

Ordinary Meetings and Criteria for Papers for Reading to the Society

Introduction

The Society's discussion meetings ('Ordinary Meetings', i.e. as opposed to its 'Special' or annual general meetings) span a very wide range of topics, and suitable papers may fall into any of the following categories:

- (a) a study of an applied statistical problem (or problems) of sufficient general interest to warrant discussion and publication;
- (b) new methodology;
- (c) interesting and new applications of existing methodology;
- (d) work concerned with the interface between statistics and other fields;
- (e) work concerned with statistical education;
- (f) expository papers, 'state of the art' reviews and critical summaries of statistical material;
- (g) critical studies of an area of economic, scientific or social interest in which statistical methods have an important role;
- (h) issues of general interest to statisticians, especially if a wide variety of views is to be found.

In addition, papers which are intended for consideration by the Research Section Committee should fall into one or more of the following categories:

- (a) descriptions of new methods of analysing data or of designing experiments, with theoretical bases of methods and an indication of the scope of application, preferably with examples;
- (b) comparisons and critical evaluations of existing methods;
- (c) discussion of the logical and/or philosophical bases of statistical theory;
- (d) original contributions to probability theory which have a practical bearing.

Format of papers

Papers for reading should not exceed 12000 words. With figures, tables and references, this guideline translates to about 24 journal pages or around 30 manuscript pages in 12 pt Times and extra half-line spacing. Detailed guidelines on the preparation and submission of manuscripts are available from the 'Publications' section of the Society's Web site (<http://www.rss.org.uk>) or from the Journals Administrator (journal@rss.org.uk) in the Editorial Office.

Organization of Discussion Meetings

According to availability of suitable papers, meetings are held several times a year. Preprints are made available from the Society's Web site or in paper or electronic form from the Journals Administrator (journal@rss.org.uk), usually at least 2 weeks before each meeting, and they can be picked up at the meeting.

The usual format of the meetings is that the authors summarize the main features of their papers in about 40 minutes, such that people attending the meeting who have not studied the paper in advance can follow its substance.

Following the authors, the discussion is opened by two invited speakers who have up to 10 minutes (or about 800 words in writing) each to comment on the paper ('proposing and seconding the vote of thanks').

Further shorter comments (up to 5 minutes or 400 words in writing, not counting reference details) are then invited from the audience, starting from a list of people who have notified the Journals Administrator in advance that they would like to speak. If the 2 hours in total permits before the authors are given the opportunity to respond very briefly verbally, the secretary for the meeting will read out any contributions that have been sent in from people who cannot be present in person. Contributions to the discussion in writing (again, 400 words maximum) are allowed up to 2 weeks after the meeting and should be sent to the Journals Administrator (journal@rss.org.uk), preferably as .pdf files (with any figures as separate files also). Shortly after the deadline the authors are sent the whole discussion to reply to. The paper and the entire proceedings are then subsequently published together in the journal as a permanent record.

Occasionally the format of meetings may be rather different. They may be longer ('extended' or 'half-day' Ordinary Meetings) and include several related papers or papers paired by subject-matter, or they may not include substantial papers at all but be focused on discussion of specific themes, introduced by two or three main speakers presenting differing points of view ('Ordinary Discussion Meetings'). Such discussion meetings will often be concerned with matters of public interest. The process for these types of meeting is quite similar to that for the single-paper meetings but the rules for the conduct of the meeting may depend on the individual circumstances and will be determined by the organizers of the meeting.

Location of Meetings

Most Ordinary Meetings are held at the Society's premises in London. Occasionally, 'out-of-London' Ordinary Meetings are organized, e.g. at a session of a major statistical conference outside the UK or to coincide with a particular statistical occasion somewhere.