Theoretical Economics Editor's Report for year ending June 30, 2023

Simon Board October 3, 2023

Highlights

- *TE* published 51 papers in 2022/23 compared to 54 papers in 2021/22 and 46 papers in 2020/21. The number of papers waiting to be published has fallen from 55 to 47 over the last year. The expected yield of papers under review has also fallen from 54 to 44 over the last year.
- The number of submissions is stable over the last year. Adjusting for withdrawals, the numbers there were 280 submissions in 2023/22, 288 in 2021/22, 377 in 2020/21, 369 in 2019/20 and 325 in 2018/19. The post-Covid drop may be due to the reduction in pandemic-related restrictions and the return of conferences.
- The number of submissions whose authors have requested the transfer of editorial material from *Econometrica* fell to 34 compared with 39 in 2021/22, 54 in 2020/21 and 47 in 2019/20.
- In 2021/22, our average first-round turnaround was 61 days, significantly less than our target of 70 days. Still, this is higher than 51 days in 2020/21, 50 days in 2020/21 and 53 days in 2019/20. Over this year, 78% of first-round decisions were made within three months of submission, 92% within four months and 100% within five months. This is inferior to 2021/22 when 89% of first-round decisions were made within three months of submission, and 97% within four months.
- The average length of an article is 34 pages in 2023. This compares with 34 pages in 2022 and 2021, down from 38 pages in 2019. Over 2022/23, we only published three supplementary appendices. This was driven by a consistent effort on behalf of the editors to trim papers during the review process.

1 Papers

1.1 Papers published

Data on the papers published 2017 through June 2022 are given in Table 1. So far, we published 26 papers in two issues during 2023. The total for the four issues this year will be 50. We have maintained our goal of shortening papers. In 2019, the average publication length went up partly due to the new policy of incorporating formerly supplemental material into the main text. Since then, the average number of pages per paper went down to 34 over the past 3 years. This was achieved without the use of supplementary appendices. (For example, in 2017, 11 out of 41 papers had a supplementary appendix, whereas in 2022/23 only 3 out of 54 had a supplementary appendix.)

Year	Number	Pages	Pages per article
2018	44	1481	34
2019	40	1590	40
2020	45	1712	38
2021	50	1714	34
2022	55	1895	34
2023	26	883	34

Table 1: Number of articles and pages published, by year of publication.

1.2 Papers in process

Data on the papers in process are given in Table 2. Our backlog of accepted papers awaiting publication is slowly coming down after the Covid-induced burst in 2020. After the publication of the July issue of 2023, there are 34 papers in this list. We will seek to stabilize the backlog by continuing to publish 12 papers per issue over the coming year.

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Accepted, awaiting publication	23	26	35	50	55	46
Under review, round 1	42	59	60	55	44	57
Under revision after 1 round	34	32	44	35	23	23
Under review, round 2	14	11	12	18	10	7
Under revision after 2 rounds	11	12	9	11	14	6
Under review, round 3	4	5	5	4	3	3
Under revision after 3 rounds	2	2	1	1	1	1
Under review, round 4	0	0	0	0	0	2
Under revision after 4 rounds	1	0	0	0	1	1
Under review, round 5	1	0	0	0	0	0
Under revision after 5 rounds	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	132	147	166	174	151	146

Table 2: Papers in process on June 30 of each year.

Of the papers *currently* in process, I estimate, based on past experience, that about 44 papers will be published down from 54 in July 2022 and 72 in July 2021.¹

1.3 Submissions

The numbers of submissions by year and their current status are given in Table 3. (By contrast, the numbers in Table 2 relate to statuses as of the dates given.) The number of submissions in 2022/23 is similar to last year and slightly lower than 2019/20 when

¹Calculated by computing, for each paper, the fraction of previous papers with the same round number and referee recommendations on the current round (if any) that were accepted, and adding up these fractions. These frequencies are available to Editorial Board members on the journal website.

taking with drawals into account. These numbers are substantially smaller than 2019/20 and 2020/21 that were affected by Covid. Our estimated acceptance rate in recent years ranges between 12-15%.

