

Keough School Policy Briefs and Reports

Updated August 24, 2021

A Keough School policy brief or report focuses on a particular policy issue, provides sufficient background information for readers to understand that issue, offers evidence to support potential approaches to the issue, and provides actionable policy recommendations. The series as a whole is aimed at a diverse range of policy actors and others who are interested in formulating or influencing policy; individual briefs and reports target more specific policy audiences.

Key elements:

1. **Policy Focus:** Keough School policy briefs/reports must address a policy issue or problem; **if there isn't a clear policy issue or problem (if, for example, the main focus of the work is technical or methodological), the publication should not be a policy brief/report.**
2. **Evidence Based:** Keough School policy briefs/reports must be based on evidence. A policy brief may be: 1) an original piece of scholarship derived from a systematic review of published research or from original data, or 2) a derivative work that authors develop from one of their longer, previously published, peer-reviewed articles or books/book chapters.¹
3. **Brevity:** A Keough School policy brief must be 4 pp. (2,000 words) or less; there is a reason it is called a *brief*. A policy report, which includes the same elements as a brief, can be longer.
4. **Language:** Keough School policy briefs/reports should be written in an engaging manner that is appropriate for intelligent, non-specialist audiences, and should avoid jargon and lengthy explanations of methodology. Wherever possible, they should adhere to the Chicago Manual of Style.
5. **Format:** Keough School policy briefs/reports must include the following elements:
 - i. **Title, author(s), author affiliations**
 - ii. **Executive Summary/Overview:** An intro section that states the policy issue or problem to be addressed and summarizes the main messages of the brief/report.
 - iii. **Key words:** 7-10 thematic keywords.
 - iv. **Audiences:** A description of the *specific* policy audiences for whom the brief/report could be useful. "Policymakers" is too broad; what types of policymakers?

¹ If a policy brief is derived in full from a longer, previously published, peer-reviewed article or book/book chapter, a statement to that effect must be included on the brief, along with a full reference to the longer publication (with relevant DOI or other link).

Please also submit the longer article or book/book chapter along with the brief.

- v. **Body:** A main section that presents the evidence and concepts from which the policy recommendations will follow.
- vi. **Policy Recommendations:** A list of clear, actionable recommendations that provide concrete next steps for policymakers and others. **If it is not possible to provide such recommendations, the publication should not be a policy brief/report.**

Policy recommendations should logically follow from the evidence and concepts presented in the body of the brief/report. They should:

- be written in active language that uses subjects and verbs—i.e., they should clearly specify who should do what,
 - avoid overly broad recommendations such as “Better policies need to be developed,” as those types of recommendations don’t provide policymakers and others with any clear way forward, and
 - be presented the same way throughout; avoid having one recommendation start with a gerund, another with an imperative, and a third with a noun.
- vii. **Endnotes:** Use end notes vs in-text citations. For policy briefs, the Endnotes section should consist of essential references only, given space constraints; for policy reports, this section can be longer. An endnote format consists of numbered citations (in superscript) in the text, with a list of Notes at the end in Chicago style—including DOIs or relevant URLs. Sample Notes entry:

Reifenberg, Steve, and Luke Maillie. *Where Surgery is Difficult: Overcoming Barriers to Access in Chiapas, Mexico*. Keough School of Global Affairs Case Study Series. South Bend, IN: Keough School of Global Affairs, University of Notre Dame, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.7274/r0-ah86-8k39>

6. Additional considerations:

- i. **Figures and tables:** Figures and tables should be placed as close as possible to the text to which they refer. Place the title above the figure/table (**Figure 1: Title in sentence case**), with Notes and Sources below.
- ii. **Sources/Permissions:** Each figure/table/map/photo must have a source, and **you must have permission to use all non-original figures/tables/maps/photos featured in your policy brief or report**; please see the Rights and Permission document on the [Author Resource page](#) for more detailed information.
- iii. **Licensing/CurateND:** All Keough School policy briefs and reports will be licensed under a Creative Commons CC BY-NC 4.0 license and will be housed in Notre Dame’s digital publications repository, [CurateND](#). Faculty and student authors of Keough School policy briefs and reports will need to sign the CurateND Submission Agreement (available on the [Author Resource page](#)) prior to publication.
- iv. Submit policy briefs and reports to gstansbu@nd.edu.