

RURAL SPECIAL EDUCATION QUARTERLY

GUIDELINES FOR PROSPECTIVE AUTHORS

Journal Mission

The *Rural Special Education Quarterly* is the quarterly refereed journal of the American Council on Rural Special Education (ACRES). The *Quarterly* is the only national scholarly publication devoted to topics and issues in service delivery or personnel preparation in rural special education and disability services. The purpose of the *Quarterly* is to provide a forum for presentation of new research findings, description of innovative program models or current best practices, analysis of local, state, and national policies, and discussion of issues and trends for special education and related services personnel working in rural communities.

Types of Manuscripts (ALL manuscripts must have a distinctly rural focus)

The *Quarterly* publishes full-length manuscripts in three (3) formats:

1. **research reports:** explanations of empirical or applied studies using quantitative or qualitative methodology, including information about the sample, the data collection and analysis procedures, the results or findings, and the implications for policy, research and practice;
2. **program descriptions:** descriptions of service delivery programs in special education or disability services or personnel preparation programs at the preservice or inservice levels, outlining the program's structure, target audience, and key components as well as reporting evaluation data that documents significant program outcomes; and
3. **position papers:** discussions of controversial issues or emerging trends in rural special education and disability services, examining multiple perspectives, presenting a rationale for a specific course of action, and stating the implications for policy, practice, and future research in the field.

Full-length manuscripts should include a substantive list of citations from the professional literature to establish connections with the ongoing scholarly discourse in rural special education and disability services. Typically they are no more than 20-25 pages long, including references and other end material.

The *Quarterly* also publishes brief manuscripts in two (2) formats:

4. **promising practices:** sharing ideas and examples for direct implementation by practitioners involved in service delivery or in personnel preparation; and
5. **viewpoints:** sharing thoughts and feelings about hot topics from the perspective of a particular individual or group to stimulate discussion.

Brief manuscripts should include at least a few (perhaps 5-10) citations from the professional literature to establish a basis for the practice or viewpoint and its applicability to rural special education and disability services. They should be no more than 10-12 pages long, including references.

Manuscript Preparation

The *Quarterly* adheres to the guidelines in the most current edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychology Association* (APA). Manuscripts should be double-spaced in vertical paper format with at least one (1) inch margins all around. An abstract of no more than 100 words and a detachable cover page with the names, addresses, telephone numbers, and email addresses of all authors should be included as the first two pages of the manuscript. Figures and charts must be presented in a final reproducible format and should not occupy more than a single page, while tables should be submitted exactly as they are to appear constructed using software with appropriate tab column settings and limited to three (3) pages. Letters and numbers on figures, charts, and tables must be readable when published in reduced form. Manuscripts should NOT exceed the page length for a specific format, including references, tables, figures, and appendices. The *Quarterly* follows the recommendations outlined in *Guidelines for Reporting and Writing about People with Disabilities* published by the United Cerebral Palsy Association. ALL manuscripts should use person-first language when referring to individuals with disabilities and avoid negative or stereotyping comments. Any questions should be addressed to the editorial staff at rseq@mail.wvu.edu.

Author Mentoring and Support

New authors may request assistance with preparing and submitting manuscripts to the journal. The Executive Editor will ask the Co-Editor for Author Mentoring and Support to work individually with the author or to assign a member of the editorial board with appropriate content expertise to serve as a mentor in providing support for a new author prior to and during the submission process.

Manuscript Submission

Authors are required to send an email message with the manuscript attached to rseq@mail.wvu.edu. The message should include the title of the manuscript, a statement that it has not been published or submitted elsewhere, and confirmation that it is not currently under review by another journal. The manuscript should be sent as a .doc file formatted in a current version of Microsoft Word. Editorial staff will send an email reply to this message that will serve as notification of receipt of the manuscript and specify the due date by which the review process is expected to be completed. RSEQ no longer accepts print submissions of manuscripts via surface mail.

Criteria for Publication

The criteria used by the Editor and reviewers in judging the merits of manuscripts are:

1. *Rural focus or implications of the topic or issue*
2. *Importance/timeliness of the topic or issue*
3. *Significance of contribution to the professional literature*
4. *Specific and immediate applications to practice*
5. *Logical argument and organized presentation*

Executive Editor Contact Information

Barbara L. Ludlow, Ed. D., RSEQ Executive Editor
304-293-3835

West Virginia University
Barbara.Ludlow@mail.wvu.edu

Manuscript Review Process

The Editor reviews all manuscripts to determine their appropriateness for *RSEQ* and the category of manuscript into which they fit. Authors are notified of the initial disposition of submitted manuscripts within three (3) weeks of receipt. When a manuscript is unsuitable for the journal (usually because it does not address a topic in rural special education or disability services), the Editor returns the manuscript to the author without further review. When a manuscript is determined to be suitable for the journal, the Editor assigns it a number, then sends a blind copy (with all author information removed) to three (3) anonymous professional reviewers. The editor also notifies the author of the date by which a decision is likely to be made, usually within two (2) months of such notification. When all three reviews are returned, the Editor independently reviews the manuscript to make one of three (3) possible decisions: to **accept** the manuscript for publication with minor revisions based on the reviews' comments; to invite the author to **revise and resubmit** the manuscript if reviewers' substantive concerns can be addressed; and to **reject** the manuscript as unsuitable for publication in the journal. Revised and resubmitted manuscripts will be sent back to the same reviewers to determine if the new manuscript is appropriate for publication. If an author requests assistance in any aspect of manuscript preparation or submission, the Editor will ask the Co-Editor for Author Mentoring and Support to work with the author or to assign a member of the editorial board to help the author to address journal criteria.

Manuscript Publication Process

When a manuscript has been accepted with minor revisions, the Editor will ask the author to submit the following materials within two (2) months of notification of acceptance: a cover letter explaining how and where requests for revisions have been addressed within the manuscript; two (2) print copies of the manuscript; one (1) electronic copy on disk or Zip cartridge formatted in the most current version of Microsoft Word for Macintosh or Windows; and a completed Author Information Sheet that provides contact information and a brief biography for each author, a list of ten (10) keywords for use on database searches, and signatures granting ACRES all rights to the manuscript for publication purposes. The Editor reserves the right to make editorial changes in accepted manuscripts that do not alter the meaning of the text. The Co-Editor for Technical Services will copyedit the manuscript and contact the author directly about any unclear or missing information or any discrepancies between the citations and references.

When a manuscript has been recommended for revision and re-submission, the Editor will invite the author to revise and re-submit the manuscript if desired. If the revised manuscript is re-submitted, the Editor will send it back to the same three (3) reviewers for their consideration of the changes and recommendation for publication. An author may be invited to revise and re-submit a manuscript more than once if the reviewers identify additional changes and the Editor feels the manuscript has merit. Revisions re-submitted more than six (6) months after the original invitation to revise and re-submit will not be considered for publication in the journal.

All prospective authors are advised to review articles that have recently been published in the journal to determine appropriate content, style, and format for their own work.