Founding Document, Editorial Policy & Purpose Statement for CARES-WPS.

Overview

CARES Working Paper Series (CARES-WPS) positions itself as a versatile, interdisciplinary online platform that rapidly disseminates research carried out by members of the Centre for Applied Research in Empowering Society (CARES) and its collaborators. CARES-WPS works in parallel with standard academic outputs (journal articles, manuscripts, etc.), not as a replacement for them. CARES-WPS aims to accept works that are valuable to scholarly, policy, and practitioner communities. Items that could be published in CARES-WPS include toolkits, policy briefs, pilot studies, opinion pieces, initial-findings reports and conference/knowledge-exchange event reflections.

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Alignment with LMU's Strategic Vision

CARES-WPS directly supports London Metropolitan University's Civic University strategic vision, operating within the London Met Labs. It is committed to social justice, community engagement, and applied research with real-world impact and relevance. By prioritising timely, accessible, and practice-relevant outputs, CARES-WPS echoes LMU's mission to empower communities and contribute to the public good. It also enhances the visibility of CARES' research activity and strengthens links with external stakeholders.

REF Relevance

CARES-WPS is not intended as a route to high-rated REF outputs. Instead, its significance lies in supporting the REF's *impact* and *environment* components. Papers disseminated through CARES-WPS will serve as evidence of knowledge exchange, public engagement, and/or policy influence. CARES-WPS also reflects a commitment to the rapid and accessible dissemination of applied research, aligning with the REF's broader goals of engagement and societal benefit.

Publication Registry

All publications will go through an internal peer-review process where the Editor-in-Chief initially reviews each submission followed by another member of the CARES team. All publications will share a British Library ISSN (ISSN 2977-8352) and an individually assigned DOI, using Zenodo.org services. All publications will be online, viewable at https://www.londonmet.ac.uk/about/cares/. The publication process, from initial submission, aims to be completed within one calendar month.

Internal Peer-Review Process

The CARES Editor-in-Chief oversees each submission from receipt to publication. As shown in the figure below, each article will be reviewed by at least two CARES members (including the Editor-in-Chief). All CARES members are expected to review up to two articles per year. The Editor-in-Chief will select reviewers based on individual expertise. All authors will sign a release form prior to publication. The Editor-in-Chief will be allocated 100 hours annually to carry out this work.
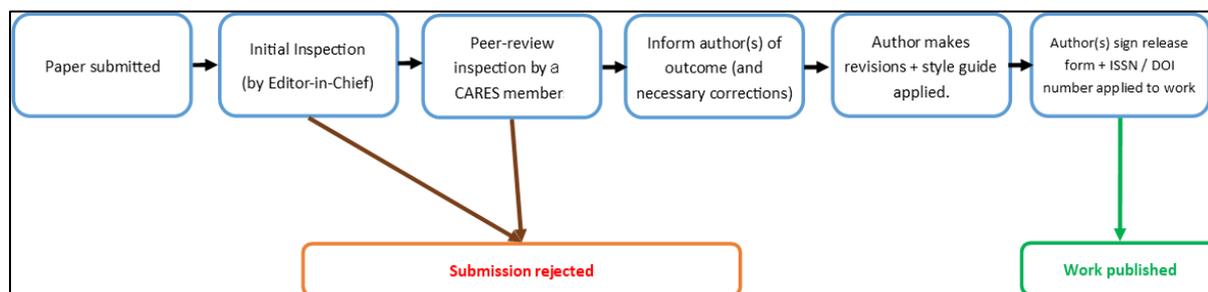

Fig 1. Diagram to show the publication process from submission-to-publication.

In the situation where the Editor-in-Chief submits an article for publication, a (co)Director or Deputy Director of CARES will be involved in the early stage of the process, ensuring independent oversight. In this way, the independent peer-review aspect of CARES-WPS is preserved.

Logo & Design Language

While fitting within the overarching design language of London Metropolitan University, the colour scheme of CARES-WPS is white, black, grey and a single other colour. CARES-WPS does not have its own standalone logo; rather it uses the CARES logo (see in Figure 2).

All publications must make use of the standardised template.

Figure 2. The CARES logo adjacent to the London Met Lab logo and the London Metropolitan University logo.

CARES-WPS Purpose Statement

CARES-WPS is a publication platform that seeks to support London Metropolitan University (LMU) in satisfying Research Excellence Framework (REF) metrics, specifically in terms of bolstering its 'people, culture and environment' (PCE). In practice, CARES-WPS strives to satisfy PCE indicators of success by providing SSSP staff with an accessible and rapid means of publishing their research materials that would otherwise be unsuitable for standard academic

platforms. The following five areas offer a more detailed conceptualisation of CARES-WPS's purpose:

Strategy – CARES-WPS publishes materials that support our researchers, to help them develop portfolios that demonstrate robust and expansive engagement with their chosen field.

Responsibility – CARES-WPS also makes use of an internal peer-review process, upholding a high standard of research integrity.

Connectivity – CARES-WPS supports all colleagues within CARES and, therefore, the platform is inherently multidisciplinary. CARES-WPS also welcomes collaborative works that involve other institutions (the first author must be a CARES member).

Inclusivity – CARES-WPS seeks to be a platform that is accessible, inclusive and collegial, empowering colleagues (especially early-career researchers) to develop their research profiles.

Development – CARES-WPS serves as part of LMU's larger mission to recognise and value the breadth of activities, practices and roles involved in research, building and sustaining relevant and accessible career pathways for all staff and postgraduate research students. More specifically, by using CARES members as part of the internal peer-review process, CARES-WPS seeks to support colleagues' professional and career development by giving them editorial experience in a research context.