

Publishing Ethics: Academic Research

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Introduction

This document outlines the best practice principles that our publishing house and editors apply to our books, journals and series. These guidelines will be useful to many different groups, including authors, reviewers, editors within and outside of online editing tool, societies, institutes, universities and funders.

We follow and fully comply best practice and transparency principles provided by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE); a global not-for-profit organisation which aims to support publishers and editors to achieve high standards in publishing ethics. We also follow standards and best practice guidelines set by other relevant industry associations.

In addition to the general principles, we expect our editorial teams to provide specific guidelines and policies for authors on research ethics appropriate to their subject matter and discipline.

Anyone who believes that research published by our publishing house has not been carried out in line with Publishing Ethics should raise their concern with email editors@scientific.net. Concerns will be addressed by following COPE guidelines where possible and/or by escalating the matter to our Publishing Quality Control Team, if necessary.

Editorial Process

We strive in all cases to exclude from whole editorial and publishing process any corporate, business, financial or political influence. We are committed to editorial independence. We do not discriminate against authors, editors or peer reviewers based on personal characteristics or identity. We are committed to embedding diversity, removing barriers to inclusion, and promoting equity at every stage of our publishing process. We actively seek and encourage submissions from scholars of diverse backgrounds, including race and ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, and disability.

Proposals submitted for our book publishing programme are initially reviewed by inhouse editors, who may also consult relevant external editors or subject specialists. If the proposal is suitable for consideration, the proposal, along with sample content, will be sent to a minimum of two external and independent peer reviewers. The peer reviewers' assessments are used to inform the editor's decision as to whether or not to recommend publication. Our editors are free to solicit additional reviews and guidance postcontract to inform the development of the manuscript.

Editorial decisions on manuscripts submitted to our journals and series are made by external academic editors and based on independent peer review reports.

We encourage all journals and series to provide a public policy and process for considering appeals of editorial decisions. Please contact individual journals by journal's email address provided on the journal homepage for details about this process.

We do not tolerate abusive behaviour or correspondence towards our staff and others involved in the publishing process on our behalf. If anyone involved in this process engages in such behaviour we have the right to take action to protect others from this abuse. This may include, for example, withdrawal of a manuscript from consideration, or challenging clearly abusive peer review comments.

Peer Review

Peer review is critical to maintaining the standards of our publications. We:

- provide appropriate systems, training and support to facilitate rigorous, fair and effective peer review for all our publications;
- encourage our editors and peer reviewers to familiarise themselves with and act in accordance with relevant best practice guidelines on peer review. For journal editors and peer reviewers, please refer to COPE's Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers;
- expect those who oversee the peer review process to be able to recognise warning signs of fraudulent or manipulated peer review, and to raise any concerns by emailing editors@scientific.net. People who oversee the peer review process may be internal or/and contracted by us directly or indirectly;
- support our editors and peer reviewers in investigating and acting on any suspected cases of manipulated or fraudulent peer review;
- protect the confidentiality of participants in the peer review process where anonymity forms part of that publication's peer review process. We also expect our publishing partners, authors and peer reviewers to uphold any relevant confidentiality arrangements for each book, series or journal and to provide necessary information to support this.

Authorship and Contributorship

We acknowledge that different disciplines and publication formats have different norms for who is listed as an author. Where no other guidance is specified, we recommend applying the following principles.

- Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work; and/or
- Drafting the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content; and/or
- Final approval of the version to be published; and
- Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work and to ensure that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

The corresponding author's specific responsibilities include:

- Manuscript correction and proofreading. Handling the revisions and re-submission of revised manuscripts up to the acceptance of the manuscripts.
- Agreeing to and signing the Author Publishing Agreement on behalf of relevant co-authors and/or arranging for any third-party copyright owners' signature;
- Arranging for payment of an APC (article processing charge) where one is required. The affiliation of the corresponding author is used to determine eligibility for discounted or waived APCs under Open Access Agreements.
- Acting on behalf of all co-authors in responding to queries from all sources post-publication, including questions relating to publishing ethics, reuse of content, or the availability of data, materials, resources etc.

We encourage authors to list anyone who does not meet the criteria for authorship in an Acknowledgments section in their publication with permission, for example to recognise the contributions of anyone who provided research or writing assistance.

COPE also provides extensive resources on authorship and authorship disputes, and we encourage anyone involved in editorial decisions to familiarise themselves with these resources. We support our editors in dealing with any authorship disputes, including escalating or seeking advice on cases with COPE. We integrate with established and emerging industry standards to increase transparency in authorship (for example, ORCID). We support initiatives that enable transparency in authorship and contributorship.

Affiliations

Any article affiliations should represent the institution(s) at which the research presented was conducted and/or supported and/or approved. For non-research content, any affiliations should represent the institution(s) with which each author is currently affiliated.