				Under			
Year ending	Total	Accepted	Rejected	revision	Overdue	Withdrawn	In review
2017-6-30	298	34 (11%)	257 (86%)		1 (0%)	6 (2%)	
2018-6-30	341	32 (9%)	290 (85%)		5 (1%)	14 (4%)	
2019-6-30	352	49 (14%)	272 (77%)		4 (1%)	27~(8%)	
2020-6-30	401	54 (13%)	313 (78%)	1(0%)	1(0%)	32 (8%)	1(0%)
2021-6-30	414	57 (14%)	313 (76%)	1(0%)	3(1%)	37 (9%)	3(1%)
2022-6-30	291	30 (10%)	245 (84%)	8 (3%)	1(0%)	3 (1%)	4 (1%)
2023-6-30	281	5 (2%)	199 (71%)	19 (7%)		1 (0%)	57 (20%)
Totals	2,378	261	1,889	29	15	120	65

Table 3: Submissions by year, with current status. Papers are "overdue" after 12 months.

2 Paper handling

2.1 Assignment

The numbers of papers handled by each coeditor are given in Table 4. (The date associated with a paper is the date of submission. The totals for some years are smaller than the totals in Table 3 because some papers were withdrawn before a coeditor was assigned.)

	1819	1920	2021	2122	2223	Total
Simon Board	62	72	68	92	102	396
Federico Echenique	1	69	74	50	51	245
Marina Halac		1	69	49		119
Thomas Mariotti	52	65		1		118
Dilip Mookherjee	54					54
Todd D. Sarver				47	48	95
Florian Scheuer	58	58	64	45		225
Ran Spiegler	111	127	125	1		364
Bruno Strulovici				2	44	46
Rakesh Vohra					1	1
Pierre-Olivier Weill				2	35	37
Total	338	392	400	289	281	1,700

Table 4: Assignment of submissions to coeditors. The column headings are years. For example, '2223' means 2022-7-1 to 2023-6-30.

 $^{^2}$ Rani would "withdraw" papers that are too long, whereas I send them back to authors before they are logged into the system.

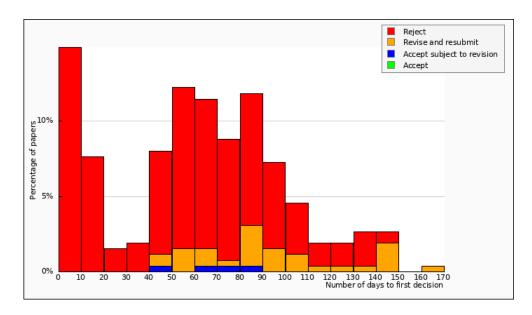


Figure 1: Distribution of days to first decision for papers on which a first decision was made between July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023.

2.2 Turnaround

Table 5 gives the average turnaround in days for decisions made in each year, by round. Average turnaround this year remained below our target of 70 days. Relative to the last few years, turnaround times have started to creep upwards, which requires some attention.

Decision date	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	Round 5	Round 6
Year to 2018-6-30	61	101	53	32	15	
Year to 2019-6-30	52	87	51	6	31	
Year to 2020-6-30	53	68	31	23	1	
Year to 2021-6-30	50	68	22	5		
Year to 2022-6-30	51	68	28	13		
Year to 2023-6-30	61	77	32	12	0	
Up to 2023-6-30	54	76	34	17	16	0

Table 5: Average turnaround in days, by year of decision and round.

Figure 1 shows the full distribution of days-to-first-decision for first decisions made.

Table 6 shows the distributions of turnaround on the first round and all subsequent rounds for decisions made in the current year. (For the purposes of this table, a month is an Econometrica month, which has 365.25/12 = 30.4375 days.) Analogous data for decisions made in the previous year are given in Table 7.

