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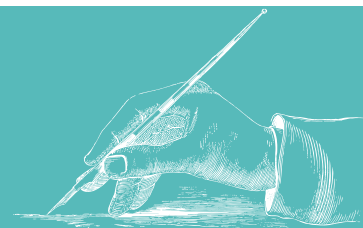
एन सी ई आर टी
NCERT

राष्ट्रीय शैक्षिक अनुसंधान और प्रशिक्षण परिषद्
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING

NCERT Journals Publication Policy

Guiding the Path to
**Transparent and Ethical Educational
Research Publication**

NCERT JOURNALS PUBLICATION POLICY



Compiled by:

Prof. Dinesh Kumar, Dean (Research), NCERT

Prof. B. P. Bhardwaj, Head, Division of Educational Research, NCERT

Prof. Y. Sreekanth, Division of Educational Research, NCERT

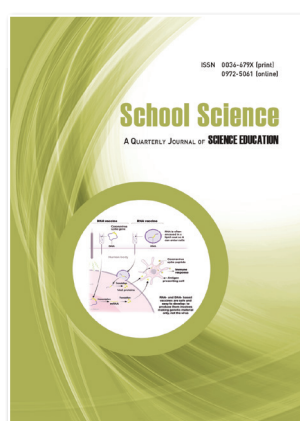
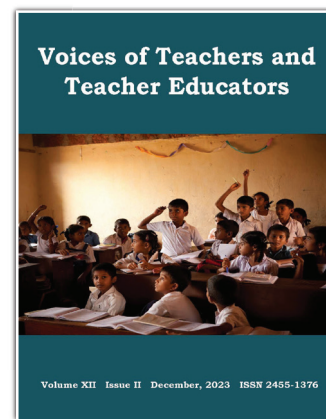
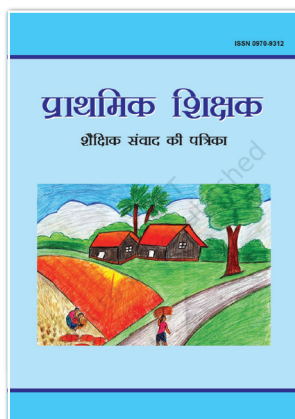
Dr. Akash, Head, Library and Documentation Division, NCERT

Support:

Mr. Nitik Bhuriya, Assistant

Mr. Brijesh, Graphic Designer

Mr. Manish Kumar, DTP Operator



FOREWORD

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has played a vital role in designing both school and teacher education in India. As a premier institution involved in curriculum development, teacher education and academic scholarship, NCERT consistently underscores the critical role of research in shaping educational policies, and practices. The journals published by various departments of NCERT serve as key platforms for disseminating scholarly analyses, reflecting on the evolving landscape of educational reforms.

In view of rapid technological advancements and the unprecedented expansion of information exchange, academic publishing faces new challenges and heightened expectations. Upholding the principles of transparency, integrity, and accountability remain essential for ensuring the quality and credibility of academic output. These guiding values form the foundation of the NCERT Journals Publication Policy.

The proposed policy establishes an organised and clear framework for the submission, review, and dissemination of academic contributions across NCERT journals. It aligns with globally recognised best practices, including anonymous peer review (double-blind), mandatory plagiarism screening, explicit declaration of AI-assisted content, and adherence to standardised citation protocols such as the APA format. Through these mechanisms, the policy reinforces the scholarly and ethical standards of academic publishing.

A defining feature of the policy is its emphasis on inclusivity and accessibility. Committed to the principles of open access, NCERT has launched the digital platform *ejournals.ncert.gov.in*, thereby enabling widespread access to educational research for teachers, researchers, and students alike. Concurrently, print subscriptions remain available for those who prefer traditional formats, ensuring equitable dissemination of knowledge. Recognising the shifting ethical contours and professional expectations in academic publishing, the policy incorporates comprehensive provisions for editorial transparency, grievance redressal, correction and retraction mechanisms, and long-term digital archiving.

The formulation of this policy is the result of collaborative efforts by NCERT team to foster a research culture rooted in ethical rigour, openness, and intellectual creativity. It is expected that the implementation of this policy will enhance the credibility of NCERT's academic publications and promote their broader and more frequent utilisation. I appreciate and acknowledge the contribution of all the members of Advisory Board, experts, reviewers and NCERT faculty involved in developing this policy.

