



Taylor & Francis Group
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EDITORRESOURCES

Supporting Taylor & Francis journal editors

Ensuring ethical integrity

INTRODUCTION

Journal editors hear a lot about publishing ethics and ethics misconduct. They might even have dealt with allegations of misconduct in articles submitted to or published in their journals. At their core, publishing ethics are guidelines for authors, editors, and reviewers. They are in place to maintain the integrity of the peer review and publication process. You should contact your Taylor & Francis Managing Editor if you have any questions about publishing ethics or are handling a (potential) case of publishing misconduct on your journal.

Contents

Taylor & Francis and the Committee on Publishing Ethics (COPE)

Taylor & Francis is a member of the COPE and follows its principles on how to manage allegations of misconduct. Taylor & Francis editors may attend COPE Forums, access the flowcharts and submit queries to COPE for advice. We recommend journal editors join COPE and adhere to its principles. By committing to investigate allegations of misconduct, you ensure the integrity of research.

For more information on COPE and the ten core practices of member journals, visit the COPE website: www.publicationethics.org

Ethical guidelines for journal editors

We ask all journal editors to make every reasonable effort to adhere to the following ethical guidelines for articles submitted for peer review in Taylor & Francis journals:

- Journal editors should give unbiased consideration to each manuscript submitted for publication. They should judge each on its merits, without regard to race, religion, nationality, sex, seniority, or institutional affiliation of the author(s).
- Journal editors must keep the peer-review process confidential. They must not share information about a manuscript with anyone outside of the peer-review process.
- If a journal editor receives a credible allegation of misconduct by an author, reviewer, or journal editor, then they have a duty to investigate the matter with Taylor & Francis.
- Journal editors may reject a submitted manuscript without formal peer review if they consider it to be inappropriate for the journal and outside its scope.
- Journal editors should make all reasonable effort to process submissions on time.
- Journal editors should delegate the peer review of any original self-authored research article to a member of the editorial or advisory board as appropriate.
- If a journal editor receives convincing evidence that the main substance or conclusions of an article published in the journal are incorrect, then, in consultation with Taylor & Francis, the journal editor should ensure the publication of an appropriate notice of correction.
- Any data or analysis presented in a submitted manuscript should not be used in a journal editor's own research without the consent of the author.

Why is research ethics important?

Following ethical research guidelines as a journal editor ensures that:

- They treat all papers fairly and without bias during the review process.
- They investigate any allegations made about articles, whether under peer review or already published, in line with industry standards.

Following ethical guidelines is also a sign of trust. It shows that the editors and independent peer reviewers have evaluated the paper. Readers should have enough information on any conflicts of interest and ethical approval to draw their own conclusions about the results presented in the paper.

The role of editors in ensuring ethical integrity

All journal editors play a vital role in safe-guarding the integrity of the peer-review process. They ensure that all submissions get the same treatment by following ethical guidelines.

Editors are the first point of contact for a journal. They are likely to receive the first allegations of misconduct. If you receive an allegation of misconduct, contact your Taylor & Francis Managing Editor. They will support you through the investigation and will contact any parties involved.

Common ethical issues and how to handle them

Some of the most common issues you are likely to face as a journal editor are:

- allegations of plagiarism and dual submission
- authorship disputes
- author and reviewer conflicts of interest

PLAGIARISM & DUAL SUBMISSION

For plagiarism or dual submission, you may choose to use similarity detection software. Contact your Taylor & Francis Managing Editor to run a paper through the [Crossref Similarity Check](#) software. This software can provide a visual and quantifiable sign of text overlap in a manuscript.

Your journal Editorial Board members are also an invaluable asset when investigating plagiarism. Their subject-specific knowledge is useful in assessing the novelty in suspect manuscripts. They can also conduct further evaluation of the paper and allegations when required.

After investigation, if the allegations appear to be true, the COPE guidelines suggest contacting the author(s) of the paper to request an explanation of the overlapping material.

