

# Format: Policy Blog

## Introduction



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### Description

### What is the format about?

A policy blog is a written analysis of a policy issue that is about 6,000-10,000 characters long. The brevity of the text is an appealing factor for readers. Therefore, a catchy title that attracts readers' attention on social media and an easily understandable writing style are essential.

- Policy blogs are great for sharing timely analysis of current policy issues. Scientists can also write them to present research findings from academic publications relevant to current policy debates. A widely read and linked blog post can also increase the citation rates of the respective academic paper.
- To have their posts read by policymakers, scientists can either regularly publish their blog posts on their website or via platforms like Medium or WordPress, which can be very time-consuming. Or, scientists can publish their blog posts via an existing blog post series of research institutions, think tanks, NGOs, or scientists.
- If you publish the blog post on your website, make sure that your website allows sharing it via social media or forwarding it via e-mail.
- Make sure to announce your blog posts via social media.

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### Function

### How does the format work?

Policy briefs are well-structured and easy-to-read publications. Policy blogs are great for sharing timely analysis of current policy issues. Scientists can also write them to present research findings from academic publications relevant to current policy debates. A widely read and linked blog post can also increase the citation rates of the respective academic paper. Yet, blog posts are not mere summaries of existing research.

A typical structure looks like this: A catchy title, an opening paragraph outlining the key messages, which have to grasp the readers' attention, followed by a short analysis of the policy issue and the research findings, and a concluding paragraph. That's enough for a policy blog. Visual elements like charts or tables are very helpful to explain complex issues and to keep the readers' attention.

Scientists can keep sentences short and apply a writing style that is more informal than writing academic publications. Scientists should think in advance about their readership. Suppose they want to focus on policy professionals in ministries, agencies or research services in parliaments who have expert knowledge on the topics covered in the policy blogs. In that case, scientists can apply a technical writing style. Scientists should avoid jargon if they want to

reach members of parliament or their staff. Scientists should spell out acronyms unless they are commonly known (e.g. EU).

Policy blogs or blogs, in general, offer the excellent opportunity to use hyperlinks rather than footnotes or endnotes, which make the text shorter and easier to follow.

Scientists should include a short bio of three to four sentences at the text's beginning or end. The bio should encompass information on expertise, key publications and policy experience rather than information on the visiting fellowship in 2007. Scientist should also add links to their websites and social media channels. Adding a comments section to the blog sites is an excellent way for scientists to interact with their readers if they wish to do so.

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## Challenges

## How to adress them?

A blog post is a concise text. Therefore, scientists need to consider the key messages they want to convey. Scientists can use an existing academic publication as the basis of a blog post. However, they should present the policy-relevant findings of the publication rather than summarising the publications. Therefore, scientists can dispense with sections on methods and literature reviews when writing blog posts.

Another question is how blog posts can reach a policy audience. Scientists have two options: They can publish their blog posts on their website or platforms like Medium or WordPress. This approach works if scientists are well-known in the policy world or if policymakers follow their social media accounts. Also, scientists should blog regularly if they want to publish their blog posts via their websites or blogging platforms.

Alternatively, scientists can identify well-known blog series published by other research institutions, think tanks, or NGOs. Many blog series welcomes contributions from external scientists. Scientists can also approach colleagues who are well-known bloggers regarding a joint blog post.

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## Support Staff

## Knowledge exchange managers and research managers

Knowledge exchange managers can assist scientists in writing policy blogs by informing them about current policy issues. To do so, knowledge exchange officers can follow media coverage, subscribe to policymaking institutions' newsletters, and read official documents like strategy papers or legislation. Knowledge exchange managers can read research articles and use Google or ChatGPT to link research output with current policy debates. Knowledge exchange managers can talk to scientists regarding current policy issues and make suggestions for the structure and content of a policy brief. After reading the scientists ' journal articles, press officers often send drafts for press releases to scientists on current research results. The scientist can then comment on the draft press releases. Knowledge exchange officers can work similarly and produce draft policy blogs, which scientists can further develop. Such an approach is a time-saving one for scientists.

Knowledge exchange managers are vital in disseminating policy blogs. They can identify readers by browsing organisation charts or committee members in parliaments. They can communicate the policy briefs via mailing lists, websites, and social media. Suppose they need more reach in terms of social media followers, mailing list recipients, or website visitors. In that case, knowledge exchange managers can identify other research institutions, think tanks, or NGOs with a broad reach and accept external contributions.

**Required resources at a glance**

	Hours	Days	Weeks	Months
Researchers` time for writing policy briefs	x			
Researchers` time for dealing with organisational issues	x			
Knowledge exchange officers` time	x			

Required funding for activity	Low x	Medium	High
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