Plagiarism

We do not tolerate plagiarism in any of our publications, and we reserve the right to check all submissions through appropriate plagiarism checking tools. Submissions containing suspected plagiarism, in whole or part, will be rejected. If plagiarism is discovered postpublication, we will follow our guidance outlined in the Retractions, Corrections and Expressions of Concern section of these guidelines. We expect our readers, reviewers and editors to raise any suspicions of plagiarism, either by contacting the relevant editor or by emailing editors@scientific.net.

Duplicate and Redundant Publication

Duplicate or redundant publication, or ‘self-plagiarism’, occurs when a work, or substantial parts of a work, is published more than once by the author(s) of the work without appropriate cross-referencing or justification for the overlap. This can be in the same or a different language.

Based on COPE’s definition of redundant publication, available at: <https://publicationethics.org/category/keywords/redundant-publication>

We do not support substantial overlap between publications, unless:

- it is felt that editorially this will strengthen the academic discourse; and
- we have clear approval from the original publication; and
- we include citation of the original source.

We expect our readers, reviewers and editors to raise any suspicions of duplicate or redundant publication, either by contacting the relevant editor or by emailing editors@scientific.net.

When authors submit manuscripts to our journals or series, these manuscripts should not be under consideration, accepted for publication or in press within a different journal, book or similar entity, unless a journal is explicit that it does not have an exclusive submission policy. However, deposition of a preprint on the author’s personal website, in an institutional repository, or in a preprint archive shall not be viewed as prior or duplicate publication. Authors should follow our Preprint Policy regarding preprint archives and maintaining the version of record.

Any manuscript based on a thesis should be a reworking of the material in the thesis and written to conform to the journal’s style guide or relevant book guidance. When quoting from the thesis or reusing figures, authors should avoid self-plagiarism by citing and referencing any extracts copied or adapted from the thesis appropriately. If a thesis was published by a publisher and is

publicly accessible, permission may be required from the thesis publisher before submitting to a journal or series. The relevant editor should be informed that the manuscript draws on a thesis in the cover letter.

Research with Humans or Animals

Research involving humans or animals should be approved by relevant ethics committee(s) and should conform to international ethical and legal standards for research.

Competing Interests and Funding

Editors and reviewers are required to declare any potential competing interests that could interfere with the objectivity or integrity of a publication. Competing interests are situations that could be perceived to exert an undue influence on the presentation, review or publication of a piece of work. These may be financial, non-financial, professional, contractual or personal in nature. We also expect that anyone who suspects an undisclosed competing interests regarding a work published or under consideration should inform the relevant editor or email editors@scientific.net.

Many of our publications require the inclusion of a funding declaration in addition to a competing interest declaration. Please check with the relevant journal or book editor regarding declaration requirements.

Libel, Defamation and Freedom of Expression

Freedom of expression is critical to us as academic publishers, but we do not support publishing false statements that harm the reputation of individuals, groups, or organisations. Our legal team can advise on pre-publication libel reviews, and will also address allegations of libel in any of our publications.

Retractions, Corrections and Expressions of Concern

Journal and series editors will consider retractions, corrections or expressions of concern in line with COPE's Retraction Guidelines. If an author is found to have made an error, the journal will issue a corrigendum. If the journal is found to have made an error, they will issue an erratum. Retractions are usually reserved for articles that are so seriously flawed that their findings or conclusions should not be relied upon, or that contain substantial plagiarism or life-endangering content. Journals and series that publish Accepted Manuscripts may make minor changes such as those which would likely occur during copyediting, typesetting or proofreading, but any substantive corrections will be carried out in line with COPE's Retraction Guidelines.

In exceptional cases, we may remove an article from online publication where we believe it is necessary to comply with our legal obligations. This includes, without limitation, where we have concerns that the article is defamatory, violates personal privacy or confidentiality laws, is the subject of a court order, or might pose a serious health risk to the general public. In these circumstances, we may decide to remove the article and publish a notice that clearly states why the full article has been removed.

We also participate in Crossmark; a multi-publisher initiative to provide a standard way for readers to locate the current version of a piece of content, view any changes that have occurred, and access additional information about that publication record.

Image Manipulation, Falsification and Fabrication

Where research data are collected or presented as images, modifying these images can sometimes misrepresent the results obtained or their significance. We recognise that there can be legitimate reasons for modifying images, but we expect authors to avoid modifying images where this leads to the falsification, fabrication, or misrepresentation of their results.

Fraudulent Research and Research Misconduct

Where we are made aware of fraudulent research or research misconduct by an author, our first concern is the integrity of content we have published. We work with the relevant editor(s), COPE, and other appropriate institutions or organisations, to investigate. Any publication found to include fraudulent results will be retracted, or an appropriate correction or expression of concern will be issued. Please see the Retractions, Corrections and Expressions of Concern section of these guidelines for more information.

