

COPE research findings on publication ethics for arts, humanities, and social sciences

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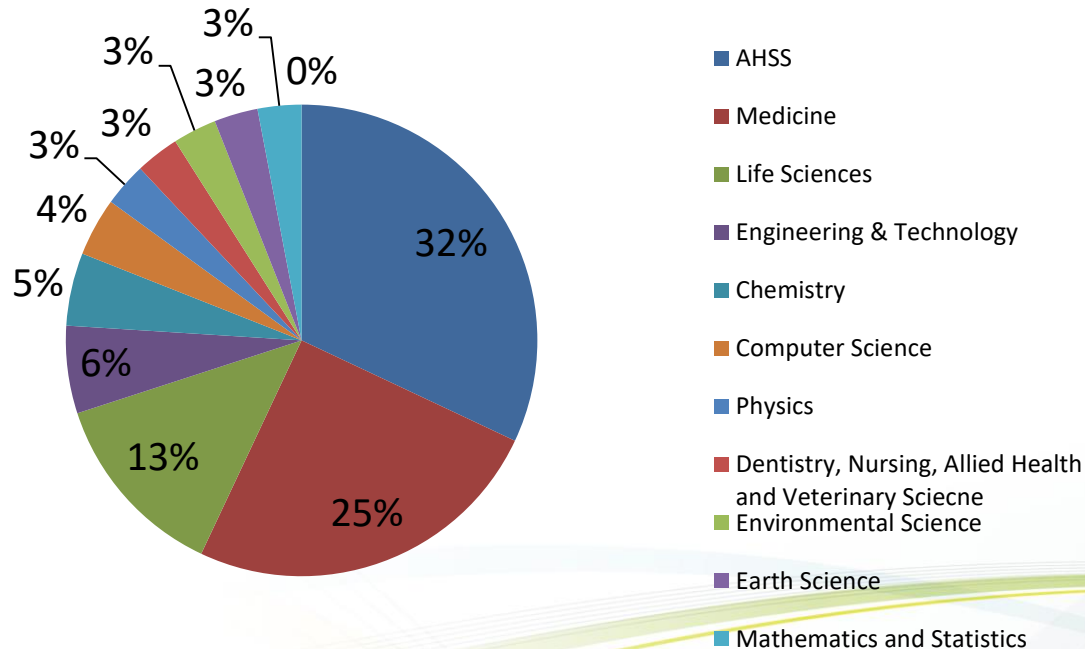
COPE Council Member



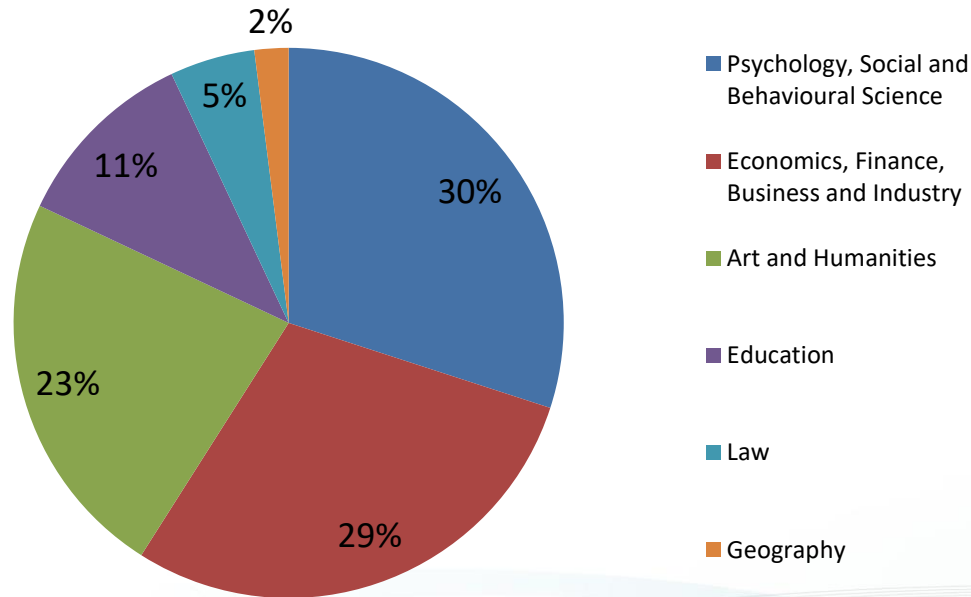
Summary of COPE

- Conceived in 1997
- Now >12,500 journal members (3,960 AHSS) worldwide
- Advisory, education, support: non-statutory
- Remote team of staff + council members and Trustees based internationally
- Council and Trustees: academic editors, publishers, scholarly publishing services
- Flowcharts, guidance, eLearning, Forum, seminars
- Members can bring cases to COPE council via Forums for advice

