

Ethical Standards

The journal adopts a neutral position on issues treated in it, as it serves to further academic discussions of topics, irrespective of their nature—whether religious, gender-based, environmental, ethical, political or other potentially or topically contentious subjects. Publication of an article in an academic peer-reviewed journal serves several functions, one of which is to validate and preserve the “minutes” of research. It is therefore of immense importance that these “minutes” are accurate and trustworthy. The act of publishing involves many parties, each of which plays an important role in achieving these aims. It therefore follows that the author, the journal editor, the peer-reviewer and the publisher have responsibilities to meet expected ethical standards at all stages in their involvement from submission to publication of an article.

The editors are committed to meeting and upholding standards of ethical behaviour at all stages of the publication process. We are bound to the Ethical Codex of University Employees approved by the Slovak Rectors’ Conference on September 26, 2006, which stresses the correct conduct with regard to intellectual property and rejects plagiarism, and moreover follow closely the industry associations, such as the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICJME) and World Association of Medical Editors (WAME), that set standards and provide guidelines for best practices in order to meet these requirements. Below is a summary of our key expectations of editors, peer-reviewers and authors.

1) Ethical expectations

Editors’ responsibilities

- To act in a balanced, objective and fair way while carrying out their expected duties, without discrimination on grounds of gender, sexual orientation, religious or political beliefs, ethnic or geographical origin of the authors.
- To handle submissions for sponsored supplements or special issues in the same way as other submissions, so that articles are considered and accepted solely on their academic merit and without commercial influence.
- To adopt and follow reasonable procedures in the event of complaints of an ethical or conflict nature, in accordance with the policies and procedures of the Department of East Asian Studies, Comenius University in Bratislava (hereafter: the Department) where appropriate. To give authors a reasonable opportunity to respond to any complaints. All complaints should be investigated no matter when the original publication was approved.
- Documentation associated with any such complaints should be retained.

Reviewers’ responsibilities

- To contribute to the decision-making process, and to assist in improving the quality of the published paper by reviewing the manuscript objectively, in a timely manner
- To maintain the confidentiality of any information supplied by the editor or author. To not retain or copy the manuscript.
- To alert the editor to any published or submitted content that is substantially similar to that under review.
- To be aware of any potential conflicts of interest (financial, institutional, collaborative or other relationships between the reviewer and author) and to alert the editor to these, if necessary

- Withdrawing their services for that manuscript.

Authors' responsibilities

- To maintain accurate records of data associated with their submitted manuscript, and to supply or provide access to these data, on reasonable request. Where appropriate and where allowed by employer, funding body and others who might have an interest, to deposit data in a suitable repository or storage location, for sharing and further use by others.
- To confirm/assert that the manuscript as submitted is not under consideration or accepted for publication elsewhere. Where portions of the content overlap with published or submitted content, to acknowledge and cite those sources. Additionally, to provide the editor with a copy of any submitted manuscript that might contain overlapping or closely related content.
- To confirm that all the work in the submitted manuscript is original and to acknowledge and cite content reproduced from other sources. To obtain permission to reproduce any content from other sources.
- Authors should ensure that any studies involving human or animal subjects conform to national, local and institutional laws and requirements (e.g. WMA Declaration of Helsinki), and confirm that approval has been sought and obtained where appropriate. Authors should obtain express permission from human subjects and respect their privacy.
- To declare any potential conflicts of interest (e.g. where the author has a competing interest – real or apparent – that could be considered or viewed as exerting an undue influence on his or her duties at any stage during the publication process).
- To notify promptly the journal editor or publisher if a significant error in their publication is identified. To cooperate with the editor and publisher to publish an erratum, addendum, corrigendum notice, or to retract the paper, where this is deemed necessary.

Publisher and Department responsibilities

Both the Publishing House of Comenius University in Bratislava (hereafter: the Publishing House) and the Department on behalf of which it publishes shall ensure that good practice is maintained to the standards outlined above.

The Department will provide assurance that they subscribe to the principles outlined above, or to substantially similar principles, either adopting these formally or producing their own for the attention of their editors and editorial boards.

2) Procedures of dealing with unethical behaviours

Identification of unethical behaviour

- Misconduct and unethical behaviour may be identified and brought to the attention of the editor and publisher at any time, by anyone.
- Misconduct and unethical behaviour may include, but need not be limited to, examples as outlined above.
- Whoever informs the editor or publisher of such conduct should provide sufficient information and evidence in order for an investigation to be initiated. All allegations should be taken seriously and treated in the same way, until a successful decision or conclusion is reached.

Investigation

- An initial decision should be taken by the editor, who should consult with or seek advice from the publisher, if appropriate.
- Evidence should be gathered, while avoiding spreading any allegations beyond those who need to know.

Minor breaches

- Minor misconduct might be dealt with without the need to consult more widely. In any event, the author should be given the opportunity to respond to any allegations.

Serious breaches

- Serious misconduct might require that the employers of the accused be notified. The editor, in consultation with the publisher or department as appropriate, should make the decision whether or not to involve the employers, either by examining the available evidence themselves or by further consultation with a limited number of experts.

Outcomes (in increasing order of severity; may be applied separately or in conjunction)

- Informing or educating the author or reviewer where there appears to be a misunderstanding or misapplication of acceptable standards.
- A more strongly worded letter to the author or reviewer covering the misconduct and as a warning to future behaviour.
- Publication of a formal notice detailing the misconduct.
- Publication of an editorial detailing the misconduct.
- A formal letter to the head of the author's or reviewer's department or funding agency.
- Formal retraction or withdrawal of a publication from the journal, in conjunction with informing the head of the author or reviewer's department, Abstracting & Indexing services and the readership of the publication.
- Imposition of a formal embargo on contributions from an individual for a defined period. Reporting the case and outcome to a professional organization or higher authority for further investigation and action.