
AJE Contribution Categories

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Currently, there are 11 sections to which authors may contribute material for consideration for publication in the *American Journal of Evaluation (AJE)*. Specifications for these categories, in terms of content and page length, are presented below.

Articles

Articles should deal with topics applicable to the broad field of program evaluation. Articles may focus on evaluation methods, theory, practice, or findings. In all cases, implications for practicing evaluators should be clearly identified. Examples of contributions include, but are not limited to, reviews of new developments in evaluation, descriptions of a current evaluation study, critical reviews of some area of evaluation practice, and presentations of important new techniques. Manuscripts should follow APA format for references and style. Length per se is not a criterion in evaluating submissions. However, manuscripts in excess of 35 double-spaced pages may be returned to the authors without review at the discretion of the editor.

Forum

Forum contributions present essays, opinions, and professional judgments. Forum articles speak to and about the philosophical, ethical, and practical dilemmas of our profession. By design, the "Forum" is open to diverse views, in the hope that such diversity will enhance professional dialogue. Standard citations and reference lists should be used to acknowledge and identify earlier contributions and viewpoints. Manuscripts should typically not exceed 15 doublespaced typewritten pages in length, unless the paper is invited by the editor.

Ethical Challenges

All evaluators face the challenge of adhering to the highest possible standards of professional ethical conduct. Guidance for ethical behavior is available in AEA's Guiding Principles and the Joint Committee's Program Evaluation Standards as well as in the ethical guidelines and codes of conduct of many other professional associations. Learning how to use those principles and standards in everyday practice can be a complex, uncertain, and demanding undertaking. This section of the journal is dedicated to discussing ethical issues and challenges in the practice of evaluation. Submissions may include cases with multiple commentaries or essays on particular ethical issues or challenges in specific fields where evaluation is practiced. With the ever-growing expansion of evaluation activities in multiple fields there arise a variety of issues and concerns related to ethics, for example, obtaining IRB approval when working as an independent contractor, working in cross-cultural settings, working with vulnerable populations, ethics of communication, ethics of data mining, the ethics of intervention, and so on. We invite scholarly discussions of these issues. Readers interested in submissions to this category should contact Leslie Goodyear at lgoodyear@edc.org.

Exemplars

This section presents reports of evaluation work that, in some way, is considered exemplary. Each entry will include a brief introduction to the evaluation work; an exploration of the process and rationale for conducting the work, presented in an interview format; and a series of reflections on what makes this particular evaluation work exemplary. The editors seek to emphasize the evaluator's working logic underlying the conduct of the study; the conditions, events, and actions that contributed to the work being exemplary; and the conditions, if any, that might have limited quality in unexpected ways. All forms of evaluation practice – formative or summative and in any professional or disciplinary setting – are suitable for consideration, such as award winning studies, long-term consulting relationships, internal ongoing systemic evaluations, or meta-evaluations. The focus will be less on exemplary instances of applications of models of evaluation and more on exemplary instances of expert evaluation practice conducted in a manner appropriate to program settings. Entries in this section will be developed through collaboration between the Section editors and the evaluation practitioner using an iterative dialogic process. Nominations of exemplary work that might be examined and shared through this section should be sent to the Section editors, Paul Brandon at brandon@hawaii.edu or Nick Smith at nlsmith@sy.edu.

Evaluating Evaluations

This section is designed to help improve evaluation practice by having competent evaluators critique and comment on previously completed evaluation studies—the "meta-evaluands." Abbreviated summaries of prior evaluations will be published here (along with references to fuller reports of the studies), and "meta-evaluators" will be asked to critique the studies, using wherever possible the existing standards and guidelines published by AEA (the "guiding principles") and the Joint Committee (the "evaluation standards"), in order to help other evaluators see how these touchstones of competent and ethical evaluation practice apply to actual studies. Contributors can submit their own evaluation studies to serve as the meta-evaluands or may volunteer the work of a colleague to be reported and critiqued (please provide the address, e-mail, and telephone number of that colleague and, preferably, their statement of agreement for their study to be published). Those who wish to submit material for this section may also wish to read pp. vii-viii of the "From the Editor" section of Volume 19, Number 3, of this journal for additional information.

Teaching Evaluation

This section includes articles that focus on teaching of, and training in, evaluation. Articles may address evaluation teaching and training in diverse environments, including K-12, corporate, government, nonprofit, or community settings, in addition to more traditional academic settings. Articles might also identify strategies and outcomes of teaching evaluation to community and agency members. A variety of formats are welcome, including case studies, interviews, and more traditional articles. Research on the teaching of evaluation is especially welcome. In general, manuscripts for this section should range from 5 to 20 pages in length, although shorter or longer papers will be considered. All manuscripts will be peer reviewed, with as timely a review process as we can achieve. If you have any questions or suggestions about topics you would like to see addressed in this section or would like to chat about an idea you are considering for submission, feel free to contact the section editor, Marvin Alkin at alkin@gseis.ucla.edu.

The Historical Record

Papers in this section focus on evaluation from a historical perspective. They may analyze important turning points within the profession, provide commentary on historically significant evaluation works, or describe and analyze what promises to be a contemporary watershed event with important implications for the future of evaluation. For more information, contact section editor John Gargani at john@gcoinc.com.

Dialogue

This section, as its name implies, is designed to foster dialogue in the evaluation community. Various formats are appropriate for this section. First, a pair of outstanding evaluators or evaluation scholars may be invited to discuss some topic of general interest. In most cases, the two will be selected in part because they are expected to have differing viewpoints and because their discussion should be illuminating for readers. Second, panel discussions may be presented on some topic of general interest, using an interactive or question-answer format. Third, this section may sometimes include responses and commentary on a recent article published in AJE. Any such response should be concise, to the point, substantive, and devoid of personal attacks. Other formats for Dialogue will also be considered. Prospective contributors are encouraged to contact the Editor.

Method Notes

This section includes shorter papers (e.g., 10-15 double-spaced manuscript pages or less) describing methods and techniques that can improve evaluation practice. Method notes may include reports of new evaluation tools, products, and/or services that are useful for practicing evaluators. Alternatively, they may describe new uses of existing tools. Also appropriate for this section are user-friendly guidelines for the proper use of conventional tools and methods, particularly for those that are commonly misused in practice. For more information, please contact the section editor, Rebecca Campbell, at rmc@msu.edu.

Book Reviews

In this section, we commission reviews of single books applicable to the broad field of evaluation as well as reviews of other kinds of resources for evaluators including web-based resources, manuals and handbooks. We also invite essay reviews. Essay reviews are special peer-reviewed articles that examine in depth one or more recent books of particular significance on a single topic. Essay reviews are generally between 5,000 and 8,000 words in length. Reviews need not be limited to examinations of books on evaluation per se. AJE readers would profit from essay reviews that examined books on public policy issues, organizational decision making, the relationship between science and society, and so on. If you are interested in submitting a review please contact Lori Wingate at lori.wingate@wmich.edu.

Letters to the Editor

Letters to the editor should be submitted no later than 4 months from the date of the issue containing the article on which they comment. Letters should make a reasonable and substantive contribution to the discussion of the topic. Letters commenting on prior letters will not be considered. However, if accepted, letters may be accompanied by a response from the authors of the original journal article. Letters must be limited to 1,000 words and should contain no more than five references. Letters should be prepared according to *APA* (6th edition).