

PRINCIPLES OF TRANSPARENCY & Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing



Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA), and the World Association of Medical Editors (WAME) are scholarly organizations. All have seen increases in the number, and range in quality, of membership applications. Our organizations have collaborated to identify Principles of Transparency & Best Practice for Scholarly Publications. These principles form the basis of the criteria by which suitability for membership is assessed by COPE, DOAJ and OASPA, and part of the criteria on which membership applications are evaluated by WAME.

In the event that a member organization is found to have violated these best practices, or other specific requirements of the organization, OASPA/DOAJ/COPE/WAME shall in the first instance try to work with them in order to address any concerns that have been raised. In the event that the member organization is unable or unwilling to address these concerns, their membership in the organization may be suspended or terminated. All of the member organizations have procedures for dealing with concerns raised about member journals.

WEBSITE	NAME OF JOURNAL	PEER REVIEW PROCESS	OWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	ALLEGATIONS OF RESEARCH MISCONDUCT	PUBLICATION ETHICS	PUBLISHING SCHEDULE	ACCESS
 <p>A Journal's website, including the text that it contains, shall demonstrate that care has been taken to ensure high ethical and professional standards.</p> <p>It should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – contain an 'Aims & Scope' statement and the readership clearly defined. – include a statement on what a journal will consider for publication including authorship criteria e.g. not multiple submissions, redundant publications) – ISSNs displayed clearly (separate for print and electronic). <p>It must not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – contain information that might mislead readers or authors. – attempt to mimic another journal/publisher's site. 	 <p>The Journal name shall be unique. It must not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – be one that is easily confused with another journal. – mislead potential authors and readers about the Journal's origin or association with other journals. 	 <p>Journal content must be clearly marked as whether peer reviewed or not. Peer review is defined as obtaining advice on individual manuscripts from reviewers expert in the field who are not part of the journal's editorial staff.</p> <p>The journal's website should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – clearly describe this process, as well as any policies related to the journal's peer review procedures including the method of peer review used. <p>The journal's website should not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – guarantee manuscript acceptance or very short peer review times. 	 <p>Information about the ownership and/or management of a journal shall be clearly indicated on the journal's website.</p> <p>Publishers should not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – use organizational or journal names that would mislead potential authors and editors about the nature of the journal's owner. 	 <p>Publishers and editors shall take reasonable steps to identify and prevent the publication of papers where research misconduct has occurred.</p> <p>This includes but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – plagiarism – citation – manipulation – data falsification/fabrication <p>In no case shall a journal or its editors encourage such misconduct, or knowingly allow such misconduct to take place. In the event that a journal's publisher or editors are made aware of any allegation of research misconduct relating to a published article in their journal, the publisher or editor shall follow COPE's guidelines (or equivalent).</p>	 <p>A journal should have policies on publishing ethics. These should be clearly visible on its website, and should refer to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – journal policies on authorship and contributorship – how the journal will handle complaints and appeals – journal policies on conflicts of interest/competing interests – journal policies on data sharing and reproducibility – journal's policy on ethical oversight – journal's policy on intellectual property – journal's options for post-publication discussions and corrections. 	 <p>The periodicity at which a journal publishes shall be clearly indicated.</p>	 <p>The way(s) in which the journal and individual articles are available to readers and whether there are associated subscription or pay per view fees shall be stated.</p>
GOVERNING BODY	EDITORIAL TEAM/CONTACT INFORMATION	COPYRIGHT AND LICENSING	AUTHOR FEES	ARCHIVING	REVENUE SOURCES	ADVERTISING	DIRECT MARKETING
 <p>Journals shall have editorial boards or other governing bodies whose members are recognized experts in the subject areas included within the journal's scope.</p> <p>The journal's website should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – show full names and affiliations of the journal's editorial board or other governing body. 	 <p>Journals shall provide the full names and affiliations of the journal's editors on the journal website as well as contact information for the editorial office, including a full address.</p>	 <p>The policy for copyright shall be clearly stated in the author guidelines and the copyright holder named on all published articles.</p> <p>The journal's website should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – show licensing information clearly described in guidelines. <p>Licensing terms shall be indicated on all published articles, both HTML and PDFs. If authors are allowed to publish under a Creative Commons license then any specific license requirements shall be noted. Any policies on posting of final accepted versions or published articles on third party repositories shall be clearly stated.</p>	 <p>Any fees or charges that are required for manuscript processing and/or publishing materials in the journal shall be clearly stated.</p> <p>This must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – in a place that is easy for potential authors to find prior to submitting their manuscripts for review OR – explained to authors before they begin preparing their manuscript for submission. – if no such fees are charged that should also be stated. 	 <p>A journal's plan for electronic backup and preservation of access to the journal content shall be clearly indicated (for example, access to main articles via CLOCKSS or PubMedCentral).</p> <p>This is in the event that a journal is no longer published.</p>	 <p>Business models or revenue sources shall be clearly stated or otherwise evident on the journal's website.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – author fees – subscriptions – advertising – reprints – institutional support – organizational support <p>Publishing fees or waiver status should not influence editorial decision making.</p>	 <p>Journals shall state their advertising policy if relevant including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – what types of adverts will be considered – who makes decisions regarding accepting adverts – (online only) whether they are linked to content or reader behavior or are displayed at random. <p>Advertisements should not be related in any way to editorial decision making and shall be kept separate from the published content.</p>	 <p>Any direct marketing activities, including solicitation of manuscripts that are conducted on behalf of the journal, shall be appropriate, well targeted, and unobtrusive.</p> <p>Information provided about the publisher or journal is expected to be truthful and not misleading for readers or authors.</p>

Each organization also has their own, additional criteria which are used when evaluating applications. The organizations will not share lists of publishers or journals that failed to demonstrate that they met the criteria for transparency and best practice. This is the third version of a work in progress (published January 2018); the first version was posted on the COPE website on January 2014 and a second version in June 2015. We encourage its wide dissemination and continue to welcome feedback on the general principles and the specific criteria.

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 Non-commercial — You may not use this work for commercial purposes. No Derivative Works — You may not alter, transform, or build upon this work.
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