methodological perspectives.

We are committed to providing an efficient service for both authors and readers. A streamlined peer-review system, together with the support of an eminent Editorial Board, allows us to make rapid and fair publication decisions. Prompt dissemination of accepted papers to Palgrave Macmillan’s wide readership and beyond is achieved through a program of continuous online publication. Published manuscripts are enhanced by innovative web technologies, including an enhanced article template and article level metrics.

Content types

Article
Articles describe original research. Articles may range in length from short communications through to more in-depth studies. Regardless of the length, an Article represents novel and important research.
We do not impose word length limits, but suggest articles should be no more than 8000 words (excluding abstract, tables, figure legends and references).

Articles are peer-reviewed and include received/accepted dates. Where it is relevant authors must include a statement about any competing financial interest before publication.

**Review**
A Review is an authoritative, balanced and scholarly survey of recent developments in a research field. Although Reviews should be recognized as scholarly by specialists in the field, they should be written with a view to informing non-specialist readers. Thus, Reviews should be presented using simple prose, avoiding excessive jargon and technical detail.

Reviews may range in length, and while we do not impose word length limits, we do suggest Reviews should be no more than 8000 words (excluding abstract, tables, figure legends and references).

Where it is relevant authors must include a statement about any competing financial interest before publication.

**Editorial**
Editorials represent the opinion of the Journal on a topical matter of interest to the readership. This section is commissioned only.

**Comment**
Comment articles represent an analysis of recently published articles of particular interest. This section is commissioned only.

Authors should visit the Submission Guidelines for more detailed information.

**Costs**

*Palgrave Communications* is an open access publication. To provide this service, all expenses, including peer review, production, and online hosting and archiving, are recovered via an article-processing charge (APC).

Visit our open research site for further information about APC pricing and our free OA funding support service.

**Editorial Board**

*Palgrave Communications* has a distinguished and extensive Editorial Board, which reflects the broad scope and standing of the Journal — academics and researchers from a broad spectrum of the community. Editorial board members are ambassadors for *Palgrave Communications*. They will review papers and suggest reviewers as appropriate. Decisions to publish or not on *Palgrave Communications* are made by reference to our reviewers’ recommendations, and in some instances with further reference to our Editorial Board.

**Contact information**

For general editorial enquiries relating to *Palgrave Communications*, including manuscript submission queries, and for enquiries relating to the Editorial Board, please contact palcomms@palgrave.com.
Online submission

All submissions must be made via our online submission system. Authors can upload manuscript files (text, figures, and videos) directly to our office and check on the status of their manuscripts during the review process. In addition, reviewers can access the manuscript (in a highly secure fashion that maintains referee anonymity) over a direct internet link, which speeds up the review process. Please consult our technical information on file formats and tips for using the system effectively.

When submitting your manuscript, please note that there are restrictions on the types of files that you are able to upload. This will enable a faster production process. Accepted article and figure types are as follows:

1. For Article Text — txt, doc, docx, tex
2. For Figures — eps, tif, and jpeg

If your paper does not include formulas, we strongly encourage you to submit your paper in txt, doc or docx rather than tex.

Submission policies

Submission to Palgrave Communications is taken to imply that the submitted manuscript has not already been published elsewhere. If similar or related work has been published or submitted elsewhere, then the authors must provide a copy with the submitted article. Authors may not submit elsewhere while the manuscript is under consideration at Palgrave Communications.

The primary affiliation for each author should be the institution where the majority of their work was done. If an author has subsequently moved, the current address may also be stated.

If the manuscript includes personal communications, please provide a written statement of permission from any person who is quoted. E-mail permission messages are acceptable.

Please visit the visit the Guide to Referees for further information on the peer review process.

The corresponding author is alerted when a proof of the paper is ready. Contributors will be able to correct major errors or inaccuracies in the title or author list, but Palgrave Communications reserves the right to limit the scope of changes.

Palgrave Communications reserves the right to reject a paper even after it has been accepted if it becomes apparent that there are serious problems with the content or with violations of our publishing policies.

For information relating to submission of a competing financial interests statement, pre-publication publicity, deposition of data as a condition of publication, availability of data after publication, human and animal subjects, digital image integrity, biosecurity, corrections and retractions, duplicate publication, confidentiality and plagiarism, please visit the editorial and publishing policies of Palgrave Communications.

How to submit

For detailed information about how to submit to Palgrave Communications, please view the view the Submission Guidelines.
Initial submission

Manuscripts should be submitted via the online submission system. Copies of any papers containing similar or related work that are under consideration or in press at other journals should be included with the submission as additional supplementary information.

The cover letter of your manuscript should include suggestions for Editorial Board members who might advise on reviewers for your paper. We also urge you to suggest appropriate reviewers we might approach. We do however reserve the right not to approach your suggested reviewers. Manuscripts that are within scope and seem, on initial assessment, to be technically sound, will be peer reviewed. At the submission stage, authors may also indicate a limited number of individuals who should not review the paper. Excluded individuals must be identified by name.

Peer review

The corresponding author will be notified by e-mail when we decide whether or not the paper will be peer reviewed. Papers judged to be of potential interest to our readership are sent for formal review, typically to two reviewers. A decision is then made, based on the reviewers' advice, from among several possibilities:

- Accept
- Accept after minor revision
- Probably acceptable after major revision with re-review
- Unacceptable as is, but worth reconsideration if extensively revised
- Reject

Decision after review

In cases where the referee has requested well-defined changes to the manuscript that do not appear to require extensive further experiments, we may request a revised manuscript that addresses the referees' concerns. The decision letter will specify a deadline.

In cases where the referees' concerns are more wide-ranging, we will normally reject the manuscript. If the consensus is that the manuscript is of potential interest to the journal, however, they may express interest in seeing a future resubmission. The resubmitted manuscript may be sent back to the original referees or to new referees. In such cases, revised manuscripts will not retain their earlier submission date.

In either case, the revised manuscript should be accompanied by a cover letter explaining how the manuscript has been changed.

An invited revision should be submitted via the revision link to the online submission system provided in the decision letter, not as a new manuscript.

Final submission and acceptance

When all editorial issues are resolved, the paper is formally accepted. The received date is the date on which we received the original manuscript. The accepted date is when the acceptance letter is sent.

Contributors are sent proofs; however, the production process does not allow minor changes. Only changes in the title, author list or major scientific errors will be permitted at this stage. All corrections
will be approved by the publishing team. Palgrave Communications reserves the right to make the final decision about matters of style and the size of tables and figures.