Thus, this policy is envisioned not merely as a set of procedural guidelines but as a manifestation of a collective aspiration to strengthen academic publishing in education. Stakeholders, including authors, reviewers, editors, and readers, are encouraged to engage critically with this document and actively contribute to building a robust and scholarly publishing ecosystem.

New Delhi
August 2025

DINESH PRASAD SAKLANI
Director,
National Council of Educational
Research and Training

NCERT JOURNALS PUBLICATION POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION



The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has a long-standing commitment towards advancing educational research and pedagogical innovations through its scholarly journals. In line with the global best practices in research and national academic standards, the NCERT Journals Publication Policy aims to ensure the highest levels of academic integrity, editorial transparency, and publication ethics. This policy provides a structured framework for submission, review, publication, and dissemination of original research and scholarly articles in the field of education. It is intended to guide authors, editors, reviewers, and readers in maintaining rigorous quality and ethical standards throughout the publication process.

2. EDITORIAL POLICY



- 2.1. Only original and unpublished manuscripts based on original research or innovative work should be submitted for consideration in NCERT journals.
- 2.2. Authors have a responsibility to ensure the originality of their work and to confirm that the manuscript has not been submitted or published elsewhere simultaneously.
- 2.3. They must also respect the rights of other authors and avoid any form of copyright infringement. References taken from the scholarly sources must be cited properly.
- 2.4. If a manuscript is based on a project or an assignment, the authors must include proper citations and obtain permission from the relevant departments and institutions. This is necessary to prevent the violation of third-party rights.
- 2.5. Authors must submit a similarity report along with certificate that confirm the originality of the submitted paper generated from widely used plagiarism software.
- 2.6. In case of more than one author the Editorial Board will communicate only with the corresponding author regarding all decisions.
- 2.7. The selection of manuscripts for the journals follows a rigorous double peer review process, as outlined in the policy, in order to maintain the quality of publications.

- 2.8 The views expressed by individual authors are their own and do not necessarily reflect the policies of NCERT, or the views of Academic Editors.
- 2.9 As a matter of transparency and considering the academic interest of the author submitting a paper, it is mandatory that a decision on the paper submitted be taken as early as possible but not later than six months of the receipt of the paper under normal circumstances.
- 2.10 Receipt of a manuscript from author must be acknowledged by the Academic Editor within a week's time. A suggestive format of acknowledgement of receipt is given in Annexure-I.
- 2.11 A manuscript passes through different stages after its submission for publication and the purpose for transparency the following dates must be mentioned in the paper .
 1. Manuscript submission Date
 2. Manuscript Acceptance Date
 3. Manuscript Publication Date
- 2.12 Providing all the relevant information to Stakeholders should also be the prime objective of the Department/Division/Institute. Therefore, a mandatory disclosure about Journal has to be there on the home page of respective Department/Division/Institute in NCERT's website. Details of the said mandatory disclosure has been given in Annexure II.

While setting up of the manuscript after final acceptance, the above three dates must be mentioned at the top of the article along with Title of the Article; Name of the Author (s) along with ORCID ID(s).

3. EDITORIAL BOARD



The Editorial Board may be constituted by the respective departments for the journals. The Editorial Board is responsible for maintaining the academic quality and integrity of the journal. A suggestive constitution for the Editorial Board is given below:

- 3.1 **Editor-in-Chief:** Oversees the journal's vision, policy implementation, and final decision-making. (Director, NCERT)
- 3.2 **Academic/Managing/Associate Editors:** Handle manuscript workflows and coordinate with reviewers.
- 3.3 **Section Editors (if applicable):** Manage discipline-specific submissions (if required).

With regard to the best Editorial practices, the chapter on Code of Conduct and its points given on Serial numbers 1 to 17 should be adhered to. In addition, there should be a conscious effort that own work of the editor(s) should not be published in the journals edited by him/her. Strict adherence of the time schedule for review of paper after its receipt, editorial processing and publication in order to ensure a timely publication of the Journal.

4. CALL FOR PAPERS

NCERT journals accept original manuscripts as per the subject areas and submission schedule specified on the web portal of each journal (please visit www.ejournals.ncert.gov.in to view the subject areas and submission schedule for each journal).

5. GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS

Articles should be sent in English or Hindi, to the Academic Editors of the respective journals of the National Council of Educational Research and Training, Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi 110016. For submissions in Hindi, authors may consider Hindi journals published by the NCERT. All manuscripts should be submitted in MS Word format by e-mail to the Academic Editors of the respective journals as per the information available in the web portal of NCERT Journals (www.ejournals.ncert.gov.in).

The following guidelines for submission of the manuscripts must be adhered to without exception:

5.1 ARTICLE SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

5.1.1 Submission Requirements and File Preparation

In case the manuscript is based on a case study, research problem, or project undertaken the submissions should range from 3000 to 8000 words. Notes, comments, or observations on policies should range from 3000 to 5000 words.

Similarly, book reviews including abstract should range from 1500 to 2500 words. However, the exact details of the word limit for the concerned journal may be checked from the said journal's guidelines. The main manuscript file must not include name and affiliation of the author(s). Author(s) must provide a separate title page containing the **manuscript title, names, affiliations, e-mail IDs and postal addresses of all the contributors**. The manuscript and title page file must be submitted along with a covering letter containing the following undertaking:

"I confirm that the citation style of the manuscript is according to APA Style Manual, 7th Edition. I have read the publication guidelines of the NCERT journal and confirm that my manuscript complies with them. I declare that the manuscript is original, has not been submitted elsewhere or published earlier, and does not breach any provisions of the copyright laws. A similarity report, as required by the regulations of Research and Publication Ethics, is attached."

5.1.2 *Format of the Manuscript*

The manuscript to be submitted must have the following mandatory sections:

For the Manuscripts submitted in English, the Title must be in Times New Roman font of 14-point size. The main text must be in Times New Roman font of 12-point size. For the Manuscripts submitted in Hindi, the Title must be in DevLys 010/Kruti Dev 010/Unicode font of 14-point size. The main text must be in DevLys 010/Kruti Dev 010/Unicode of 12-point size.

The Manuscript must contain Abstract (in 150-200 words), Keywords (5-7), Main text area, Conclusion and References. Any artwork, figures and other graphics must be clearly visible, or, if needed, must be provided in the Annexure. Abbreviations when they are used for the first time must be spelt out and explained.

5.1.3 *Reference Style and Citations*

Citations should follow the referencing style prescribed by the American Psychological Association (Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 7th Edition, 2020). For the latest APA guidelines, authors can also refer to APA (American Psychological Association) style. Citation examples of a journal article and a book are given below for quick reference.

Sharma, P. (2023). Teaching for the time being: Teaching and teacher identity in low-fee private schools in semi-urban Delhi. *Contemporary Education Dialogue*, 20(2), 283-304. <https://doi.org/10.1177/097318492311724>

Veraksa, A., & Solovieva, Y. (Eds.). (2024). *Learning mathematics by cultural-historical theory implementation: Understanding Vygotsky's approach*. Springer.

5.2 **IMPORTANT FILES TO BE SUBMITTED BY THE CORRESPONDING AUTHOR**

5.2.1 File-1: Title page with author(s) details (Name, Affiliation, E-Mail ID, ORCID ID and Contact Number). It is mandatory to mention ORCID ID for the author(s).

- 5.2.2 File-2: An abstract within 150–200 words along with 5–7 keywords. The abstract should contain the purpose, methodology, findings, and implications of the study.
- 5.2.3 File-3: Main Manuscript (without author details) The length of the manuscript submitted should be less than 8000 counts. However, the limit of the word count may differ according to the policy guideline of the particular journals of NCERT, which shall be notified by the respective publication department of the journals and will be available to refer on the website of the journals. Charts, tables, diagrams or other allied objects as mentioned in the mail file must also be submitted in separate files for more clear/high resolution quality.
- 5.2.4 File-4: Diagrams or line drawings should be submitted in complete form, separately in JPEG files (with resolution of 600 dpi), neatly numbered for identification and clearly indicating their position in the text. Tables can be given as a part of the text. Captions should be provided whenever necessary.
- 5.2.5 File-5: Tables (If any)
- 5.2.6 File-6: A plagiarism report within the 10% threshold.
- 5.2.7 File 7 : AI content report.
- 5.2.8 File-8: An undertaking stating that the manuscript represents original work, has not been previously published in print or electronic form, and is not currently under consideration for publication elsewhere.

