

JPART introduces a submission cap on July 1, 2026

The *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* is introducing a submission cap as a pilot. The PMRA Board has approved the creation of such a policy, which will take effect on July 1, 2026.

The purpose of the cap is to protect the quality of the journal's editorial process and its reviewers at a time when submission volumes are increasing rapidly, in large part because generative AI has changed the cost and speed of manuscript production.

1. The problem: A sharp and unsustainable rise in submissions

JPART has experienced a major increase in submissions over recent years, with particularly sharp growth in 2025 and 2026. When the current editors took over in autumn 2023, the journal received roughly 45 to 50 submissions per month, corresponding to around 575 submissions per year (see Figure 1). In April 2026, JPART received 119 submissions, and the submission trend continues to rise sharply.

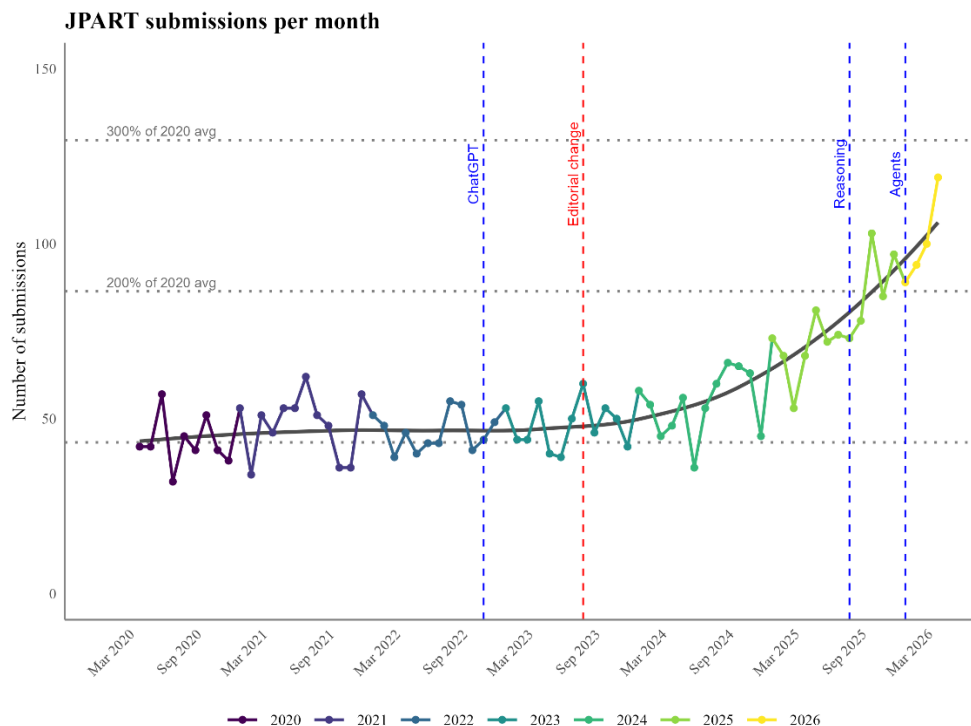


Figure 1. Monthly received submissions to JPART over time, with LOESS trend line. The dotted lines indicate 100, 200, and 300 percent of the 2020 monthly average. Blue vertical lines indicate major developments in generative AI.

This growth is putting considerable pressure on JPART's editors, associate editors, and reviewers. Every submission must be read, assessed, and processed. Some manuscripts are desk rejected, while others are sent to three or four reviewers. In both cases, editorial work is required, and in the latter case significant time is spent by voluntary reviewers. As submissions grow, so do desk rejection rates, reviewer requests, time to review, and the workload in the

scholarly community. If growth continues at current rates and nothing else changes, the journal system is going to collapse, with no clear, viable alternative system to replace it.

Our analysis of JPART's submissions suggests that the problem largely relates to Generative AI. AI has sharply reduced the cost and time needed to produce manuscripts. Authors or author teams can now create and submit manuscripts at a pace that would previously have been impossible. However, the cost of evaluating a manuscript has not fallen. The current trend in AI generated submissions is not sustainable for academic publishing, and it is not fair to all the scholars who contribute to voluntary peer review.

2. Why a submission cap?

A submission cap limits the number of manuscripts an individual author can submit within a calendar year. The JPART submission cap is designed to slow the growth in submissions while keeping the journal open to high-quality work from the full public administration research community. The policy responds to two related concerns.