**Appeals**

Even in cases where Palgrave Communications does not invite resubmission, some authors may ask that we reconsider a rejection decision. These are considered appeals, which, by policy, must take second place to the normal workload. In practice, this means that decisions on appeals often take several weeks. Only one appeal is permitted for each manuscript, and appeals can only take place after peer review. Final decisions on appeals will be made by the Publisher following consultation with appropriate Editorial Board member(s).

Decisions are reversed on appeal only if we become convinced that the original decision was a serious mistake, not merely a borderline call that could have gone either way. Further consideration may be merited if a referee made substantial errors of fact or showed evidence of bias, but only if a reversal of that referee’s opinion would have changed the original decision. Similarly, disputes on factual issues need not be resolved unless they were critical to the outcome. Thus, after careful consideration of the authors' points, most appeals will be rejected.

If an appeal merits further consideration, we reserve the right to send the authors’ response or the revised paper to the original referee/s.

**Ethics policy**

This journal is a member of the Committee on Publication Ethics. We expect all prospective authors to read and understand our Ethics Policy before submitting any manuscript to this journal. This policy details the responsibilities of all authors, editors and reviewers working with and for Palgrave Macmillan Journals as well as our own ethical responsibilities. This includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, falsification of data, misuse of third party material, fabrication of results and fraudulent authorship. Please note that submitted manuscripts may be subject to checks using the iThenticate service, in conjunction with CrossCheck, in order to detect instances of overlapping and similar text. The iThenticate software checks submissions against millions of published research papers, documents on the web, and other relevant sources. If plagiarism or misconduct is found, consequences are detailed in the policy.
Submission Guidelines

1. General information for preparing manuscripts
2. Format of manuscripts
3. References
4. Acknowledgements
5. Author contributions
6. Clearing permissions
7. Competing interests
8. Figure legends
9. Tables
10. Equations
11. General figure guidelines
12. Figures for peer review
13. Figures for publication
14. Supplementary information

General information for preparing manuscripts

Online submissions include a cover letter, a manuscript text file, individual figure files and optional Supplementary Information files. For first submissions (i.e. not revised manuscripts), authors may choose to incorporate the manuscript text and figures into a single file up to 3 MB in size - the figures may be inserted within the text at the appropriate positions, or grouped at the end. Supplementary Information should be combined and supplied as a separate file, preferably in PDF format.

Authors should note that only the following file types can be uploaded for article text and figures:

- For article text: txt, doc, docx, tex
- For figures: eps, tiff, jpg

If your paper does not include formulas, we strongly encourage you to submit your paper in txt, doc or docx rather than tex.

*Palgrave Communications* is read by academics and researchers from diverse backgrounds. In addition, many are not native English speakers. Authors should, therefore, give careful thought to how their findings may be communicated clearly. Although a basic knowledge may be assumed, please bear in mind that the language and concepts that are standard in one field may be unfamiliar to non-specialists. Thus, technical jargon should be avoided as far as possible and clearly explained where its use is unavoidable.

Abbreviations, particularly those that are not standard, should also be kept to a minimum. Where unavoidable, abbreviations should be defined in the text or legends at their first occurrence, and abbreviations should be used thereafter. The background, rationale and main conclusions of the study should be clearly explained. Titles and abstracts in particular should be written in language that will be readily intelligible to any academic or researcher. We urge authors to ask a colleague with different expertise to review the manuscript before submission, in order to identify concepts and terminology that may present difficulties to non-specialist readers.

The format requirements of *Palgrave Communications* are described below.
Cover letter

Authors should provide a cover letter that includes the affiliation and contact information for the corresponding author. Authors should briefly explain why the work is considered appropriate for *Palgrave Communications*. Authors are asked to suggest the names and contact information for reviewers and they may request the exclusion of certain referees. Please ensure that your cover letter also includes suggestions for Editorial Board members who would also be able to review or advise on your submission. Finally, authors should indicate whether they have had any prior discussions with a *Palgrave Communications* Editorial Board Member about the work described in the manuscript.

Format of manuscripts

In most cases we do not impose strict limits on word and page lengths, however we encourage authors to write concisely and suggest authors adhere to the guidelines below.

The manuscript text file should include the following parts. The main text of an Article should begin with an Introduction or other introductory section (with heading) of referenced text that expands on the background of the work (some overlap with the Abstract is acceptable), followed by the main sections of the paper. The file should also contain Reference and any Acknowledgements (optional). Additional Information (including a Competing Interests statement), Figure Legends and Tables (maximum size of one page) can be added as relevant. Footnotes are allowed.

For first submissions (i.e. not revised manuscripts), authors may choose to incorporate the manuscript text and figures into a single file up to 3 MB in size - the figures may be inserted within the text at the appropriate positions, or grouped at the end. Any Supplementary Information should be combined and supplied as a separate file, preferably in PDF format. The first page of the Supplementary Information file should include the title of the manuscript and the author list.

Authors who do not incorporate the manuscript text and figures into a single file should adhere to the following: all textual content should be provided in a single file, prepared using either Microsoft Word or LaTeX; figures should be provided in individual files.

TeX/LaTeX - Authors submitting LaTeX files may use any of the standard class files such as article.cls, revtex.cls or amsart.cls. Non-standard fonts should be avoided; please use the default Computer Modern fonts. For the inclusion of graphics, we recommend graphicx.sty. Please use numerical references only for citations. References should be included within the manuscript file itself as our system cannot accept BibTeX bibliography files. Authors who wish to use BibTeX to prepare their references should therefore copy the reference list from the .bbl file that BibTeX generates and paste it into the main manuscript .tex file (and delete the associated \bibliography and \bibliographystyle commands). As a final precaution, authors should ensure that the complete .tex file compiles successfully on their own system with no errors or warnings, before submission.

Manuscripts published in *Palgrave Communications* are not subject to in-depth copyediting as part of the production process. Authors are responsible for procuring copy-editing or language editing services for their manuscripts, either before submission, or at the revision stage, should they feel it would benefit their manuscript.

References

References will not be copy-edited by *Palgrave Communications*. References will be linked electronically to external databases where possible, making correct formatting of the references essential.
All submissions should follow the Harvard style of in-text parenthetical citations, followed by a complete list of works cited at the end of the paper. For any needed clarification of the style, please consult one of the many online guides to the Harvard style.

- **Journal Articles**

- **Online Articles**

- **Books**

- **Chapter in a contributed volume**

**Acknowledgements**

Acknowledgements should be brief, and should not include thanks to anonymous referees and editors, or effusive comments. Grant or contribution numbers may be acknowledged. Assistance from, proof-readers and editors should also be acknowledged here.