6. REVIEW POLICY



NCERT journals follow a stringent double-peer review process for evaluation of the submitted manuscripts. At the preliminary stage, a team of subject experts blindly screens the manuscripts under the supervision of the editorial committee. Based on the preliminary screening and evaluation of the similarity reports submitted by the author(s), the manuscripts are shortlisted. The selected manuscripts should then be sent to two reviewers for blind review. In case of a tie (one positive and one negative review), the paper should then be sent to a third reviewer, who holds a comparatively senior position in terms of academic credentials. The third reviewer's comments will be the basis for a decision to either accept or reject the paper. The comments and suggestions of the reviewers are conveyed to the authors for further course of action, if any. The final version of the manuscript, as revised by the author(s) incorporating the suggestions of the reviewers, if any, is considered accepted for publication in the NCERT journals.

6.1 REVIEWER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

- Provide objective, constructive, and timely feedback on the submitted manuscripts.
- Maintain confidentiality throughout the review process.
- Disclose any potential conflicts of interest before accepting to review.
- Avoid personal criticism; focus on the content and academic merit.
- Reviews are expected to adhere to the time schedule to review the paper will be helpful in bringing out the Journal on time.

With regard to the ethical guidelines for the peer reviewers, given in the COPE document (from page no.19-23) should have to be adhered to for best practices (Refer Annexure-III).

7. PUBLICATION ETHICS



NCERT journals follow the publication and ethical standards set by the UGC and Ministry of Education (MoE) and so respect academic honesty and maintain the quality of research. It is mandatory to acknowledge funding agencies as well as the parent organisation, while the manuscript is prepared on the basis of such professional engagements in research activities. Therefore, manuscripts submitted for consideration in NCERT journals must be authentic, unpublished, and based on the original research or innovative work. The journals also follow the research ethics guidelines framed by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) for promoting ethical practices and supporting high standards in scholarly publications. Before submitting manuscripts to the NCERT journals, authors are encouraged to read and comply with the COPE guidelines accessible at: Link <https://publicationethics.org/getting-started/what-publication-ethics> (What is publication ethics? | COPE: Committee on Publication Ethics.)

8. GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL MECHANISM



8.1 COMPLAINTS HANDLING

The NCERT Journal policy adheres to establish a clear and transparent grievance redressal mechanism for:

- Authors disputing editorial or peer-review decisions.
- Reviewers raising concerns about misconduct.
- Readers reporting ethical issues in published articles.

8.2 STEPS IN THE GRIEVANCE PROCESS

- **Submission of Complaint:** Through a designated email or an online form with evidence to editor(s).
- **Initial Review:** The editorial team must acknowledge receipt and also conduct a preliminary evaluation.
- **Investigation:**
 - ◇ For ethical issues: Follow COPE flowcharts.
 - ◇ For editorial appeals: Review by the Editor-in-Chief or an Ethics Committee.
- **Decision and Resolution:**
 - ◇ A written communication of the decision within a defined time frame (e.g., 4-6 weeks).
 - ◇ Possible actions: correction, apology, retraction, or revision of editorial decisions.
- **Appeal:** Complaint may escalate unresolved issues to an external body (e.g., publisher or COPE, if applicable).

9. ETHICS AND MISCONDUCT



9.1 ALLEGATIONS OF MISCONDUCT

The journal shall investigate:

- Plagiarism, data fabrication/falsification.
- Undisclosed conflicts of interest.
- Inappropriate authorship credit.
- Peer review manipulation.

9.2 ACTION ON MISCONDUCT

Depending on severity:

- Rejection or retraction of the article.
- Notification to the author's institution or funding body.
- Banning authors or reviewers from future submissions.

9.3 Transparency and Best Practices

The journal should:

- Publish clear authorship and review policies on its website.
- List all members of the Editorial and Advisory Boards with affiliations.
- Provide ethical guidelines for authors and reviewers.
- Regularly review and update its policies to reflect evolving standards.

10. OPEN ACCESS & PRINT SUBSCRIPTION POLICY



NCERT facilitates open access to the contents of its journals in order to promote wider accessibility and dissemination of articles published. Archives of NCERT journals shall be available in a searchable format via its web portal *ejournals.ncert.gov.in* at no cost, except for the current issue. Current print issues will be available through subscription-based model, and the subscription process is explained on the web portal *ejournals.ncert.gov.in*. The contents and abstracts of the current issues shall be accessible via the digital platform.