First, it limits the ability of individuals or teams to use AI tools to generate and submit large numbers of manuscripts with limited prior human review, checking, and intellectual accountability. AI can support research, but authors remain responsible for the content they submit. Authorship requires intellectual responsibility for the argument, evidence, analysis, and text. A cap helps prevent a development in which manuscripts are produced at scale by automated or semi-automated workflows and then submitted to journals for quality control.

Second, the cap gives authors stronger incentives to conduct their own thorough quality control before submission. As AI changes research workflows, effort must be placed on checking, validating, and improving manuscripts before they are submitted. Without such checks, journals and reviewers are effectively asked to absorb quality-control work that should take place before submission. A cap helps return that responsibility to authors by making each submission more valuable to them.

The cap is not intended to prevent serious scholars from submitting their best work to JPART. It is intended to discourage repeated low-quality or insufficiently checked submissions and to protect editorial and reviewer capacity to assess and improve manuscripts with a stronger chance of contributing to public administration research and theory.

3. How will the submission cap work?

The cap will apply to individual authors. A manuscript counts toward the cap for every listed author, whether that person is the sole author, first author, co-author, or corresponding author. A manuscript counts toward the cap at submission.

The policy will take effect on July 1, 2026, and will be calculated on a calendar-year basis.

The model is as follows:

1. Authors can submit no more than two manuscripts that are desk rejected in a calendar year.
2. Authors can submit no more than three manuscripts in total in a calendar year.

This means that the cap has two limits. The first limit concerns desk-rejected manuscripts (two). The second limit concerns total submissions (three).

The cap resets on 1 January 2027.

Examples

Example 1: Two desk rejections

An author, either as sole author or as part of an author team, submits Manuscript A in February. It is desk rejected.

The same author, either as sole author or as part of an author team, submits Manuscript B in August. It is also desk rejected.

The author has now reached the limit of two desk-rejected submissions for the calendar year and cannot submit another manuscript to JPART that year.

Example 2: One desk rejection and one manuscript sent to review

An author submits Manuscript A in February. It is desk rejected.

The same author submits Manuscript B in August. It is sent out for review.

Because only one of the author's submissions has been desk rejected, the author may submit one more manuscript, Manuscript C, that year. This would be the author's third total submission.

It is not relevant whether Manuscript B is rejected after review. As long as either Manuscript A or B are sent into review, the author can submit Manuscript C.

Example 3: Three total submissions are sent to review

An author submits Manuscript A, Manuscript B, and Manuscript C in the same calendar year.

All these manuscripts are sent to review. The author has reached the total annual limit of three submissions and cannot submit another manuscript to JPART that year.

The decisions on Manuscripts A, B, and C are not relevant. Regardless of outcomes, the author cannot submit a fourth article that calendar year.

Table 1 gives a full overview of how the cap functions.

Number of manuscripts submitted	Number of desk rejections among submitted manuscripts	Manuscript cap reached for the year?
0	0	No
1	0	No
1	1	No
2	0	No

2	1	No
2	2	Yes
3	0	Yes
3	1	Yes
3	2	Yes

Table 1: Decision matrix for whether the submission cap applies. `Yes` implies that no further submissions are possible within the calendar year, `No` implies that at least one more submission is possible.

4. Transitional rule for 2026

Because the cap takes effect in the middle of 2026, JPART will apply a transitional rule for the remainder of the year.

Submissions made prior to July 1, 2026, will count toward the annual cap. However, the cap is extended by one submission for 2026 to give authors a better chance of adjusting to the new policy. Consequently, for 2026, authors can submit no more than three manuscripts that are desk rejected, and no more than four manuscripts in total.

This transitional flexibility applies only in 2026. From January 1, 2027, the cap will apply fully on a calendar-year basis. As this policy is a one-year pilot, JPART and the PMRA Board will review and revisit the policy in June of 2027.

5. Evaluation and next steps

The submission cap pilot will be closely evaluated. JPART, in close collaboration with the PMRA Board, will monitor how the policy works in practice, including developments in submission volume, desk rejection rates, reviewer burden, author behavior, and the journal's ability to process manuscripts in a timely way while preserving the quality of editorial and reviewer processes. The policy may be adjusted if modification is needed.

The cap is an immediate measure to address a pressing problem. It is also a measure with drawbacks that the editorial team recognizes. The cap is adopted on the assessment that preserving the integrity and quality of the journal's function as a guarantor of high-quality content on its platform outweighs these drawbacks.

A submission cap is not the end of JPART's and the PMRA Board's work on AI and scholarly publishing. The journal and the PMRA board will continue to consider how best to respond to AI-generated content, research integrity, and the broader effects of AI on academic publishing, quality, and peer review.

Please submit any comments about the policy by emailing contact@gopmra.org.