**Author contributions**

Palgrave *Communications* permits the designation of up to six equally contributing authors, up to six joint supervisors, and up to three corresponding authors. Any requests to include more equally contributing, supervising, or corresponding authors are reviewed by the Managing Editor. When applicable, equally contributing and jointly supervising authors should be clearly indicated in the manuscript, using the exact wording: ‘These authors contributed equally to this work’; ‘These authors jointly supervised this work’. For corresponding authors the following wording should be used: ‘Corresponding author’ followed by ‘Correspondence to:’

**Clearing permissions**

The author bears the responsibility for checking whether material submitted is subject to copyright or ownership rights, eg figures, tables, photographs, illustrations, trade literature and data. The author will need to obtain permission to reproduce any such items, and include these permissions with their final submission. Where use is so restricted, the Publisher must be informed with the final submission of the material. Please see our further guidance on the use of 3rd party materials. Please add any necessary acknowledgments to the typescript, preferably in the Acknowledgments section. Credit the source and copyright of photographs, figures, illustrations etc. in the accompanying captions.

**Competing interests**

Where appropriate a competing interests statement is required for accepted papers published in Palgrave Communications where authors have competing financial interests.
All original articles should include a Data Availability statement after the References section. This should, wherever possible, include a link to and citation of any datasets analysed or generated in the study, when these are available in an appropriate public repository.

We recognise it is not always possible to share research data publicly, for instance when individual privacy could be compromised, and in such instances data availability should still be stated in the manuscript along with any conditions for access. Data Availability statements can take one of the following forms (or a combination of more than one if required for multiple datasets):

1. The datasets generated during and/or analysed during the current study are available in the [NAME] repository, [PERSISTENT WEB LINK TO DATASETS]

2. The datasets generated during and/or analysed during the current study are not publicly available due [REASON WHY DATA ARE NOT PUBLIC] but are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

3. Data sharing not applicable to this article as no datasets were generated or analysed during the current study.

4. All data generated or analysed during this study are included in this published article.

An example of a Data Availability statement can be found in the paper by Shutters et al. (2015).

While deposition of data in specialised public repositories (statement #1) is the preferred approach wherever possible, in principle all authors who generate or analyse research data are expected to comply with #2, which is the minimum journal policy.

The journal’s editorial team carries out appropriate checks to ascertain whether non-availability of data is for legitimate reasons.

**Figure legends**

Figure legends begin with a brief title sentence for the whole figure and continue with a short description of what is shown in each panel in sequence and the symbols used; methodological details should be kept to a minimum as much as possible.

**Tables**

Please submit tables at the end of your text document (in Word or TeX/LaTeX, as appropriate). Tables that include statistical analysis of data should describe their standards of error analysis and ranges in a table legend.

**Equations**

Equations and mathematical expressions should be provided in the main text of the paper. Equations that are referred to in the text are identified by parenthetical numbers, such as (1), and are referred to in the manuscript as "equation (1)".

If your manuscript is or will be in .docx format and contains equations, you must follow the instructions below to make sure that your equations are editable when the file enters production.
If you have not yet composed your article, you can ensure that the equations in your .docx file remain editable in .doc by enabling “Compatibility Mode” before you begin. To do this, open a new document and save as Word 97-2003 (*.doc). Several features of Word 2007/10 will now be inactive, including the built-in equation editing tool. You can insert equations in one of the two ways listed below.

If you have already composed your article as .doc and used its built-in equation editing tool, your equations will become images when the file is saved down to .doc. To resolve this problem, re-key your equations in one of the two following ways.

1. Use MathType to create the equation. MathType is the recommended method for creating equations.
2. Go to Insert > Object > Microsoft Equation 3.0 and create the equation.

If, when saving your final document, you see a message saying “Equations will be converted to images,” your equations are no longer editable and we will not be able to accept your file.

**General figure guidelines**

Authors are responsible for obtaining permission to publish any figures or illustrations that are protected by copyright, including figures published elsewhere and pictures taken by professional photographers. The journal cannot publish images downloaded from the internet without appropriate permission.

Figures should be numbered separately with Arabic numerals in the order of occurrence in the text of the manuscript. One- or two-column format figures are required. When appropriate, figures should include error bars. A description of the statistical treatment of error analysis should be included in the figure legend.

Figure lettering should be in a clear, sans-serif typeface (for example, Helvetica); the same typeface in the same font size should be used for all figures in a paper. Use symbol font for Greek letters. All display items should be on a white background, and should avoid excessive boxing, unnecessary colour, spurious decorative effects (such as three-dimensional 'skyscraper' histograms) and highly pixelated computer drawings. The vertical axis of histograms should not be truncated to exaggerate small differences. Labelling must be of sufficient size and contrast to be readable, even after appropriate reduction. The thinnest lines in the final figure should be no smaller than one point wide. Authors will see a proof that will include figures.

Figures divided into parts should be labelled with a lower-case bold a, b, and so on, in the same type size as used elsewhere in the figure. Lettering in figures should be in lower-case type, with only the first letter of each label capitalized. Units should have a single space between the number and the unit, and follow SI nomenclature (for example, ms rather than msec) or the nomenclature common to a particular field. Thousands should be separated by commas (1,000). Unusual units or abbreviations should be spelled out in full or defined in the legend. Scale bars should be used rather than magnification factors, with the length of the bar defined on the bar itself rather than in the legend. In legends, please use visual cues rather than verbal explanations such as "open red triangles".

Unnecessary figures should be avoided: data presented in small tables or histograms, for instance, can generally be stated briefly in the text instead. Figures should not contain more than one panel unless the parts are logically connected; each panel of a multipart figure should be sized so that the whole figure can be reduced by the same amount and reproduced at the smallest size at which essential details are visible. When a manuscript is accepted for publication, we will ask for high-resolution figure files. This information will be included in the acceptance letter. See below for details of digital image production and submission.
Figures for peer review

Figures should be uploaded on submission via our online submission system, in one of our preferred formats. Please use the smallest file size that provides sufficient resolution for their content to be clearly legible, preferably less than 1 MB, so that referees do not have to download extremely large files.

Figures for publication

When possible, we prefer to use original digital figures to ensure the highest-quality reproduction in the journal. For optimal results, prepare figures to fit either one (87mm wide) or two columns (180mm wide). When creating and submitting digital files, please follow the guidelines below. Failure to do so, or to adhere to the following guidelines, can significantly delay publication of your work.

Authors are responsible for obtaining permission to publish any figures or illustrations that are protected by copyright, including figures published elsewhere and pictures taken by professional photographers. The journal cannot publish images downloaded from the internet without appropriate permission.

