

## CONTRIBUTIONS TO URBAN MATTERS JOURNAL – A GUIDE

Urban Matters seeks to stimulate and contribute to public debates around contemporary urbanization. The written pieces we share are designed to inform and inspire conversations among audiences both within and beyond academia.

We combine academic rigueur with journalistic flair to help readers understand and examine the social, economic, political, cultural and ecological consequences of urbanization. We seek articles that are based on recent academic research and written in a popular science tone.

### Planning for an issue

We welcome contributions from all fields within urban studies and from all around the world. If you want to contribute to the journal and become a **Guest Theme Editor**, contact any of the Editorial Board Members (see the end of this document for contact details) or use the online submission form on [Contribute - Urban Matters Journal](#). We will respond as swiftly as possible.

We aim for a fast publication process with four issues per year. The process is as follows:

- 1) The Guest Editor(s) contact the journal with a theme issue proposal.
- 2) Once accepted, the Guest Editor(s) open the contribution call. We will support the call by disseminating it in our communication channels.
- 3) The Guest Editor(s) receive the submissions from the authors.
- 4) The Guest Editor(s) select the contributions and make the first round of reviews.
- 5) Following a predefined date, the Guest Editor(s) will submit the articles (following our style guide, see below) and complementary information (short bios, photos of authors and images for the articles).
- 6) We will then edit the texts in a popular science style. Artist [David Peter Kerr](#) will provide an illustration based on the issue's content.
- 7) We will format and upload the articles and other material to the Urban Matters website.
- 8) We will use our communication channels to disseminate and spread the new issue (IUR website, newsletter, social media, and other means).

The time between submission of the articles and online publication is commonly 3 to 4 months. In addition to this time, the Guest Editor(s) need to schedule the time for collecting the articles from the authors.

### Types of Contributions

A themed issue typically includes between 5 and 10 contributions from different authors. Contributions can take different forms: research articles, commentaries, interviews, photo essays or book reviews.

**Research articles should** be original, unpublished research material or popular versions of research findings published elsewhere. They should be minimum of 2000 words and a maximum of 4000 words in length. Research articles should be accompanied by at least one visual (photo, drawing, etc.) that respects copyright legislation.

**Commentaries** express opinions about contemporary urban issues and events that have international relevance. Commentaries should be minimum of 1000 words and a

maximum of 2000 words. Commentaries should be accompanied by at least one visual (photo, drawing, etc.) that respects copyright legislation.

**Interviews** with urban experts should be original, deal with internationally relevant topics and should be between 2000 and 4000 words in length. Interview transcripts should be submitted with one picture of the interviewee and possibly other visuals.

**Photo essays** deal with urban issues that benefit from a strong visual representation. They should contain at least ten photographs, start with a brief introduction outlining the theme of the essay, and each photograph should have a caption.

**Book reviews** should review recently published books that have broad relevance for the field of urban studies and should be between 500 and 1000 words.

## Style Guide

The key points specific to the style of our publication are:

### Language

The language of the journal is English. Articles should be written in a popular science tone and free of jargon.

### Citations

Urban Matters follows the [Harvard referencing system](#).

Due to the online nature and format of our publication, we discourage the use of footnotes and endnotes in all submissions. Instead, we recommend in-text explanations and parenthetical references to external sources as needed.

### Submissions

Please send in submissions as Microsoft Word attachments. Submissions should also include a cover photo. This photo must be available in Creative Commons or be an original photo taken by the author.

### Photos and graphic elements

Photos should be sent in a Word document, each with a cutline describing who is in the photo, when it was taken, what is happening in the photo, and who took the photo, as well as any other relevant details.

In addition to the Word document, photos should be sent separately as high-resolution (minimum 300 pixels per inch) files, in PNG, JPEG, or TIFF format. Submit image files as email attachments or via a file-sharing service such as Dropbox.

### Length

We seek ready-to-publish articles and commentaries written to an agreed-upon length. More information on [submissions can be found here](#), but a general guideline of article type and length is as follows:

- Research articles - minimum 2000 words, maximum 4000 words.
- Commentaries - minimum 1000 words, maximum 2000 words.
- Interviews with urban experts – minimum 2000 words, maximum 4000 words.

- Photo essays should contain at least 10 photographs and start with a brief introduction outlining the theme of the essay. Each photograph should have a caption.
- Book reviews - minimum 500, maximum 1000 words.

***Tips to stay within a limited word count:***

Limit the use of long, unnecessary wording in favor of short, easy-to-understand language.

Reduce the use of adverbs and adjectives (words that describe). Show, rather than tell, readers about your topic.

Tighten sentences by getting rid of unnecessary descriptions and try to keep sentences to 30 words or less. Too many ideas in one sentence makes writing less clear.

***Use an active voice***

Academic writing usually uses the passive voice minimize focus on the “doer” of an action. In popular science writing, the active voice encourages a clear, direct tone, while also reducing the word count.

Passive voice: *More interesting subdivisions must be approved by planners.*

Active voice: *Planners must approve more interesting subdivisions.*

**Titles and names**

Use people’s full names the first time they are mentioned. In subsequent references, use their last name only (e.g., “Johan Andersson was drinking coffee. Andersson later said that...”).

The only exception to this rule is when two people have the same last name. In these cases, use first names to differentiate.

**Acronyms and abbreviations**

Avoid acronyms and abbreviations unless they are commonly used and easily understood (e.g., UNESCO, OECD, NATO). Even then, the first reference to an acronym should explain the full name, with the acronym or abbreviation included in brackets after the name.

**Numbers and percentages**

The numbers one to nine are written in full, while 10 and up are written numerically, unless the number starts a sentence (e.g., Twenty-five residents were displaced... or The accident caused 33 injuries...)

Percentages are written as “percent” not “per cent” or “%”.

**Titles of publications**

The Harvard Referencing System recommends that the title of a source be underlined or italicized, but not both. For in-text citations, Urban Matters recommends the consistent use of italics for titles of books, movies, magazines, and other forms of media.

**Inclusive language**

We capitalize the proper names of race, nationality and peoples (e.g., Black, South Asian, Indigenous Peoples).

**Punctuation**

Urban Matters uses the Oxford comma. In a series of three or more items, use a comma before the final “and” or “or”.

**For further questions contact the one of the members of the Editorial Board:**

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