

CSIC Press / Editorial CSIC

Good editorial practice guidelines for scientific journals and monograph series of the State Agency Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas

These *Good publication practice guidelines* are intended to serve as a code of conduct for all stakeholders in the academic management and publication of research results in CSIC scientific journals and monograph series: editorial teams, authors and manuscript reviewers.

1 Editorial Teams

The Assistant Editors of CSIC journals and Editorial Committees of CSIC monograph series (hereafter termed Editorial Teams), together with the offices of the Director and the Secretary, are responsible for the content that is published, and must therefore ensure its scientific quality, avoid misconduct in the publication of research results, and ensure that submitted manuscripts are published within a reasonable period. The management of monographs not to be published in an existing series will be handled by the office of the Director of CSIC Press, who will be advised by experts drawn from the different scientific-technical areas of CSIC in preparing a preliminary recommendation and in designating reviewers for new proposals, in accordance with procedures set down in these Guidelines.

In light of these responsibilities, the following principles should be observed.

1.1 Impartiality

The Editorial Teams must handle all submitted manuscripts in an impartial manner, and must respect the intellectual independence of all authors, who must be given the right of reply if they receive a negative review.

Manuscripts that report negative research results should not be excluded from consideration.

1.2 Confidentiality

Members of the Editorial Teams are required to ensure the confidentiality of all manuscripts received and of their content until they have been accepted for publication. Only then may the title and authors of the article be communicated.

In addition, no member of an Editorial Team may use data, lines of reasoning or interpretations in unpublished manuscripts for his or her own research, except with the authors' express written consent.

1.3 Manuscript review

The Editorial Teams must ensure that all published research articles have been evaluated by at least two subject specialists, and that the review process has been fair and impartial.

The method of peer review most appropriate for the scientific community that the journal or series is targeted to must be made public: *double blind* (in which both authors and reviewers are anonymous), *single blind* (in which reviewers are anonymous) or *open* (in which neither authors nor reviewers are anonymous). When one of the two reviews is negative, a third review will be requested.

The Editorial Teams must give due consideration to refusals by any author to be reviewed by certain specialists (when peer review is not anonymous) if the justification provided appears reasonable. The Editorial Teams are under no obligation to forego review by these specialists if Team members believe that their views are fundamental for the accurate evaluation of the manuscript.

Persons who submit a manuscript for review may suggest the names of up to three specialists as peer reviewers. The Editorial Teams reserve the right to decide whether to accept or decline these suggestions, and is not required to communicate their decision to the authors.

The Editorial Teams must ensure that all submitted manuscripts are original and unpublished, and that during the peer review process due precautions are taken to verify originality and to detect plagiarism, self-plagiarism and redundant publication defined as the complete copy, partial copy or altered copy of work published by the same author in such a way as to make the work appear different. Editorial Teams must also take appropriate measures to detect data falsification or manipulation. In addition, contents that have undergone peer review must be clearly identified.

The Editorial Teams must recognize the value of and acknowledge the input of all those involved in the review of manuscripts submitted to the journal or series. In addition Team members should encourage academic authorities to acknowledge peer review activities as part of the scientific process, and should decline to use reviewers who submit reports that are of poor quality, erroneous or disrespectful, or that are delivered after the agreed deadline.

1.4 Manuscript acceptance or rejection

Responsibility for accepting or rejecting manuscripts for publication rests with the Editorial Teams, which should base their decision on the reports received about the manuscript. The reviewers should base their decision on the quality of the manuscript in terms of its relevance, novelty and clarity of writing and reporting.

The Editorial Teams may reject a submitted manuscript without external review if the members believe it to be unsuitable for the journal because it does not reach an acceptable level of quality, is outside the scientific aims and scope of the journal or series, or contains evidence of scientific fraud.

