AUTHOR SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Journal Purpose
Scholarship and Practice of Undergraduate Research (SPUR) serves as the leading international, cross-disciplinary, scholarly destination for those committed to effective, inclusive, and diverse experiences in mentored undergraduate research, scholarship, and creative inquiry. SPUR advances knowledge and understanding of novel and effective approaches to mentored undergraduate research, scholarship, and creative inquiry by publishing high-quality, rigorously peer-reviewed studies written by scholars and practitioners of undergraduate research, scholarship, and creative inquiry.

Journal Audience
The audience encompasses the many individuals interested in quality undergraduate-level education and professional preparation, such as postsecondary administrators, faculty, staff, researchers, and student mentors both on and off campus, as well as industry professionals—all those involved in the scholarship and practice of undergraduate research around the world.

The journal welcomes manuscript and proposal submissions from anyone (faculty, staff, or administrators) involved in undergraduate research, scholarship, and creative inquiry worldwide. There is no requirement that submitters be members of the Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR).

Journal Policies
Journal-specific policies are available on the SPUR website.

The SPUR Authorship Policy provides details of what constitutes authorship. The corresponding author assumes primary responsibility for managing all correspondence between coauthors and SPUR and responding to all inquiries from manuscript submission to publication.

The journal adheres to strict publication ethical guidelines detailed in the SPUR Publication Ethics and Publication Malpractice Statement. In brief:

Prior Publication Policy: All submitted work should be original and not have been published anywhere else in part or whole unless the work represents a significant development of a previously published study. The following do not constitute prior publication: abstract for a conference presentation, blog post, poster, thesis, or dissertation. The authors ensure their work has been submitted for exclusive consideration of publication in SPUR.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is defined by the HHS Office of Research Integrity as “both the theft or misappropriation of intellectual property and the substantial unattributed textual copying of another’s work”; it may encompass copying text, images, or data without proper attribution; manipulating digital images, or reusing text from prior publications. Plagiarism is considered a violation of academic integrity and is unacceptable. Providing statements that are fraudulent or known to be inaccurate is deemed to be unethical behavior and unacceptable. Authors may review their manuscripts using Grammarly (free), Quetext, or another plagiarism-detection software before submission.

Conflict of Interest (COI): At submission, the authors must disclose any conflict of interest (a personal or professional situation that could affect the perception of the results presented in the manuscript). Please review the SPUR Publication Ethics and Publication Malpractice Statement for additional information on what constitutes a COI.

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For human subjects research or research using animal models, authors must submit evidence of Institutional or Ethical Review Board and animal care committee approval (uploaded as an “Institutional or Ethical Review Board letter” file type) or explain why such approval does not apply to their work. Wherever conducted, studies should abide by their institutional and national policies for ethical and responsible conduct of research on human subjects, including education research, and cite these policies in the manuscript. In addition to submitting the evidence requested, authors must include an explicit statement within the manuscript (see “Required Statements” section below) noting that their work has received either approval or exemption by the relevant board.

Data: Key data, critical questions used in scripts, and instruments must appear in the body, figures, and tables of the manuscript so that the readers and reviewers of manuscripts can adequately evaluate the quality of the work performed. Authors must deposit pertinent data and information not included in the body of the manuscript in a digital repository. SPUR encourages authors to select a repository that issues a persistent unique identifier, such as a DOI or an accession number. Include identifiers in the text and in a citation (details below) to facilitate the discoverability and citation of deposited data. To find an appropriate repository for their data, authors may refer to re3data.org and FAIRsharing.org for information on available repositories, certification status, and services offered.

Authors must also disclose (in a Data Availability Statement) where the data, critical questions used in scripts, and instruments associated with this manuscript are available. Authors are expected to comply with the requirements on data sharing of their funding agencies. Authors are expected to make their raw data available to interested readers and researchers who wish to replicate or analyze the data in new ways.

