

Bulletin of Latin American Research **Constitutional Guidelines**

The following draft Constitution for the *Bulletin of Latin American Research (BLAR)* (revising documents from 1981, 1985, 1987, 1989, 2006) was presented to the Editorial Board of 26th March, 2009 and was approved.

1. The Editors

i) There shall be five Editors of equal status.

ii) A replacement editor shall be nominated by the Editors and appointed by the SLAS Committee. Nominations for replacement editors will be forwarded by agreement between those Editors remaining in office to the Editorial Board and SLAS Committee meeting held at the SLAS conference.

iii) Editors shall be appointed for three years in the first instance and may be renewed for one further term of three years subject to the approval of the Editorial Board and the SLAS Committee. One Editor (usually the longest-serving) shall act as Coordinating Editor for two years (renewable for a further two years); one editor, by agreement with the other Editors, shall act as Book Reviews Editor.

iv) The Editors shall have complete freedom of decision over matters of content of each issue of *BLAR*. Their decision shall be final.

v) In the event of an unresolved dispute between the Editors, the matter shall be referred to the Editorial Board and its decision shall be final. If no meeting is scheduled for the near future, then the Chair of the Board shall consult with all members of the Editorial Board individually in order to reach a decision.

vi) The financial obligations incurred in the production of the Bulletin (apart from those specified in the contract with the publisher) shall be the responsibility of the Treasurer of SLAS; all charges apart from the personal expenses of the Editors shall be billed to the Treasurer.

vii) The Editors shall be co-opted members of the SLAS Committee.

viii) The annual Harold Blakemore Prize shall be judged by the President of SLAS and the five *BLAR* Editors. The winner(s) of the prize shall be invited by the President of SLAS to submit their work for publication in *BLAR*, subject to the usual anonymous peer review process.

2. The Editorial Board (EB)

i) The EB shall be of sufficient size (normally around 13 but never more than 17 voting members including the Chair) as to ensure adequate representation of all disciplines and areas covered in *BLAR* (currently history, social sciences and cultural studies of Latin America, the Caribbean and the associated diaspora). The composition of the EB shall, so far as possible, cover the broad spectrum of approaches.

ii) The President of SLAS shall chair the Editorial Board and in the event of a divided Board s/he shall have the casting vote. Responsibility for drawing up an agenda for the meeting and for ensuring that minutes are kept shall rest with the Chair. At the changeover of SLAS Presidents, the outgoing President shall chair that SLAS Conference meeting of the EB.

iii) Members of the EB (except the Chair) shall be appointed for three years in the first instance and may be re-appointed, subject to approval by the EB, for a further three years. They shall normally be members of SLAS.

iv) Nominations for the EB shall be agreed by the Editors and submitted to the SLAS Committee for review and confirmation. Their decision shall be final. The Coordinating Editor shall write to members of the EB about the appointments.

v) The Editors shall be voting, *ex officio* members of the Editorial Board. The Editorial Assistant shall usually attend the Editorial Board, but will not have voting rights. Members of the publisher's staff shall be invited to attend, but will not have voting rights.

vi) The functions of the EB shall be:

1. To advise on matters of policy concerning *BLAR*.
2. To provide wherever possible such assistance as the Editors request.
3. To encourage interest in *BLAR* and to promote submission of academic papers.
4. To make recommendations for the appointment or re-appointment of editors to the SLAS Committee.
5. To make recommendations for confirmation by the SLAS Committee for the appointment or reappointment to the EB taking into account items 2i) and 2ii) above.
6. To make recommendations for confirmation by the SLAS Committee for the appointment or reappointment of members of the International Advisory Board, taking into account 3i) below.

vii) The EB shall meet at least once a year, usually at the SLAS Annual Conference. A quorum shall be set at seven voting members including the Chair.

viii) All recommendations of the EB are subject to the approval by the SLAS Committee.

3. The International Advisory Board (IAB)

i) The IAB shall be a working body of not more than 25 people appointed to ensure representation of the different disciplines covered by *BLAR*. It is desirable that members should cover as many geographical areas of Latin America and constituencies of interest in Latin America that exist in Europe as is reasonably possible. The composition of the IAB shall, so far as possible, cover the broad spectrum of approaches.

ii) Members shall be appointed for three years in the first instance and may be re-appointed, renewable by approval of the EB and SLAS Committee.

iii) The functions of the IAB are:

- To promote *BLAR* internationally.
- To provide the EB with information and initiatives that may further the interests of *BLAR*.
- To provide wherever possible such assistance as the Editors request.

Comments and Complaints

BLAR publishes research articles (usually 6,000-8,000 words in length, including notes and references); book reviews; and *Debates* articles (usually 4,000-6,000 words), which are intended to promote intellectual debate. It does not publish unsolicited book reviews, review articles or comments on material published elsewhere.

1. Comments on articles published in *BLAR*.

Anyone wishing to respond to an article in *BLAR* will be asked to present their material in a form suitable for *Debates*. Any such submission shall be sent for review as usual. The author of the original article shall have a right of reply, to be published in the same issue if possible.

2. Comments on book reviews published in *BLAR*

Correspondence on book reviews will not be published, but complainants may be invited to write an article for *Debates*, which will normally be subject to the usual refereeing process.