		Round 1			Round 2+			All rounds		
	#	%	Cum. $\%$	#	%	Cum. %	#	%	Cum. $\%$	
0–1 month	63	24%	24%	35	43%	43%	98	28%	28%	
1–2 months	63	24%	48%	16	20%	63%	79	23%	51%	
2–3 months	81	31%	78%	13	16%	79%	94	27%	79%	
3-4 months	36	14%	92%	10	12%	91%	46	13%	92%	
4–5 months	20	8%	100%	1	1%	93%	21	6%	98%	
5-6 months	1	0%	100%	2	2%	95%	3	1%	99%	
6–7 months	0	0%	100%	4	5%	100%	4	1%	100%	
7–8 months	0	0%	100%	0	0%	100%	0	0%	100%	
≥ 8 months	0	0%	100%	0	0%	100%	0	0%	100%	
Totals	264			81			345			

Table 6: Time taken by all decisions made between July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023.

	Round 1			Round 2+			All rounds		
	#	%	Cum. $\%$	#	%	Cum. $\%$	#	%	Cum. $\%$
0–1 month	82	27%	27%	51	41%	41%	133	31%	31%
1–2 months	102	34%	62%	32	26%	66%	134	32%	63%
2–3 months	82	27%	89%	24	19%	86%	106	25%	88%
3–4 months	23	8%	97%	9	7%	93%	32	8%	96%
4–5 months	10	3%	100%	6	5%	98%	16	4%	99%
5–6 months	0	0%	100%	1	1%	98%	1	0%	100%
6–7 months	0	0%	100%	2	2%	100%	2	0%	100%
7–8 months	0	0%	100%	0	0%	100%	0	0%	100%
≥ 8 months	0	0%	100%	0	0%	100%	0	0%	100%
Totals	299			125			424		

Table 7: Time taken by all decisions made between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022.

2.3 Referees

Data on referees' performance are given in Table 8.³

The "quality" of a report is assigned by the coeditor handling the paper; it is an integer from 1 to 5, where 3 is "average".

The distributions of the number of days referees have taken to produce reports are shown in Figure 2. We ask referees to submit reports within 35 days. It is worth noting that the mode of the distribution occurs between 30 and 40 days. The average turnaround was 40.4 in 2022/23 compared to 37.4 days in 2021/22 and 39.8 in 2020/21.

The distribution of the number of first-round reports received across the papers

³The categories "canceled" and "declined" are not entirely well-defined. If a potential referee responds to a request on our website, her only options are "accept" or "decline". But if she responds by email to the coeditor, the coeditor has the additional option to "cancel" the request. If, for example, a potential referee says that she isn't familiar enough with the field, a coeditor may "cancel" a request rather than record it as having been "declined". A request may also be "canceled" by an editor when there is enough evidence to make a decision in the absence of a report from the referee or when he gives up waiting for the referee to send a report.

Number of papers: 265	Total	AEs	non-AEs	Per paper
Reports requested (% of total)	637	156 (24%)	481 (76%)	2.4
Reports received (% of # requested)	469 (74%)	142 (91%)	327 (68%)	1.8
Report requests declined (% of # requested)	116 (18%)	5(3%)	111 (23%)	0.4
Report requests cancelled (% of # requested)	51 (8%)	8 (5%)	43 (9%)	0.2
Average number of days taken by referees	40.4	39.1	41.0	
Average number of days reports late	3.4	2.1	3.9	
Average quality of reports	4.0	4.1	4.0	

Table 8: Referee performance on papers for first-round decisions made from 2022-7-1 to 2023-6-30. The "number of papers" is the total number of first-round decisions, including ones for which there were no referees.

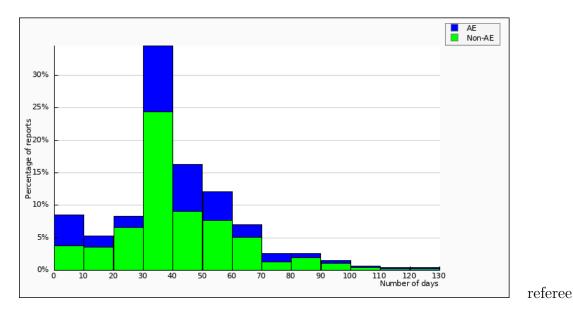


Figure 2: Distribution of days taken by referees to produce first-round reports for papers for which first-round decisions were made between July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023.

