

# Ethics and Malpractice Statement<sup>1</sup>

## For Authors

The attribution of a contribution to one or more author(s) should reflect the reality. It is unethical to omit names of scholars who contributed to the research. All researchers who made a significant contribution should be listed as co-authors. Crediting as an author any person who did not make a substantial contribution to the conception, execution, or interpretation of the research reported in the paper is also a breach of publication ethics. Scholars who have a lesser involvement in the research should thus be listed as contributors or identified in the acknowledgements.

When submitting a text for publication, authors should disclose any possible conflict of interest that could affect their objectivity in a cover letter and/or footnote to the manuscript. Conflicts of interest can be personal, commercial, political, academic, or financial. The funding body of the research and/or any other source of (financial) support, including funding for open access publication and for writing, indexing, or editorial assistance, should be mentioned here as well, or else indicated in the acknowledgements section.

All forms of plagiarism — which might range from literally copying someone else's work to paraphrasing another researcher's ideas or copying their research methods without giving due credit — is considered unacceptable. All sources, direct or indirect, should be fully acknowledged. When a passage is copied word for word from a previously published work, it should be identified as a citation, either by placing it between quotation marks or else by formatting it as a block quotation, and its source should be cited correctly. These rules also apply when an author makes use of their own work, which has previously been published elsewhere; the author is required to correctly cite and refer to the original source to avoid self-plagiarism and text recycling.

Submitting papers that do not contain original, hitherto unpublished research, is considered dishonest and therefore unethical. Simultaneously submitting the same paper to more than one journal is unacceptable: as long as a paper is under review with one journal, it cannot be submitted elsewhere. Resubmitting or offering for publication identical or near-identical content to that found in a prior publication, 'salami slicing', and other forms of redundant publication are likewise considered a breach of publication ethics. Re-publication of a translation of a paper in another language is acceptable, provided that full reference is given to the original, and that the first publisher has granted approval.

Authors who discover any mistakes or inaccuracies in their work must promptly notify the journal editor and publisher and provide them with a correction or *erratum* as soon as possible. When the error is such that it renders the entire work or parts of it invalid, the paper should be retracted, and a public explanation of the reason for this retraction given.

## For Journal Editors and Peer Reviewers

Editors are responsible for everything that is published in their journal: they decide which of the papers submitted to the journal are accepted for publication. They should have quality control mechanisms in place as a key part of the decision-making process, both to ensure the excellence of the published

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<sup>1</sup> Main source of information:

Documentation of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), mainly Code of conduct

<https://publicationethics.org/files/2008%20Code%20of%20Conduct.pdf>

[https://publicationethics.org/files/Code%20of%20Conduct\\_2.pdf](https://publicationethics.org/files/Code%20of%20Conduct_2.pdf)

material, and to encourage accuracy, completeness, and clarity of research. All content published in the journal should therefore be subjected to peer review. Submitted papers can be rejected without peer review when the content, publication language and/or type of paper do not match with the scope of the journal. Non-peer-reviewed sections, if any are included, should be clearly identified as such.

Journal editors should adopt policies and procedures to guarantee an unbiased, objective, and timely peer review process. Papers should be reviewed strictly on academic merit, based on reports prepared by referees who have been commissioned by their specialism in the appropriate field. Journal editors have a duty to ensure that the screening is done fairly and independently, without regard to the author's race, gender, sexual orientation, religious belief, ethnic origin, citizenship, or political philosophy, and without any conflicts of interest. Journals should adopt specific procedures for ensuring a fair peer review of submissions made by editors, members of the editorial or advisory board, and other editorial staff. It is obvious that they can never be involved in editorial decisions about their own work.

Journal editors guarantee that all material under review is treated confidentially. No information about the submitted paper can be distributed to anyone other than the corresponding author, (candidate) referees and other editorial advisers, and the publisher. Journal editors and peer reviewers may not use any unpublished content disclosed in submitted papers for their own research purposes without the explicit written consent of the author.

Peer reviewers are expected to assess the originality of the research, to draw attention to any redundant publication and plagiarism, and to point out relevant literature that is not yet referred to. Prior to accepting a peer review request, selected referees should report any conflicts of interest that might influence their opinion. They should also notify the journal editors when a prompt review would be impossible or when they feel unqualified to assess the paper.

All comments offered by referees in the peer review report should be passed on in their entirety to the author. Unless otherwise stated in the description of the journal's peer review process, journal editors ensure reports are sent in an anonymous form to protect the identity of the peer reviewer.

Journal editors should not force authors to cite articles from their journal for non-scholarly reasons, to artificially increase the journals metrics and to inappropriately influence the journal's ranking and impact factor.

When authors or readers point out genuine errors in published material to the journal editors, the editors must be willing to publish a correction or clarification, or else to initiate the process of retracting the flawed publication. Journal editors should also offer authors the opportunity to respond to critics.