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Authors shall have the right to deposit the published version of the manuscript in the institutional repository (defined as an online archive that collects, preserves, and disseminates digital copies of the research output of an educational institution) of the author's institution to fulfill institutional requirements.

- Post Publication Policies: CUR follows guidance from the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) when considering any ethical concerns regarding a published article, retractions, or expressions of concern.

Editorial Practices

All submitted articles are initially reviewed for compliance with the SPUR manuscript guidelines below. Manuscripts that do not conform will be returned to the author. The Editor-in-Chief will review the manuscript to ensure its contents align with the aim and scope of SPUR and assign the manuscript to an associate editor responsible for shepherding submissions through the review process. Each manuscript is assigned to a minimum of two reviewers for completion of the first reviews within one month. Based on the reviews, the associate editor will make a recommendation to the Editor-in-Chief regarding the disposition of the manuscript, as follows:

- Accept with minor revision – recommended changes will not require further external review; however, the authors must make the requested revisions before publication.
- Major revision – based on the reviews, significant changes in the manuscript will necessitate another review of the revised manuscript.
- Reject – there are flaws in the study that preclude publication.

Final editorial judgment regarding the publication of manuscripts rests with the Editor-in-Chief. Questions or concerns about editorial policies and decisions should be addressed to the editors.

Content Types

Authors are encouraged to discuss their submission with Editor-in-Chief Patricia Ann Mabrouk (p.mabrouk@northeastern.edu) to ensure the relevance of content and scope.

- Full Manuscripts
  Articles (Practices, Assessments, and International Perspectives) within the scope of SPUR may be submitted for review at any time.

- Communications
  Communications are shorter reports that describe new, original experimental research on undergraduate research, scholarship, and creative activity. Like full manuscripts, communications are expected to place the study in the context of the relevant current literature, clearly outlining the gap in the literature that the work is intended to fill, to describe the research methodology and results in sufficient detail that interested readers can judge the quality of the work, and offer specific conclusions and recommendations appropriate given the limitations of the study. If the work cannot be competently communicated using the abbreviated format for communication, the work should be prepared and submitted as a full paper. All communications will be subject to full peer review.

- Review Articles
  Reviews submitted to SPUR should be authoritative, critical, and comprehensive reviews of recent peer-reviewed undergraduate research pedagogy and practice studies. Reviews focus on timely topics likely to promote new, thoughtful, well-designed, and executed studies by the global undergraduate research community. The best reviews presume no prior subject knowledge, make minimal use of acronyms, and are interesting to read. Reviews should have a well-defined scope that is clearly stated in the introduction. Subject headings are used to guide the reader through the review. Review authors must exercise special care to credit all who have made significant contributions relevant to the review. Older authoritative studies should not be neglected because they are "old," nor is it appropriate to ignore seminal contributions made by experts outside one's field. All reviews are subject to full peer review.

- Invited Themed Issue Content
  Issue themes are announced through a call for papers (CFP) process approximately one year before the intended publication date. Articles and communications are invited for submission and peer review by the deadline listed in the CFP.

- Invited Book Reviews
  Book reviews, invited by the book reviews editor, are published monthly on books published in the preceding 12 months. These reviews summarize the primary motivation of the author or authors, the book’s intended audience, and the book’s central argument. A publishable review is expected to identify and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the publication. Any critique should be balanced and directed at the author’s or authors’ work.

- Invited Commentaries
  Commentaries are short opinion pieces written by experts intended to present or advocate for emergent new ideas, directions, and opinions on issues important to all shareholders of the global undergraduate research, scholarship, and creative inquiry enterprise. Authors with ideas for these pieces are encouraged to email the editor-in-chief their proposals.

Checklist for Submission

Before submission, check that your biographical sketch and manuscript files adhere to the journal’s style detailed below.

Journal Style

- Follow the Chicago Manual of Style. A modified Chicago style is used for author-date text citations and references. Headline-style capitalization is used for titles.

