
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES REVIEW

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Annual Editorial Report 2014-2015

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Executive Summary

June 1, 2015 marked the transfer of editorial operations from the team based at the National University of Singapore to the new editorial team headed by Kelly Kadera at the University of Iowa and Laura Sjoberg at the University of Florida. Both Kadera and Sjoberg were Associate Editors under the NUS-based team, as was Ja Ian Chong, who remains an associate editor on the current team. Additional members of the new editorial team include associate editors Kyle Beardsley and Tim Peterson, book review editor Aida Hozic, and Managing Editor Kevan Hudson.

This report covers the period from October 1, 2014 to September 30, 2015. This time interval is identical to the previous annual report, and allows a more direct comparison to the previous years performance. Rather than examine the operation of the journal pre and post-transition, this report examines the entire time period. Given the integral role of Kelly Kadera and Laura Sjoberg with the journal pre-transition, this is representative of the journal's operations over the last year.

Manuscript Flow

During the period this report covers, the journal processed 222 analytical essays, an increase of 35% from the last reporting period. The journal considered 6 forums, an increase of 50% from the previous reporting period.

The journal considered 13 invited review essays, an increase of 18% over last year. It considered 62 single book reviews, an increase of 100% over last year. The journal considered one Presidential Special Issue this reporting period, as it did last reporting period. The essays in that issue are not otherwise aggregated in our reported data. Overall, the journal saw an increase of manuscripts considered of 44% in this reporting period over the last reporting period. We credit this effectiveness to intentional recruiting: the board has a manuscript-recruitment plan, the editorial team has been using social media and direct recruiting at conferences, and the editors have implemented a recruitment plan.

Table 1. Manuscripts Disaggregated by Type

Manuscript Type	# Manuscripts	Percentage
Analytical Essay	222	74%
Forum	6	2%
Invited Review Essay	13	4%
Invited Single Book Review	62	20%
Special Issue	1	0%
Summary	304	100.0 %

The manuscripts that the journal receives are almost 75% analytical essays – the main form of article we publish at *International Studies Review*. These essays are peer-reviewed and up to 15000 words. They critically engage a literature in international studies, looking to use analysis, examples, and information to move the literature forward. An additional 20% of the manuscripts that the journal receives are single book reviews, which are another major part of ISR’s remit. The Review Essay replaces multiple book reviews – the former is peer-reviewed and requires a contribution to the literature, where the old format was an aggregate of single book reviews. Forums are forward-looking engagements with potential areas of the literature to be explored, often written by a combination of leading and new scholars in the field.

Of the 304 manuscripts received, 25 are still under review and have not yet been subject to a decision. Of the 279 manuscripts on which at least one decision had been rendered 89 (32%) were rejected without review, 102 (37%) were rejected following review, 73 (26%) were accepted, conditionally or otherwise, and 15 (5%) were sent for revision and resubmission. This does not tell us a lot about the journal’s acceptance rate, however, since the different sort of manuscripts have very different acceptance rates.

Figure 1. Decisions by Decision Type, Percent

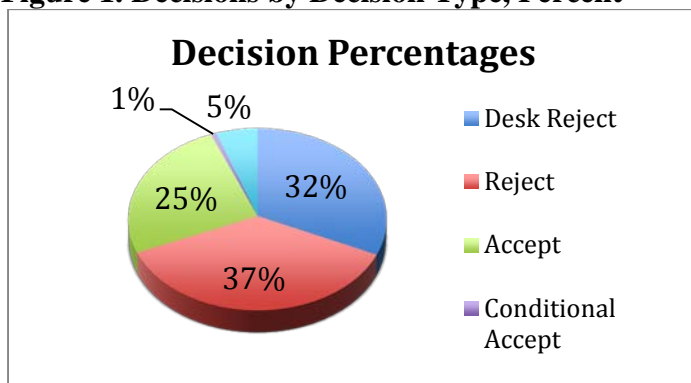


Table 2. Decisions by Decision Type, Number

Decision	Count	Percentage
Desk Reject	89	31.90%
Reject after review	102	36.56%
Accept	71	25.45%
Conditional Accept	2	0.72%
Revise and Resubmit	15	5.38%
Summary	279	100.00%

Of the 304 manuscripts submitted during the reporting period the vast majority were analytical essays (74%). Given the scope and remit of the journal, this high proportion of analytical essays is desired, and indicates a steady trend from the previous year's 77%. Of the 222 analytical essays that were submitted to *International Studies Review* during the reporting period, 205 have been brought to a decision, and 17 remain under review. Of the 205 that have a decision, 11, or 5.37%, have been accepted, while 95.63% have been rejected. This is the best indicator of the journal's acceptance rate. Forums and Invited Review essays are also peer-reviewed – adding them to the manuscript tally brings the acceptance rate to 6.82%.