Decision date	0	1	2	3	4	5	≥ 6
Year to 2018-6-30	96 (27%)	25 (7%)	122 (34%)	107 (30%)	8 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Year to 2019-6-30	87~(28%)	17~(5%)	94 (30%)	108 (35%)	6(2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Year to 2020-6-30	93~(25%)	39 (11%)	134 (36%)	100~(27%)	5 (1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Year to 2021-6-30	83~(22%)	$28 \ (7\%)$	137 (36%)	134 (35%)	1(0%)	1(0%)	0 (0%)
Year to 2022-6-30	43 (14%)	41 (14%)	$143 \ (48\%)$	72 (24%)	1(0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Year to 2023-6-30	43~(16%)	27 (10%)	138~(52%)	56 (21%)	1(0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Up to 2023-6-30	445 (22%)	177 (9%)	768 (39%)	577 (29%)	22 (1%)	1 (0%)	0 (0%)

Table 9: Distribution of number of referees' reports received on first round, by year of decision. The cell in row r, column c is the number of papers for which a first decision was made in period r and c reports were received.

by the year of the first decision is shown in Table 9. Over the last two years there were slightly more papers with one report and fewer papers with no reports when compared to Rani's regime. This stems from me often soliciting a quick opinion from an AE before desk rejecting a paper.

3 Papers with reports transferred from Economet-rica

The data for submissions whose authors requested the transfer of the editorial materials (reports, covering letters, and editor's decision letter) from *Econometrica* are given in Table 10 (the analog of Table 3). The decline in transfers is notable (although some was due to Covid inflating the numbers in 2020 and 2021).

				Under			
Year ending	Total	Accepted	Rejected	revision	Overdue	Withdrawn	In review
2018-6-30	36	9 (25%)	22 (61%)		2 (6%)	3 (8%)	
2019-6-30	46	17 (37%)	23 (50%)		1(2%)	5 (11%)	
2020-6-30	47	18 (38%)	25 (53%)			4(9%)	
2021-6-30	54	16 (30%)	24 (44%)	1(2%)	1(2%)	10 (19%)	2(4%)
2022-6-30	39	11 (28%)	23 (59%)	2(5%)	1(3%)	1(3%)	1(3%)
2023-6-30	34	1(3%)	18 (53%)	4 (12%)			11 (32%)
Totals	256	72	135	7	5	23	14

Table 10: Submissions by year for which authors requested transfer of editorial material from *Econometrica*, with current status. Papers are "overdue" after 12 months.

The average time to a first decision for these papers is longer than the corresponding time for other papers by about three weeks, mainly, it seems, because these papers are rarely desk rejected.

4 Coeditors

Simon Board's term as editor will end June 30, 2025. Federico Echenique's term ended June 30, 2023. Todd Sarver's term will end June 30, 2025. Pierre-Olivier Weill and Bruno Strulovici's terms will end June 30, 2026. Rakesh Vohra's term will end June 30, 2027.

5 Associate Editors

Number currently serving: 45 (excludes those whose term ended during year ending June 30)