Procedures in cases of misconduct by authors

Misconduct is defined as:

1. Plagiarism

Plagiarism ranges from the unreferenced use of others' published and unpublished ideas, including research grant applications. To submission of a complete paper, sometimes in a different language, which is passed off as the work of the person submitting it rather than the original author. It may occur at any stage of planning, research, writing or publication; it applies equally to print and electronic versions. All sources must be disclosed, and, if large amounts of other people's written or illustrative material are or used, permission must be obtained and presented to Editors. Authors are responsible for any costs involved in this. Plagiarism will always be considered as possible misconduct.

2. Redundant Publication

Redundant publication occurs when two or more papers, without full cross-reference, share the same hypothesis, data, discussion points or conclusions. It is accepted in an interdisciplinary field like Latin American studies that it will often be appropriate to publish similar material in journals with different readerships so that findings receive appropriate dissemination. The problem occurs when this is not acknowledged through relevant self-citation, giving a misleading impression to readers. Redundant publication can only constitute misconduct if there is evidence of a deliberate deception of Editors, referees and readers. Re-publication of a paper previously published only in a language other than English will be considered, provided that this is fully disclosed to the Editors at the time of submission and acknowledged in any published version. The authors will be responsible for obtaining any necessary copyright clearance and meeting any costs involved in this. At the time of submission, authors should disclose details of related papers, even if in a different language, and similar papers forthcoming or in press.

Procedures for dealing with misconduct or allegations thereof

1. Serious Misconduct

i) This includes but is not restricted to evidence of fraud or fabrication in research results, complete or extensive plagiarism, major breaches of anonymity or confidentiality of data on research participants or other abuse of the rights of human subjects, as identified by reference to the Nuremburg Code or the current edition of the Declaration of Helsinki, or of the abuse of co-authorship, either to include those who have not contributed to the research or to exclude those who have.

ii) Editors, reviewers or readers may identify possible evidence of serious misconduct. In all cases, the first action must be to draw it to the attention of the editorial team in confidence. If the editorial team are compromised, the matter may be referred to the Chair of the Editorial Board.

iii) In consultation with the Chair of the Editorial Board, the Editors will determine whether one of their number should be appointed to investigate the matter or whether an independent person should be asked to undertake this in confidence. The investigator may obtain such confidential expert advice as she or he considers appropriate and will submit a full report in confidence to the Editors and the Chair of the Editorial Board.

iv) The investigator may conclude that there is no case to answer or that the case does not warrant treatment as serious misconduct and so recommend to the Editors. The Editors, in consultation with the Chair of the Editorial Board, shall not be bound by this recommendation but must record reasons for their dissent. If there is no case to answer, a paper will be handled in the usual way. If the case is not treated as serious misconduct, it will be dealt with through the process described at 2 below.

v) The investigator may conclude that there is a *prima facie* case of serious misconduct and so recommend to the Editors. The Editors, in consultation with the Chair of the Editorial Board, shall not be bound by this recommendation but must record reasons for their dissent.

vi) If it is agreed that there is a *prima facie* case of serious misconduct, the available evidence will be disclosed in confidence to the person against whom the allegation is made, who will then be invited to submit a response. In the light of this response, the Editors, in consultation with the Chair of the Editorial Board, will determine whether to forward the whole matter to her person's employer or professional association.

2. Less Serious Misconduct

i) This includes but is not restricted to redundant publication, minor plagiarism, failure to declare relevant conflicts of interest or inadequate acknowledgement of the contribution of others.

ii) Editors, reviewers or readers may identify possible evidence of less serious misconduct. In all cases the first action must be to draw it to the attention of editorial team in confidence. If the editorial team are compromised, the matter may be referred to the Chair of the Editorial Board. Those dealing with the matter must remember that even minor allegations may have serious professional consequences.

iii) In consultation with the Chair of the Editorial Board, the Editors will determine whether one of their number should be appointed to investigate the matter or whether an independent person should be asked to undertake this in confidence. The investigator may obtain such confidential expert advice as she or he considers appropriate and will submit a full report in confidence to the Editors and the Chair of the Editorial Board.

iv) The investigator may conclude that there is no case to answer and so recommend to the Editors. The Editors, in consultation with the Chair of the Editorial Board, shall not be bound by this recommendation but must record reasons for their dissent. If there is no case to answer, a paper will be handled in the usual way.

v) If it is agreed that there is *prima facie* evidence of less serious misconduct, the available evidence will be disclosed in confidence to the person against whom the allegation is made, who will then be invited to submit a response. In the light of this response, the Editors, in consultation with the Chair of the Editorial Board, will determine whether some internal sanction may be appropriate.

Sanctions

In view of the possible legal implications, sanctions will not be invoked without reference to the publishers and to the SLAS Committee. Sanctions may entail:

i) A confidential educational letter of explanation to the authors where there seems to be a genuine misunderstandings of the principles of publication ethics.

ii) A confidential letter of reprimand and formal warning about future submissions.

iii) A formal letter in confidence to the relevant head of institution or funding body.

iv) Publication of a notice of redundant publication or plagiarism.

- v) An editorial detailing the misconduct.
- vi) Refusal to accept future submissions from an individual, team or institution for a specified period.
- vii) Formal withdrawal or retraction of the paper, reported to other editors and indexing services.
- viii) Report to an employer, professional association or national regulatory body.