Journal Language

- English: American English.
- Capitalization: The journal has adopted the capitalization of White, Black, and Indigenous in demographic contexts.
- Bias-free language: For freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior, the journal prefers to use gender-neutral terms. o freshman = first-year student, first-year undergraduate o sophomore = second-year student, second-year undergraduate o junior = third-year student, third-year undergraduate o senior = fourth-year student, fourth-year undergraduate
- Third-person narration: The journal uses a third-person style.
  - Avoid using pronouns such as I, we, and our.
  - Avoid use of he/she. Use a workaround such as changing from singular to plural so that they can be used instead.

Biographical Sketch Specifications

Biographical sketches are uploaded as separate files from the manuscript files. They are only required for certain manuscripts and are published after the reference section of full articles.

- Format: One Word document (separate from manuscript file) with all biographical sketches listed in order of the author listing, uploaded as “Author biosketch file” at submission if prompted.
- Length: 75 words maximum per author
- No professional titles such as “Dr.” or “professor”; surname used on the second reference
- ORCID ID cannot be included at this time

Article and Review Type Specification

- Prospectus
  - Length: 600 words
  - Format: Word (no PDFs), uploaded as Article or Review File

- Article and Review
  - Length: 2000–3500 words (excluding references)
  - Format: Word (no PDFs)
  - Times New Roman, 12-point, double-spaced, 1-inch margins, with one space after periods
• Do not include footnotes or endnotes (instead, incorporate them into the text; use author-date text citations.)

- General organization
  - Abstract, Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion, Conclusion, Data Availability Statement, IRB Statement, COI Statement, Acknowledgments, References
  - Include line numbering to facilitate reference for reviewer comments
- Title: maximum of 10 words in length
- Authors’ contact information
  - Full name and institution of each author
  - Corresponding author: provide the institutional title, postal address, and email address
  - The journal will NOT make changes to the byline after acceptance of the manuscript
- Abstract: maximum of 125 words
- Keywords: maximum of 6
- Text: Authors should present an accurate account of the work conducted, objectively discuss its significance, and provide adequate detail and references so that others can reproduce the work
- Figures and Tables: present in the manuscript file, correctly labeled, and called out in the text
  - Maximum of 8 tables and figures (total)
  - Figures should be original artwork explicitly prepared for the manuscript being submitted
  - Tables must be in Word format (not images)
  - Tables and figures must have captions
    - If a figure or table is reproduced or adapted from a source other than SPUR, the caption must include a statement indicating it is reproduced or adapted. Include the specific language required by the permission granter (e.g., publisher) indicating that copyright permission to reproduce or adapt the figure or table has been secured and upload the publisher's permission granting letter as “Related Manuscript File”
  - Tables and figures must be cited in the text
    - Separate higher resolution figures can be supplied at revision, if necessary. Accepted figure formats: TIFF, GIF, JPG, PDF, Postscript, EPS.
- Data in manuscript
  - Data mentioned in the text must be consistent with that in tables and figures (e.g., Do sample sizes match? Have you explained why they do not match? Do percentages add to 100%? If not, why not?)
  - When citing or making claims based on data, authors should refer to the data at the appropriate place in the manuscript text (and if available with dataset identifier). In addition, authors must provide a formal citation in the reference list using the appropriate style.
- Quotations in the Manuscript
  - Short quotations are generally considered to be fewer than 100 words. Long (block) quotations should be indented ½” single-spaced. Quotations, whether short or long, are not italicized in the Chicago Style.
- Required statements to follow the Conclusion
  - Data Availability Statement: Disclose where the data, critical questions used in scripts, and instruments associated with this manuscript are available and under what conditions this supplementary information can be accessed; select from the options below and include the relevant details to complete the statement:
    - (if available in the article itself) The data, critical questions used in scripts, and instruments underlying this study are available within the text.
    - (if openly available in a public repository) The data, critical questions used in scripts, and instruments underlying this study are openly available in [Repository Name] at [persistent link to data in repository, e.g., DOI, accession number].
    - (if available from a source in the public domain) The data, critical questions used in scripts, and instruments underlying this study are openly available in [Repository Name] at [persistent link to data in repository, e.g., DOI, accession number]. These data were derived from sources in the public domain [list sources, including URLs].
    - (if available upon request due to legal or ethical reasons) The data underlying this study are not publicly available due to [explanation of reasons for not sharing, e.g., patient privacy issues]. They are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request [list any registration or other requirements for access].
    - (if owned by a third party) The data underlying this study were provided by [Third Party] under license by permission. Data are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request with the authorization of [Third Party].
  - Institutional or Ethical Review Board Statement: Provide review protocol number or an equivalent institutional approval reference number; if approval was not required or necessary, state, “Not required as the research did not involve human or animal subjects or samples.”
  - COI Statement: Provide details of COIs; if none exist, state “No conflict of interest to declare.”
- Acknowledgments: if relevant, include
  - Author contributions: If you wish to note that specific authors contributed equally (e.g., are co-first authors), add a simple equal authorship statement such as “authors of the study (designated by *) contributed equally.”
  - Funding sources: project name, funding agency, and grant number in the format required by the funding agency
  - Thank you: Individuals (not authors) adding value to the work
  - See the recent issue of SPUR or this file: SPUR Reference Format Examples on the SPUR website.
  - Citations in the text must match those listed in the references
  - References are listed in alphabetical order
    - For multiple entries for the same author: chronological order beginning with the earliest publication date
  - Reference entries should be complete and correct (e.g., correct spelling of authors’ names and titles of works)
  - DOIs listed in the references are correct and working
  - URLs listed in the references are correct and working
    - If website URLs are listed in the text, convert these to reference entries per journal style
    - Remove all hyperlinks