Table 3. Decisions Disaggregated by Manuscript Type

Manuscripts' First Decisions		
Peer Reviewed Manuscript Type	Count	Percent
Analytical Essay		
Accept	11	5.37%
Reject	194	94.63%
Forum		
Accept	2	40.00%
Reject	3	60.00%
Invited Review Essay		
Accept	2	20.00%
Reject	8	80.00%
Total		
Accept	15	6.82%
Reject	205	93.18%

The journal accepted a total of 74 manuscripts on first decision in the reporting period – the 15 listed above and 59 book reviews. The acceptance rate for book reviews (59/62, or 95%) is a product of recruiting and editing the book reviews carefully. Of the manuscripts where the first decision was to reject, 35, or 17% of rejections and 16% of total manuscripts, were invited to Revise and Resubmit the manuscript. Table 4 reports the conversions of revise and resubmit decisions.

Table 4. Conversion Rate of Revise and Resubmit Decisions

Latest Decision	Count	Percent
Accept	16	45.71%
Reject	5	14.29%
Revise and Resubmit	14	40.00%
Total	35	100.00%

In other words, a returned Revise and Resubmit decision has a 46% chance of acceptance, a 40% chance of getting another request to revise, and a 14% chance of being rejected.

Turn Around Time

The journal's average time to decision for peer-review eligible submissions was 44 days (as compared to 57 days in the previous year). Those manuscripts that are eligible for peer review include analytical essays, forums, and invited review essays. When desk rejects are excluded from the calculation the average jumps to 69 days, one day longer than the previous year. This suggests that even in the face of a significant increase in the number of manuscripts over the previous year, the time to decision has been largely unchanged. The editorial team is committed to maintaining and, if possible, lowering the time to decision, though this may be a difficult goal to achieve. The review process is invariably lengthened by the lag in reviewers accepting invitations to review and completing reviews on time. The time to decision once all reviews have been submitted is minimal. As can be seen below, the time to decision for the bulk of the submitted work, analytical essays, are even lower than the total peer review average. This highlights that expediting forums may help to decrease the annual average time to decision, but the complex nature of forum submissions makes this a difficult goal to achieve.

Table 5. Turnaround Time

Manuscript Type	Mean	Median
Analytical Essay	42	55
<i>Peer Reviewed</i>	65	66
<i>Desk Rejected</i>	9	8
Forum	63	70
<i>Peer Reviewed</i>	75	77
<i>Desk Rejected</i>	15	15
Invited Review Essay	60	54
Book Review (non-peer reviewed)	11	7
Summary	37	29
<i>Peer Reviewed</i>	69	66
<i>Not Reviewed</i>	9	8

Author Participation, Sex, and Geography

Over the reporting period women accounted for roughly 28% of authors submitting work to *International Studies Review*. This marks a slight decline (2%) from the previous reporting period. This decline may be due in part to the fact that in compiling data for this year's report we relied on voluntarily supplied information from the submitting author. In the previous report information was gathered on the corresponding author by the editorial team doing research. It should also be noted that this calculation is based on the author that submitted the work, and does not consider co-authors. As in the previous reporting period approximately 2% of authors declined to provide their gender. The author base of the journal continues to be primarily male. The acceptance rate is slightly smaller for women than for men (8% as compared to 11%). The editors aim to improve the submission differential by outreach to organizations of female scholars in IR (e.g., the Feminist Theory and Gender Studies section of ISA, the Women's Caucus of the ISA, Journeys in World Politics alumnae, and Women in Conflict Studies). We aim to improve the acceptance differential by paying attention to sex in reviewing and citation.

Table 5. Submitting Author Reported Sex

Author Sex	Count	Percent
Male	197	70.61%
Female	77	27.60%
Unknown	5	1.79%
Total	279	100.00%

The geographic diversity of the journal's authors has increased significantly in the last year. Authors from the United States accounted for just 26% of the submitted work, down from 46% last year. The decline is due in part to the growth of submissions from a number of countries. Canadian authors accounted for 23 submitted manuscripts, up from 12 in the previous period. Israeli authors contributed an additional 9 articles as compared to the previous year. Other countries such as Turkey, Taiwan, and Italy also saw sizeable increases in the number of manuscripts submitted by authors located within their borders. Additionally, a number of countries experienced small increases from the previous year in which only one manuscript originated from those countries. This suggests that *International Studies Review* is attracting a growing international collection of authors, a trend that the editorial team hopes will continue.

