

Report of the Editor: *American Economic Review: Insights*

By Matthew Gentzkow

If you're gonna have a hit, you gotta make it fit.
—Billy Joel

AER: Insights published its first issue in June 2019 under its founding editor, Amy Finkelstein. The journal has been published quarterly since then, with eight to nine papers per issue. This report covers the period November 2023 through October 2024.

For the first two months of this period, Amy Finkelstein served as editor, and Dirk Bergmann, Pete Klenow, and Rohini Pande served as coeditors. Starting January 1, 2024, I replaced Amy as editor. At the same time, Pete and Rohini stepped down as coeditors, and Gabriel Chodorow-Reich, Seema Jayachandran, and Tatyana Deryugina joined as coeditors.

We are currently aided by 20 excellent associate editors (listed at the end of this report). During the period of this report, Alberto Abadie, Eric Budish, Pascaline Dupas, Hilary Hoynes, and Andrzej Skrzypacz stepped down as associate editors, and David Berger, Rahul Deb, Mira Frick, Elena Manresa, Danny Yagan, and David Yang joined as associate editors.

Editorial Process

By default, we follow the editorial processes of the *American Economic Review (AER)*, departing in specific instances as warranted. Details of our editorial policy, submission guidelines, and conflict-of-interest rules are listed on our web page.

There are three main policies that distinguish *AER: Insights* from the *AER* and from most other economics journals.

- (1) We only publish short papers. Manuscripts may not exceed 7,000 words and may not have more than five exhibits.
- (2) We do not issue traditional “revise and resubmit” decisions. First decisions are either “conditional accept” or “reject.” Authors are typically given eight weeks to revise conditionally accepted manuscripts, which are not usually sent back to referees for a second round of review.
- (3) Papers must be self-contained, in the sense that a reader can understand and evaluate the findings without consulting the Supplemental Appendix. All essential information, such as data sources, variable definitions, and methods (for empirical work) and proofs of the formal results (for theoretical work), must be included in the paper itself.

In cases where the editor and/or coeditors are conflicted, papers may be handled by guest editors. In the past year, a guest editor served as the handling editor on seven of the 710 papers, two of which were accepted.

Editorial and Publication Statistics

Table 1 shows the distribution of published papers across subject categories for the last three years. It indicates that we are publishing across a broad range of topics, including theory, macroeconomics, and applied microeconomics.

We received just over 700 submissions, an increase relative to the previous two years (Table 2). Our acceptance rate is about 5 percent (Table 3). Our desk rejection rate has increased in the past year to roughly 50 percent (Table 3).

In 2024, 94 percent of first-round decisions were made in less than three months, and 81 percent were made in less than two months (Table 4a). Excluding desk-rejected manuscripts, these figures are 88 percent and 61 percent, respectively (Table 4b). Table 5 shows the distribution of publication statistics by publication year. Table 6 shows that our average time to first decision has fallen relative to the past three years.

TABLE 1— SUBJECT MATTER OF PUBLISHED MANUSCRIPTS (COUNTS OF AREAS)

Subject Category	2022	2023	2024
A–General economics and teaching	1	0	1
B–History of economic thought, methodology, and heterodox approaches	0	0	0
C–Mathematical and quantitative methods	6	1	7
D–Microeconomics	19	20	19
E–Macroeconomics and monetary economics	6	5	7
F–International economics	1	2	2
G–Financial economics	8	6	9
H–Public economics	5	9	9
I–Health, education, and welfare	8	6	11
J–Labor and demographic economics	9	12	8
K–Law and economics	3	5	4
L–Industrial organization	6	8	2
M–Business administration and business economics; marketing; accounting	2	2	1
N–Economic history	0	0	1
O–Economic development, technological change, and growth	5	14	7
P–Economic systems	1	3	1
Q–Agricultural and natural resource economics; environmental and ecological economics	2	2	2
R–Urban, rural, and regional economics	1	3	3
Y–Miscellaneous categories	0	0	0
Z–Other special topics	0	0	2

Note: Derived from *JEL* codes reported for each manuscript for the 2024 publication year.

TABLE 2—MANUSCRIPTS SUBMITTED AND PUBLISHED, 2019–2024

Year	Submitted	Published	Average page length
2019	601	24	16
2020	786	32	16
2021	779	32	17
2022	678	32	17
2023	694	34	17
2024	705	34	17

Notes: Submissions for each year include all new submissions from November 1 of the previous year through October 31 of the stated year. Published manuscripts for 2019, the journal's first year of publication, include three issues only.

TABLE 3—STATUS OF MANUSCRIPTS BY SUBMISSION YEAR, 2020–2024

Submission year	Accepted	Conditionally accepted for compliance check	Pending	Rejected	Summary reject	Conditionally accepted	Withdrawn	Total
2020	36	0	0	463	287	0	0	786
	(5)	(0)	(0)	(59)	(37)	(0)	(0)	(100)
2021	37	0	0	455	285	0	2	779
	(5)	(0)	(0)	(58)	(37)	(0)	(0)	(100)
2022	32	0	0	404	242	0	0	678
	(5)	(0)	(0)	(60)	(36)	(0)	(0)	(100)
2023	33	1	0	393	265	1	1	694
	(5)	(0)	(0)	(57)	(38)	(0)	(0)	(100)
2024	10	8	56	254	365	9	2	705
	(1)	(1)	(8)	(36)	(52)	(1)	(0)	(100)

Notes: Entries show status as of November 1, 2024. Figures in parentheses show percents rounded to the nearest integer. Pending manuscripts include original submissions and revisions that were undergoing review as of November 1, 2024. Conditionally accepted is a decision given to papers that require expositional changes only. Summary rejections are manuscripts rejected without referee review.

