

**APPLY**

# Transparency & best practice

## Introduction

The Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), DOAJ, the Open Access Scholarly Publishing Association (OASPA), and the World Association of Medical Editors (WAME) are scholarly organisations that have collaborated to identify principles of transparency and best practice for scholarly publications. This is the fourth version of a work in progress (published September 15 2022). We encourage its wide dissemination.

The Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing should apply to all published content, including special issues and conference proceedings. Where practices deviate from the standards outlined, editors must transparently communicate the procedures that the journal follows.

These principles also acknowledge that publishers and editors are responsible for promoting accessibility, diversity, equity, and inclusivity in all aspects of the publication. Editorial decisions should be based on scholarly merit. They should not be affected by the origins of the manuscript, including the nationality, ethnicity, political beliefs, race, or religion of the authors. Journals should ensure no policies create an exclusionary environment for anyone wanting to engage with the journal and should regularly assess their policies for inclusivity.

## Principles of transparency and best practice in scholarly publishing

### JOURNAL CONTENT

#### 1. Name of journal



- Not mislead potential authors and readers about the journal's origin, scope, or association with other journals and organisations.

## 2. Website

- Websites should be properly supported and maintained, with particular attention given to security aspects that help protect users from viruses and malware.
- As a minimum, websites should use https and not http, and all traffic should be redirected through https. Those responsible for the website should apply web standards and best ethical practices to the website's content, presentation, and application.
- The website should not contain information that might mislead readers or authors.
- The website should not copy another journal/publisher's site, design, or logo.
- If any text is copied from another website, an acknowledgement to the source website should be declared.

In addition to the requirements outlined above, the following items should be clearly displayed:

- Aims and scope.
- The target readership of the journal.
- The types of manuscripts the journal will consider for publication (for example, that multiple or redundant publication is not allowed).
- Authorship criteria.
- ISSNs (separate for print and electronic versions).

## 3. Publishing schedule

A journal's publishing frequency should be clearly described, and the journal must keep to its publishing schedule unless there are exceptional circumstances.

## 4. Archiving

A journal's plan for electronic backup and long term digital preservation of the journal content, in the event that the journal and/or publisher stops operating, should be clearly indicated. Examples include PMC and those listed in [the Keepers Registry](#).

## 5. Copyright



- The copyright holder should be named on the full text of all published articles (HTML and PDF).
- If the copyright terms are described in a separate form, this should be easy to find on the website and available to all.

## 6. Licencing

- Licencing information should be clearly described on the website.
- Licencing terms should be indicated on the full text of all published articles (HTML and PDF).
- Content designated as Open Access must use an open licence.
- Licencing policies about the posting of author manuscripts and published articles in third party repositories should be clearly stated.

If Creative Commons licences are used, then the terms of that licence should also link to the correct licence on the Creative Commons website.

## JOURNAL PRACTICES

### 7. Publication ethics and related editorial policies

A journal should have policies on publication ethics (for example, [COPE's Core Practice guidance](#)). These should be visible on its website, and should refer to:

- Journal's policies on [authorship and contributorship](#).
- How the journal will handle [complaints and appeals](#).
- How the journal will handle [allegations of research misconduct](#).
- Journal's policies on [conflicts of interest](#).
- Journal's 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](#).
- Journal's policies on [corrections and retractions](#).

Editors and publishers are responsible for ensuring the integrity of the scholarly literature in their journals and should ensure they outline their policies and procedures for handling such issues when they arise. These issues include plagiarism, citation manipulation, and data falsification/fabrication, among others. Neither the journal's policies nor the statements of its



should follow [COPE S guidance](#) (or equivalent) in dealing with allegations.

## 8. Peer review

Peer review is defined as obtaining advice on manuscripts from reviewers/experts in the manuscript's subject area. Those individuals should not be part of the journal's editorial team. However, the specific elements of peer review may differ by journal and discipline, so the following should be clearly stated on the website:

- Whether or not the content is peer reviewed.
- Who conducts the peer review, for example, external experts or editorial board members.
- The [type of peer review](#) process(es) used
- Any policies related to the [peer review procedures](#), for example:
  - Use of author recommended reviewers.
  - Any masking of identities, and if so who is masked and to whom.
  - Whether or not supplementary material is subjected to peer review.
  - Whether or not reviews are posted with articles.
  - Whether or not reviews are signed or anonymous.
- How a decision about a manuscript is ultimately made and who is involved.
- Any exceptions to the peer review process, such as specific article types that do not undergo peer review.

If an article's peer review is an exception to the usual policy, the article should state what review it received.

Journals should not guarantee acceptance of initial manuscript submissions. Statements of peer review times should be supported by published timeframes on accepted papers. In the event of delays, authors should be informed of the reason for the delay and given the opportunity to withdraw their manuscript if they wish.

The date of publication should be published with all published research. Dates of submission and acceptance are preferred as well.