11. ARCHIVAL POLICY



NCERT journals maintain a robust archival policy for the long-term access and preservation of past issues. All past issues are systematically archived and made available in digital format through the official website of NCERT journals (*ejournals.ncert.gov.in*). Print copies are available in the Library and Documentation Division, G.B. Pant Block, NCERT, New Delhi. The archival system uses standard methods for digital storage. It includes indexing, DOI numbering, and links with national databases.

12. AI GENERATED CONTENT POLICY



NCERT journals adhere to strict ethical guidelines on the use of AI-generated content. Authors must clearly state if AI-assisted tools were used at any stage of manuscript preparation. The Editorial Board reserves the right to reject any submission if AI-generated content has compromised originality and research integrity. Generally, AI Generated Charts based on the original data and/or images based on related concepts may be declared in advance. Manuscripts containing AI-generated text without proper human oversight and authorship verification will not be accepted.

13. INDEXING IN REPUTED DATABASES

NCERT journals aim to gain visibility and recognition through listing in national and international journal databases. These are expected to be listed in platforms such as Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholars, and other recognised indices.

14. LICENSE AND COPYRIGHT

The copyright of the articles published in the journals will vest with the NCERT. NCERT shall host the digital copies under the Creative Commons Attribution-BY-NC-ND 4.0 License, which grants certain permissions and specifies certain restrictions with regard to usage and distribution of the articles hosted on digital platforms.

15. CORRECTION, COMPLAINTS AND RETRACTION POLICY

NCERT Journals are committed to maintaining academic accuracy, transparency, and integrity. In cases of errors, ethical concerns, or disputes, appropriate corrective actions such as corrections, retractions, or editorial notes will be taken promptly. Minor inaccuracies will be addressed through errata or corrigenda, while serious issues—such as plagiarism, data fabrication, or legal violations—may lead to article retraction, following due process and author notification. Complaints regarding editorial decisions, peer review, or ethical conduct must be submitted in writing and will be resolved within a defined timeframe. All actions will be documented and updated in the online version to ensure transparency and uphold the credibility of NCERT publications.

16. FEEDBACK/SUGGESTIONS FROM THE READERS

Readers of NCERT journals are welcome to report any error(s), misinformation, discrepancy, inaccuracy or any ethical or legal concern. The respective editorial boards of the NCERT journals shall be responsible for issuing corrections related to errors, falsification, misrepresentation, discrepancy or inaccurate information reported by the readers. Any correction noted shall appear in the next print issue. However, the digital edition with correctional clause mentioned in the footnote shall be updated.

ANNEXURE-I

Dr. xyx

Institute of _____

Bhopal (MP)

Dear Madam/Sir,

We thankfully acknowledge the receipt of your manuscript entitled, “_____” on DD/MM/YYYY. The decision of the Editorial Board will be communicated in due course of time.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

abc

{Academic Editor}

Journal_____

Department of _____

NCERT, New Delhi-110016 (India)

ANNEXURE-II

MANDATORY DISCLOSURE AND COMPLIANCE ABOUT JOURNAL

- The following disclosure has to be mandatorily made both on the page of the department/division/institute on the NCERT website as well as on the NCERT's Journals webpage (ejournals.ncert.gov.in). In addition, a few compliances should also be done by the respective department/division/institute from the point of view of information to all stakeholders uniformly as well as maintaining transparency.
 1. Objective of the Journal
 2. Periodicity
 3. Name of the Department/Division/Institute
 4. Contact Information
 5. Name of Editors
- Ethical Guidelines for Authors (plagiarism and AI content): Authors should be cautioned in the Author Guidelines that any articles falling beyond the permissible threshold of similarity of AI content will be rejected outright.
- Transparent Article Processing Charges (APCs): Clearly state if the journal is open access, hybrid, or subscription-based and mention any fees, waivers, or subsidies for authors, especially from developing countries.
- DOI and Digital Archiving Policy: Every article should have a DOI (Digital Object Identifier) and be preserved in digital repositories (e.g., CLOCKSS, Portico) to ensure permanence and retrievability. Concerned department/division/institute publishing the Journal should ensure the generation of DOI for every article published.
- Identification system for authors: Department/division/institute should insist for providing ORCID/Google Scholar/researcher ID for authors and reviewers to ensure authentic authorship and to facilitate research tracking and evaluation.
- The department/division/institute will ensure having sufficiently large

number of reviewers in their panel belonging to all the domains of the Journal(s) published.

