<u>**Writing guide**</u>

Policy paper structure:
- Your policy papers must be structured around the following 6 sections:
    - 1. Introduction: State the issue at hand, the core aim of your policy recommendations, and list your policy recommendations.
    - 2. Background: Outline the relevant background information on the issue.
    - 3. Issues: Outline why [YOUR TOPIC] is an issue that needs to be addressed.
    - 4. Policy recommendations: First, outline the core aim of your policy recommendations. Second, state each policy recommendation. Third, expand on each of these policy recommendations (write them out in full). This section should constitute no less than 40% of the total word count.
    - 5. Conclusion: Provide a recapitulation of the issue, state the core aim of your policy recommendations, re-state each policy recommendation, and finally state what these policies hope to achieve.
    - 6. Bibliography: All sources must be referenced using Chicago style with in text references (no footnotes).
- For an example of how the policy papers should be structured please see the [SOAS Policy Forum's own papers](#).

Apply the [SOAS core criteria](#):
- Utilisation of proper academic style
- Relevance of material selected and of the arguments proposed
- Logical coherence
- Critical evaluation
- Comprehensiveness of research
- Evidence of synthesis
- Innovation/creativity/originality

Before you begin:
- You should read at least two policy papers from professional think tanks (please see the [policy paper examples document](#)), even if they are not necessarily relevant to your topic. You should pay particular attention to the policy recommendations sections in order to familiarise yourself with how the authors articulate their policy recommendations. This should give you an idea of the style you should emulate when you write your policy recommendations.

Writing advice:
- Refer to primary sources. For example, refer to government watchdogs reports (e.g. the [Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction](#)) and IGO reports (e.g. the [UNODC Afghanistan Opium Survey 2017](#)). Doing so will result in a better grounded and more sophisticated paper.
- Use data. For example, refer to [Worldwide Governance Indicators](#), specific reports (e.g. the [Brookings Afghanistan Index](#)), and polls ([Asia Foundation Afghan Survey](#)). This too will make for a better grounded and reliable paper.
- Be specific, clear, and concise without being superficial.
- Do not be vague, as explained in this [video](#) (17:59-18:28) by the managing editor of Foreign Affairs Magazine.

Support:
- If you are unsure how best to approach an issue you are interested in, or choose an issue to write about, please contact the Policy Forum committee (soaspoliform@gmail.com). We are more than happy to provide support and guidance.