Table 6. Submitting Author Reported Location

Submitting Author Country	Count	Percent
United States	100	26.04%
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	33	7.91%
Canada	23	4.17%
Germany	13	2.52%
Israel	13	2.61%
Turkey	12	2.79%
Australia	8	2.82%
Taiwan	7	1.60%
Italy	5	1.03%
The Republic of Korea	5	1.05%
Netherlands	5	1.07%
Singapore	5	1.11%
Denmark	4	0.76%
Brazil	3	0.54%
China	3	0.57%
Japan	3	0.62%
Poland	3	0.66%
Switzerland	3	0.68%
Czech Republic	2	0.38%
Estonia	2	0.39%
Kuwait	2	0.42%
Mexico	2	0.43%
New Zealand	2	0.43%
Pakistan	2	0.44%
Russian Federation	2	0.44%
Sweden	2	0.45%
Austria	1	0.18%
Ecuador	1	0.19%
France	1	0.19%
Hong Kong	1	0.20%
Hungary	1	0.20%
India	1	0.20%
Islamic Republic of Iran	1	0.20%
Malaysia	1	0.21%
Nigeria	1	0.22%
Norway	1	0.22%
Qatar	1	0.22%
Romania	1	0.22%
Saudi Arabia	1	0.22%
Spain	1	0.23%
Tajikistan	1	0.23%
United Arab Emirates	1	0.24%
Total	284	100.00%

Reviewer Participation, Sex, and Geography

Of the more than 1,200 reviewers invited to review for the journal over the reporting period, 43% agreed, while 57% declined. This 57% includes reviewers who were automatically declined by the Scholar One system if they had failed to respond after the 7-day window that Reviewers are given to agree or decline. This rate of invitation acceptance is on par with the trend from the previous period, suggesting a slight (1%) increase over the reviewer agreement rate of the previous year.

Table 7. Reviewer Invitations and Responses

Invitation Response	Number	Percent
Agreed	521	42.67%
Declined	700	57.33%
Total	1221	100.00%

Information on the sex of reviewers is quite limited, given that reviewers are less likely to complete the optional questionnaire associated with establishing a ScholarOne account than authors are. We hand-coded Reviewer data where it was not provided, and were able to determine the sex of 1218 of 1221 of our invited reviewers. We find women are about 33.5% of the Reviewer pool, up about 3.5% from last year. We find that women are more likely than men to agree to review – where 44 percent of women invited agree, compared to 42 percent of men.

Table 8. Reviewer Invitations and Results by Sex

Reviewer Sex	Count	Percent
Male	809	66.25%
Accepted	340	42.03%
Declined	469	57.97%
Female	409	33.49%
Accepted	181	44.25%
Declined	228	55.75%
Unknown	3	.25%
Declined	3	100.00%

The geographic distribution of reviewers appears similar to the previous year. The majority of reviewers were based in the United States (32%). Continuing the trend from last year, Singapore accounted for a large number of reviewers as well (26%). Other countries that hosted a sizeable number of reviewers include the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and Germany. The international character of the reviewer pool is a feature that the editorial team will strive to maintain.

Table 9. Agreed Reviewers by Geographic Location

Reviewer Country	Count	Percent
United States	128	31.92%
Singapore	106	26.43%
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	42	10.47%
Canada	22	5.49%
Australia	19	4.74%
Germany	17	4.24%
Switzerland	8	2.00%
Netherlands	7	1.75%
Israel	5	1.25%
Turkey	5	1.25%
Denmark	4	1.00%
Sweden	4	1.00%
China	3	0.75%
Finland	3	0.75%
Japan	3	0.75%
Norway	3	0.75%
Taiwan	3	0.75%
Austria	2	0.50%
Czech Republic	2	0.50%
United States Minor Outlying Islands	2	0.50%
Belgium	1	0.25%
Brazil	1	0.25%
Cambodia	1	0.25%
Ecuador	1	0.25%
France	1	0.25%
Hungary	1	0.25%
India	1	0.25%
Italy	1	0.25%
Kazakhstan	1	0.25%
Korea, Republic of	1	0.25%
Lebanon	1	0.25%
New Zealand	1	0.25%
Spain	1	0.25%
Total	401	100.00%

Points of Interest

- *International Studies Review* transitioned editorial teams mid-year and in the middle of a transition between Wiley-Blackwell and Oxford as journal publishers. As we did so, our turnaround time did not go up, and we never missed a deadline to any publisher.
- The new peer-reviewed Review Essay format has increased the submissions of book review essays, and we expect that trend to continue.
- *International Studies Review* handled twice as many manuscripts in this reporting period as it did in the same period for 2012-2013.
- The current team has been able to develop a backlog for ISR (which has gone from no manuscripts to three issues) without increasing the acceptance rate of the journal by increasing high-quality submissions that are being attracted. Unlike volumes in the recent past, volume 18 used all of its available pages with Wiley-Blackwell.
- *International Studies Review* has started to utilize OnlineFirst to allow reading essays before they are published in print.
- ISR can be found on Twitter at @IntlStudiesRev