- There has to be a declaration that the Journal will honour the originality of idea and content written by author(s), however, editorial team reserves the right to make corrections for typographical error and grammatical errors.
- Department/division/institute should also make an attempt to publish FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) about possible issues and queries related to submission of paper/article, review & editorial policy, ethical guideline, retraction policy etc.
- The Department/division/institute should ensure the source of financial and academic support, if any, provided towards completing the work reported and printed at the end of the article.



ANNEXURE-III

C O P E

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

COPE Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers

*Irene Hames on behalf of COPE Council
March 2013, v.1*

Peer review in all its forms plays an important role in ensuring the integrity of the scholarly record. The process depends to a large extent on trust, and requires that everyone involved behaves responsibly and ethically. Peer reviewers play a central and critical part in the peer-review process, but too often come to the role without any guidance and may be unaware of their ethical obligations. The COPE Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers set out the basic principles and standards to which all peer reviewers should adhere during the peer-review process. It is hoped they will provide helpful guidance to researchers, be a reference for journals and editors in guiding their reviewers, and act as an educational resource for institutions in training their students and researchers.

Basic principles to which peer reviewers should adhere

Peer reviewers should:

- only agree to review manuscripts for which they have the subject expertise required to carry out a proper assessment and which they can assess in a timely manner
- respect the confidentiality of peer review and not reveal any details of a manuscript or its review, during or after the peer-review process, beyond those that are released by the journal
- not use information obtained during the peer-review process for their own or any other person's or organization's advantage, or to disadvantage or discredit others
- declare all potential conflicting interests, seeking advice from the journal if they are unsure whether something constitutes a relevant interest
- not allow their reviews to be influenced by the origins of a manuscript, by the nationality, religious or political beliefs, gender or other characteristics of the authors, or by commercial considerations
- be objective and constructive in their reviews, refraining from being hostile or inflammatory and from making libellous or derogatory personal comments
- acknowledge that peer review is largely a reciprocal endeavour and undertake to carry out their fair share of reviewing and in a timely manner
- provide journals with personal and professional information that is accurate and a true representation of their expertise
- recognize that impersonation of another individual during the review process is considered serious misconduct

COPE Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers

Expectations during the peer-review process

On being approached to review

Peer reviewers should:

- respond in a reasonable time-frame, especially if they cannot do the review, and without intentional delay.
- declare if they do not have the subject expertise required to carry out the review or if they are able to assess only part of the manuscript, outlining clearly the areas for which they have the relevant expertise.
- only agree to review a manuscript if they are fairly confident they can return a review within the proposed or mutually agreed time-frame, informing the journal promptly if they require an extension.
- declare any potentially conflicting or competing interests (which may, for example, be personal, financial, intellectual, professional, political or religious), seeking advice from the journal if they are unsure whether something constitutes a relevant interest.
- follow journals' policies on situations they consider to represent a conflict to reviewing. If no guidance is provided, they should inform the journal if: they work at the same institution as any of the authors (or will be joining that institution or are applying for a job there); they are or have been recent (e.g. within the past 3 years) mentors, mentees, close collaborators or joint grant holders; they have a close personal relationship with any of the authors.
- review afresh any manuscript they have previously reviewed for another journal as it may have changed between the two submissions and the journals' criteria for evaluation and acceptance may be different.
- ensure suggestions for alternative reviewers are based on suitability and not influenced by personal considerations or made with the intention of the manuscript receiving a specific outcome (either positive or negative).
- not agree to review a manuscript just to gain sight of it with no intention of submitting a review.
- decline to review if they feel unable to provide a fair and unbiased review.
- decline to review if they have been involved with any of the work in the manuscript or its reporting.
- decline to review if asked to review a manuscript that is very similar to one they have in preparation or under consideration at another journal.
- decline to review if they have issues with the peer-review model used by a journal (e.g. it uses open review and releases the reviewers' names to the authors) that would either affect their review or cause it to be invalidated because of their inability to comply with the journal's review policies.

