
SPIRAL Academic Press

A Division of SPIRAL With Fredah LLC

PUBLICATION ETHICS CODE

Standards of Research Integrity and Ethical Publishing Practice

VERSION

1.0

ISSUED

January 2026

ALIGNED WITH

COPE · ICMJE · BOAI

This Code establishes the ethical obligations of all parties involved in the publication of scholarly work by SPIRAL Academic Press — including authors, peer reviewers, editors, and the Press itself. It is grounded in the guidelines of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), the principles of the Budapest Open Access Initiative (BOAI), and the standards of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE).

COPE Member

Crossref Member

DOAJ Committed

PREAMBLE

SPIRAL Academic Press is committed to the highest standards of publication ethics and research integrity. We believe that honest, rigorous, and transparent scholarship is the foundation of a trustworthy body of knowledge — and that the integrity of the scholarly record is a shared responsibility of authors, reviewers, editors, and publishers alike.

This Publication Ethics Code defines the ethical obligations of each party in the publication process and establishes the procedures by which the Press addresses allegations of misconduct. It is not a punitive document; it is a statement of the values and standards that make scholarly publishing worthy of public trust.

This Code is grounded in and consistent with the guidelines of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), whose flowcharts and guidance documents the Press adopts as operational references for handling specific cases of alleged misconduct.

Contents

I. Obligations of Authors	4
II. Obligations of Peer Reviewers	5
III. Obligations of Editors	6
IV. Obligations of the Press	7
V. Handling Allegations of Misconduct	7
VI. Specific Policies	9
VII. Contact and Reporting	9
VIII. Acknowledgments and Governing Standards	10

I. Obligations of Authors

Authors bear primary responsibility for the integrity of the work they submit for publication. The following obligations apply to all individuals listed as authors on a submission.

I.I. Authorship Standards

Criteria for Authorship. Authorship should be limited to individuals who have made a substantial contribution to the conception or design of the work, or to the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data; who have participated in drafting or critically revising the work for important intellectual content; who have approved the final version to be published; and who agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

Corresponding Author Responsibility. The corresponding author is responsible for ensuring that all co-authors have approved the final manuscript, have agreed to its submission, and have been informed of and consent to the submission and publication terms.

Ghost Authorship. Individuals who meet the criteria for authorship must be listed as authors. The omission of qualifying contributors (ghost authorship) is a violation of this Code.

Gift and Honorary Authorship. Listing individuals as authors who do not meet the criteria for authorship — regardless of seniority, funding role, or institutional affiliation — is a violation of this Code.

Contributor Roles. Authors are encouraged to use the CRediT (Contributor Roles Taxonomy) framework to specify the contributions of each author.

I.II. Originality and Prior Publication

Authors must confirm that their submission is original work that has not been published previously in any form, is not under simultaneous review at another journal or publisher, and does not contain material that has been published elsewhere without appropriate citation and permission.

Duplicate Submission. Submitting the same manuscript to more than one journal simultaneously is prohibited.

Redundant Publication. Submitting work that substantially overlaps with previously published work by the same authors without disclosure and justification is prohibited. Legitimate secondary publication (e.g., translation into another language for a different audience) is permissible with full disclosure and the consent of both publishers.

Preprints. Authors may post preprints of their work on recognized preprint servers (e.g., PsyArXiv, SSRN, OSF Preprints) prior to or concurrent with submission. Authors must disclose the existence of any preprint in their cover letter and update the preprint with a link to the published version upon acceptance.

I.III. Data Integrity and Research Ethics

Accuracy. Authors are responsible for the accuracy of all data, figures, and results presented in their work. Data must not be fabricated, falsified, or selectively reported in a manner that misrepresents the findings.

Data Availability. Authors are encouraged to make their research data available in an appropriate open repository and to include a data availability statement in their manuscript.

Research Ethics Approval. Research involving human participants must have been conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki and must have received approval from an appropriate institutional review board or ethics committee. Authors must include an ethics statement confirming this approval.

Informed Consent. Where research involves identifiable human participants, authors must confirm that informed consent was obtained and must protect participant confidentiality.

