IMPACT Journal

Author Guidance

DRAFT

August 31, 2026

IMPACT JOURNAL 1

AUTHOR GUIDANCE 1

ABOUT THE JOURNAL 2

WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR? 3

WHY SUBMIT TO _IMPACT_? 3

PREPARING YOUR MANUSCRIPT FOR SUBMISSION 4

ARTICLE TYPES 4

Commentaries 4

Research Articles 4

Research Notes 5

Tools and Resources 5

Interactives 5

FORMATTING YOUR MANUSCRIPT 6

Format 6

Title, Abstract, and Keywords 6

Artwork, figures, and other graphics 6

Title Page 7

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 7

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS 8

STATEMENTS AND DECLARATIONS 8

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS 8

Ethical considerations 8

Consent to participate 9

Consent for publication 9

Declaration of conflicting interest 9

Funding statement 9

DATA AVAILABILITY 9

REFERENCE STYLE 10

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL 10

English Language Editing Services 10

SUBMITTING YOUR MANUSCRIPT 10

PUBLISHING FEES AND OPEN ACCESS 10

PREPRINTS 11

AUTHORSHIP 11

DRAFT

SUBMISSION SITE 11
FILES TO INCLUDE IN YOUR SUBMISSION 11

About the journal

IMPACT is a new open-access journal and web platform dedicated to advancing and improving knowledge on the ways that research, evidence, and research use lead to broader impacts in the world. It aims to help us understand and improve the likelihood that the tools and products of research will support changes in decisions, policies, and practices that positively impact our societies.

IMPACT aims to bridge traditional divides—sciences vs. humanities, basic vs. applied research—that prevent us from understanding the impact of research and research investments. By improving our understanding of the connection between research and societal impact, *IMPACT* will help inform R&D and investment in research, foster more impactful research, enhance society's understanding of the value of research, and improve our understanding of how research can be responsibly integrated into our societies and economies.

IMPACT helps to centralize knowledge currently dispersed across a range of sub-disciplinary journals, isolated repositories, meta-analyses, and guidelines on research impact. The wide range of nonprofits, government offices, funders, and others committed to leveraging research to solve problems are, themselves, often not informed by the best available research about maximizing research impact – particularly if it originates outside their field of practice. *IMPACT* helps to address this gap by providing a single, easily accessible venue that supports engagement and knowledge-building across disciplines, sectors, regions, and professions.

IMPACT is designed with principles of research use, pedagogy, and communication to inform its strategy and approach, and to make its content appealing to a range of audiences. We have ambitious audience goals that mirror our cross-sectoral and multi-disciplinary focus. The audience for *IMPACT* include: scholars who are interested in understanding, maximizing, and demonstrating the impact of their scholarship; university administrators who want to demonstrate and improve the university's external impact and engagement; students who want to learn how to bridge the research-practice divide; non-university think tanks or research units who want to improve the uptake of research and evidence; funders who want to understand how to incentivize and improve the impact of their research-focused investments; policymakers and practitioners who want to more effectively integrate evidence into their decision-making and practice; and community organizations who want to facilitate and demonstrate the value of evidence-informed action, among others.

DRAFT

Most journals speak to one community. *IMPACT* speaks across scholarly, funder, policy, practitioner, and disciplinary divides. *IMPACT* is built on the premise that multiple kinds of knowledge—public and private, empirical and experiential, basic and applied, humanities and sciences, global and local—are necessary to understand and facilitate the impact of research.

What are we looking for?

IMPACT is not limited to any disciplinary or methodological tradition. We welcome contributions from researchers, practitioners, funders, policymakers, community members, and others across the range of submission types described below.

IMPACT seeks manuscripts and other contributions that investigate the connection between research or evidence and real-world change. All submissions should explain the nature of the change—whether it is a policy shift, a new product, a changed practice, an improved institution, a scaled idea, a community better served, or other types of changes. All submissions should also indicate the specific role that research, evidence, or the broader research and development process played in achieving that change. Where relevant, submissions should also give a clear account of what worked, what did not work, and why.

All submissions should make the implications of their analysis understandable to a broader audience, answering the perennial "so what" question for people beyond their sector or discipline. Submissions that focus on a specific case study, institution, sector, or discipline should make clear the broader potential implications of their findings for other cases, institutions, sectors, or disciplines.

Why submit to *IMPACT*?