COPE COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

COPE Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers

During review

Peer reviewers should:

- **notify the journal immediately and seek advice if they discover either a conflicting interest that wasn't apparent when they agreed to the review or anything that might prevent them providing a fair and unbiased review.**
- **refrain from looking at the manuscript and associated material while awaiting instructions from a journal on issues that might cause the request to review to be rescinded.**
- **read the manuscript, ancillary material (e.g. reviewer instructions, required ethics and policy statements, supplemental data files) and journal instructions thoroughly, getting back to the journal if anything is not clear and requesting any missing or incomplete items they need to carry out a full review.**
- **notify the journal as soon as possible if they find they do not have the expertise to assess all aspects of the manuscript; they shouldn't wait until submitting their review as this will unduly delay the review process.**
- **not involve anyone else in the review of a manuscript, including junior researchers they are mentoring, without first obtaining permission from the journal; the names of any individuals who have helped them with the review should be included with the returned review so that they are associated with the manuscript in the journal's records and can also receive due credit for their efforts.**
- **keep all manuscript and review details confidential.**
- **contact the journal if circumstances arise that will prevent them from submitting a timely review, providing an accurate estimate of the time they will need to do a review if still asked to do so.**
- **in the case of double-blind review, if they suspect the identity of the author(s) notify the journal if this knowledge raises any potential conflict of interest.**
- **notify the journal immediately if they come across any irregularities, have concerns about ethical aspects of the work, are aware of substantial similarity between the manuscript and a concurrent submission to another journal or a published article, or suspect that misconduct may have occurred during either the research or the writing and submission of the manuscript; reviewers should, however, keep their concerns confidential and not personally investigate further unless the journal asks for further information or advice.**
- **not intentionally prolong the review process, either by delaying the submission of their review or by requesting unnecessary additional information from the journal or author.**

COPE Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers

- ensure their review is based on the merits of the work and not influenced, either positively or negatively, by any personal, financial, or other conflicting considerations or by intellectual biases.
- not contact the authors directly without the permission of the journal.

When preparing the report

Peer reviewers should:

- bear in mind that the editor is looking to them for subject knowledge, good judgement, and an honest and fair assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the work and the manuscript.
- make clear at the start of their review if they have been asked to address only specific parts or aspects of a manuscript and indicate which these are.
- follow journals' instructions on the specific feedback that is required of them and, unless there are good reasons not to, the way this should be organized.
- be objective and constructive in their reviews and provide feedback that will help the authors to improve their manuscript.
- not make derogatory personal comments or unfounded accusations.
- be specific in their criticisms, and provide evidence with appropriate references to substantiate general statements such as, 'this work has been done before', to help editors in their evaluation and decision and in fairness to the authors.
- remember it is the authors' paper and not attempt to rewrite it to their own preferred style if it is basically sound and clear; suggestions for changes that improve clarity are, however, important.
- be aware of the sensitivities surrounding language issues that are due to the authors writing in a language that is not their own, and phrase the feedback appropriately and with due respect.
- make clear which suggested additional investigations are essential to support claims made in the manuscript under consideration and which will just strengthen or extend the work.
- not prepare their report in such a way or include comments that suggest the review has been done by another person.
- not prepare their report in a way that reflects badly or unfairly on another person.

COPE COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

COPE Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers

- not make unfair negative comments or include unjustified criticisms of any competitors' work that is mentioned in the manuscript.
- ensure their comments and recommendations for the editor are consistent with their report for the authors; most feedback should be put in the report for the authors.
- confidential comments to the editor should not be a place for denigration or false accusation, done in the knowledge that the authors will not see these comments.
- not suggest that authors include citations to the reviewer's (or their associates') work merely to increase the reviewer's (or their associates') citation count or to enhance the visibility of their or their associates' work; suggestions must be based on valid academic or technological reasons.
- determine whether the journal allows them to sign their reviews and, if it does, decide as they feel comfortable doing.
- if they are the editor handling a manuscript and decide themselves to provide a review of that manuscript, do this transparently and not under the guise of an anonymous review if the journal operates blind review; providing a review for a manuscript being handled by another editor at the journal can be treated as any other review.

Expectations post review

Peer reviewers should:

- continue to keep details of the manuscript and its review confidential.
- respond promptly if contacted by a journal about matters related to their review of a manuscript and provide the information required.
- contact the journal if anything relevant comes to light after they have submitted their review that might affect their original feedback and recommendations.
- read the reviews from the other reviewers, if these are provided by the journal, to improve their own understanding of the topic or the decision reached.
- try to accommodate requests from journals to review revisions or resubmissions of manuscripts they have reviewed.

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