TABLE 4A—DISTRIBUTION OF FIRST DECISION TIMES BY SUBMISSION YEAR

Months to response	2022		2023		2024	
	Monthly percent	Cumulative percent	Monthly percent	Cumulative percent	Monthly percent	Cumulative percent
1	37	37	38	38	54	54
2	37	74	26	64	27	81
3	24	98	22	87	13	94
4	2	100	11	97	5	99
5	0	100	3	100	1	100
6	0	100	0	100	0	100
7	0	100	0	100	0	100
8	0	100	0	100	0	100
9	0	100	0	100	0	100
10	0	100	0	100	0	100
11	0	100	0	100	0	100
12	0	100	0	100	0	100

Notes: Submission year denotes the period from November 1 of the preceding year to October 31 of the stated year. The 2022 and 2023 distributions are the actual distributions. The 2024 distribution is projected from Kaplan–Meier hazards computed from the right-censored distribution of decision times of manuscripts submitted between November 1, 2023, and October 31, 2024. Percents are rounded to the nearest integer. Figures in this table supersede those contained in previous *AER: Insights* reports.

TABLE 4B—DISTRIBUTION OF FIRST DECISION TIMES BY SUBMISSION YEAR, EXCLUDING SUMMARY REJECTS

Months to response	2022		2023		2024	
	Monthly percent	Cumulative percent	Monthly percent	Cumulative percent	Monthly percent	Cumulative percent
1	3	3	3	3	7	7
2	56	59	39	42	54	61
3	38	97	36	78	27	88
4	3	100	18	96	10	98
5	0	100	4	100	2	100
6	0	100	0	100	0	100
7	0	100	0	100	0	100
8	0	100	0	100	0	100
9	0	100	0	100	0	100
10	0	100	0	100	0	100
11	0	100	0	100	0	100
12	0	100	0	100	0	100

Notes: Submission year denotes the period from November 1 of the preceding year to October 31 of the stated year. The 2022 and 2023 distributions are the actual distributions. The 2024 distribution is projected from Kaplan–Meier hazards computed from the right-censored distribution of decision times of manuscripts submitted between November 1, 2023, and October 31, 2024. Percents are rounded to the nearest integer. Figures in this table supersede those contained in previous *AER: Insights* reports.

TABLE 5—AVERAGE PROCESSING TIMES BY PUBLICATION YEAR

Publication year	Submission to acceptance			Weeks from acceptance to publication
	Total weeks	Weeks in peer review	Weeks in data review	
2021	27	10	8	36
2022	28	12	7	40
2023	32	14	10	40
2024	34	16	8	33

Notes: Total weeks is the time from submission to acceptance, including the time taken by authors to develop their revisions. Weeks in peer review is the total time the manuscript spent in the hands of editors and peer reviewers. Weeks in data review is the total time the manuscript spent in the hands of the data editor.

TABLE 6—DECISION TIME FOR MANUSCRIPTS SENT FOR REVIEW

	Review time (days) for manuscripts sent to referees					
	Percent summarily rejected	Average decision time	Median decision time	75th percentile	90th percentile	No. papers sent to referees
2020	37%	52	47	66	84	499
2021	37%	59	57	79	88	492
2022	36%	58	56	73	89	436
2023	38%	70	68	89	103	428
2024	52%	55	50	68	85	284

Note: Submission year denotes the period from November 1 of the preceding year through October 31 of the stated year. For 2024, 54 manuscripts with a first decision pending were omitted.

TABLE 7—DATA-POSTING POLICY STATISTICS, 2023–2024

	Number of papers	Papers with data	Papers using restricted data
2023	34	27	13
2024	34	29	7

Editorial Staff

I owe a special debt of gratitude to Amy Finkelstein for her visionary leadership as the journal's founding editor. The main goal I have strived for in the past year has been simply to maintain the incredibly high standard of quality and efficiency she established. I am grateful to Pete Klenow and Rohini Pande for their contributions prior to my taking over and to my four amazing coeditors—Dirk Bergemann, Gabriel Chodorow-Reich, Tatyana Deryugina, and Seema Jayachandran—for their hard work, dedication, scholarly expertise, and good humor.

Our board of editors plays an important role in advising the coeditors and assisting with the evaluation of manuscripts. Board members are selected to reflect the highest level of scholarship in the economics profession over the many different fields represented in the submissions, as well as for conscientiousness, judgment, and professional reliability as demonstrated in their refereeing for the journal. Our board of editors currently consists of:

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Danny Yagan, California, Berkeley
David Yang, Harvard

I am very grateful to them for their service.

Office Staff and Other Assistants

We have been ably supported by Tina Lippert as managing editor and are extremely grateful to her for her excellent and efficient work.