- Gives you the opportunity to contribute to a broader cross-sector conversation on the societal and economic impact of research, evidence, and broader investments in research and development.
- Facilitates your engagement with a diverse, cross-disciplinary and cross-sectoral audience of researchers, practitioners, policy actors, and philanthropists.
- Is fully open access, with no article processing charges.
- Has multiple submission types—from full research articles to shorter commentaries to practical tools and interactive presentations—that enable you to pick the format that fits your work and desired audience.

DRAFT

- Supports the dissemination of your publication through social media channels, conferences, and broader networks.

Preparing your manuscript for submission

Article types

Commentaries

Commentaries are short, argument-driven pieces that engage a current question in the field, challenge a prevailing assumption, take stock of knowledge or understanding on a topic, or propose a new conceptual direction. These are agenda-setting pieces intended to deal with cutting-edge issues.

The goal of a commentary is to advance thought and actionable solutions, not simply to discuss a problem or summarize existing research. These pieces map solutions and explain why their argument matters for our understanding of when, where, and how research and research investments may, or may not, have an impact.

Commentaries are not intended to be blog posts or newspaper op-eds. While the author may clearly express an opinion, these pieces must be grounded in research and evidence. They are argument-based, not simply synopses or descriptions. Authors should explicitly state their argument at the beginning of the piece and support it with evidence throughout the piece.

Commentaries should deal with the impact on research beyond disciplines or sectoral boundaries. Commentaries should also be accessible to non-specialist readers, explaining the research in a clear and approachable way.

Commentaries should be 1,500–3,000 words.

Research Articles

Original empirical or theoretical work advancing the understanding of the conditions under which scientific discovery, research, research use, research institutions, or support for research is facilitated and how this relates to real-world impact.

The research should contribute to a new theory or utilize new data to analyze an existing theory. We welcome contributions from diverse theoretical perspectives.

Research articles should include a collection of new data or use existing data for new analyses. Data can be qualitative, quantitative, or mixed.

DRAFT

Research articles are evaluated on their methodological rigor, the degree to which they advance the existing scholarship, their cross-disciplinary readability, and their potential for relevance across disciplines.

Research articles should provide a short summary statement summarizing the research and its significance, 1-3 sentences in length and easily accessible to non-experts. It should explain the context for the research and provide a brief statement on the impact and applicability of the research.

Research articles should be between 8,000 and 10,000 words, not including references.

Research Notes

Concise contributions on highly focused research results from new data or that discuss a new theory. Research notes present a focused scholarly finding, discrete empirical results, new data sets, a methodological innovation, or new insights about how research leads to impact. Despite their brevity, research notes should include sufficient context (either methodological or theoretical detail) to allow readers to evaluate the contribution, but do not need to be exhaustive.

Research notes should be between 3,000 and 4,000 words, not including references.

Tools and Resources

The goal of "Tools and Resources" is to provide practical instruments that scholars, policymakers, philanthropists, or practitioners can use to strengthen research and evidence use and impact. Tools and Resources are not literature reviews or discussion pieces; they are instruments that practitioners and researchers can adopt and adapt across diverse contexts. This can include frameworks, guides, protocols, assessment tools, templates, methodological guides, or training curricula, among other options. Tools and Resources should have multi-disciplinary or multi-sectoral application.

Each tool or resource should be accompanied by a short description (500 to 2000 words). The description should explain why the tool was developed; the methodological choices; how the tool is currently being used; and how the tool can be used, expanded, or support additional work. Authors should also identify the field or sector the tool relates to and its application across disciplines.

Interactives

Interactive presentations of research and evidence such as data visualizations, explorable models, frameworks, etc. that actively engage readers in the material. This can also include vlogs or podcasts, dashboards, maps, or other interactive modalities. These digital media submissions should be visually appealing, contain highly compelling content, and should

DRAFT

make issues around research and evidence use and impact more accessible to a broader audience. All digital content and visual materials should comply with Sage artwork guidelines, linked below.

Proposals welcome; format and length negotiable.

Formatting your manuscript

File Types

The preferred format for your manuscript is Word. You do not need to follow a template, but please ensure your heading levels are clear, and the sections clearly defined.

LaTeX files are also accepted. A LaTeX template is available on the Sage Journal Author Gateway.