1. Line art, graphs, charts and schematics

All line art, graphs, charts and schematics should be supplied in vector format, such as EPS (preferred), and should be saved or exported as such directly from the application in which they were made.

They should not be saved as bitmaps, jpegs or other non-vector file types unless strictly necessary.

2. Photographic and bitmapped images

All photographic and bitmapped images should be supplied in TIFF (preferred) or JPEG format at 300 DPI if possible. A single column width measures 88 mm and a double column width measures 180 mm.

Please do not supply Word or Powerpoint files with placed images. Images can be supplied as RGB or CMYK (note: we will not convert image colour modes).

Please do not scan laser printouts of figures and send them to us as digital files. The dot pattern on a laser print often creates a moiré pattern when scanned.

Figures that do not meet these standards will not reproduce well and may delay publication until we receive high-resolution images.

Supplementary information

Any Supplementary Information should be submitted with the manuscript and will be sent to referees during peer review. It is published with the online version of accepted manuscripts. We request that authors avoid “data not shown” statements and instead include data necessary to evaluate the claims of the paper as Supplementary Information. Supplementary Information is not edited by Palgrave Communications, so authors should ensure that it is clearly and succinctly presented, and that the style and terminology conform to the rest of the paper. Authors should include the title of the manuscript and full author list on the first page.
Please note that the preferred way to share datasets associated with papers is via specialised public repositories, if one exists, or through a general data repository that can assure permanence and unique identification of deposited data sets. Please consult the journal’s data availability policy for further guidance.

The guidelines below detail the creation, citation and submission of Supplementary Information - publication may be delayed if these are not followed correctly. Please note that modification of Supplementary Information after the paper is published requires a formal correction, so authors are encouraged to check their Supplementary Information carefully before submitting the final version.

1. Designate each item as Supplementary Table, Figure, Video, Audio, Note, Data, Discussion, Equations or Methods, as appropriate. Number Supplementary Tables and Figures as, for example, “Supplementary Table S1”. This numbering should be separate from that used in tables and figures appearing in the main article. Supplementary Note or Methods should not be numbered; titles for these are optional.
2. Refer to each piece of supplementary material at the appropriate point(s) in the main article. Be sure to include the word “Supplementary” each time one is mentioned. Please do not refer to individual panels of supplementary figures.
3. Audio and video files should use a frame size no larger than 320 x 240 pixels.
4. Images should be just large enough to view when the screen resolution is set to 640 x 480 pixels.
5. Remember to include a brief title and legend (incorporated into the file to appear near the image) as part of every figure submitted, and a title as part of every table.
6. File sizes should be as small as possible, with a maximum size of 10 MB, so that they can be downloaded quickly.
7. With the exception of spreadsheet, audio and video files, please submit the Supplementary Information as a single combined PDF if possible (in the order figures, tables and text). If necessary, we can also accept any of these formats:

.txt - Plain ASCII text
.gif - GIF image
.html - HTML document
.doc - MS Word document
.jpg - JPEG image
.swf - Flash movie
.mov - QuickTime movie
.xls - MS Excel spreadsheet
.pdf - Adobe Acrobat file
.ppt - MS Power Point slide
.wav - Audio file

Further queries about submission and preparation of Supplementary Information should be directed to email: palcomms@palgrave.com.

**********
Editorial and Publishing Policies

1. Author responsibilities
2. License agreement and author copyright
3. Competing interests
4. Availability of materials and data
5. Digital image integrity and standards
6. Refutations, complaints and corrections
7. Duplicate publication
8. Confidentiality and pre-publicity
9. Plagiarism and fabrication

Author responsibilities

Being an author

*Palgrave Communications* does not require all authors of a paper to sign the cover letter upon submission, nor do we impose an order on the list of authors. Submission to *Palgrave Communications* is taken by the publication to mean that all the listed authors have agreed to all of the contents. The corresponding (submitting) author is responsible for having ensured that this agreement has been reached, and for managing all communication between *Palgrave Communications* and all co-authors, before and after publication.

Author contributions

Palgrave Communications permits the designation of up to six equally contributing authors, up to six joint supervisors, and up to three corresponding authors. Any requests to include more equally contributing, supervising, or corresponding authors are reviewed by the Managing Editor. When applicable, equally contributing and jointly supervising authors should be clearly indicated in the manuscript, using the exact wording: ‘These authors contributed equally to this work’; ‘These authors jointly supervised this work’. For corresponding authors the following wording should be used: ‘Corresponding author’ followed by ‘Correspondence to:’

Corresponding author – prepublication responsibilities

The corresponding (submitting) author is solely responsible for communicating with *Palgrave Communications* and for managing communication between coauthors. Before submission, the corresponding author ensures that all authors are included in the author list, its order has been agreed by all authors, and that all authors are aware that the paper was submitted.

After acceptance, the proof is sent to the corresponding author, who deals with *Palgrave Communications* on behalf of all coauthors; *Palgrave Communications* will not necessarily correct errors after publication if they result from errors that were present on a proof that was not shown to coauthors before publication. The corresponding author is responsible for the accuracy of all content in the proof, in particular that names of coauthors are present and correctly spelled, and that addresses and affiliations are current.
Corresponding author – responsibilities after publication

Palgrave Communications regards the corresponding author as the point of contact for queries about the published paper. It is this author’s responsibility to inform all coauthors of matters arising and to ensure such matters are dealt with promptly. This author does not have to be the senior author of the paper or the author who actually supplies materials; this author’s role is to ensure enquiries are answered promptly on behalf of all the coauthors. The name and e-mail address of this author (on large collaborations there may be two) is published in the paper.

Correcting the record

Authors of published material have a responsibility to inform the publication promptly if they become aware of any part that requires correcting.

A confidential process

Palgrave Communications treats the submitted manuscript and all communication with authors and referees as confidential. Authors must also treat communication with Palgrave Communications as confidential: correspondence with Palgrave Communications, referee reports and other confidential material must not be posted on any website or otherwise publicized without prior permission from the Palgrave Communications publishing team, regardless of whether or not the submission is eventually published. Our policies about posting preprints and postprints, and about previous communication of the work at conferences or as part of a personal blog or of an academic thesis, are described in the Confidentiality section.

Referee suggestions

Authors are welcome to suggest suitable independent referees when they submit their manuscripts, but these suggestions may not be used by Palgrave Communications. Authors may also request that Palgrave Communications excludes a few (usually not more than two) individuals. Palgrave Communications sympathetically considers such exclusion requests and usually honours them, but our decision is final.