I.IV. Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

Authors must disclose all financial and non-financial interests that could be perceived as influencing the results or interpretation of their manuscript. This includes funding sources, employment relationships, consultancy arrangements, stock ownership, honoraria, and personal relationships. Disclosures are published as part of the article.

IV. Citation and Attribution

Authors must accurately cite all sources that informed their work. Selective citation that misrepresents the state of the field, citation of sources that the authors have not read, and citation manipulation intended to inflate citation counts are violations of this Code.

II. Obligations of Peer Reviewers

Peer reviewers make an essential contribution to the quality and integrity of scholarly publishing. In accepting a review assignment, reviewers accept the following obligations.

II.I. Competence and Scope

Reviewers must accept assignments only for manuscripts within their genuine area of expertise. Reviewers who realize, after accepting an assignment, that they lack the expertise to provide a competent review must notify the editor promptly.

II.II. Timeliness

Reviewers must complete reviews within the agreed timeframe. Reviewers who are unable to complete a review on time must notify the editor as early as possible so that an alternative reviewer can be found.

II.III. Confidentiality

Manuscripts under review are confidential documents. Reviewers must not share, discuss, or use the content of manuscripts under review with or for any third party. Reviewers must not use information from manuscripts under review to advance their own research prior to publication.

II.IV. Objectivity and Constructiveness

Reviews must be objective, evidence-based, and constructive. Personal criticism of authors is not acceptable. Reviewers should identify both the strengths and the weaknesses of the work and provide specific, actionable suggestions for improvement.

II.V. Conflicts of Interest

Reviewers must declare all conflicts of interest before accepting a review assignment. Reviewers who have a personal, professional, or financial relationship with any of the submitting authors that could bias their assessment must decline the assignment.

II.VI. Suspected Misconduct

If a reviewer suspects that a manuscript contains fabricated data, plagiarized material, or other ethical violations, they must notify the editor immediately rather than simply rejecting the manuscript.

III. Obligations of Editors

Editors are the stewards of the scholarly record. They are responsible for ensuring that the publication process is fair, rigorous, and transparent.

III.I. Editorial Independence

Editors make decisions on manuscripts based solely on scholarly merit. Editorial decisions are not influenced by the commercial interests of the Press, the institutional affiliation of authors, the nationality of authors, or any other non-scholarly consideration.

III.II. Fair Treatment

Editors must treat all authors with respect and fairness. Manuscripts must be evaluated on their scholarly content without regard to the authors' gender, race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, political views, or institutional affiliation.

III.III. Confidentiality

Editors must maintain the confidentiality of submitted manuscripts and the identities of reviewers. Editors must not discuss submitted manuscripts with colleagues outside the editorial process without the authors' consent.

III.IV. Conflicts of Interest

Editors who have a conflict of interest with a submitted manuscript must recuse themselves from the editorial process for that manuscript and assign it to another editor.

III.V. Timely Decisions

Editors are responsible for ensuring that authors receive timely decisions. Editors must adhere to the target timelines specified in the Editorial Handbook and must communicate proactively with authors when delays are unavoidable.

IV. Obligations of the Press

SPIRAL Academic Press accepts the following obligations to authors, reviewers, editors, and the scholarly community.

IV.I. Editorial Independence

The Press guarantees the editorial independence of its editors. The Publisher does not intervene in individual manuscript decisions. Commercial considerations do not influence editorial decisions.

IV.II. Transparency

The Press publishes its peer review policies, editorial workflows, and publication ethics standards openly on its website. The Press publishes an annual transparency report disclosing the number of submissions received, acceptance rates, and any corrections or retractions issued.

IV.III. Open Access

The Press is committed to open access publishing. All articles are made freely available online under Creative Commons licensing. The Press does not charge subscription fees. Article Processing Charges, where applicable, are disclosed transparently and waiver policies are maintained.

IV.IV. Archiving and Preservation

The Press is committed to the long-term preservation of the scholarly record. All published content is deposited in recognized digital preservation archives to ensure permanent accessibility.

IV.V. Responding to Misconduct

The Press takes all allegations of research and publication misconduct seriously and investigates them in accordance with COPE guidelines. The Press acts promptly to correct, retract, or otherwise address published work where misconduct is substantiated.

V. Handling Allegations of Misconduct

V.I. Scope

This section applies to allegations of misconduct relating to manuscripts under review, manuscripts accepted for publication, and articles already published by the Press.

