

American Economic Journal: Economic Policy

The *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, or *AEJ Policy* for short, published four issues in 2013.

As stated in the call for papers posted on the journal's website:

AEJ Policy will publish papers covering a range of topics, the common theme being the role of economic policy in economic outcomes. Subject areas will include public economics; urban and regional economics; public policy aspects of health, education, welfare, and political institutions; law and economics; economic regulation; and environmental and natural resource economics.

Editorial Process

AEJ Policy is a peer-reviewed journal, now following the same single-blind procedure used by the *American Economic Review* (*AER*) and the other *AEJs*. The submission fee is \$100 for AEA members and \$200 for nonmembers. The journal rejects some papers on the basis of an initial screening by the Editors (in which cases submission fees are returned to authors). Unlike the *AER*, *AEJ Policy* does not have separate sections of longer and shorter papers. Along with the other *AEJs*, we have adopted a liberal republication policy, granting authors of published papers the right to republication in any work in any form, including digital repositories. We follow the *AER*'s policy with respect to the posting of information, requiring that authors of accepted papers that employ data in econometric exercises, simulation models, or experiments agree to post their data and programs on the journal website unless an exemption for proprietary data is requested and granted.

Submissions to the journal must be made electronically, via the journal website (www.aeaweb.org/aej-policy/), using editorial software set up for the journal by Manuscript Central. All subsequent editorial correspondence with referees and authors is also done electronically, including the provision of ultimate decision

letters and referees' reports to authors. Since July 1, 2012, the journal has followed the AEA's new disclosure policy, requiring authors to provide statements with their submissions indicating sources of funding and potential conflicts of interest. The new policy is described in detail at https://www.aeaweb.org/aea_journals/AEA_Disclosure_Policy.pdf.

A significant element of the journal's operation is coordination of the review process with the *AER*, following a common procedure worked out in consultation with the Editors of the other new journals and the *AER*. When submitting their papers via the *AEJ Policy* website, authors of manuscripts previously reviewed by the *AER* may request that, subject to the referees' agreement, the full correspondence files of the *AER* referees (including not just the referees' reports but the referees' cover letters as well) be shared with the Editors of *AEJ Policy*, who will have the discretion to make a decision based on these reports or to request additional reports.

The Editor assigns each manuscript either to himself or to one of the Coeditors, and all subsequent responsibility for handling the manuscript—including the decision of whether to reject summarily, the choice of referees, and the ultimate disposition of the paper—rests with the person to whom the paper has been assigned. The journal has adopted a policy to avoid conflicts of interest, so that papers by department colleagues, current students, or coauthors will be assigned to another member of the senior editorial team. Other members of the editorial board may, on occasion, be asked to assume responsibility for papers.

Editorial Staff

The journal's Coeditors are Mark Duggan (Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania) and Dan Silverman (Arizona State University), a former member of the editorial board who became Coeditor on July 1, 2013 replacing John Karl Scholz (University of Wisconsin, Madison), who stepped down when he became his

university's Dean of the College of Letters and Science. The members of the *AEJ Policy* editorial board are Douglas Almond, Robin Boadway, Stephen Coate, Dhammika Dharmapala, Lucas W. Davis, William N. Evans, Robert C. Feenstra, David N. Figlio, Michael Greenstone, Louis Kaplow, Henrik Jacobsen Kleven, Christopher R. Knittel, Wojciech Kopczuk, Adriana Lleras-Muney, Deborah J. Lucas, Jens Ludwig, Erzo F. P. Luttmer, Kathleen McGarry, Cecilia Rouse, and Jonathan Skinner. During the year, Severin Borenstein, Julie Berry Cullen, Roger H. Gordon, Jonathan Gruber, Brigitte Madrian, and Thomas J. Nechyba completed their terms as members of the board, leaving with our appreciation for their service.

Board members provide valuable advice concerning journal policy, aid in the identification of suitable referees, serve as referees themselves, and have been asked on occasion to assume additional editorial responsibilities.

Editorial Data

The distribution of submissions to the journal by year (ending October 31) is shown in Table 1, indicating relatively steady growth over time. Of the 411 original submissions during the year ending October 31, 2013, one paper was withdrawn from submission prior to being reviewed. Of the remaining papers, as of November 12, 174 (42 percent) had been summarily rejected. (This summary rejection rate is lower than last year's, when it was 46 percent, but higher than in 2011, when it was 39 percent.) An additional 145 papers had been rejected after the normal refereeing process. Of the remaining papers, 33 had received an invitation to revise and resubmit, and the other 58 papers were still in the initial review process as of October 31. If one assumes that the papers still in review will be rejected or invited to revise in the same fractions as reviewed papers for which decisions have already been made, then approximately 11 percent of papers submitted this year eventually will have received positive first-round decisions, compared to 16 percent based on the same calculation last year and 20 percent the year before. This steady decline in the fraction of papers receiving a favorable first-round response primarily reflects a toughening standard being applied as the number of submissions to the journal has increased.

TABLE 1—MANUSCRIPTS SUBMITTED AND PUBLISHED, 2007–2013

Year	Submitted	Published	Previously submitted to the <i>AER</i>
2007	57	0	6
2008	171	0	23
2009	215	18	23
2010	248	31	20
2011	295	30	31
2012	375	36	32
2013	411	42	39

Notes: Submissions to the *AEJ Policy* for each year include all new submissions from November 1 of the previous year through October 31 of the stated year. Publications for 2009 include the February and August issues. Publications for all other years include the February, May, August, and November issues.

Table 1 also shows the number of manuscripts submitted each year via transfer from the *AER*, with 39 such manuscripts in 2013.

Table 2 shows the status of manuscripts by year of submission, as of the end of each respective year.