License agreement and author copyright

Articles are published under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license. All authors retain the copyright to their article if they pay the APC and sign the License to Publish Form.

Learn more about Creative Commons licensing and the licenses available in Palgrave Communications.

Competing interests

Palgrave Communications’ competing financial interests policy

In the interests of transparency and to help readers to form their own judgements of potential bias, authors must declare any competing financial interests in relation to the work described.

The corresponding author is responsible for submitting a competing financial interests statement on behalf of all authors of the paper. This statement must be included in the submitted article file, under the heading “competing financial interests”. The corresponding author will also be required to indicate the existence of a competing financial interest as part of the submission process.
Definition of a competing financial interest

For the purposes of this statement, competing interests are defined as those of a financial nature that, through their potential influence on behaviour or content or from perception of such potential influences, could undermine the objectivity, integrity or perceived value of a publication.

They can include any of the following:

Funding: research support (including salaries, equipment, supplies, reimbursement for attending symposia, and other expenses) by organizations that may gain or lose financially through this publication.

Employment: recent (while engaged in the research project), present or anticipated employment by any organization that may gain or lose financially through this publication.

Personal financial interests: stocks or shares in companies that may gain or lose financially through publication; consultation fees or other forms of remuneration from organizations that may gain or lose financially; patents or patent applications whose value may be affected by publication.

It is difficult to specify a threshold at which a financial interest becomes significant, but note that many US universities require faculty members to disclose interests exceeding $10,000 or 5% equity in a company (see, for example, B. Lo et al. *New Engl. J. Med.* 343, 1616–1620; 2000). Any such figure is necessarily arbitrary, so we offer as one possible practical alternative guideline: "Any undeclared competing financial interests that could embarrass you were they to become publicly known after your work was published."

We do not consider diversified mutual funds or investment trusts to constitute a competing financial interest.

We recognize that some authors may be bound by confidentiality agreements. In such cases the publishing team will investigate further and may at their discretion invite the authors to state in the online version, in place of itemized disclosure: "The authors declare that they are bound by confidentiality agreements that prevent them from disclosing their financial interests in this work."

We do not require authors to state the monetary value of their financial interests.

Competing financial interest statement format guidelines

The statement included in the article file must be explicit and unambiguous, describing any potential competing financial interest (or lack thereof) for each contributing author.

Examples of declarations are:

Competing financial interests
The author(s) declare no competing financial interests.

Competing financial interests
Dr X's work has been funded by A. He has received compensation as a member of the advisory board of B and owns stock in the company. He also has consulted for C and received compensation. Dr Y and Dr Z declare no potential conflict of interest.
Availability of materials and data

An inherent principle of publication is that others should be able to replicate and build upon the authors' published claims. Therefore, a condition of publication in Palgrave Communications is that authors are required to make materials, data and associated protocols promptly available to readers without undue qualifications in material transfer agreements. Any restrictions on the availability of materials or information must be disclosed to the publishing team at the time of submission. Any restrictions must also be disclosed in the submitted manuscript, including details of how readers can obtain materials and information. If materials are to be distributed by a for-profit company, this must be stated in the paper.

Supporting data must be made available to Palgrave Communications and peer-reviewers at the time of submission for the purposes of evaluating the manuscript. Peer-reviewers may be asked to comment on the terms of access to materials, methods and/or data sets; Palgrave Communications reserves the right to refuse publication in cases where authors do not provide adequate assurances that they can comply with the publication's requirements for sharing materials.

After publication, readers who encounter refusal by the authors to comply with these policies should contact the Palgrave Communications publishing team. In cases where we are unable to resolve a complaint, the matter may be referred to the authors' institution or funding institution and/or a formal statement of correction may be published, attached online to the publication, stating that readers have been unable to obtain necessary materials to replicate the findings.

All original articles should include a Data Availability statement. This should, wherever possible, include a link to and citation of any datasets analysed or generated in the study, when these are available in an appropriate public repository.

The preferred way to share data sets is via specialised public repositories, if one exists, or through a general data repository that can assure permanence and unique identification of deposited data sets.

Authors who make their datasets publicly available should use the most broadly supported and recognised repository for their research community. Public repositories that can be used by Palgrave Communications authors include:

- Dataverse – authors who do not have a preferred option can use the Palgrave Communications Dataverse. Deposition can be confidential during peer review and datasets released after acceptance of associated manuscripts for publication by the editorial team.
- Figshare
- OpenICPSR
- EASY (part of Data Archiving and Networked Services, DANS
- Dryad

Repositories for sensitive data that cannot be made public for individual privacy or other legitimate reasons include:

- UK Data Archive
- ICPSR (Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research)
Some of these repositories offer authors the option to host data associated with a manuscript confidentially, and provide anonymous access to peer-reviewers before public release. Some of these repositories coordinate public release of the data with the journal's publication date. This option should be used when possible, but it is the authors' responsibility to communicate with the repository to ensure that public release is made promptly on the publication date. In the unlikely event there is no public repository to accommodate supporting datasets, they must be made available as Supplementary Information files that will be freely accessible on the journal website upon publication. In cases where it is technically impossible for such files to be provided to the journal, the authors must make the data available to *Palgrave Communications* and peer-reviewers at submission, and directly upon request to any reader on and after the publication date, the authors providing a URL or other unique identifier in the manuscript.

**Sharing data sets**

A condition of publication in *Palgrave Communications* is that authors are required to make materials, data and associated protocols promptly available to others without preconditions.

Data sets must be made freely available to readers from the date of publication, and must be provided to *Palgrave Communications* and peer-reviewers at submission, for the purposes of evaluating the manuscript.

**Citing data sets**

Citing data sets in an equivalent way to citing journal articles and other types of publication helps enable researchers to earn appropriate credit for the collection and publication of data sets. Data citation also makes reuse and verification of scholarly research more efficient, and can help measure the impact and reuse of data sets. We recommend authors cite, in their reference list, any public data sets that are used or produced in any work described in *Palgrave Communications*, provided the data sets have been assigned a persistent identifier. When citing data sets the format preferred by DataCite should be used, where persistent identifiers, such as digital object identifier (DOI) names, are displayed as linkable, permanent URLs. See the section of References in our Submission Guidelines for more information.

**Pre-registration of studies**

*Palgrave Communications* encourages pre-registration of studies, where appropriate databases exist, as a means of making research more discoverable. Authors who have pre-registered their study in an independent registry (e.g. http://socialscienceregistry.org/, http://openscienceframework.org/, http://egap.org/design-registration/, http://ridie.3ieimpact.org/) are requested to indicate this clearly in the manuscript, such as in the abstract and an appropriate footnote.