Based on the investigation and reply from the author(s), you can decide how to proceed. There are some key options you can consider:

- If a paper is still in peer review, your decision might be to send it back to the author for revision. You should request that they address the issues through appropriate citation, use of quote marks to identify direct quotes, or re-writing.
- If the similarity between the manuscripts is too extensive for revision, or if the paper is already published, a rejection or a retraction may be more appropriate.

You can access the full range of COPE guides and resources at all times. Useful guidelines include:

- [Suspected plagiarism in a published manuscript](#)
- [Suspected redundant publication in a submitted manuscript](#)
- [Suspected redundant publication in a published manuscript](#)
- [How to deal with text recycling](#)

AUTHORSHIP DISPUTES

Authorship disputes are one of the most common complaints made to journals. As such, guidelines to help define authorship are essential. Journal article authors must name all persons who have a reasonable claim to authorship as co-authors.

A “co-author” is defined as any person who has made a significant scholarly contribution to the work reported, and who shares responsibility and accountability for the results.

Where two or more authors have prepared an article, Taylor & Francis requires a designated Corresponding Author.

In signing a Publishing Agreement, the Corresponding Author warrants that:

- All named co-authors have authorized her or him to act as an agent on their behalf.
- All named co-authors have authorized her or him to sign the Publishing Assignment on their behalf.
- All named co-authors have agreed the order of names given in the article.

There are cases of mixed copyright status – for example, where one author is a civil servant – or any co-author waiving her or his copyright in favor of a government copyright assertion. In such cases, the Corresponding Author must confirm that the co-author has agreed to do so, and in doing so retains her or his right to be named as a co-author.

- All named co-authors must have made a significant contribution to the work reported. This includes research conception or design, and/or acquisition of data, and/or the analysis and interpretation of those data.
- All named co-authors are responsible for drafting, writing, and revising the article, or checking and confirming the article before submission.
- All named co-authors approve the final version of the article before submission.
- All named co-authors are aware and approve of submitting the final version of the article.
- All named co-authors accept that if the article is found to be unsafe, in error, fraudulent, or in breach of warranties made, they share responsibility.

- All named co-authors agree to empower the Corresponding Author to act on their behalf with respect to:
 - Communication with the journal's Editorial Office on submission and during the peer review process. This includes the coordination of revisions required by peer reviewers, and preparation of a Final Revised Version of the article.
 - Communication with the journal's publisher during the article production process. This includes checking, correcting, and approving the accuracy of all content in article proofs.
 - Communication with the journal's publisher about the published version of the article, the Version of Scholarly Record. This includes its marketing (where appropriate).

AFFILIATION

The Corresponding Author must ensure all address, email, and telephone data are correct for all named co-authors. The affiliations of all named co-authors should be the affiliation where the research was conducted. If any of the named co-authors moves affiliation during the peer review process, the new affiliation may be given as a footnote.

Read findings from our co-authorship whitepaper – [Co-authorship in the Humanities and Social Sciences: a global view](#).

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

What is a conflict of interest?

A conflict of interest describes a situation in which an author or author group have potential competing interests, be it professional or financial, in the submission and publication of their paper and its research. This is to the extent that it might skew or corrupt their manuscript, or the results of their research.

Transparency is key

During a manuscript submission, the author can declare any interests affecting their paper. They can do this in their cover letter, or by answering a conflict of interest question on the peer review systems submission form. By volunteering this information and ensuring complete transparency, the author significantly contributes to diffusing any potential concerns regarding competing interests. This will help to maintain the integrity of their research.

An author has declared a conflict of interest; how do you proceed?

A declared conflict of interest doesn't necessarily imply that the research is problematic. But, it allows you to check the information provided by the author, and to assess the manuscript fairly for any undue bias.

If you find that the results are based on sound research, and they reached their conclusions independent of any conflicting interests, you should allow the manuscript to progress to peer review. For full disclosure, you should publish any conflict of interest alongside the article. This will uphold the integrity of both the research and the journal.

