

Procedures for Guest Edited Issues in the *Modern Language Journal*

1. Guest edited issues within the *MLJ*'s profile

The Modern Language Journal welcomes proposals for guest edited issues. Within the overall scope of the *MLJ*, guest edited issues present the guest editor, the contributors, and the journal's readership the unique opportunity to explore a topic from diverse perspectives in one issue of the journal. In order to meet the high expectations associated with such an in-depth exploration, the papers included in the issue should show a significant level of coherence so as to extend knowledge of that particular area in a clearly identifiable fashion. The expectation of coherence across papers does not mean that all authors will take similar theoretical or empirical positions or explore similar phenomena. But it does mean that, taken together, the contributions offer a discernible and thought-provoking dialogue regarding the topic.

Making this happen is the principal task of the guest editor (GE) who, throughout the creation of the issue, uses various collaborative, cooperative, and quality control procedures to assure that level of quality for the guest edited issue. In short, the GE takes on the same role as an editor of a volume published with a commercial press.

Because publication of individual research projects is the journal's primary mission guest edited issues are unusual in the overall publication line-up of the *MLJ*, occurring at most once every 1-2 years. There is no fixed schedule for their publication and therefore no fixed deadline for proposal submission.

2. Submitting a proposal

Scholars interested in guest editing a special issue of the *Modern Language Journal* should confer with the journal editors (JE) ahead of time. Their completed proposal should cover the following points:

Focus/theme of the special issue

Motivation for and positioning of the special issue within scholarship that treats similar/related matters

Relevance of the special issue in the general discussion in language teaching and learning

Specific emphases that will characterize treatment of the theme in focus

Detailed information about the projected contributions to the special issue

For each paper, this should include

- a summary, about 50 – 75 words in length

- an abstract about 250 – 300 words in length, including, as appropriate, a listing of key sources

The proposal should also include a tentative date when the GE anticipates being able to submit the entire set of papers to the *MLJ* editor (see below for additional details).

3. Proposal approval process

The proposal will be considered based on its merits and on the journal's anticipated publication line-up and editorial office commitments.

a) The proposal will be reviewed by the editors of the journal and the journal's board. Two members of the board whose research and scholarly interests lie in the direction of the proposed theme will provide in-depth comments; the remaining members of the board will offer more general comments and recommendations. Since proposals can occur throughout the year, this feedback will be handled through electronic forms of consultation/feedback.

b) The GE should expect to be notified by the JE of the board's decision within 6 weeks after submission of the completed proposal.

c) If the proposal is approved, a more detailed time line will be worked out with the GE and the authors.

4. Submission of first draft of manuscripts and review process

The following overall guidelines pertain to guest edited issues:

- a) The GE handles all aspects of the creation of the full manuscript for the issue **until it is submitted to the JE for final copy-editing and editorial processing.**
- b) **GEs must inform prospective contributors that all papers will undergo the *MLJ*'s usual external review process;** that is, inclusion in the special issue proposal should not be taken as an obligation on the part of either the GE or the JEs to publish that particular paper as part of the special issue.
- c) Guest edited issues generally include 7-8 articles, including the GE's introduction. The introduction can be conceptualized as primarily serving to frame the topic and provide summaries of the contributions or can itself constitute a substantive contribution to the discussion, along with the standard overview of papers. The guest editor may also include a separate contribution, aside from the customary introduction.
- d) Manuscript length is approximately 30 – 35 pages, double spaced. Length requirements in excess of those limitations should be discussed with the JE as the special issue evolves.
- e) The review process for papers in accepted guest edited proposals is the following:
- Each paper is blind reviewed by two external reviewers.
 - Once papers are submitted to the GE, he/she sends to the JE a list of potential reviewers for approval.
 - Upon approval of the list of reviewers, the GE sends the MS out for review. At the same time, the MS is also sent to the JEs, to enable them to provide commentary prior to manuscript revision.
 - Once the external reviews have been received, the GE provides contributors with feedback that has the following components: his/her own synthesizing evaluation of the MS in light of the commentaries received, including those of the JE's; and the two external reviewers' comments as provided by them. A copy of this correspondence is provided to the JE's.
 - The blind reviews for a contribution by the GE will be handled separately by the JE.
 - The review process may request that authors make major revisions and resubmit their contribution. Ample time should be allowed for that. The review continues until a decision regarding publication of each paper is reached, a joint decision between GEs and JEs on the basis of the GE's recommendations. **At that point only is the paper considered "accepted" for the special issue.**
- f) The GE, in consultation with the JE, creates a timeline for the entire process and shares that with the contributors and the JE. It is critically important to allow enough time for the first review, for the creation of feedback by the GE, and for revisions on the part of contributors. Planning also needs to allow enough time for the GE to prepare the complete final MS for the special issue.
- g) GE's should take note that the review process of special issues is handled outside the *MLJ*'s electronic system. However, they must keep a record of all the review process documents and make them available to the JE. Eventually these will be uploaded into the journal's electronic data base.

5. Creation of the final manuscript

- a) The GE handles all correspondence with contributors regarding suggested changes to the first draft and assures that an intellectually exciting and substantive, stylistically polished, and largely error-free manuscript that adheres to APA guidelines as used by the *MLJ* is submitted to the JE by the agreed-upon deadline.
- b) As appropriate, the GE makes sure that authors are securing copyrights.
- c) After submission of the complete MS for the special issue, the remainder of the editorial process is handled between the JE and the individual authors.
- d) Page proofs with queries by the Wiley-Blackwell team will be sent to all authors and the GE. All will respond to a Wiley-Blackwell editor who handles final corrections before the issue goes into production.