**Code sharing**

*Palgrave Communications* requests that authors, where applicable, make available, to editors and reviewers, any previously unreported custom computer code used to generate results that are reported in the paper and central to its main claims. Upon publication, authors are encouraged to release custom computer code in a way that allows readers to repeat the published results. For all studies using custom code that is deemed central to the conclusions, a statement must be included in the paper (e.g. as a footnote), indicating whether and how the code can be accessed, including any restrictions to access.

Authors may supply code as Supplementary Information files or submit it to the *Palgrave Communications Dataverse* when code must be kept private during peer review. Before final publication, however, authors are encouraged to release their code in a public repository that can
assign it a DOI, such the Palgrave Communications Dataverse or Figshare. In addition, for sufficiently complex software, we recommend using an open control version system (CVS), such as GitHub, in combination with a DOI-providing repository to provide permanent access to a usable instance of code (information on how to archive GitHub code at figshare). Code with an assigned DOI may be formally cited and listed in the References section of the manuscript.

Digital image integrity and standards

Image integrity and standards

All digitized images submitted with the final revision of the manuscript should be 300 DPI if possible.

A certain degree of image processing is acceptable for publication (and for some experiments, fields and techniques is unavoidable), but the final image must correctly represent the original data and conform to community standards. The guidelines below will aid in accurate data presentation at the image processing level; authors must also take care to exercise prudence during data acquisition, where misrepresentation must equally be avoided. Manuscripts should include an 'equipment and settings' section with their Methods that describes for each figure the pertinent instrument settings, acquisition conditions and processing changes, as described in this guide.

- Authors should list all image acquisition tools and image processing software packages used. Authors should document key image-gathering settings and processing manipulations in the Methods.
- Images gathered at different times or from different locations should not be combined into a single image, unless it is stated that the resultant image is a product of time-averaged data or a time-lapse sequence. If juxtaposing images is essential, the borders should be clearly demarcated in the figure and described in the legend.
- The use of touch-up tools, such as cloning and healing tools in Photoshop, or any feature that deliberately obscures manipulations, is to be avoided.
- Processing (such as changing brightness and contrast) is appropriate only when it is applied equally across the entire image and is applied equally to controls. Contrast should not be adjusted so that data disappear. Excessive manipulations, such as processing to emphasize one region in the image at the expense of others (for example, through the use of a biased choice of threshold settings), is inappropriate, as is emphasizing experimental data relative to the control.

When submitting revised final figures upon conditional acceptance, authors may be asked to submit original, unprocessed images.

Refutations, complaints and corrections

Correction and retraction policy

Palgrave Communications operates the following policy for making corrections to their peer-reviewed content.

Publishable amendments must be represented by a formal online notice because they affect the publication record and/or the scientific accuracy of published information. Where these amendments concern peer-reviewed material, they fall into one of three categories: erratum, corrigendum or retraction, described here.

Erratum. Notification of an important error made by the journal that affects the publication record or the integrity of the paper, or the reputation of the authors, or of the journal.
Corrigendum. Notification of an important error made by the author(s) that affects the publication record or the integrity of the paper, or the reputation of the authors or the journal.

Retraction. Notification of invalid results. All coauthors must sign a retraction specifying the error and stating briefly how the conclusions are affected, and submit it for publication. In cases where coauthors disagree, the publishing team will seek advice from independent peer-reviewers and impose the type of amendment that seems most appropriate, noting the dissenting author(s) in the text of the published version.

If ethical misconduct is discovered in content that has already been published, we may publish a statement of concern whilst the work is investigated. If we deem it necessary, the paper may be retracted with a statement of explanation. Other consequences may include a submissions ban for any or all authors, and contacting the relevant institution(s).

Editorial decision-making

Decisions about types of correction are made by the journal's publishing team, with the advice of the peer-reviewers' and/or Editorial Board Members. This process involves consultation with the authors of the paper, but the publishing team makes the final decision about whether an amendment is required and the category in which the amendment is published.

When an amendment is published, it is linked bi-directionally to and from the article being corrected.

Authors sometimes request a correction to their published contribution that does not affect the contribution in a significant way or impair the reader's understanding of the contribution (a spelling mistake or grammatical error, for example). Palgrave Communications does not publish such corrections. The online article is part of the published record and hence its original published version is preserved. Palgrave Communications does, however, correct the online version of a contribution if the wording in the html version does not make sense when compared with the PDF version ("see left" for a figure that is an appropriate phrase for the PDF but not for the html version, for example). In these cases, the fact that a correction has been made is stated in a footnote so that readers are aware that the originally published text has been amended.

Detailed description of correction types

Errata concern the amendment of mistakes introduced by the journal in production, including errors of omission such as failure to make factual proof corrections requested by authors within the deadline provided by the journal and within journal policy. Errata are generally not published for simple, obvious typographical errors, but are published when an apparently simple error is significant (for example a Greek mu for an ‘m’ in a unit, or a typographical error in the corresponding author’s name).

If there is an error in the lettering on a figure, the usual procedure is to publish a sentence of rectification. A significant error in the figure itself is corrected by publication of a new corrected figure as an erratum. The figure is republished only if we consider it necessary for a reader to understand it.

Corrigenda are judged on their relevance to readers and their importance for the published record. Corrigenda are published after discussion among the team. All coauthors must sign an agreed wording.

Corrigenda submitted by the original authors are published if the scientific accuracy or reproducibility of the original paper is compromised; occasionally, on investigation, these may be published as retractions. In cases where some coauthors decline to sign a corrigendum or retraction, we reserve the right to publish it with the dissenting author(s) identified. Palgrave Communications publish corrigenda if there is an error in the published author list, but not for overlooked acknowledgements.
Readers wishing to draw the journal's attention to a significant published error should contact the publishing team.

Retractions are judged according to whether the main conclusion of the paper no longer holds or is seriously undermined as a result of subsequent information coming to light of which the authors were not aware at the time of publication. In the case of experimental papers, this can include further experiments by the authors or by others that do not confirm the main experimental conclusion of the original publication. Readers wishing to draw our attention to published work requiring retraction should first contact the authors of the original paper and then write to the publishing team, including copies of the correspondence with the authors (whether or not the correspondence has been answered). The publishing team will seek advice from reviewers if they judge that the information is likely to draw into question the main conclusions of the published paper.

Supplementary information

Authors' corrections to supplementary information (SI) are made only in exceptional circumstances (for example major errors that compromise the conclusion of the study). Published corrections to SI are usually linked to the Corrigendum statement. Authors cannot update SI because new data have become available or interpretations have changed, as the SI is a peer-reviewed and integral part of the paper, and hence part of the published record.