Versions and Adaptations

Our publications are distributed in many different global cultural, environmental and economic contexts. We may therefore issue different versions of some of our products in order to cater to these contexts. We neither modify existing, published content nor originate new materials to meet political or ideological requirements where we judge these to compromise the quality, effectiveness or factual accuracy of the materials or to conflict with our Code of Ethics.

We grant licences in volume and subsidiary rights to third-parties which permit the reproduction, reuse or adaptation of our content in different contexts, languages and territories.

Transparency

We strive to follow COPE's Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing and encourage our publishing partners to uphold these same principles. Data and Supporting Evidence

We support transparency and openness around data, code, and other materials associated with research. We expect authors to maintain accurate records of supporting evidence necessary to allow others to understand, verify, and replicate new findings, and to supply or provide access to this supporting evidence, on reasonable request. Where appropriate and where allowed by their employer, funding body or others who might have an interest, we encourage authors to:

- deposit evidence in a suitable repository or storage location, for sharing and further use by others; and
- describe where the evidence may be found in a Data Availability Statement which authors should include in their publication.

Many of our publications also permit authors to submit and publish supplementary materials that are not essential for inclusion or that cannot be accommodated in the main text, but that would be of benefit to the reader. Unless otherwise stated, it should be assumed that data, code, and other materials or supplementary files will not be peer-reviewed.

Integrity of Record

We maintain a record of the existence of everything we publish with information (metadata) describing each publication. If our content is deemed not to comply with the laws of a sovereign nation, we make every effort to ensure the metadata remain accessible within that jurisdiction. Where we are obliged to alter the publication record in any way, such as in the case of research misconduct leading to retraction of a publication, we preserve the academic record as far possible. See the Retractions, Corrections and Expressions of Concern of these guidelines for information about how we do this.

We apply these same principles to our marketing, and do not modify or manipulate the representation of the academic record in our marketing activities.

When any product (chapter, article, book or journal) is purchased or subscribed to, we supply it only in its totality to the customer, who is not entitled to alter its content in any way that is inconsistent with the licensing terms under which it was published. Any sale of disaggregated products is subject to the contracts with the copyright holders of the original products.

Ethical Business Practices

Fair Access

We have an expansive developing country programme to allow free or low-cost access to our digital content for researchers in developing countries. We also participate in global access initiatives to ensure that academics from eligible low and middle-income countries are able to publish in our Open Access journals. We also review and consider requests for waivers from academics who have insufficient funds to pay an Article Processing Charge for Open Access publication.

Censorship

We support COPE's Statement on Censorship.

Marketing Communication

Social media and email communication are powerful tools for disseminating and engaging with our publications, for reaching new readers and for keeping content alive. However, such onward communication should never be at the expense of the integrity of the content or of the academic record. All colleagues with responsibility for our social media channels are expected to familiarise themselves with relevant social media policies.

Advertising

We allow for limited, appropriate and sometimes targeted advertising on our online platform, and within some of our print publications. Where present, advertising must:

- be independent from editorial decisions on what we publish;
- be clearly distinct from content.

We reserve the right to reject or remove any advertising. We also advertise our products and services to customers. We do so in accordance with our Privacy Policy, data protection regulations, the Advertising Standards Authority's Guidance on the Marketing of Publications, and our internal Compliance procedures.

PR / Media

Where we solicit or encourage media activities concerning one of our authors, editors or publishing partners, we strive to keep them informed.

Metrics, Usage and Reporting

We endeavour to ensure that our reporting of content usage remains compliant with the industry standard and the COUNTER Code of Practice. We seek to implement new releases of COUNTER at the earliest opportunity in order to allow our customers and publishing partners to compare our usage resources with data received from other publishers and vendors.

We partner with a number of third parties, including commercial services, to provide our users with metrics to illustrate the impact and reception of our content. We do not seek to control or influence these third parties and we are not responsible for the metrics and rankings they produce.

Useful contacts

- For all enquiries relating to the integrity of content or COPE Core Practice areas, please contact office@scientific.net. All queries will be handled sensitively and as confidentially as possible within the scope of any necessary subsequent investigation.
- For all commercial licensing enquiries across books, series and journals, as well as bulk and customised/branded book special sales, journal advertising, reprints and supplementary issues, contact office@scientific.net.
- For enquiries regarding advertising in any of our Academic products or platforms, including journal issues, contact office@scientific.net
- For enquiries regarding third-parties licenses to translate and reprint whole books under the licensee's own imprint, contact office@scientific.net
- For any enquiries, contact e.antonova@scientific.net
- To report counterfeiting, copyright infringement or suspected piracy, contact office@scientific.net

Related information:

<https://www.scientific.net/PolicyAndEthics/Ethics>

<https://www.scientific.net/PolicyAndEthics/PublishingPolicies>

<https://www.scientific.net/PolicyAndEthics/TermsAndConditions>
<https://www.scientific.net/Home/PrivacyPolicy>