Communications
- Length: maximum of 1500 words (excluding references)
- Title: maximum of 10 words in length
- Authors’ contact information
  - Full name and institution of each author
  - Corresponding: provide the email address
- Abstract: <125 words
- Keywords: maximum of 6
- Section heads: Minimal or no headings
- Figures + Tables: 3 total (in style noted for Articles and Reviews)
- Required statements (same as Articles and Reviews)
- Acknowledgments (if relevant)
- References: maximum of 10
- Biographical sketch
• **Invited Book Reviews**
  o Length: 600–700 words
  o Cover of the book: upload an image of the book cover
  o Book Title
  o Book Author(s)
  o Publisher, Publisher Location, Publication Year, Number of Pages
  o ISBN (paperback), Price
  o ISBN (e-book), Price
  o Reviewed by name, institution/affiliation, email address
    ▪ For multi-authored book review, only corresponding author’s email address is needed
  o Keywords: maximum of 3
  o No section headings
  o No Figure or tables
  o No References
  o No biographical sketch

• **Invited Commentary**
  o Length: maximum of 2000 words
  o Authors’ contact information
    ▪ Full name and institution of each author
    ▪ Corresponding: provide the email address
  o Abstract: <125 words
  o Keywords: maximum of 3
  o No section headings
  o Figures+Tables: 3 total (in style noted for Articles and Reviews)
  o References: maximum of 10
  o Biographical sketch

**Submission**

Once all items on the appropriate checklist are completed, submit your manuscript at https://SPUR.msubmit.net.

**Acceptance**

If your manuscript is accepted, you will receive a letter with detailed instructions on the next steps, including completing a required copyright form. Please complete this form to ensure timely publication.

There are no publication charges for any author publishing in SPUR.

**Production and Publication**

Corrected files and proofs must be returned within five business days to ensure the timely publication of the manuscript. Please comply to avoid delayed publication which may preclude the piece’s inclusion in a special themed issue.

The corresponding author will receive an email when the files are ready for review and instructions for returning their edited files. Extensive changes are discouraged following acceptance. At the proofing stage, only minor typographical errors may be corrected. Significant changes on page proofs, including changes to the title or list of authors, are subject to review by the editor and may delay publication. The publication date for the manuscript is provided upon receipt of the approved proofs.