SI cannot be amended between acceptance and publication unless a change made for technical reasons by the journal in order to publish the material on the website has introduced a significant error.

Duplicate publication

**Palgrave Communications' policy on duplicate publication**

Material submitted to Palgrave Communications must be original and not published or submitted for publication elsewhere. This rule applies to material submitted elsewhere while the Palgrave Communications contribution is under consideration.

Authors submitting a contribution to Palgrave Communications who have related material under consideration or in press elsewhere should upload a clearly marked copy at the time of submission, and draw attention to it in their cover letter. Authors must disclose any such information while their contributions are under consideration by Palgrave Communications – for example, if they submit a related manuscript elsewhere that was not written at the time of the original Palgrave Communications submission.

If part of a contribution that an author wishes to submit to Palgrave Communications has appeared or will appear elsewhere, the author must specify the details in the covering letter accompanying the submission. Consideration by Palgrave Communications is possible if the main result, conclusion, or implications are not apparent from the other work, or if there are other factors, for example if the other work is published in a language other than English.

Palgrave Communications is happy to consider submissions containing material that has previously formed part of a PhD or other academic thesis which has been published according to the requirements of the institution awarding the qualification.

Palgrave Communications allows and encourages prior publication on recognized community preprint servers for review by other academics in the field before formal submission to a journal. The details of the preprint server concerned and any accession numbers should be included in the cover letter accompanying submission of the manuscript to Palgrave Communications.
Palgrave Communications is happy to consider submissions containing material that has previously formed, and continues to form, part of an online academic collaboration such as a wiki or blog.

If an author of a submission is re-using a figure or figures published elsewhere, or that is copyrighted, the author must provide documentation that the previous publisher or copyright holder has given permission for the figure to be re-published. We consider all material in good faith and that the publication has full permission to publish every part of the submitted material, including any illustrations.

Confidentiality and pre-publicity

Confidentiality

Palgrave Communications keeps all details about a submitted manuscript confidential and does not comment to any outside organization about manuscripts that are either under consideration or that have been rejected.

After a manuscript is submitted, correspondence with Palgrave Communications, referees’ reports and other confidential material, regardless of whether or not the submission is eventually published, must not be posted on any website or otherwise publicised without prior permission. Referees of manuscripts submitted to Palgrave Communications undertake in advance to maintain confidentiality of manuscripts and any associated supplementary data.

Pre-publicity

Our policy on the posting of particular versions of the manuscript is as follows:

1. You are welcome to post pre-submission versions or the original submitted version of the manuscript on a personal blog, a collaborative wiki or a preprint server at any time.

2. Palgrave Communications articles are open access and can replace the original submitted version immediately, on publication, as long as a publication reference and URL to the published version on the Palgrave Communications website are provided.

Presentation and discussion of material submitted to Palgrave Communications at academic and scientific meetings is encouraged.

Contributions being prepared for or submitted to Palgrave Communications can be posted on recognized preprint servers and on collaborative websites such as wikis or the author's blog. The website and URL must be identified in the cover letter accompanying submission of the paper. Material in a contribution submitted to Palgrave Communications may also have been published as part of a PhD or other academic thesis.

Plagiarism and fabrication

Plagiarism can be said to have clearly occurred when large chunks of text have been cut-and-pasted. Such manuscripts would not be considered for publication in Palgrave Communications. But minor plagiarism without dishonest intent is relatively frequent, for example, when an author reuses parts of an introduction from an earlier paper. We judge any case of which we become aware on its own merits.
We are part of CrossCheck, an initiative to help editors verify the originality of submitted manuscripts. As part of this process, Palgrave Communications spot checks submitted manuscripts to be scanned and compared with the CrossCheck database.

If a case of plagiarism comes to light after a paper is published in Palgrave Communications, the publication will conduct a preliminary investigation. If plagiarism is found, the publication will contact the author's institute and any funding agencies. A determination of misconduct will lead Palgrave Communications to run a statement, bidirectionally linked online to and from the original paper, to note the plagiarism and to provide a reference to the plagiarised material. The paper containing the plagiarism will also be obviously marked on each page of the PDF. Depending on the extent of the plagiarism, the paper may also be formally retracted.

**Due credit for others’ work**

Discussion of unpublished work: Manuscripts are sent out for review on the condition that any unpublished data cited within are properly credited and the appropriate permission has been sought. Where licensed data are cited, authors must include at submission a written assurance that they are complying with originators’ data-licensing agreements.

Referees are encouraged to be alert to the use of appropriated unpublished data from databases or from any other source, and to inform Palgrave Communications of any concern they may have.

Discussion of published work: When discussing the published work of others, authors must properly describe the contribution of the earlier work. Both intellectual contributions and technical developments must be acknowledged as such and appropriately cited.

**********
Guide to Referees

1. Aims and scope
2. Criteria for publication
3. The review process
4. Selecting referees
5. Writing the review
6. Confidentiality
7. Timing
8. Anonymity
9. Editing referees' reports
10. Competing interests
11. Online manuscript review

Aims and scope

Palgrave Communications is an open access online-only journal dedicated to publishing high quality original research. The scope of the journal reflects Palgrave Macmillan’s strengths in the humanities, the social sciences and business. In addition to our multidisciplinary position, we particularly welcome interdisciplinary research, which fosters interaction, creativity and reflection between the rich disciplines that our project encompasses.

We aspire to be the definitive peer-reviewed outlet for open access academic research in and between our subjects. Palgrave Communications is open to all theoretical and methodological perspectives.

We are committed to providing an efficient service for both authors and readers. A streamlined peer-review system, together with the support of an eminent Editorial Board, allows us to make rapid and fair publication decisions. Prompt dissemination of accepted papers to Palgrave Macmillan’s wide readership and beyond is achieved through a program of continuous online publication. Published manuscripts are enhanced by innovative web technologies, including interactive browsing and article level metrics.

Criteria for publication

To be published in Palgrave Communications a paper should meet several general criteria:

- the methodology and any data utilised are technically sound;
- the paper provides strong evidence for its conclusions;
- the results are novel (we do not consider abstracts and internet preprints to compromise novelty); and
- the manuscript is important to the specific field(s) and/or is important in interdisciplinary terms.

In general, to be acceptable, a paper should represent an advance in understanding likely to influence thinking in the field.