1.5 *Journal article retraction and expression of concern*

The Editorial Team reserves the right to retract published articles which are subsequently determined to be unreliable due to unintentional error or scientific fraud or misconduct: data fabrication, manipulation or appropriation, text plagiarism, self-plagiarism and redundant or duplicate publication, omission of references to sources consulted, use of content without permission or without justification, etc. The decision to retract is based on the need to correct the scientific record of publication and thereby ensure its integrity.

In case of a conflict regarding duplicate publication caused by the simultaneous publication of the same article in two different journals, the date the manuscript was received by each journal will be used to decide which of the two versions should be retracted.

If an error affects only part of a published article, it can be subsequently corrected by publishing a note from the editor, a correction or an erratum notice.

If any conflict arises, the journal will ask the author or authors to provide an explanation and relevant evidence for clarification, and will reach a decision based on this information.

The journal must publish the retraction notice in both its print and electronic editions, and the notice must mention the reasons for the retraction, in order to differentiate between misconduct and unintentional error. The journal will notify the responsible authorities at the authors' institution of the retraction. The decision to retract an article should be reached as soon as possible in order to prevent the misleading article from being cited by other researchers.

Retracted articles will remain available in the electronic edition of the journal, and will be identified clearly and unambiguously as retracted in order to distinguish retractions from other corrections or commentaries. In the print edition, retractions will be reported as promptly as possible as an editorial or note from the editor with the same wording as in the electronic edition.

Prior to final retraction, the journal may issue an expression of concern in which the necessary information is provided with the same wording as used for a retraction. The expression of concern will be used for as brief a period as possible and will be withdrawn or superseded, if appropriate, by formal retraction of the article.

1.6 *Monograph retraction and expression of concern*

The reasons and procedures for retracting monographs are the same as specified above in paragraphs one to four of section 1.5.

CSIC Press will issue the pertinent notifications and communications, and reserves the right to initiate legal action within its current institutional remit and to delete the title from its official catalogue of publications.

1.7 Application of the Regulations for CSIC Publications

The person who serves as Editor in Chief of the journal or series is responsible for ensuring that the Regulations for CSIC Publications are implemented appropriately, and that all members of the Team are familiar with them. The functions of the Editorial Team are as follows: to promote and represent the journal or series in different bodies and organizations; to suggest and advocate potential improvements; to obtain the collaboration of experts in different subject areas; to perform initial review of submitted manuscripts; to write editorials, reviews, commentaries, news items, book reviews, etc. for the journal, and to attend Editorial Team meetings.

1.8 Guidelines for authors

The instructions for manuscript preparation for each journal or series (text length, figure preparation, reference formats, etc.) must be publicly available.

1.9 Conflict of interest

Among other situations, conflict of interest arises when an author of a manuscript submitted to a journal or series is a member of the Editorial Team, has a direct personal or professional relationship, or is closely related with previous or current research carried out by a member of the Editorial Team. Specifically, members of the Editorial Team should recuse themselves from participation in handling the manuscript when they are involved in any of the situations or similar situations described below, in relation with an author of the manuscript:

- Family relationship
- Manifest personal friendship or animosity
- Belonging to the same research group
- Serving presently or having served as PhD degree advisor or co-advisor within the previous 10 years
- Obtaining a PhD degree with an author as advisor or co-advisor within the previous 10 years
- Collaborating presently or within the previous 5 years in publications or patents
- Collaborating in other economic or scientific-technological activities
- Having a contractual relationship or sharing national or international research funding from public or private entities or any other type of entity within the previous 3 years

The Editorial Team must also refrain from choosing reviewers who are or who may be involved in any of these situations. When single-blind reviewing is used (i.e. only the reviewer is anonymous), the reasons for recusal stated above must be clearly highlighted on the evaluation form, so that reviewers are aware of the situation and have the option to opt out.

