GUIDELINES FOR SPECIAL ISSUES

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A *JIBS* Special Issue is a solicited and refereed collection of Articles and Research Notes on a predetermined theme that is published in the *Journal of International Business Studies*. *JIBS* Special Issues are designed to draw attention to under-researched or controversial topics or to new emerging themes in international business. They may also extend the range of coverage of *JIBS* to areas in which the leading scholarship on international business topics has been mainly confined to other discipline-based journals, but which scholarship would benefit from a greater and more direct interchange with the wider community of interest in international business provided by the *JIBS* readership and reviewers. Special Issues should attract high-quality submissions from influential scholars who are experts in the predetermined theme. Since Special Issues, by definition, privilege one group of authors (those who work in the area of the theme) over another (those who do not), the theme should be broad enough to attract a large number of submissions across a range of specialized areas in international business research. The ultimate goal of a *JIBS* Special Issue should be the encouragement of insightful and influential research, in line with the *JIBS* Statement of Editorial Policy.

This guide outlines the step-by-step process by which a Special Issue is created for, and eventually published in, the *Journal of International Business Studies*.

**How Special Issues Start**

The ultimate decision to solicit manuscripts for a Special Issue resides with the *JIBS* Editor in Chief. The impetus for a Special Issue may come from the Journal’s editorial team or any member of the Academy of International Business. Special Issues may be solicited or unsolicited. Proposals begin as short written proposals (up to 3 pages) which are considered once a year by the *JIBS* editors. Prospective Guest Editor(s) submit a proposal to the *JIBS* Editor-in-Chief (EIC), outlining their Guest Editor team and their credentials, the topic for the special issue, the importance of the topic and reasons for having a special issue in *JIBS*, a brief summary of the literature, and a list of previous special issues that closely relate to the topic (whether in *JIBS* or in another relevant journal), or any sequential series of articles on a connected theme that have appeared in recent years in these journals. Guest Editors submit as appendices to their proposals their bios or CVs, any bibliography, and a draft Call for Papers that outlines the theme of the issue, and possible topics for submissions. The Editors will not provide comments on proposals that are not selected for further consideration in the current round, although potential Guest Editors are welcome to resubmit in a subsequent year revised versions of proposals that do not go forward. If the editors decide to proceed with a proposal, the submitter(s) are asked to develop a fuller proposal through a further interactive exchange with the *JIBS* Editors. However, please note that no member of our regular editorial team should be associated in any way with the initial version of a special issue proposal, since that would create a conflict of interest in the first stage of the decision process. The representation of the permanent editorial team in the eventual group of Guest Editors is discussed and decided only after the initial selection process.
Finalizing the Proposal

The final proposal names the Special Issue and thoroughly describes its domain, including examples of topics and ideas for articles that would fit the theme of the Special Issue. It also identifies the team of individuals who will serve as Guest Editors and spells out the roles of the various Guest Editors. The team members must be recognized widely for their scholarly accomplishments and editorial experiences.

At least one member of the final team of Guest Editors must be a permanent *JIBS* Area Editor, and the team must also include either the EIC or Deputy Editor (DE). The established Area Editor acts as an administrative liaison between the *JIBS* Editorial Office and the Guest Editors. The *JIBS* Editor-coordinator is responsible for ensuring that the Guest Editors follow *JIBS* norms, standards and practices throughout the reviewing process. The *JIBS* Editor-coordinator is also responsible, together with the EIC or DE, for ensuring that publications in the Special Issue meet *JIBS* norms for quality, timeliness and acceptance rates.

Lastly, the formal proposal must include a suggested timetable for the reviewing process, starting with circulation of the Call for Papers and ending with final submission to the *JIBS* Editorial Office of all materials appearing in the Special Issue. Normally, the time period between the due date for submission of manuscripts to final submission of all materials to the *JIBS* Editorial Office should take no longer than one year to 18 months. Individuals should not accept Guest Editor positions if they are unable to finish the Special Issue within this time period.

Based on the final proposal and associated materials, the EIC decides whether or not to move ahead with the Special Issue, after receiving advice from the *JIBS* Editors and the AIB Board. The *JIBS* Editors work with the Guest Editors by providing comments upon, and helping to further develop the proposal and the Call for Papers, and to agree upon a consolidated editorial team for the special issue.

Criteria for evaluating a *JIBS* Special Issue proposal include:

- Fit with the *JIBS* Statement of Editorial Policy
- Quality and thoroughness of the formal proposal
- Importance of the proposed theme
- Appeal to a broad segment of *JIBS*'s authors and readers
- Scholarly credentials of the proposed Guest Editors

If the decision is to proceed, the Guest Editors provide a Call for Papers that when approved is published in *JIBS* and other Academy of International Business publications, and on the *JIBS* and AIB websites. The Guest Editors are responsible for suggesting related organizations’ list serves and websites for the Managing Editor to circulate the Call for Papers.

The Editorial Process

Normally, the due date for all submissions for the Special Issue is set somewhere between six and 18 months after the Call for Papers is first announced. Manuscripts may be submitted for review no earlier than one month before the submission due date. The due date is selected in consultation with the EIC and Managing Editor.