The review process

To save authors and referees time, only those papers that seem most likely to meet our editorial criteria are sent for formal review. Those papers judged to be of insufficient interest to the field, or otherwise inappropriate, are rejected promptly without external formal review (although these decisions may be based on informal advice from the Editorial Board).
Manuscripts judged to be of potential interest to our readership are sent for formal review, typically to two reviewers. A decision is then made, based on the reviewers’ advice, from among several possibilities:

- Accept
- Accept after minor revision
- Probably acceptable after major revision with re-review
- Unacceptable as is, but worth reconsideration if extensively revised
- Reject

Referees are asked to recommend a particular course of action. The most useful reports, therefore, provide us with the information on which a decision should be based. Setting out the arguments for and against publication is often also helpful.

We may go back to referees for further advice, particularly in cases where referees disagree with each other, or where the authors believe they have been misunderstood on points of fact. We therefore ask that referees should be willing to provide follow-up advice as requested. We are very aware, however, that referees are normally reluctant to be drawn into prolonged disputes, so we try to keep consultation to the minimum we judge necessary to provide a fair hearing for the authors.

When referees agree to review a paper, we consider this a commitment to review subsequent revisions as well. However, editors will not send resubmitted papers to the referees if it seems that the authors have not made a serious attempt to address the referees’ criticisms.

We take referees’ criticisms very seriously, and in particular, we are very reluctant to disregard technical criticisms. In cases where one referee opposes publication, we may consult with the other referee(s) as to whether s/he is applying an unduly critical standard. We occasionally bring in additional referees to resolve disputes, but we prefer to avoid doing so unless there is a specific issue on which we feel a need for further advice.

**Selecting referees**

Referee selection is critical to the review process, and our publishing team, in conjunction with the editorial board will base their choice on many factors, including expertise, specific recommendations, and previous experience. When inviting referees to review manuscripts we may send confidential information with the invitation letter, which should be treated as such. Authors can suggest reviewers during the submission process, but we are not bound to accept such suggestions.

We normally check with potential referees before sending them manuscripts to review. Referees should bear in mind that these messages contain confidential information, which should be treated as such.

**Writing the review**

The primary purpose of the review is to provide us with the information needed to reach a decision. It could also instruct the authors on how they can strengthen their paper to the point where it may be acceptable.

As far as possible, a negative review should explain to the authors the weaknesses of their manuscript, so that rejected authors can understand the basis for the decision. This is secondary to the other functions, however, and referees should not feel obliged to provide detailed advice to authors of papers that do not meet the criteria for *Palgrave Communications*. 
Confidential comments are welcome, but it is helpful if the main points are stated in the comments for transmission to the authors. To enable rapid and easy decisions we have developed a template approach. The review process will answer the following questions:

- Is the paper methodologically and technically sound?
- What are the major claims of the paper?
- Are the claims novel? If not, please identify the major papers that compromise novelty
- Are the claims convincing? If not, what further evidence is needed?
- Will the paper be of interest to others in the field?
- Will the paper influence thinking in the field?
- Are the claims fully supported by the argument(s) and/or any associated data?
- Are the claims appropriately discussed in the context of previous literature?
- Have the authors complied with the journal’s policy and the research community’s expectations on the availability of research data, and documented this in their Data availability statement?
- If the manuscript is unacceptable in its present form, does the study seem sufficiently promising that the authors should be encouraged to consider a resubmission in the future?

In addition to answering the previous questions, referees can provide further information, including comments that may answer the following:

- Is the manuscript clearly written? If not, how could it be made more accessible?
- Have the authors done themselves justice without overselling their arguments/claims?
- Have they been fair in their treatment of previous literature?
- Have they provided sufficient methodological detail?
- Is any statistical analysis of any data sound?

Referees are given the opportunity to provide comments that will be transmitted to authors and to provide comments that are solely for us.

Finally referees are asked for their overall recommendation:

- Accept
- Accept after minor revision
- Probably acceptable after major revision with re-review
- Unacceptable as is, but worth reconsideration if extensively revised
- Reject

Confidentiality

We ask all referees to treat the review process as strictly confidential, and not to discuss the manuscript with anyone not directly involved in the review. If it is deemed necessary to consult with colleagues, please identify them to us. Consulting with experts from outside the referee’s own institution may also be acceptable, but please check with us before doing so, to avoid involving anyone who may have been excluded by the authors.

Timing

*Palgrave Communications* is committed to rapid editorial decisions and publication, and we believe that an efficient editorial process is a valuable service both to our authors and to the scholarly community as a whole. We therefore ask referees to respond promptly (within four weeks of receiving a manuscript, although this may be either longer or shorter by prior arrangement). If referees
anticipate a longer delay, we ask them to let us know so that we can keep the authors informed and, where necessary, find alternative referees.

Anonymity

We do not release referees' identities to authors or to other referees, except when referees specifically ask to be identified. Unless they feel strongly, however, we prefer that referees should remain anonymous throughout the review process and beyond. We ask referees not to identify themselves to authors without our knowledge.

We deplore any attempt by authors to confront referees or determine their identities. Our own policy is to neither confirm nor deny any speculation about referees' identities, and we encourage referees to consider adopting a similar policy.

Editing referees' reports

As a matter of policy, we do not suppress referees' reports; any comments that were intended for the authors are transmitted, regardless of what we may think of the content. On rare occasions, we may edit a report to remove offensive language or comments that reveal confidential information about other matters. We ask referees to avoid saying anything that may cause needless offence; conversely, authors should recognize that criticisms are not necessarily unfair simply because they are expressed in robust language.

Competing interests

Our normal policy is to avoid referees whom the authors have excluded, for whatever reason. We also usually try to avoid referees who have recent or ongoing collaborations with the authors, who have commented on drafts of the manuscript, who are in direct competition to publish similar research, who we know to have a history of dispute with the authors, or who have a financial interest in the outcome. It is not possible for the publishing team or our editorial board to know of all possible biases, however, so we ask referees to draw our attention to anything that might affect their review, and to decline to review in cases where they feel unable to be objective.

We recognize, however, that competing interests are not always clear-cut, and the above circumstances need not automatically undermine the validity of a report. Indeed, the people best-qualified to evaluate a paper are often those closest to the field, and a skeptical attitude towards a particular claim does not mean that a referee cannot be persuaded by new evidence.

Referees who have reviewed a paper for another journal might feel that it is unfair to the authors for them to re-review it for Palgrave Communications. We disagree; the fact that two journals have independently identified a particular person as well-qualified to review a paper does not, in our view, decrease the validity of his or her opinion.

Online manuscript review

Referees must submit their comments via our online submission system by following the link provided in our email. For help with the system please contact palcomms@palgrave.com.