Your article title, keywords, and abstract all contribute to its position in search engine results, directly affecting the number of people who see your work. For details of what you can do to influence this, visit How to help readers find your article online

Format

The entire document should be double-spaced.

Title, Abstract, and Keywords

The title of your article should be less than 50 words. Your manuscript's title should be concise, descriptive, unambiguous, accurate, and reflect the precise contents of the manuscript. A descriptive title that includes the topic of the manuscript makes an article more findable in the major indexing services.

Please include an unstructured abstract of 300 words between the title and main body of your manuscript that concisely states the purpose of the research, major findings, and conclusions. If your research includes clinical trials, the trial registry name and URL, and registration number must be included at the end of the abstract. Submissions that do not meet this requirement will not be considered.

Please include 3-10 keywords, listed after the abstract. Keywords should be as specific as possible to the research topic.

Artwork, figures, and other graphics

For guidance on the preparation of illustrations, pictures, and graphs in electronic format, please read Sage's artwork guidelines.

Figures supplied in color will appear in color online.

DRAFT

Please ensure that you have obtained any necessary permission from copyright holders for reproducing any illustrations, tables, figures, or lengthy quotations previously published elsewhere. For further information including guidance on fair dealing for criticism and review, please see the Frequently Asked Questions page on the Sage Journal Author Gateway.

Title Page

The Title Page should include:

- Article title
- The full list of authors including names and affiliations of each
    - **The listed affiliation should be the institution where the research was conducted**. If an author has moved to a new institution since completing the research, the new affiliation can be included in a note at the end of the manuscript – please indicate this on the title page.
    - **All persons eligible for authorship must be included at the time of submission (please see the authorship section for more information).**
- Contact information for the corresponding author: name, institutional address, phone, email
- Acknowledgements section
- Declaration of conflicting interest
- Funding statement
- Ethical approval and informed consent statements
- Data availability statement
- Any other identifying information related to the authors and/or their institutions, funders, approval committees, etc., that might compromise anonymity.

Acknowledgements

If you are including an Acknowledgements section, this will be published at the end of your article. The Acknowledgments section should include all contributors who do not meet the criteria for authorship. Per ICMJE recommendations, it is best practice to obtain consent from non-author contributors who you are acknowledging in your manuscript.

DRAFT

Writing assistance and third-party submissions: if you have received any writing or editing assistance from a third-party, for example a specialist communications company, this must be clearly stated in the Acknowledgements section and in the covering letter. Please see the Sage Author Gateway for what information to include in your Acknowledgements section. If your submission is being made on your behalf by someone who is not listed as an author, for example the third-party who provided writing/editing assistance, you must state this in the Acknowledgements and also in your covering letter. Please note that the journal editor reserves the right to not consider submissions made by a third party rather than by the author/s themselves.

Author contributions

As part of our commitment to ensuring an ethical, transparent and fair peer review and publication process, this journal has adopted CRediT (Contributor Roles Taxonomy). CRediT is a high-level taxonomy, including 14 roles, which is used to describe each author's individual contributions to the work.

You will be asked to list the contribution of each author as part of the submission process. Please include the Author Contributions heading within your submission after the Acknowledgements section. The information you give on submission will then show under the Author Contributions heading later at the proofing stage.

Statements and declarations

To ensure proper anonymization, please include a section with the heading 'Statements and Declarations' on your title page, after the Acknowledgements section [and Author Contributions section if applicable] including each of the sub-headings listed below. If a declaration is not applicable to your submission, you must still include the heading and state 'Not applicable' underneath. Please note that you may be asked to justify why a declaration was not applicable to your submission by the Editorial Office. This information will be added to the end of your published paper.

Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations

Please include your ethics approval statements under this heading, even if you have already included ethics approval information in your methods section. If ethical approval was not required, you need to explicitly state this.

All papers reporting studies involving human participants, human data or human tissue must state that the relevant Ethics Committee or Institutional Review Board approved the study, or waived the requirement for approval, providing the full name and institution of the review

DRAFT

committee in addition to the approval number. If applicable, please also include this information in the Methods section of your manuscript.

Consent to participate

Please include any participant consent information under this heading and state whether informed consent to participate was written or verbal. If the requirement for informed consent to participate has been waived by the relevant Ethics Committee or Institutional Review Board (i.e. where it has been deemed that consent would be impossible or impracticable to obtain), please state this. If this is not applicable to your manuscript, please state 'Not applicable' in this section.