2 Authorship in CSIC journals and monographs

The authors of works submitted for publication in CSIC journals or series are primarily responsible for the content, and are thus obligated to follow ethical guidelines intended to ensure, among other considerations, that the work is original and that authorship has been attributed appropriately. Inappropriate behavior may lead to the retraction of published

material in accordance with the procedures described above in sections 1.5 and 1.6 of these Guidelines.

Aside from its ethical implications, inappropriate behavior may result in infringement of the intellectual property rights of the CSIC and/or third parties. Accordingly, CSIC Press reserves the right to initiate legal action within its current institutional remit.

2.1 *Publication guidelines*

Manuscripts submitted for publication must be based on original, unpublished research. They must include the data obtained and used, as well as an objective discussion of the results. They must supply enough information to allow any specialist to reproduce the research and confirm or refute the interpretations defended in the manuscript.

All authors must appropriately reference the sources of all ideas or phrases taken verbatim from previously published articles, in accordance with the instructions and guidelines of the journal or series.

When illustrations are used as part of the research, the methods used to create or obtain them must be explained appropriately whenever this information is needed to understand the images. If any graphic material (e.g., figures, photographs, maps, etc.) has been entirely or partially reproduced from other publications, the authors must cite the source and obtain permission, if needed, to reproduce the material.

The unnecessary subdivision of articles should be avoided. If the research report is very long, it can be published in two or more parts; each part should deal with a particular aspect of the overall study. Different articles relating to the same research should be published in the same journal to facilitate readers' interpretation of the work.

2.2 *Originality and plagiarism*

All authors must ensure that the data and results reported in the manuscript are original and have not been copied, fabricated, falsified or manipulated.

Plagiarism in all forms, self-plagiarism, multiple or redundant publication, and data fabrication or manipulation constitute serious ethical failings and are considered scientific fraud.

Authors must not submit to a CSIC journal or series any manuscript that is simultaneously under consideration by another publisher and must not submit their manuscript to another publisher until they are notified that it has been rejected or have voluntarily withdrawn it from consideration. However, an article that builds upon an item published previously as a short report, brief communication or conference abstract may be published as long as it appropriately cites the earlier source it is based on, and as long as the new manuscript represents a substantial modification of the previous publication.

Secondary publication is also acceptable if the later manuscript is targeted to completely different readers – for example, if the article is to be published in different languages or if one version is intended for specialists whereas the other version is intended for the general public. These circumstances must be specified and the original publication and must be cited appropriately.

2.3 Authorship of manuscripts

If the manuscript has more than one author, the author responsible for the work must ensure appropriate recognition of all persons who contributed significantly to the conception, planning, design and performance of the study, to obtaining the data, and to the interpretation and discussion of the results. All persons named as authors share responsibility for the work reported in the manuscript. Likewise, the person responsible for the work must ensure that all persons named as authors have reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript and have agreed to its possible publication.

The person responsible for the work must ensure that no person responsible for the manuscript and who meets the criteria noted above for scientific authorship has been omitted from the list of authors. This will avoid *ghost authorship* and *gift authorship*, which constitute scientific misconduct.

In addition, an acknowledgment must be included in the article to note the contributions of other collaborators who are not authors and are not responsible for the final version of the manuscript.

If the Editorial Team or the authors so request, a brief description of the individual contributions of each member of the group of coauthors may appear in the published version of the work.

2.4 Sources of information and funding

All publications that have influenced the research should be acknowledged in the manuscript; accordingly, all original sources upon which information in the manuscript is based should be identified and cited in the reference list. However, references that are not relevant to the research or that refer to similar examples should not be included, and overreliance on references to research that forms part of the common body of scientific knowledge should be avoided.

Authors should not use information obtained privately through conversations, correspondence or informal discussions with colleagues, unless they have obtained explicit written permission from the source of the information, and the information was provided in the context of a scientific consultation.

The published work must indicate, clearly and concisely, all sources of funding awarded for the study, and must note the public or private entity that provided the funding, and the code number assigned to each source of funding, if appropriate. This information will appear in the published work.