All authors will receive an electronic copy of the entire issue and may request a print copy of the journal issue from SPUR@technicaeditorial.com. The journal does not provide individual article reprints.

**Post-Publication**

Authors of material published in SPUR are responsible for informing the journal promptly if they become aware of any required corrections or additions after publication. The author should contact the Editor-in-Chief, explain the nature of the correction (or error), and describe its impact on the published work. The Editor-in-Chief will determine the appropriate course of action using the COPE guidelines for reference.

**Questions**

Questions regarding the suitability of the content and the peer review process should be directed to Editor-in-Chief Patricia Mabrouk at p.mabrouk@northeastern.edu.

Send your questions about the submission system, production process, and publication timelines to SPUR@technicaeditorial.com.

All other questions should be directed to SPUR@cur.org.
REVIEWER GUIDELINES

SPUR Policies and Practices

Journal Purpose

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Note that SPUR does not publish supplementary information at the present time. In brief, key data, critical questions used in scripts, and instruments associated with this manuscript must appear in the body, figures, and tables of the manuscript so that the readers and reviewers of manuscripts can adequately evaluate the quality of the work performed. Authors must deposit pertinent data and information not included in the body of the manuscript in a digital repository and disclose (in a Details of What Constitutes Authorship) the data, critical questions used in scripts, and instruments associated with this manuscript are available. Authors are expected to make their raw data available to interested readers and researchers who wish to replicate or analyze the authors’ data in new ways.

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Journal Peer Review Process

SPUR uses the single-blind peer review process in which the authors do not know the reviewers’ identity. However, the reviewers know who the authors are. Upon submission, the Editor-in-Chief, Dr. Mabrouk, completes an initial review of manuscript suitability before assigning it to a handling editor, usually an associate editor, or in the case of a themed issue a special issue editor, to manage the peer review process. The handling editor identifies suitable reviewers (two to three experts in the field) and invites them to review the manuscript. Each reviewer evaluates the manuscript against journal-specific criteria and makes a recommendation on whether the manuscript should be published or revised in some manner. The handling editor compiles the reviewer recommendations and comments and makes a recommendation that is shared with the Editor-in-Chief, Dr. Mabrouk and subsequently with the author.

Reviewer Checklist


Reviewer Responsibilities:

Requests for review are considered confidential. Reviewers may not share manuscripts with anyone, including student trainees at any level. Upon completion of any review assignment, reviewers are expected to delete any copy of the manuscript in their possession.

Reviewer Self-assessment:

To assess if you are suitable reviewer, please consider the following questions.

1. Do you have the expertise to perform a review of this paper?
   a. If not, please decline to review promptly so the editor handling this manuscript can identify an alternative reviewer.
   b. Recommend a good reviewer who has the expertise to review this manuscript and provide contact information including email for this individual.

2. Do you have any potential conflict of interest (personal, professional, financial, etc.) that might prevent you from evaluating this paper fairly and without any bias?
   a. If the answer is yes, then please decline to review.
      i. It is inevitable that you will be asked to evaluate the works of colleagues in the field with whom you have collaborated or worked with in some capacity. Certainly, you should decline to review a paper if you are a coauthor or a current collaborator.
   b. Recommend a good reviewer who has the expertise to review this manuscript and provide contact information including email for this individual.

3. Can you complete your review assignment on time?
   a. We request receipt of your review within 25 days. If you are not able to complete the review within this time frame, please decline the assignment promptly so the editor handling this manuscript can identify an alternative reviewer.
   b. Recommend a good reviewer who has the expertise to review this manuscript and provide contact information including email for this individual.

Peer Review Best Practice

Quickly read through the manuscript. After reading the manuscript, mentally summarize your understanding of
Reviewer Guidelines

• the study’s purpose;
• key findings and their significance;
• the relevance and value of the work to SPUR’s readers given the aims and scope of the journal; and
• existence of any fatal flaws (size of study, methodology, statistical analysis, etc.)

