

# Ethical Guidelines to Publication of Scientific Research

The guidelines in this document were revised by Taylor and Francis in March 2006.

## Overview

Taylor & Francis serves the scientific profession and societies at large. Every editor of a journal or Society journal has the responsibility to establish and maintain guidelines for selecting and accepting papers submitted to that journal. An essential feature of a profession is the acceptance by its members of a code that outlines desirable behaviour and specifies obligations of members to each other and to the public. Taylor & Francis believe that most of the guidelines offered are already understood and subscribed to by experienced researchers and academics. They may, however, be of substantial help to those who are relatively new to research.

## Guidelines

### A. Ethical Obligations of Editors of Scientific Journals

1. An editor should give unbiased consideration to all manuscripts offered for publication, judging each on its merits without regard to race, religion, nationality, sex, seniority, or institutional affiliation of the author(s).
2. An editor should consider manuscripts submitted for publication with all reasonable speed and attention.
3. The sole responsibility for acceptance or rejection of a manuscript rests with the editor. Manuscripts may be rejected without review if considered inappropriate for the journal.
4. The editor and members of the editorial team should not disclose information about a manuscript under consideration to anyone other than those from whom professional advice is sought. After a decision the editor may disclose manuscript titles and authors' names of papers that have been accepted for publication.
5. An editor should respect the intellectual independence of authors.
6. Editorial responsibility and authority for any manuscript authored by an editor and submitted to the editor's journal should be delegated to some other qualified person. Editorial consideration of the manuscript in any way or form by the author-editor would constitute a conflict of interest.
7. Unpublished information, or interpretations disclosed in a submitted manuscript should not be used in an editor's own research except with the consent of the author. When a manuscript is so closely related to the research of an editor as to create a conflict of interest, the editor should arrange for some other qualified person to take editorial responsibility for that manuscript.
8. If an editor is presented with convincing evidence that the main substance or conclusions of a report published in an editor's journal are erroneous, the editor should facilitate publication of an appropriate report or note pointing out the error and, if possible, correcting it.
9. An author may request the editor not use certain reviewers in consideration of a manuscript.
10. An Editor should ideally send a PDF rather than Microsoft Word or other electronic file to reviewers and request that comments not be made to the electronic copy of the manuscript.

### B. Ethical Obligations of Authors/Contributors

1. An author's obligation is to present an accurate account of research performed and an objective discussion of its significance.
2. A primary research report should contain sufficient detail and reference to public sources of information to permit the author's peers to repeat the work.
3. An author should cite those publications that have been influential in determining the nature of the reported work and that will guide the reader quickly to the earlier work that is essential for understanding the present investigation.
4. Laboratory and clinical research should be driven by protocol; pilot studies should have a written rationale.
5. Formal and documented ethical approval from appropriate research ethics committees are required for all studies using people, medical records and anonymised human tissues. A letter of consent must accompany the photographs of patients in which a possibility of identification exists.

6. Contributors are required to follow the procedures in force in their countries which govern the ethics of work done with human or animal subjects, such as the Helsinki Declaration, representing minimal requirement.
7. When describing surgical procedures on animals, identify the pre anaesthetic and anaesthetic agents used and state the amount of concentration and the route and frequency of administration for each. When reporting studies on unanaesthetized animals or on humans, indicate that the procedures followed were in accordance with institutional guidelines.
8. Fragmentation of research reports must be avoided.
9. In submitting a manuscript for publication, an author should inform the editor of related manuscripts that the author has under editorial consideration or in press.
10. It is improper for an author to submit manuscripts describing essentially the same research to more than one journal of primary publication, unless it is a resubmission of a manuscript rejected for or withdrawn from publication.
11. An author should identify the source of all information quoted or offered, except that which is common knowledge. Information obtained privately, as in conversation, correspondence, or discussion with third parties, should not be used or reported in the author's work.
- 12., At no time is personal criticism ever considered to be appropriate in a written piece of work.
13. The co-authors of a paper should be all those persons who have made significant scientific contributions to the work reported. Deceased persons who meet the criterion for inclusion as co-authors should be so included, with a footnote reporting date of death
14. The authors should reveal to the editor any potential conflict of interest that might be affected by publication of the results contained in a manuscript.

### **C. Ethical Obligations of Reviewers of Manuscripts**

1. Every scientist has a moral obligation to do a fair share of reviewing.
2. A chosen reviewer who feels inadequately qualified to judge the research reported in a manuscript should return it promptly to the editor.
3. A reviewer of a manuscript should judge objectively the quality of the manuscript. A reviewer should respect the intellectual independence of the authors.
4. A reviewer should be sensitive to the appearance of a conflict of interest when the manuscript under review is related to the reviewer's work in progress or published.
5. A reviewer should not evaluate a manuscript authored or co-authored by a person with whom the reviewer has a personal or professional connection if the relationship would bias judgment of the manuscript.
6. A reviewer should treat a manuscript as a confidential document.
7. Reviewers should explain and support their judgments adequately so that editors and authors may understand the basis of their comments. Any statement that an observation, derivation, or argument had been previously reported should be accompanied by the relevant citation.
8. A reviewer should be alert to the failure of authors to cite relevant work by other scientists. A reviewer should call to the editor's attention any significant similarity between the manuscript under consideration and any published paper or any manuscript submitted concurrently to another journal.
9. A reviewer should act promptly, submitting a report in a timely manner.
10. Reviewers should not use or disclose unpublished information, arguments, or interpretations contained in a manuscript under consideration, except with the consent of the author.
11. At no time is personal criticism of the author ever considered to be appropriate when reviewing their work.
12. A reviewer should not make their comments on the appropriateness of publication of a manuscript on the electronic copy of the work.

### **D. Ethical Obligations of Scientists Publishing outside the Scientific Literature**

1. A scientist publishing in popular literature has the same basic obligation to be accurate in reporting observations and unbiased in interpreting them as when publishing in a scientific journal.
2. The scientist may find it necessary to use common words of lesser precision to increase public comprehension of their work. In view of the importance of scientists' communicating with the general public, some loss of accuracy in that sense can be condoned.
3. A scientist should not proclaim a discovery to the public unless the experimental, statistical, or theoretical support for it is of sufficient strength to warrant publication in the scientific literature.