Guest Editors are expected to actively encourage submissions based on the Call for Papers. This will normally include sending letters to prominent scholars inviting them to
submit to the Special Issue; however, such letters should make it clear to those invited to submit papers that their manuscripts will be reviewed and that acceptance is not guaranteed.

The process by which Special Issue manuscripts are handled is nearly identical to that of regular submissions to *JIBS* through the *JIBS* Scholar One web-based submission system. All manuscripts, except the Introductory Article by the Guest Editors, which is single blind reviewed, go through the normal *JIBS* double-blind review process.

In the normal *JIBS* review process, manuscripts are first assessed on minimal fit and quality by the Reviewing Editor, followed by the EIC or DE. With a Special Issue, the *JIBS* Editor-coordinator working as part of the team of Guest Editors replaces the Reviewing Editor, who is again followed by the EIC or DE. Manuscripts that pass initial scrutiny and are not desk rejected are then assigned to the Guest Editors. The EIC normally follows the recommendations of the Guest Editor team in making these editor assignments.

Guest Editors make decisions at all stages of the reviewing process, up to the final acceptance decision, which is made by the Editor-in-Chief. The Guest Editors are expected to adhere to all *JIBS* guidelines, including the Statement of Editorial Policy, Code of Ethics, Instructions for Contributors, Guidelines for Reviewers and Style Guide.

Submissions that the Guest Editors find unsuited to the topic of the Special Issue, but still appropriate for *JIBS* in general, are transferred directly to the regular process by the Managing Editor and reassigned to a regular Area Editor to handle the review process, rather than being given a "desk reject & resubmit" decision.

**Publication of the Special Issue**

When manuscripts are accepted, they are initially accepted to *JIBS*. They are not initially accepted for the Special Issue as such, and this impression should not be conveyed to the authors. Once sufficient papers have been accepted or are close to acceptance to assemble the Special Issue for publication, then the Guest Editors and the EIC discuss and agree on the contents/run order of that SI. Any other papers which had been originally submitted for the SI and are eventually accepted then appear in regular issues of the journal, as determined by the EIC. The final decision as to which manuscripts appear in the Special Issue is the EIC’s, and she/he notifies the authors as to how and when their manuscripts will be published in *JIBS*.

The maximum length of a Special Issue is one issue of the Journal; however, a Special Issue may be smaller depending on the number of final, accepted manuscripts. In the latter situation, the remainder of the issue would then consist of regular *JIBS* manuscripts.

The penultimate stage of the process is the Publication Packet submitted by the Guest Editors to the *JIBS* Editorial Office. The Packet includes (1) the agreed-upon list of manuscripts to be included in the Special Issue, (2) the order in which the manuscripts are to appear in the Special Issue, (3) the Introductory Article for the Special Issue, and (4) a list of all reviewers for the Special Issue and their affiliations.

The *JIBS* Editorial Office sends final versions of all accepted manuscripts and the Introductory Article to the publisher for copy editing, on a rolling basis as they are accepted. Copy edited manuscripts are sent from the publisher to the authors of each manuscript for final correction and review; all articles are published online ahead of print publication after authors have reviewed the proofs, whether the paper will eventually
appear in a Special Issue or a regular issue. The Guest Editors are responsible for ensuring successful completion of the Special Issue.

**Conference Linkages**

*JIBS* Special Issues are not designed to publish manuscripts that have been or will be presented at a conference or workshop on a specialized theme since such manuscripts cannot go, by definition, through the required double-blind review process. Nor is it required that an authors’ workshop or conference be included as part of the Special Issue publication process. However, if the team of Guest Editors wishes to hold a Focused Workshop whereby authors of manuscripts that have successfully passed one or more stages of the double-blind review process are brought together to encourage further integration of the manuscripts into a more coherent whole, and to provide further feedback to the authors of papers, this would be a welcome and useful addition to the publication process. However, since the workshop eliminates the double-blind review, it is important that any such workshop not occur too early in the process.

If the Guest Editors choose to include an authors’ workshop as part of their formal proposal, they must also include in their proposal a budget for the workshop showing sources and uses of funds. Any costs incurred with respect to such a conference or workshop cannot be paid for by the Journal and must be fully paid for through outside funding.

**Guest Editors’ Introductory Article**

Typically, the Guest Editors prepare an introduction that reviews the state of the art on the domain of the Special Issue, suggests new directions for research, and provides a synopsis and integrative analysis of the collective contributions of the Articles and Research Notes in the Special Issue. The Introductory Article then goes through a single-blind review process managed by the Editor-in-Chief. The manuscript is submitted to up to two stages of review, with a final decision made by the EIC to publish or not publish the Introductory Article. The Guest Editors are responsible for timely revisions of their own manuscript based on the *JIBS* Style Guide and Information for Contributors.

It is *JIBS* policy that none of the Guest Editors, including any *JIBS* Editor on the project, can submit a manuscript either as an author or co-author for review for publication in the Special Issue, other than the Introductory Article, in order to avoid any appearance of conflict of interest.

**Summary**

Special Issues are a way for *JIBS* to solicit and package contributions to international business research on a specified theme. The use of Guest Editors is designed to encourage highly-focused feedback and substantial development of the submitted manuscripts. At the same time, manuscripts proceed on a parallel track with regular *JIBS* submissions and adhere to *JIBS* fit and quality norms.