

Publication Ethics

1- Introduction

Authors, reviewers, editorial board and the editor-in-chief of the journal are obliged to be aware of the best practices and codes of conduct in publishing an article and act in accordance with them.

Submission of an article by the authors, peer review by the reviewers and acceptance or rejection of the article by the editorial board suggest being aware and dedicated to the ethics policy and in cases that misconduct on behalf of any of these parties is proved, the journal is entitled to any legal action. The publication ethics guide approved by the research and technology office of The Ministry of Science, Research and Technology should be the authors', reviewers' and publishing officials' guideline.

2- Authors' responsibilities:

The submitted articles should be in the specialized field of the journal and scientifically written and integrated in accordance with the journal's manuscript guidelines

The articles must be the result of original research conducted by the authors and proper reference to others' works must be provided. The research has to be conducted with accuracy and observation and the data should be accurately reported.

The authors are held responsible for the accuracy and reliability of the contents of the articles and they are obliged to ensure the validity of the articles. The publication of an article does not reflect the verification of the contents by the journal.

The authors are obliged to refrain from "research and publication misconduct" as will be explained in part 3.

The authors are not entitled to "duplicate submission" of an article. In other words, they must ensure that the manuscript has not been published previously (partly or in full) or is not under consideration for publication either inside or outside Iran.

The authors are not entitled to "overlapping publication" which means; re-use of data and findings of previous articles with minor changes in an article under a new title.

The authors are obliged to perform accurate citation on the occasion that they need to use other researchers' works, and they need to make sure permissions are secured for material that is copyrighted. In case of quoting another researcher, quotation marks are used for verbatim copying of material.

The author in charge is strongly advised to ensure the correct submission of the authors' names and information and that no names are included except for the authors contributing to the research and writing of the article.

The author in charge has to ensure that all the authors have studied the article and unanimously agree with the presentation of the article and their contribution.

Submission of an article means that the authors have been granted the consent of the financial or venue sponsors and have introduced all the sponsors of the article.

The authors are obliged to immediately inform the journal at any time they become aware of any errors or inaccuracy in their article and either modify or withdraw their article.

The authors are expected to reserve the samples and raw data used in the article for at least one year after publication of the article to be able to respond to any potential questions proposed by the readers of the journal.

Any dangers posed to human beings or the environment through this research must be clarified in the article.

The authors are expected to cooperate with the journal in the peer review of other researchers' articles in the corresponding specialized fields.

3. Research and publication misconduct

- If during any of the submission, review, edition or publication stages or after them, one of the following misconducts has been established beyond reasonable doubt, it is considered unethical 'research and publication misconduct' and the journal reserves the right to pursue legal action.
- Fabrication: defined as reporting inaccurate contents and presenting fabricated results or data instead of experimental data and studies or personal findings. Recording matters which have not been materialized or exchanging results of different studies are examples of this violation.
- Falsification: defined as recording and presenting the results of a research in a way that the details of the conducted research or the process of data collection is manipulated, or some data is removed or modified, or some insignificant results are magnified to cover more important facts (juicy quotes) so that the results of the research follow a certain aim or the presented results are not questioned.
- Plagiarism: defined as quotes that are taken near-verbatim from others' thoughts and words, copying the expression of ideas, similarity in the structure of writing or presenting others' ideas and results without proper citation, or introducing it as an authentic scientific research.
- Academic ghostwriting: which means hiring one or several authors to conduct the research and having it published under one's own name after minor modifications.
- Unauthorized affiliation: defined as unfounded affiliation claim of the author(s) to an institute, organization, and educational research center or group which has not had a direct role in the research.
- Resubmission of an article, duplicate submission, including an honorary author or removing an original author

3- Reviewers' responsibility:

- ❖ Reviewers collaborate with the editor-in-chief and the editorial board of the journal in the quality, content and scientific assessment of the articles, and contribute to the improvement of the quality and contents of the authors' articles via the journal.
- ❖ The selected reviewer is obliged to inform the journal's editor-in-chief of their decision about acceptance or rejection of the review request (due to unrelated field, time shortage, etc.) immediately after reading the abstract. The reviewer is also expected to aid the editor-in-chief to select a replacement for the reviewer.
- ❖ Professionally, the reviewer has to be an expert in the field of the article. The reviewer should not accept peer review of articles outside his/her field of expertise. It is also advisable that the reviewer refrains from accepting articles with subjects on which he/she has major disagreement and may not be able to provide a fair assessment.

