

Guidelines on how to write a Research or Policy Briefing

POLICY@SUSSEX | WINTER 2017

Research Briefing

DO YOU WANT TO ENGAGE WITH POTENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS AND DECISION-MAKERS?

Research briefings can help at the beginning of a research project or at a point when you want to engage with potential stakeholders to help them understand the intent of your research.

Suggested structure: 2-4 pages either double-sided A4 or A3 folded, printed in colour

Summary/Overview (Front page; 100-250 words): project title, image/infographic, summary of what the research is investigating and why the project is important; can include bullet point list. How is the research going to be conducted and what questions are you looking to address?

Contact details: a recognised author name on the front page can attract positive attention; include details of how to get involved

Key questions (100-250 words): aims of the research - what do you want to find out and why is this important?

Background information (Pages 2 and 3; 100-400 words): Rationale for project, mode of investigation, etc

Engagement and Impact (300-400 words; optional): how do you envisage this research having an impact with academic and non-academic users? How are you involving potential users in the shaping of the research? What will be the outputs and opportunities for dissemination?

Back page (Page 4): how findings may have policy implications

Funding: include details of the funder

References/further reading: any academic literature or other work that can be highlighted to set the context of the work.

Policy Briefing

DO YOU HAVE RESEARCH FINDINGS WITH POLICY IMPLICATIONS TO SHARE ON A TOPICAL POLICY ISSUE?

DO YOU SEEK TO INFLUENCE STAKEHOLDERS, DECISION-MAKERS AND POLICY?

Policy briefings seek to influence policy thinking and decisions through the practical application of research. They offer timely and accessible information which can either be proactive or responsive to particular policy agendas. They are based on insights gained from research and should have clear policy implications. Evidence in support of a particular stance taken or conclusion is crucial.

Suggested structure: 2-4 pages either double-sided A4 or A3 folded, printed in colour

Executive Summary (Front page; 200 words): title, image/infographic, summarise the key issue and outline key policy implications

Key findings: bullet point list of key findings from the research including author contact details - details of key researchers involved - a recognised author name on the front page can attract positive attention

Setting out the argument (Pages 2 and 3; maximum 1500 words): use sub-headings to build the case and set out your argument; describe the context, description of the research and discuss the specific findings

Back page (Page 4): policy implications (or recommendations if you have clear ones), ideally in bullet point form

Further information: details of funders, dates of research, etc.

References or Endnotes: list relevant publications,

The logo of the University of Sussex, consisting of the letters 'US' in a stylized, bold, serif font.

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POLICY@SUSSEX - ABOUT US

Our team can support you to:

- disseminate your research
- engage with stakeholders and decision-makers
- develop pathways to research impact through a range of activities

In terms of publications we can help develop a range of publications from full reports to blogs. We have standard templates for research briefings and policy briefings.

The Policy@Sussex team will discuss with you how best to share your findings and support the development of a strategy to maximise the reach of your work. For example, connecting you with appropriate parliamentary committees or other policy makers to present your work. Let us know of potential or established partners, platforms or other forums where we could help launch or promote this briefing. Consider whether there are any dates or milestones when this briefing would be considered most timely.

We are currently able to support the Schools of Business Management & Economics, Global Studies and Education & Social Work due to the grant awarded by the University of Sussex Impact Acceleration Account.

We hope to be able to work with further schools in future.

Contact us via policy.engagement@sussex.ac.uk for advice



WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN DEVELOPING A POLICY BRIEFING

1. What is the policy topic you wish to address?
2. Who or what are you trying to influence with this policy briefing? Why is this timely now? Is this an area where you perceive there to be a genuine policy need /gap and why?
3. Are there any dates or milestones when this briefing would be considered most timely?
4. Broadly speaking, what do you predict to be the policy recommendations or conclusions?
5. Do you have any preliminary ideas of potential partners / platforms or other forums where we could launch / promote this briefing?

STYLE AND PRODUCTION OF BRIEFINGS

A briefing should be structured so that the most relevant information is presented up front in a summary, the body of the text reinforces the main message and then the closing sections reiterate the main points.

Aim to support your policy recommendations as far as possible with new research. They should be written in an accessible manner, avoiding jargon.

Short sentences and paragraphs and an active rather than passive voice greatly improves accessibility to a non-academic audience.

This publication is supported by the Policy@Sussex initiative funded by the ESRC Impact Acceleration Account which connects social science research to a wide range of stakeholders

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