Term end 2023-06-30

• Gabriel Carroll: 2019-07-01 to 2023-06-30

• Felix Kubler: 2017-07-01 to 2023-06-30

• Thomas Mariotti: 2016-09-01 to 2023-06-30

• Georg Nöldeke: 2005-04-13 to 2023-06-30

Term end 2024-06-30

• Francis Bloch: 2021-07-01 to 2024-06-30

• Kfir Eliaz: 2012-07-01 to 2024-06-30

• Mira Frick: 2021-07-01 to 2024-06-30

• Yingni Guo: 2021-07-01 to 2024-06-30

• Yuichiro Kamada: 2018-07-01 to 2024-06-30

• Fuhito Kojima: 2021-07-01 to 2024-06-30

• Pablo Kurlat: 2018-07-01 to 2024-06-30

• Stephan Lauermann: 2018-07-01 to 2024-06-30

• Benjamin Lester: 2018-07-01 to 2024-06-30

• Jay Lu: 2021-07-01 to 2024-06-30

• Ezra Oberfield: 2021-07-01 to 2024-06-30

• Marcin Peski: 2015-07-01 to 2024-06-30

• Ran Spiegler: 2021-07-01 to 2024-06-30

• Juuso Toikka: 2018-07-01 to 2024-06-30

• Utku Unver: 2012-07-01 to 2024-06-30

• Alexander Westkamp: 2021-07-01 to 2024-06-30

• Thomas Wiseman: 2012-07-01 to 2024-06-30

Term end 2025-06-30

• Marco Bassetto: 2010-07-01 to 2025-06-30

• J. Aislinn Bohren: 2019-07-01 to 2025-06-30

• Rahul Deb: 2019-07-01 to 2025-06-30

• Laura Doval: 2022-07-01 to 2025-06-30

• Piotr Dworczak: 2022-07-01 to 2025-06-30

• Andrew Ellis: 2019-07-01 to 2025-06-30

• Vijay Krishna: 2022-07-01 to 2025-06-30

• Elliot Lipnowski: 2022-07-01 to 2025-06-30

• Antonio Penta: 2019-07-01 to 2025-06-30

• Ariel Rubinstein: 2004-06-10 to 2025-06-30

• Florian Scheuer: 2022-07-01 to 2025-06-30

• Yves Sprumont: 2016-07-01 to 2025-06-30

Term end 2026-06-30

• Scott Ashworth: 2023-07-01 to 2026-06-30

• Sarah Auster: 2023-07-01 to 2026-06-30

• Mariagiovanna Baccara: 2020-07-01 to 2026-06-30

• Jaroslav Borovicka: 2020-07-01 to 2026-06-30

• Benjamin Brooks: 2023-07-01 to 2026-06-30

• Christopher P. Chambers: 2023-07-01 to 2026-06-30

• Geoffroy de Clippel: 2020-07-01 to 2026-06-30

• Eddie Dekel: 2008-07-01 to 2026-06-30

• Federico Echenique: 2023-07-01 to 2026-06-30

• Ignacio Esponda: 2017-07-01 to 2026-06-30

• Alex Frankel: 2020-07-01 to 2026-06-30

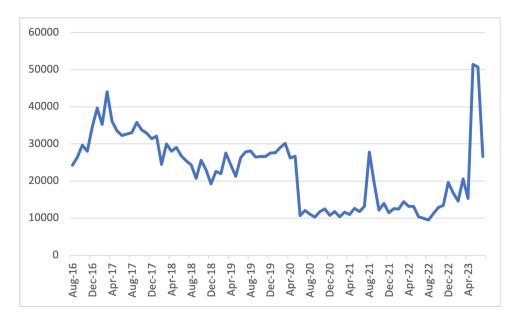


Figure 3: Number of visits to public website, by month. The number of visits for each month is the sum of the visits from distinct IP addresses on each day.

• Shengwu Li: 2020-07-01 to 2026-06-30

• George J. Mailath: 2017-07-01 to 2026-06-30

• Philipp Sadowski: 2020-07-01 to 2026-06-30

• Uzi Segal: 2005-04-26 to 2026-06-30

• Juuso Välimäki: 2020-07-01 to 2026-06-30

6 Users, members, website

6.1 Users

Currently we have 6,497 registered "users" who can submit and referee papers. New issues are now sent out via the ES email list.

6.2 Visits to public website

Figure 3 shows the number of visits to the public website each month. (Multiple visits from the same IP address during a single day (Eastern time) are counted as a single visit.) The number of visits is lower than 2016-2019 probably because Wiley's website diverts some of the traffic.

6.3 RSS

An RSS feed automatically included accepted and published papers. Accepted papers are added when the author uploads the final version after acceptance (at which point it is available on our website as a "Paper to appear").

6.4 Twitter

We tweet out a summary of the paper (written by the author) along with a link to the paper and a picture of the abstract when an accepted paper is posted as forthcoming. We have 6,885 followers up from 5,565 in 2022 and 2,518 in 2021.