- ❖ The reviewer may not accept the articles which serve the benefits of individuals, institutes or certain corporations or when personal interests are taken into account.
- ❖ The reviewer may not accept articles which he/she has had a role in conducting, analyzing or writing of.
- ❖ After accepting to review the article, the reviewer is responsible to provide the editor-in-chief and the authors with his specialized and constructive opinions very clearly including necessary documents if needed, in the assigned time limit. The thorough examination of the references, tables, illustrations and other attachments of the article are also the responsibility of the reviewer.
- ❖ The review of the articles must be based on scientific study and reasoning and imposing personal, professional, racist, religious, etc. tastes and interests must be avoided.
- ❖ The reviewer is expected to provide the editor and the authors with his assessment of the weaknesses and strengths of the article in a constructive, clear and educational manner accompanied by the analysis of the weak and strong points and offer suggestions to improve the article.
- ❖ The reviewer is expected to be responsible, accountable, punctual, truth-seeking, interested and dedicated to professional ethics and individual rights. Referring to valid related documents, fairness, courtesy, avoidance of prejudice, and quick judgment, accompanied by clear statements for the editor-in-chief about the suitability of the article for publication in the journal are other attributes of the reviewers.
- ❖ If the article is written based on the guidelines and is flawless, the reviewers are expected to avoid corrections and requests for revision based on their personal taste and preferences. The reviewers must remember that the journal is in need of their scientific expertise and not editing capabilities.
- ❖ The reviewers are responsible to ensure that referencing to all of the researches, subjects, citations and quotations is done thoroughly and accurately. They are also expected to notify the authors of the related published researches that have not been referred to in the article.
- ❖ The reviewer must consider all the information in the article confidential and refrain from making it available to or discussing it with others.
- ❖ The reviewer is not authorized to use the data or concepts provided in the article in favor of or against his own or others' researches before the publication of the article, or use it to criticize or discredit the authors. In addition, after the publication of the article the reviewer is not allowed to disclose any details about the article beyond what has been published by the journal.
- ❖ The reviewer is not authorized to assign the responsibility of peer review of the article to another person including other faculty members or post-graduate students without consent of the editor-in-chief. The name of any individual who has assisted the reviewer in the review process has to be mentioned in the review report to the editor-in-chief and recorded in the article documents.
- ❖ The reviewer is not allowed to be in direct contact with the authors regarding the articles under review. Any form of contact with the authors will be done through the journal office.
- ❖ The reviewers are expected to pay special attention to reporting "research and publication misconduct" and provide the related documents to the editor-in-chief.

4- Editorial board responsibilities:

- The editorial board has the responsibility and authority of appointing the reviewers and acceptance or rejection of the articles based on the reviewers' opinions.
- The editorial board and the editor-in-chief are expected to be professional experts with several publications. They need to be truth-seeking, fair and unbiased with a sense of responsibility and dedication to professional ethics and observe all individual rights. They are also expected to take responsible measures to fulfill the aims of the journal and its constant improvement.
- The editorial board is supposed to organize a database of the eligible reviewers and constantly update it based on the reviewers' performance.
- The editor-in-chief and the editorial board are obliged to pay special attention to selecting eligible reviewers considering their expertise, eminence, professional and scientific experience, and ethics. It is also expected to respect the authors' request of not having their article reviewed by certain reviewers if the reason is well-founded.
- The editor-in-chief needs to encourage in-depth and reasoned reviews and prevent simplistic and unsatisfactory reviews and also oppose biased, unfounded or humiliating reviews.
- The editor-in-chief and the editorial board are obliged to take the necessary measures to register and archive the article review documents as scientific documents and maintain the identity of the reviewers confidential.
- The decision of acceptance or rejection of an article has to be based on evaluation of the reviewers' expert opinion and assessment of their credibility, and scientific documents and sufficient reasoning; and there is no room for imposing personal taste and professional, racial and religious bias.
- The editor-in-chief and the editorial board are obliged to announce the final results about acceptance or rejection of the article to the corresponding author promptly.
- The editor-in-chief and the editorial board are expected to consider all the information available in an article highly confidential and refrain from making it available to or discussing the details with others.
- The editor-in-chief and the editorial board are not authorized to use the data or concepts provided in the article in favor of or against their own or others' researches before the publication of the article, or use it to criticize or discredit the authors. In addition, after the publication of the article the editorial board and the editor-in-chief are not allowed to disclose any details about the article beyond what has been published by the journal. The only exception is investigating the matters related to research and publication misconduct by the authors provided there is acceptable evidence.
- The editor-in-chief and the editorial board are obliged to prevent any conflict of interests in the review process regarding any personal, business, academic, and financial contact that can potentially affect the acceptance and publication of the submitted articles.
- The editor-in-chief and the editorial board are expected to encourage attention and expert opinion of the reviewers about authenticity and absence of publication or research violations.
- The editor-in-chief is required to carefully examine the articles that have allegedly violated the publication and research ethics and have been reported by the reviewers or any other sources and