COPE - % of member journals by subject



COPE - % AHSS member journals by subject



COPE's Most Popular Resources

Page Views on COPE website 1 Jan – 31 Dec 2018

Authorship and contribution **14,733**

Allegations of misconduct **9,946**

Resources/guidelines-new/cope-ethical-guidelines-peer-reviewers **6,856**

Case/paper-submitted-publication-without-consent-or-knowledge-co-authors **6,497**

Resources/guidelines-new/principles-transparency-and-best-practice-scholarly-publishing **6,272**

Resources/text-recycling-guidelines **6,107**

Core practices // Individual resources // COPE cases

Details of the survey

- Two online focus groups ($n = 10$ respondents)
- E-survey ($n = 656$ responses, 463 COPE members)
- 83% voluntary EiCs, 13% employed Eds
- 5% < 12 months experience, 29% > 11 years
- 37% USA, 21% UK, 17% EU, 9% Australia + NZ, 4% Asia, 4% Canada, 4% C and S.

America

Awareness of COPE and what resources are offered (1)

- 28% unaware of COPE
- 27% low awareness
- 21% medium awareness
- 33% high awareness (73% of current COPE members)



Awareness of COPE and what resources are offered (2)

- 36% of Humanities and 44% specifically in History were unaware
- Almost half had medium awareness – of those many were unaware of some resources, including **Forum, Flowcharts, Guidelines, Cases**
- High awareness tended to be editors with long experience, considering **Forum, Flowcharts, Guidelines, Cases** to be extremely useful
- Those that knew COPE well better perceived it as more relevant, with COPE members considering it highly relevant

Misperceptions of what COPE does

Of those with medium or high awareness of COPE they were asked to summarise what COPE did.

- ‘Offered guidelines and support’, but not ‘education’
- ‘Publication ethics’, but no specific actions or issues related to those
- Some assumed COPE adjudicated on issues, rather than offering suggestions
- Some thought COPE had regulatory or statutory powers, including setting policy
- Many didn’t actually know what COPE did
- *What COPE actually does is...*



Relevance of editor, editorial board, publisher and COPE as sources of support

- Editorial colleagues, editorial boards, publisher contacts (especially known individuals) were considered somewhat or extremely important sources by >80%
- Professional bodies, society officers, ethics committees and COPE were considered somewhat or extremely important sources by 40 – 60%
- When COPE was not mentioned it tended to be because of a lack of awareness that COPE was a potential source of support

Common issues of publication ethics

- Language and writing-quality, while remaining inclusive ^
- Plagiarism, including self-plagiarism * ^
- Bias in reviewer comments ^
- Managing complaints and appeals
- IP and copyright #
- Fraudulent submissions * #
- Data and / or image fabrication * #
- ^ Most widespread # Least confident in dealing with * Most serious



Authorship and attribution

- Plagiarism – 58%, Self-plagiarism - >50% (esp. Business, Finance, Economics)
- ? ‘Caused by need to publish or perish’, leading to ‘salami-slicing’
- Possibly prevents submission of thesis-based papers



Submissions and data

- 44% felt fraudulent submissions among most serious issues
- 24% felt lack of confidence in dealing with it
- 31% felt data / image fabrication also serious
- 24% felt lack of confidence in dealing with it



Conclusions and Recommendations (1)

Strengths

COPE is respected by those who know it.

Guidelines and flow charts extremely useful.

Aware of importance of ethical issues in general and committed to addressing them.

Weaknesses

Knowledge of COPE is not universal – 28% unaware.

Misconceptions of what COPE does – NO statutory or sanction powers.

Other resources not widely known or appreciated.

Personalisation of resources might increase awareness and usefulness for AHSS editors.

Conclusions and Recommendations (2)

Opportunities

Enhance awareness, especially for specific publishers and in the USA.

COPE could offer education and support where this is not provided by publishers (generally, smaller publishers or those with less experience of ethical issues).

AHSS editors would appreciate more support around mentoring authors, mediating between conflicting interests and moderating authorship standards.

Personalisation of resources might increase awareness and usefulness for AHSS editors.



THANK YOU

publicationethics.org