## 9. Access

If any of the online content is not freely accessible to everyone, the method of gaining access (for example, registration, subscription, or pay-per-view fees) should be clearly described. If



## ORGANISATION

### 10. Ownership and management

- Information about the ownership and management of a journal should be clearly indicated on the journal's website.
- Organisational names should not be used in a way that could mislead potential authors and editors about the nature of the journal's owner.
- If a journal is affiliated with a society, institution, or sponsor, links to their website(s) should be provided where available.

### 11. Advisory body

Journals should have editorial boards or other advisory bodies whose members are recognised experts in the subject areas stated in the journal's aims and scope.

- The full names and affiliations of the members should be provided on the journal's website.
- The list should be up to date, and members must agree to serve.
- To avoid being associated with predatory or deceptive journals, journals should periodically review their board to ensure it is still relevant and appropriate.

### 12. Editorial team/contact information

Journals should provide the full names and affiliations of their editors as well as contact information for the editorial office, including a full mailing address, on the journal's website.

## BUSINESS PRACTICES

### 13. Author fees

- If author fees are charged (such as article processing charges, page charges, editorial processing charges, language editing fees, colour charges, submission fees, membership fees, or other supplementary charges), then the fees should be clearly stated on the website.
- If there are no such fees, this should be clearly stated.
- Author fee information should be easy to find and presented as early in the submission process as possible.
- If the journal is likely to implement author charges in the future, this should be stated.
- If waivers are available for author fees, this information should be stated clearly.



- When and how to apply for a waiver.
- Author fees or waiver status should not influence editorial decision making, and this should be clearly stated.

## 14. Other revenue

Business models or revenue sources should be clearly stated on the journal's website.

Examples include author fees (see section 13), subscriptions, sponsorships and subsidies, advertising (see section 15), reprints, supplements, or special issues.

Business models or revenue sources (for example, reprint income, supplements, special issues, sponsorships) should not influence editorial decision making.

## 15. Advertising

Journals should state whether they accept advertising. If they do, they should state their advertising policy, including:

- Which types of advertisements will be considered.
- Who makes decisions regarding accepting advertisements.
- Whether they are linked to content or reader behaviour or are displayed at random.

Advertisements should not be related in any way to editorial decision making and should be kept separate from the published content.

## 16. Direct marketing

Any direct marketing activities, including solicitation of manuscripts, that are conducted on behalf of the journal should be appropriate, well targeted, and unobtrusive. Information provided about the publisher or journal should be truthful and not misleading for readers or authors.

## Version history

- This is Version 4.0 of the Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing
- [Version 3.0](#) - January 2018
- [Version 2.0](#) - June 2015 (on the OASPA website)



## About the organizations

### Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)

COPE provides advice to editors and publishers on all aspects of publication ethics and, in particular, how to handle cases of research and publication misconduct. It also provides a forum for its members to discuss individual cases. COPE does not investigate individual cases but encourages editors to ensure that cases are investigated by the appropriate authorities (usually a research institution or employer). All COPE members are expected to apply COPE principles of publication ethics outlined in the core practices.

### DOAJ

The mission of the DOAJ is: to curate, maintain and develop a source of reliable information about open access scholarly journals on the web; to verify that entries on the list comply with reasonable standards; to increase the visibility, dissemination, discoverability and attraction of open access journals; to enable scholars, libraries, universities, research funders and other stakeholders to benefit from the information and services provided; to facilitate the integration of open access journals into library and aggregator services; to assist, where possible, publishers and their journals to meet reasonable digital publishing standards; and to thereby support the transition of the system of scholarly communication and publishing into a model that serves science, higher education, industry, innovation, societies and the people. Through this work, DOAJ will cooperate and collaborate with all interested parties working toward these objectives.

### Open Access Scholarly Publishing Association (OASPA)

OASPA is a trade association that was established in 2008 in order to represent the interests of Open Access (OA) publishers globally across all disciplines. By encouraging collaboration in developing appropriate business models, tools and standards to support OA publishing, OASPA aims to help ensure a prosperous and sustainable future for the benefit of its members and the scholarly communities they serve. This mission is carried out through exchanging information, setting standards, advancing models, advocacy, education, and the promotion of innovation.

### World Association of Medical Editors (WAME)



self-regulation; and encourage research on the principles and practice of medical editing. WAME develops policies and recommendations of best practices for medical journal editors and has a syllabus for editors that members are encouraged to follow.

## In other languages

(Version 3.0 of the Principles is [available in 21 other languages](#).)

- Bengali (coming soon)
- [Portuguese](#)
- [Serbian](#) (hosted at ceon.rs)

### SEARCH

Journals

Articles

### DOCUMENTATION

API

OAI-PMH

Widgets

Public data dump

OpenURL

XML

FAQs

### ABOUT

About DOAJ

DOAJ team

Ambassadors

Advisory Board & Council

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Volunteers

News

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