Table 3 shows the performance of the journal with respect to the distribution of first decision times for papers submitted during the period Nov. 1, 2011–Oct. 31, 2012, and projected using Kaplan-Meier hazards for the period Nov. 1, 2012–Oct. 31, 2013. Table 3 indicates that the journal has continued to provide initial decisions on virtually all manuscripts in less than six months. The average number of days until the first decision on submitted papers (not shown in the table) was 49 days in 2013, a slight increase from the 46 days in 2012, with this increase primarily reflecting the small decline in the fraction of papers issued a summary rejection.

Table 4 shows the total publication lags for papers published during 2011, 2012, and 2013. Table 4 shows an increased lag from submission to acceptance in 2013, but only a slightly longer lag from acceptance to publication—still just under one year.

Table 5 lists the number and average page length of published papers in each year, and Table 6 lists the *JEL* classifications of these papers (with multiple categories possible). The changes in distribution between 2012 and 2013 do not indicate any marked trend, and are in line with previous year-to-year fluctuations. Table 7 lists statistics regarding our journal's data-posting policy

TABLE 2—STATUS OF MANUSCRIPTS BY YEAR OF SUBMISSION, 2009–2013

Submission year	Accepted	Pending	Rejected	Summary reject	Revise and resubmit	Withdrawn	Total
2009	32 (15)	0 (0)	105 (49)	71 (33)	5 (2)	2 (1)	215 (100)
2010	40 (16)	0 (0)	128 (52)	76 (31)	4 (2)	0 (0)	248 (100)
2011	44 (15)	1 (0)	132 (45)	114 (39)	3 (1)	1 (0)	295 (100)
2012	41 (11)	7 (2)	140 (37)	174 (46)	12 (3)	1 (0)	375 (100)
2013	5 (1)	75 (18)	140 (34)	172 (42)	18 (4)	1 (0)	411 (100)

Notes: Entries show status as of November 1, 2013. Figures in parentheses show row percents rounded to the nearest integer. Pending manuscripts include submissions and revisions that were undergoing review as of November 1, 2013, while revise and resubmit manuscripts are manuscripts that have been returned and are in the hands of the authors on that date. Summary rejections are manuscripts rejected without referee review.

TABLE 3—DISTRIBUTION OF FIRST-TIME DECISION TIMES, BY SUBMISSION YEAR

Months to response	2012		2013	
	Monthly percent	Cumulative percent	Monthly percent	Cumulative percent
1	47	47	43	43
2	7	54	6	48
3	18	72	18	67
4	19	91	19	86
5	6	97	11	97
6	2	99	2	99
7	0	99	0	100
8	1	100	0	100
9	0	100	0	100
10	0	100	0	100
11	0	100	0	100
12	0	100	0	100

Notes: Submission year denotes the period from November 1 of the preceding year to October 31 of the stated year. The 2012 distributions are the actual distributions. The 2013 distribution is projected from Kaplan-Meier hazards computed from the right-censored distribution of decision times of manuscripts submitted between November 1, 2012 and October 31, 2013. Percents are rounded to the nearest integer. Figures in this table supersede those contained in previous *AEJ Policy* reports.

Office Staff and Other Assistants

The main editorial office for AEA journals, including *AEJ Policy*, is in Pittsburgh. I would like to thank Michelle DeBlasi, Managing Editor of *AEJ Policy*; Matthew Newton, Assistant Managing Editor; Olivia Sweeney, Editorial Assistant; and Kelly Andrews, Senior Editorial Assistant, for their efforts at keeping the journal's operations running very smoothly.

TABLE 4—AVERAGE PROCESSING TIMES BY YEAR OF PUBLICATION

	Submission to acceptance		Weeks from acceptance to publication
	Total weeks	Weeks in review	
2011	53	23	34
2012	40	21	49
2013	58	26	51

Note: Total weeks column shows the combined time a manuscript spent in review at *AEJ Policy* and the time taken by authors to develop their various revisions.

TABLE 5—DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLICATION TYPE, BY YEAR

Year of publication	Number	Average page length
2010	31	27
2011	30	29
2012	36	29
2013	42	32

Note: The table refers to the February, May, August, and November issues of *AEJ Policy*.

Finally, I extend my deep appreciation to those who have refereed for this journal in the past year. Their willingness to provide timely and informative reports for yet another journal is a satisfying demonstration of professional commitment.

ALAN J. AUERBACH, *Editor*

TABLE 6—SUBJECT MATTER OF PUBLISHED MANUSCRIPTS, 2013
(Counts of areas)

Subject category	
A—General economics and teaching	0
B—History of economic thought, methodology, and heterodox approaches	0
C—Mathematical and quantitative methods	3
D—Microeconomics	16
E—Macroeconomics and monetary economics	3
F—International economics	5
G—Financial economics	6
H—Public economics	16
I—Health, education, and welfare	10
J—Labor and demographic economics	11
K—Law and economics	4
L—Industrial organization	10
M—Business administration and business economics; marketing; accounting	0
N—Economic history	3
O—Economic development, technological change, and growth	7
P—Economic systems	1
Q—Agricultural and natural resource economics; environmental and ecological economics	4
R—Urban, rural, and regional economics	10
Y—Miscellaneous categories	0
Z—Other special topics	4
Total	113

Notes: Derived from *JEL* codes reported for each manuscript submitted to *AEJ Policy*. Entries represent totals for February, May, August, and November issues.

TABLE 7—2013 DATA-POSTING POLICY STATISTICS

Issue	Number of papers	Papers with data	Exemptions	First-round compliance	Second-round compliance	Noncompliance
February	11	11	0	11	0	0
May	11	11	0	11	0	0
August	10	10	0	10	0	0
November	10	9	0	9	0	0