if necessary, take measures based on the process of taking action against ‘research and publication misconduct’ included in this guide.

- The editor-in-chief must not consider the rejection of articles with alleged violations or those articles that have been proved to be in violation of the regulations sufficient and is obliged to investigate the matter to the last step of the process. However, the authors accused of ‘research and publication misconduct’ must be given an opportunity to answer for the allegations.
- The editor-in-chief is expected to remove the published articles that have been found guilty of “research and publication misconduct” promptly and inform the readers and corresponding references in a clear manner.
- The editor-in-chief and the editorial board are responsible for revision of the articles which contain errors and must publish a prompt amendment and clearly notify the readers of the changes applied.
- The editor-in-chief and the editorial board are expected to welcome and publish reasonable and acceptable reviews of the published articles.
- The editor-in-chief and the editorial board must constantly request for the authors’, readers’ and reviewers’ opinions about the improvement of publication policies and physical and content quality of the journal.

5– The responsibilities of the scientific research journals offices

This office is in charge of editing and layout of the accepted articles and publication of printed and electronic versions of the journal.

These responsibilities include:

- Determining and clearly announcing the publication policies of the journal regarding independent decision making of the editorial board, publication ethics, intellectual property and copyright, conflict of interests, author’s responsibilities, the editor-in-chief and the editorial board, the review process and decision making, reassessment requests and objections, preservation of the scientific documents of the review process, protection of the authors’ and reviewers’ information, modification or omission of the published articles, mediating between the plaintiffs and the accused in a “research and publication misconduct” case.
- Effort to maintain a high quality of layout and publication of the journal with maximum care and in the shortest possible time.
- Protection of the authors’ personal information and the contents and details of the article during the review and assessment process of the articles, except for what is published in the journal after acceptance of the article. The only acceptable exception is to investigate “research and publication misconduct” of the authors’ provided there is reasonable evidence.
- Maintaining the independence of the editor-in-chief and the editorial board
- Providing the editor-in-chief, the editorial board and the reviewers with the necessary training for their optimum performance.
- Training the journal authors with the aim of improving the content and layout of the articles and observing the principles of research and publication ethics.

- Cooperating with the editor-in-chief in order to maintain the highest level of research and publication ethics in the journal and to ensure absence of errors in the contents, layout and format of the journal.
- Cooperating with the editor-in-chief in investigating reports of “research and publication misconduct” and offering expert consultation to the accused and the plaintiff if necessary.
- Considering requests of citation of the material published in the journal in other publications.

6- The process of investigating “research and publication misconduct”:

On the occasion that the journal proves any violation of ethical principles, the following measures shall be construed:

1. The first step taken by the editor-in-chief is to inform the editorial board in a suitable manner and send a written notice to the corresponding author and request an explanation while maintaining a neutral and non-judgmental attitude.
2. If the author’s justification is unacceptable and it appears to be a serious case of misconduct, the editorial board will be informed and after deliberation, the committee will determine how serious the situation is and whether the author should be banned from future article submissions.
3. If the violation is minor, in consultation with the editorial board, the editor-in-chief will send a letter of reprimand to the author to remind them of the publication policies of the journal. If the article has been published, the author will be asked by the editor to publish an apology letter in the journal in order to rectify the report.
4. A notice will be sent to the corresponding author and any work done by this author who was responsible for the violation under investigation or the co-authors will be rejected.
5. The author will be prohibited from cooperation with the journal as a member of the editorial board or a reviewer.
6. In critical cases, a formal notice will be sent to the organization related to the authors and the authors will be prohibited from publishing in the journal for five years.
7. In serious cases of violation, a formal apology will be published in the journal and will be attached to the online version of the article. The online article will also be dated and marked under the title “apology”.