However, if the conflict of interest significantly affects the interpretation of the results, you should consider a rejection. If you're concerned that the information provided by the author compromises the integrity of the research, contact your Taylor & Francis Managing Editor.

After the fact: the author has declared a conflict of interest post-publication

If the author doesn't declare any conflicts of interest until a manuscript is accepted or published, you should consider this misconduct on their part. Take this up with your Taylor & Francis Managing Editor.

You can find more information on conflicts of interest [here](#).

Seven tips for handling ethical issues

1 Keep the case confidential

Don't copy in people who aren't involved in investigating the concern. This means you shouldn't circulate information before you've established the facts of the case.

2 Contact your Taylor & Francis Managing Editor for guidance and support

Chances are they've dealt with this or something similar before. Your Managing Editor can support you as you investigate the case, and can provide useful email templates and guidance documents.

3 Use the COPE flowcharts

Stuck for the next step in the process? COPE's research ethics flowcharts will help you investigate a case of potential misconduct.

4 Request a Crossref Similarity Check report

If you're unsure about the originality of an article, contact your Managing Editor for a Crossref Similarity Check report. This will flag any text matches to papers held in the Crossref Similarity Check database.

5 Draw on your editorial board for subject-specific expertise

They will have subject-specific knowledge that may help the investigation and can provide an expert review of the concerns raised. Think about appointing an editorial board member who has a permanent role in investigating ethical issues.

6 Take advantage of peer review systems features

If you suspect a potential ethical issue in peer review, first place the process on hold. It might be helpful to make it visual using the manuscript flags on your ScholarOne Manuscripts or Editorial Manager site. You should then notify your Taylor & Francis Managing Editor of the concern and liaise with them to investigate the issue.

Depending on the outcome of the investigation and the severity of the ethical issue, you may wish to:

- Remove the manuscript flag and resume the peer-review process;
- Make a revision decision showing how the author(s) should change their submission to make it acceptable for further consideration; or
- Make an immediate reject decision on the manuscript.

Your peer-review system will also contain any information on funding or conflicts of interest declared when the author submitted the manuscript.

6 Use it as an education opportunity

Use this to reflect on the journal's policies and guidelines. You may want to write an editorial or take this chance to update guidance for authors, especially if clearer guidelines may have prevented the problem.

Each journal's Aims & Scope page on Taylor & Francis Online has a peer review statement. The Instructions for Authors page should clearly state the information an author needs to submit their manuscript to the journal.

Further resources

Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)

[COPE](#) is a forum for editors of peer-reviewed journals to discuss issues related to the integrity of the scientific record. It supports and encourages editors to report, catalog and investigate ethical problems in the publication process. COPE aims to define best practice in research ethics and to assist authors, editors, researchers and publishers. COPE first published a set of guidelines as [Guidelines on Good Publication Practice](#).

Council of Science Editors (CSE)

[CSE](#)'s mission is to promote excellence in the communication of scientific information. [CSE's White paper on promoting integrity in scientific journal publications](#) covers the responsibilities of all parties involved in publishing and identifies research misconduct and guidelines for action.

International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE)

The [ICMJE](#) is a group of general medical journal editors. Its participants meet annually and fund their work on the [Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts \(URM\) submitted to biomedical journals](#).

World Association of Medical Editors (WAME)

Established in 1995, [WAME](#) (pronounced "whammy") is a non-profit voluntary association. It consists of editors of peer-reviewed medical journals from around the world who seek to foster international cooperation and education of medical journal editors.

Consolidated Standards of Reporting Trials (CONSORT)

[CONSORT](#) includes various initiatives developed by the CONSORT Group. It aims to reduce the problems arising from inadequate reporting of randomized controlled trials (RCTs). CONSORT provides standards for randomized trials.

Sense about Science

[Sense about Science](#) is an independent charitable trust promoting good science and evidence in public debates.