V.II. Types of Misconduct

The Press recognizes the following categories of research and publication misconduct:

Type	Definition
------	------------

Fabrication	Inventing data, results, or other outputs that were not actually obtained.
Falsification	Manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented.
Plagiarism	Appropriating another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit.
Duplicate Submission	Submitting the same manuscript simultaneously to more than one journal.
Redundant Publication	Publishing substantially the same work in more than one outlet without disclosure.
Ghost/Gift Authorship	Omitting qualifying contributors or including non-contributing individuals as authors.
Undisclosed Conflict	Failing to disclose financial or personal interests that could bias the work or its interpretation.
Peer Review Manipulation	Attempting to manipulate the peer review process, including suggesting fake reviewers.
Image Manipulation	Altering figures or images in ways that misrepresent the original data.

V.III. Investigation Procedure

Upon receiving an allegation of misconduct, the Press follows this procedure:

1. **Receipt and acknowledgment.** The allegation is received by the Editor-in-Chief or Managing Editor and acknowledged within five business days.
2. **Initial assessment.** The EIC conducts an initial assessment to determine whether the allegation is credible and falls within the scope of this Code. Frivolous or clearly unfounded allegations are dismissed with a written explanation.
3. **Notification.** If the allegation is credible, the subject(s) of the allegation are notified and given the opportunity to respond.
4. **Investigation.** The EIC, in consultation with the relevant Journal Editor and, where appropriate, the subject's institution, conducts a thorough investigation. The Press follows the applicable COPE flowchart for the specific type of alleged misconduct.
5. **Decision.** Based on the investigation, the Press determines whether misconduct occurred and what action is appropriate. Possible outcomes include: no action; a correction; an expression of concern; a retraction; notification of the author's institution; or a combination of these.

6. **Communication.** All parties are notified of the outcome. The Press acts transparently and proportionately.

V.IV. Whistleblower Protection

Individuals who report suspected misconduct in good faith are protected from retaliation. The Press treats all allegations confidentially to the extent possible.

VI. Specific Policies

VI.I. Corrections Policy

When a published article contains errors that do not affect the conclusions, the Press publishes a correction notice linked to the original article. The correction is clearly dated and describes the nature of the error and the correction made.

VI.II. Retraction Policy

When a published article is found to contain fabricated data, plagiarized content, duplicate publication, or other serious violations that invalidate the findings, the Press issues a retraction notice. Retracted articles remain accessible in the archive with a clear retraction watermark. The retraction notice states the reason for retraction.

VI.III. Post-Publication Discussion

The Press welcomes post-publication commentary, letters to the editor, and technical comments. Authors of the original work are given the opportunity to respond. Post-publication discussions are subject to the same editorial standards as original submissions.

VI.IV. Authorship Disputes

Authorship disputes that arise after submission or publication are handled by the Press in accordance with COPE guidelines. The Press does not adjudicate disputes between parties but facilitates communication and, where necessary, refers the matter to the relevant institution.

VII. Contact and Reporting

Allegations of misconduct, concerns about published work, or questions about this Code should be directed to:

Publication Ethics Officer	COPE (External Resource)
SPIRAL Academic Press	Committee on Publication Ethics
editorial@spiralacademicpress.org	publicationethics.org
spiralacademicpress.org/ethics	For independent guidance on publication ethics

The Press is committed to responding to all ethics inquiries within ten business days.

VIII. Acknowledgments and Governing Standards

This Code draws on and is consistent with the following external standards and guidelines:

- **COPE Core Practices** — Committee on Publication Ethics (publicationethics.org)
- **ICMJE Recommendations** — International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (icmje.org)
- **Budapest Open Access Initiative** — boaforum.org
- **Declaration of Helsinki** — World Medical Association ethical principles for medical research involving human subjects
- **FAIR Data Principles** — Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable data standards

The Press reviews this Code annually and updates it as needed to reflect evolving standards in scholarly publishing.

SPIRAL Academic Press · editorial@spiralacademicpress.org · spiralacademicpress.org
Publication Ethics Code · Version 1.0 · January 2026
Aligned with COPE Core Practices · ICMJE Recommendations · Budapest Open Access Initiative