Do a second deeper dive rereading the manuscript. Evaluate the work critically as follows:

• What is the research question?
• Has the relevant literature been reviewed?
• Have valid and appropriate research methods been used?
• Have sufficient data been collected and are they of good quality?
• How have the data been analyzed?
• Are the conclusions credible and supported by the data?

Specifically, evaluate the manuscript in the following categories and determine if the manuscript meets highest standards, is acceptable, or is not acceptable.

• Scholarship (scholarly rigor)
• Methodology (research methods, sampling)
• Analysis (data analysis)
• Pedagogy (educational relevance, insight)
• Utility (perceived value to SPUR readers)
• Presentation (organization, comprehensiveness, readability, proofing)
• Originality (novelty, innovation, creativity)

Problems with scholarship, methodology, and pedagogy that will require acquiring new data and rethinking the analysis and pedagogy should be regarded as significant flaws precluding publication.

Review the abstract and title carefully to determine whether these elements are consistent with the manuscript.

Composing Your Review

Start your review by providing an overall assessment of your understanding of the study’s purpose, the key findings and their significance, and the relevance and value of the work to SPUR’s readers given the aims and scope of the journal.

Follow this with a succinct summary of the paper’s strengths and weaknesses. It is extremely important that your evaluation of the manuscript be clearly written, specific, and detailed. Please refer to the line and page when commenting or raising issues so the author will be able to address your comments and concerns. Whenever possible offer specific recommendations for how the author can address the identified concerns citing the evaluation categories listed above—scholarship, methodology, analysis, pedagogy, utility, presentation, and originality.

Reread your review to ensure that it is objective and constructive. This can be challenging with a seriously flawed study, but it is important for the authors to be able to “hear” your feedback. It helps if you can explain why the flaw is serious or even fatal. It is always helpful if you can identify and suggest possible remedies if the issue fundamentally can be addressed through revisions to the manuscript.

Never attack people, only arguments. Also, be careful not to make assumptions based on your perceptions of an author’s identity and corresponding strengths or weaknesses.

Reviewer Recommendation

In the reviewer dashboard, you will have the opportunity to rank the manuscript, make a recommendation, and provide detailed comments to the author and editor.

Based on your overall evaluation of the work, rank the manuscript as follows:

• Top 10%
• Top 25%
• Top 50%
• Bottom 50%

Based on your detailed evaluation of the manuscript’s strengths and weaknesses, make one of the following recommendations:

• Publish as is without revisions (this should be used only in exceptional cases)
• Publish with minor revisions, as specified below (in comments)
• Publish with major revision, as specified below (in comments)
• The manuscript is not suitable for publication in SPUR

Your confidential comments should reference your evaluation of the strengths and weakness in the categories noted above—scholarship, methodology, analysis, pedagogy, utility, presentation, and originality.

Questions or concerns about editorial policies and decisions should be addressed to the editors. The final editorial judgment regarding the publication of manuscripts rests with the Editor-in-Chief, Dr. Mabrouk.

Post-Review

SPUR values its reviewers’ contributions to the journal. You will receive an email after a decision is made by the editor handling the manuscript informing you of the editor’s decision.

You can also find the status of your assigned manuscript(s) via:

1. Logging into the system https://SPUR.msubmit.net with your password.
2. Clicking on the link represented by the manuscript tracking number and abbreviated title.
3. Clicking on the “Check Status” link at the bottom of the displayed page.

This procedure will display detailed tracking information about where the manuscript is in the submission and peer review process.

Questions

Questions regarding the suitability of the content and the peer review process should be directed to Editor-in-Chief Patricia Mabrouk, p.mabrouk@northeastern.edu.

Send your questions about the submission system, production process, and publication timelines to SPUR@technicaeditorial.com.

All other questions: SPUR@cur.org