

# Mission, Aim, and Scope

## Mission Statement

A mission statement focuses and describes your purpose as a publication, defining who you serve and why. Use this exercise to write an effective and powerful mission statement that will help your readers and potential authors to understand why you publish and why your scholarly contributions are valuable and unique.

A great mission statement:

- Communicates your publication’s unique purpose and audience
- Should be no more than a paragraph—the shorter the better!
- Is a useful tool to measure potential new directions against—“Is this in keeping with our mission?”
- Answers the question **“We’re doing X(what), for Y(who), because Z(why)”?**

**Step 1:** Each member of the board writes down 5 answers to each of the following questions. Each answer goes on a post-it or index card:

- 1) What do we publish?
- 2) Who do we publish for?
- 3) What impact does our publishing have?

**Step 2:** Match the post-its or cards to see where there are overlaps in your responses. Using the audience, impact, and content identified by your group in Step 1, try to articulate your mission in 25-50 words.

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Remember that writing a mission statement is about *focus*. There will always be secondary stakeholders and audiences, new opportunities, and outliers in our content and editorial actions. Our goal is to be able to remind ourselves of the primary purpose of our publishing, in order to continue to set priorities in our work and address the needs of our communities.

## Aim

Your journal's aim is a vision statement. Whereas your mission statement states clearly what you do and is focused in the present, with your aim can be an opportunity to think big and energize both your editorial team and potential contributors.

## Scope

The journal's scope describes the kind of content that you publish. The scope can describe the structure of the content (articles, book reviews, letters to the editor), the length and kinds of supplemental materials and media that can accompany texts, the kinds of academic approaches and discussions that are preferred (theoretical, interdisciplinary), and more. A well developed set of scope criteria will:

- Ensure that your content matches and helps you follow the mission of your journal
- Keeps your content consistent issue to issue
- Helps authors to know whether their research is a good fit for your publication
- Explains what you *don't* want
- Provides an opportunity to elaborate on unique concepts

Read some examples of descriptive and innovative journal Scopes:

[Journal of Biomedical Informatics](#)

[Chaos: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Nonlinear Science](#)

[Feral Feminisms](#) (and their excellent [seasonal CFPs](#))