



Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)

Introduction

The COPE Code of Conduct for Journal Editor is designed to provide a set of minimum standards to which all members of the Editorial Board and the Editors are expected to adhere. The Best Practice Guidelines are more ambitious and aspirational and are developed as a set of guidelines to overcome a wide range of increasingly complex ethical issues. While COPE expects all members to adhere to the Code of Conduct for Journal Editors and the Editorial Board, the COPE will consider complaints against members who have not followed these guidelines. However, the PIM realises that editors may not be able to implement all the Best Practice recommendations (which may, therefore, be considered as voluntary), but it is hoped that our guidelines will identify aspects of journal policy and practice that should be reviewed and discussed.

1 General duties and responsibilities of editors

- 1.1. Editors should be accountable for everything published in the SLJM.

This encapsulates that the editors should,

- 1.2. Ensure to maintain the standards and upgrade such standards continuously.
- 1.3. Strive to meet the needs of readers and authors.
- 1.4. Have processes and procedures in place to assure the quality of the material the PIM publishes.
- 1.5. Uphold freedom of expression
- 1.6. Maintain the integrity of the academic records.
- 1.7. Not compromise intellectual and ethical standards for any business and financial needs.
- 1.8. Be willing to publish corrections, clarifications, retractions and apologies when needed.

Best Practice for Editors would include;

- Seeking the views of authors, readers, reviewers and editorial board members about ways of improving the SLJM
- Encouraging and being aware of research into peer review, publishing and reassessing the SLJM in terms of new findings
- Initiating action to reduce research and publication misconduct.
- Initiating to enlighten researchers / authors about publication ethics
- Assessing periodically the process of journal policies on author and reviewer behaviour and revising policies, as and when necessary.
- Ensuring that press releases, if any, issued by the journal, reflect the message of the reported article in the correct context with accurate content.

2 Relations with readers

- 2.1. Readers should be informed about who has funded research or other scholarly work and whether the funders had any role in the research and its publication and, if so, what this was.

Best practice for editors would include:

- To ensure that all published reports and reviews of research have been reviewed by suitably qualified reviewers possessing relevant expertise. For instance, statistical reviews.
- To ensure that non-peer-reviewed sections of their journal are clearly identified.
- To develop a transparency policy to encourage maximum disclosure about the source/ origin of non-research articles.
- To introduce sound authorship or contributorship systems that promote good practice.

3 Relations with authors

- 3.1. Editors' decisions to accept or reject a research paper for publication should be based on the paper's importance, originality and clarity, and the study's validity, and its relevance within the parameters of the journal.
- 3.2. Editors should not reverse decisions to accept submissions unless serious problems are

identified with the submission.

- 3.3. New editors should not overturn decisions to publish submissions made by the previous editor unless serious problems are identified.
- 3.4. A description of peer review processes should be published, and editors should be ready to provide rationale for any deviation from the described processes.
- 3.5. Editors should publish guidance to authors on everything that is expected of them. This guidance should be regularly updated, and should refer or link to this code. Journals should have a declared set of guidelines for authors to appeal against editorial decisions.
- 3.6. Editors should provide guidance about criteria for authorship and/or who should be listed as a contributor following the standards within the relevant field.

Best practice for editors would include:

- To review author instructions regularly and provide links to relevant guidelines (Example; <https://sljm.pim.sjp.ac.lk/guidelines.php>)
- To publish relevant competing interests for all contributors and publish corrections if competing interests are revealed after publication.
- To be guided by the COPE in cases of suspected misconduct or disputed authorship
- To ensure that appropriate reviewers are selected for the reviewing process with competences in the given area.
- To respect requests from authors that an individual should not review their submission, if these are well-reasoned and practicable.
- To publish submission and acceptance dates for articles

4 Relations with reviewers

- 4.1. Editors should provide guidance to reviewers about the process, and what is expected of them.
- 4.2. Editors should provide the necessary formats to enable reviewers to comment on the relevant research.
- 4.3. Editors should require reviewers to disclose any potential competing interests before agreeing to review a submission.

- 4.4. Editors should have systems to ensure that peer reviewers' identities are protected unless they use an open review system that is declared to authors and reviewers.