2.5 Significant errors in published works

When authors discover a serious error in their work, they must report this to the person responsible for the journal or series as soon as possible in order to modify the work, withdraw it, retract it, or publish a correction or erratum notice.

If the Editorial Team detects the potential error, the authors must then demonstrate that their work is free from error.

The process to be used to resolve conflicts that may arise is described above in sections 1.5 and 1.6.

2.6 Conflict of interest

If any commercial, financial or personal relationship exists that might influence the results and conclusions of the work, a declaration explaining these circumstances must be provided at the time of submission. This information will be included in the published version of the work.

3 Reviewers of CSIC journals and monographs

External experts who participate in manuscript review play an essential role in the process that guarantees the quality of published material. They assist the Editorial Teams of journals and series in making their decisions, help to improve the submitted works, and provide a warranty of scientific merit.

3.1 Confidentiality

Peer reviewers must consider all manuscripts as confidential documents both during and after the peer review process, until after they are published.

Under no circumstances should the reviewer divulge or use any information, details, lines of reasoning or interpretations in the material to be reviewed for his or her own benefit or that of any other persons, or with the intent to harm any third parties. Only under exceptional circumstances may the reviewer obtain advice from other specialists in the subject of the manuscript, and the reviewer must inform the Editor of the journal or series of this measure.

3.2 Objectivity

Experts who evaluate manuscripts must judge the quality of the whole report objectively, i.e., they must consider the background information used to formulate the hypothesis of the study, the theoretical and experimental data and their interpretation. Attention must also be given to the presentation and writing/reporting of the text.

They must be specific with their criticisms and provide their comments in an objective, constructive manner. They must justify their judgments with reasoning, avoid hostility and respect the authors' intellectual independence.

Peer reviewers must notify the person who requested the review of any substantial similarities between the manuscript under review and any other published work or manuscript they are aware of and that is undergoing review for another publication. In addition, reviewers must draw attention to any text or data that have been plagiarized from different authors or self-plagiarized or duplicated from other works by the authors of the manuscript under review. Reviewers must also alert the person who requested the review if

they suspect or are aware of any text or data that have been falsified, fabricated or manipulated.

3.3 Timely response

Peer reviewers must act promptly and provide their report by the agreed deadline, and must notify the Editor's office of possible delays.

In addition, they must notify the Editor's office as soon as possible if they do not feel qualified to evaluate the manuscript or if they are unable to complete their review by the agreed deadline.

3.4 Acknowledgment of sources of information

Peer reviewers must verify that previously published studies relevant to the topic have been cited. To do so they must review the literature cited in the manuscript with a view to suggesting the removal of superfluous or redundant references, or the addition of references that were not cited.

3.5 Conflict of interest

Peer reviewers must decline to review when they suspect or are aware that they may be influenced by any of the situations potentially able to affect their judgment of the work, as described above in section 1.9 of these Guidelines.

Conflict of interest may also arise when the manuscript is closely related with work the reviewer is currently performing or has previously published. In such cases, and if in doubt, the reviewer should decline to review the manuscript and return it to the Editorial Team, with an explanation of the reasons for his or her decision.

Sources used:

- [Best Practices for Peer Review](#). Association of American University Presses (AAUP), 2016.
- [Code of Good Scientific Practices of CSIC](#). CSIC, Madrid, 2010.
- [Accountability of authors in multidisciplinary publications](#). Anex to the Code of Good Scientific Practices of CSIC. CSIC, Madrid, 2010.
- [CSIC Manual of Conflicts of Interest](#). CSIC, Madrid, 2015.
- [Guidelines](#). Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).
- [Guidelines](#). European Association of Science Editors (EASE)
- [National Statement on Scientific Integrity](#). COCE, CRUE, CSIC, Madrid, 2015.
- [Regulations for CSIC Publications](#). CSIC, Madrid, 2012.