Consent for publication

Submissions containing any data from an individual person (including individual details, images or videos) must include a statement confirming that informed consent for publication was provided by the participant(s) or a legally authorized representative. Non-essential identifying details should be omitted. Please do not submit the participant's actual written informed consent with your article, as this in itself breaches the participant's confidentiality. The Journal requests that you confirm to us, in writing, that you have obtained written informed consent to publish but the written consent itself should be held by the authors/investigators themselves, for example in a patient's hospital record. The confirmatory letter may be uploaded with your submission as a separate file in addition to the statement confirming that consent to publish was obtained within the manuscript text. If this is not applicable to your manuscript, please state 'Not applicable' in this section.

Declaration of conflicting interest

The journal requires a declaration of conflicting interests from all authors so that a statement can be included in your article. For guidance on conflict-of-interest statements, see our policy on conflicting interest declarations and the ICMJE recommendations.

If no conflict exists, your statement should read: The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding statement

All articles need to include a funding statement, under a separate heading, even if you did not receive funding. You'll find guidance and examples on our Funding statements page.

Data availability

The Journal is committed to facilitating openness, transparency and reproducibility of research, and has the following research data sharing policy. For more information, including FAQs please *visit the Sage Research Data policy pages*.

DRAFT

As a condition of publication authors are required to:

- Share your research data in a relevant public data repository
- Include a data availability statement. This should:
    - Indicate if data is available and shared
    - In certain cases, indicate if research data is available but not shared, and why. If you cannot share your data and this is a requirement of publication, consult the journal editorial office.
    - Indicate if there is an absence of data
- Cite data in your research

Reference style

The journal follows the APA reference style. View the APA guidelines to ensure your manuscript conforms.

Supplemental material

This Journal can host additional materials online (e.g. datasets, podcasts, videos, images etc.) alongside the full text of the article. Your supplemental material must be one of our accepted file types. For that list and more information please refer to our guidelines on submitting supplemental files.

English Language Editing Services

Authors seeking assistance with English language editing, translation, or figure and manuscript formatting to fit the journal's specifications should consider using Sage Author Services. Visit Sage Author Services for further information.

Submitting your manuscript

Publishing fees and open access

IMPACT Journal is an open access, peer-reviewed journal. All accepted articles are made freely available online immediately upon publication, are published under a Creative Commons license, and hosted online in perpetuity.

There are currently no Article Processing Charges (APCs) to publish in this journal.

For general information on open access at Sage please visit the Open Access page.

DRAFT

Preprints

The journal accepts submissions of manuscripts that have been posted on preprint servers or other permissible formats. For further information on permissible formats, view our preprint policy.

Authorship

Please view our authorship policies, which includes information on criteria for authorship, who should be the corresponding author and more.

Please note that AI chatbots, for example ChatGPT, should not be listed as authors. For more information see the policy on Use of ChatGPT and generative AI tools.

As part of the submission process, please run your submission through the sIFA tool. Follow the instructions to download the sIFA tool and generate a disclosure on your use of AI. Please attach the disclosure with your submission to IMPACT.

Submission site

Authors will submit manuscripts through Sage Track. **We will send you this information in the first half of September.**

Files to include in your submission

- **Cover letter (optional)**. To help the Editor in their preliminary evaluation, please indicate why you think the manuscript is suitable for publication. If your manuscript should be considered for fast-track publication, please explain why.
- **Title Page** with all required identifying information as laid out in Preparing Your Manuscript for Submission (above). This **will not** be sent to the peer reviewers.
- Your **manuscript**, properly formatted and anonymized according to all stipulations above, and within the scope of the journal. Any information that compromises the anonymity of the author(s) should be removed or anonymized and included on the Title Page instead. See above for more information on anonymization. This version **will** be sent to the peer reviewers.
- **Figures and images**.
    - All figures must be numbered consecutively in the order in which they appear in the text – they will appear in the published article in the order they are numbered.

DRAFT

    - Figure resolution is 300dpi. More information on figure/image preparation can be found here.

- **Supplemental material**. This journal can host additional materials online (e.g. datasets, podcasts, videos, images, etc.) alongside the full-text of the article. Your supplemental material must be one of our accepted file types. For that list and more information please refer to our guidelines on submitting supplemental files.

DRAFT