Guidelines on Special Issues for Modern China Studies

Special issues of MCS provide focused presentations of studies around a central theme. These themes could be on issues that are important and have been under-studied or issues that deserve more attention. Generally, a special issue is edited by a team of guest editors who propose a topic to the editors of MCS or who are invited by the MCS editors to develop the special issue. Below are some general guidelines regarding MCS special issues and procedures in managing the special issue.

Procedures for managing the special issue

1. The guest editor team can be one or more editors. If it has more than one editor, one of them must assume the lead editor’s role and manage the team.

2. The guest editor team prepares the Call for Papers. Please refer to the example attached for content and format in preparing the draft Call.

3. The team develops a reviewer database and invites the reviewers in advance to help with the special issue. This should be done before the submission deadline to give reviewers time to plan for their time.

4. MCS office is given the list of reviewers and enters their names and email addresses into the MCS reviewer database.

5. MCS office (as well as the lead guest editor) receives the manuscripts. MCS office enters them into the manuscript database and sends acknowledgement to the author.

6. The lead guest editor reads and assigns manuscripts to the other guest editors to handle. This is based on a match of the topic of the paper and the expertise of the guest editor.

7. The responsible guest editor assigns reviewers and sends the information to the MCS office.

8. MCS office sends the manuscripts and manuscript evaluation forms to the reviewers.

9. MCS office sends the reviews (when both have come in) to the responsible guest editor.

10. The responsible guest editor drafts the decision letter and sends to the MCS office, with a copy to the lead guest editor.

11. The lead guest editor and a MCS regular editor review the decision letter to ensure that it is consistent with the developmental policy of MCS and consistent with MCS publication standards.

12. MCS office sends the decision letter (with reviews) to the author, with (blind) copy to the reviewers.

13. The revision process follows a similar process. Everything is done electronically.

Note: If a manuscript designated for a special issue is submitted more than a month before the deadline for the special issue, the note of acknowledgment from the MCS office will notify the author that the review process on his/her paper will not begin until nearer the deadline and request his/her patience.

Roles, Responsibilities, and other Policies

1. Role of the lead guest editor and other guest editors.

In general, the lead guest editor serves to coordinate the process with other guest editors. He/she works with the other guest editors to decide how to promote the special issue and what types of papers to encourage submission. The lead guest editor serves to oversee the entire process. The guest editors should establish who would be responsible for what types of papers and a timeline for the review process.
2. Authorship of the introduction piece to the special issue

It is generally assumed that the lead guest editor also takes the lead in writing the introductory article to the special issue. If the team decides on a different approach, that is entirely up to the team. One of the regular editors will serve as reviewer on the introduction piece to make suggestions to improve it if needed.

3. Guest editors as authors of articles published in the special issue

The general policy is no barrier to publishing good work by any authors, including the guest editors. The only requirement is that the paper by any of the guest editors be handled by someone else outside the guest editing team, most likely by one of the senior editors.

4. Number of papers in the special issue

MCS sets a limit of 10 papers per issue. If there are more than 10 papers, the editors may make an exception. There should be at least three papers to make a special issue. If fewer than three good papers are accepted, they would just be published as regular papers.

5. Page limitation and preparation of manuscript

There is no rigid length limitation though most papers should be able to tell a complete story within around 40 pages. Please encourage authors to refer to the submission guidelines and the style guide for MCS in preparing the manuscript. The MCS style guide will be published in every issue and also available on MCS website. The Information for Authors and Submission Guidelines will be found in each issue of MCS and on the MCS website.

Timeline for the review process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of days</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Responsible party</th>
<th>Cumulative days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>List of reviewers who accepted invitation to review provided to MCS office (six months before submission deadline)</td>
<td>Guest editor team</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Acknowledge receipt of manuscript and enter information into database</td>
<td>MCS office</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Lead guest editor reads and assigns manuscript to other guest editors</td>
<td>Lead guest editor</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Guest editor assigns reviewers for each manuscript and informs MCS office</td>
<td>Responsible Guest editor</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Send manuscript and review form to reviewers</td>
<td>MCS office</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Reviewers send complete reviews to MCS office, MCS office sends reminders to late reviewers</td>
<td>MCS office</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Send complete reviews to responsible guest editor</td>
<td>MCS office</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Guest editor writes decision letter and sends to lead guest editor and MCS office</td>
<td>Responsible Guest editor</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Lead guest editor and a regular editor edit and approve decision letter</td>
<td>Lead guest editor and a regular editor</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Send decision letter to author and reviewers</td>
<td>MCS office</td>
<td>54</td>
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</tbody>
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The above is a guideline. MCS’s goal is a 60 days completion of the review process on each manuscript.

Jan 2010