Best practice for editors would include:

- To encourage reviewers to effectively and professionally review the research.
- To encourage the reviewers to comment on ethical questions and possible research and publication misconduct raised by submissions. For instance, data manipulation.
- To encourage reviewers to comment on the originality of submissions and to be alert to redundant publication and plagiarism.
- To send reviewers' comments to authors in their entirety unless they contain offensive or unacceptable remarks.
- To recognise and accept the peer review activities as part of the scholarly process.
- To monitor the performance of peer reviewers and take steps to ensure that they maintain the expected high standard.
- To maintain a database of suitable reviewers, and update this on the basis of reviewer performance.

5 Relations with Editorial Board Members

- 5.1. Editors should provide new editorial board members with guidelines on all aspects that is expected of them, and should keep existing members updated on new policies and developments.

Best practice for editors would include:

- identifying suitably qualified editorial board members who can actively contribute to the development and good management of the journal.
- Having policies in place for handling submissions from editorial board members to ensure unbiased review.
- Regularly reviewing the composition of the editorial board
- Providing clear guidance to editorial board members about their expected functions and duties, which might include:

- a) Acting as ambassadors for the journal
- b) Promoting the journal

6 Editorial and peer review processes

6.1 Editors should strive to ensure that peer review of the SLJM is fair, unbiased and timely.

6.2 Editors should have systems to ensure that material submitted to the SLJM remains confidential while under review.

Best practice for editors would include:

- c) Keeping them informed about research into peer review and technological advances.
- d) Adopting peer review methods best suited for their journal and the research community.
- e) Reviewing periodically the panel of reviewers and update accordingly.

7 Quality assurance

7.1. Editors should take all reasonable steps to ensure the quality of the material they publish, recognising that journal's aims and standards are achieved.

Best practice for editors would include:

- f) To have systems in place to detect falsified and manipulated data, as well as plagiarised text, either for routine use or when suspicions are raised.

8 Encouraging ethical research

8.1. Editors should ensure that all research studies are published according to the globally accepted guidelines.

Best practices for editors would include:

- g) To be prepared to request evidence of ethical research approval, and to question authors about ethical aspects.
- h) To select reviewers with both competences and expertise for such articles.

- i) To appoint a third reviewer if necessary.

9. Dealing with possible misconduct

- 9.1. Editors should not simply reject papers that raise concerns about possible misconduct. They are ethically obliged to pursue alleged cases.
- 9.2. Editors have a duty to act if they suspect misconduct or if an allegation of misconduct is brought to them. This duty extends to both published and unpublished papers.
- 9.3. Editors should give an opportunity to the author to explain their “side of story” and seek a response from those suspected of misconduct.
- 9.4. Editors should make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a proper investigation into alleged misconduct is conducted; if this does not happen, editors should make all reasonable attempts to persist in obtaining a solution to the problem. This is an onerous but important duty.

10. Ensuring the integrity of the academic record

- 10.1. Errors, inaccurate or misleading statements must be corrected promptly, and with due prominence.

Best practice for editors would include:

- j) To ensure that published material is securely archived by using an accepted method.
- k) To have systems in place to give authors the opportunity to make original research articles freely available.

11. Intellectual property

- 11.1. Editors should be alert to intellectual property issues, and work with their publisher to handle potential breaches of intellectual property laws and conventions.

Best practice for editors would include:

- l) To adopt systems for detecting plagiarism in submitted articles.
- m) To support authors whose copyright has been breached or who have been the victims of plagiarism.

12. Complaints

- 12.1. Editors should respond promptly to complaints, and should ensure there is way for dissatisfied complainants to take complaints further. This mechanism should be made clear

in the journal, and should include information on how to refer unresolved matters to COPE.

- 12.2. The process adopted at the PIM is that all complaints received by the Editor will be referred to the Director, PIM, who would appoint an Independent Committee to investigate the complaint. Such complaints can be copied to director@pim.sjp.ac.lk in addition to the editor. If the complaint is only against the editor, complaint can be directly made to the Director.

13. Conflicts of interest

- 13.1. Editors should have systems for managing their own conflicts of interest as well as those of their staff, authors, reviewers and editorial board members.
- 13.2. Journals should have a declared process for handling submissions from the editors, employees or members of the editorial board to ensure unbiased review.

Best practice for editors would include:

- Publishing lists of relevant interests (financial, academic and other kinds) of all editorial staff and members of editorial boards (which should be updated at least annually).

The end.