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| C | O | P | E |

## Core practices

The Core Practices were developed in 2017, replacing the Code of Conduct. They are applicable to all involved in publishing scholarly literature: editors and their journals, publishers, and institutions. The Core Practices should be considered alongside specific national and international codes of conduct for research and are not intended to replace these. Journals and publishers should have robust and well-described, publicly documented practices in all of the following areas for their journals.

### 1. Allegations of misconduct

Journals should have a clearly described process for handling allegations, however they are brought to the journal's or publisher's attention. Journals must have serious allegations of misconduct pre-publication and post-

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Lithuania: [Lithuanian Association of Publishers and Editors \(LAP\)](#)  
Further stages characterised by collaborative report (2024)

**Ethics toolkit for a successful editorial office**  
**A COPE GUIDE**

# PROMOTING INTEGRITY IN SCHOLARLY RESEARCH AND ITS PUBLICATION

COPE's mission is built around three core principles:

## SUPPORT



Providing practical resources to educate and support our members.

## LEADERSHIP



Providing leadership in thinking on publication ethics.

## VOICE



Offering a neutral, professional voice in current debates.

COPE Strategic plan: <https://cope.onl/plan-1>

Member benefits: <https://cope.onl/member-benefits>

### FORUM DISCUSSION OF CASES



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### WEBINARS



### ONLINE LEARNING



### AUDIT



### PERSONALISED COPE LOGO



### SAMPLE LETTERS



### STAND FOR COUNCIL



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Links to other sites are provided for your convenience but COPE accepts no responsibility or liability for the content of those sites.

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## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

The aim of this guide is to help journal editors and publishers to prepare their application for membership of **COPE**. This guide will aid editorial offices, and those who handle ethical issues, to develop or revise their own codes of conduct, policies, and processes. The guide will help editors and publishers to identify areas in need of office development and what type of staff, reviewer, or author training is needed; how to promote best practices in scholarly publishing; and how to handle allegations and cases of misconduct appropriately.

**COPE** membership requires that members have robust and well described, publicly documented practices for their journals, for all of the areas listed in the **COPE Core Practices** (see pages 22–23). The **Core Practices** and this guide should be considered alongside any publisher guidelines, and specific national and international codes of conduct for research.

The main advice in this guide is organised by **four key activities** that are needed for a successful editorial office (as summarised in the **COPE** flowchart **General approach to publication ethics for the editorial office**, see Figure 1, page 5).

In this guide, for each key activity, the relevant **COPE Core Practices** are presented, along with practical advice on how to accomplish each activity. Also, links to useful resources are provided to help you understand the relevant **Core Practices** and ethical issues, and to help you develop your own policies and guidelines.

It is important that journals are sufficiently transparent about their processes and business practices.

Accordingly, **COPE's Core Practices** complement the **Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing**, a high level set of criteria that journals are assessed against by several international organisations, including **COPE**.

**COPE** will use these criteria to evaluate publishers and journals, expecting them to adhere to and follow the spirit of the principles in all aspects of their publishing operation. A copy of the **Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing** is on pages 24–31. In general, the **COPE Core Practices** expand on the ethical items listed in the **Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing** (as shown in the checklist on page 32). Evidence of adherence to both sets of criteria, and other requirements, are needed for **COPE** membership.

How to apply for membership of **COPE** is described on pages 16–21. Editors and publishers are advised to read the guidelines carefully and follow all of the required steps before applying for **COPE** membership.

## Four key activities for a successful editorial office

1. Develop guidelines for authors

2. Develop guidelines for reviewers

3. Develop processes to help identify ethical concerns

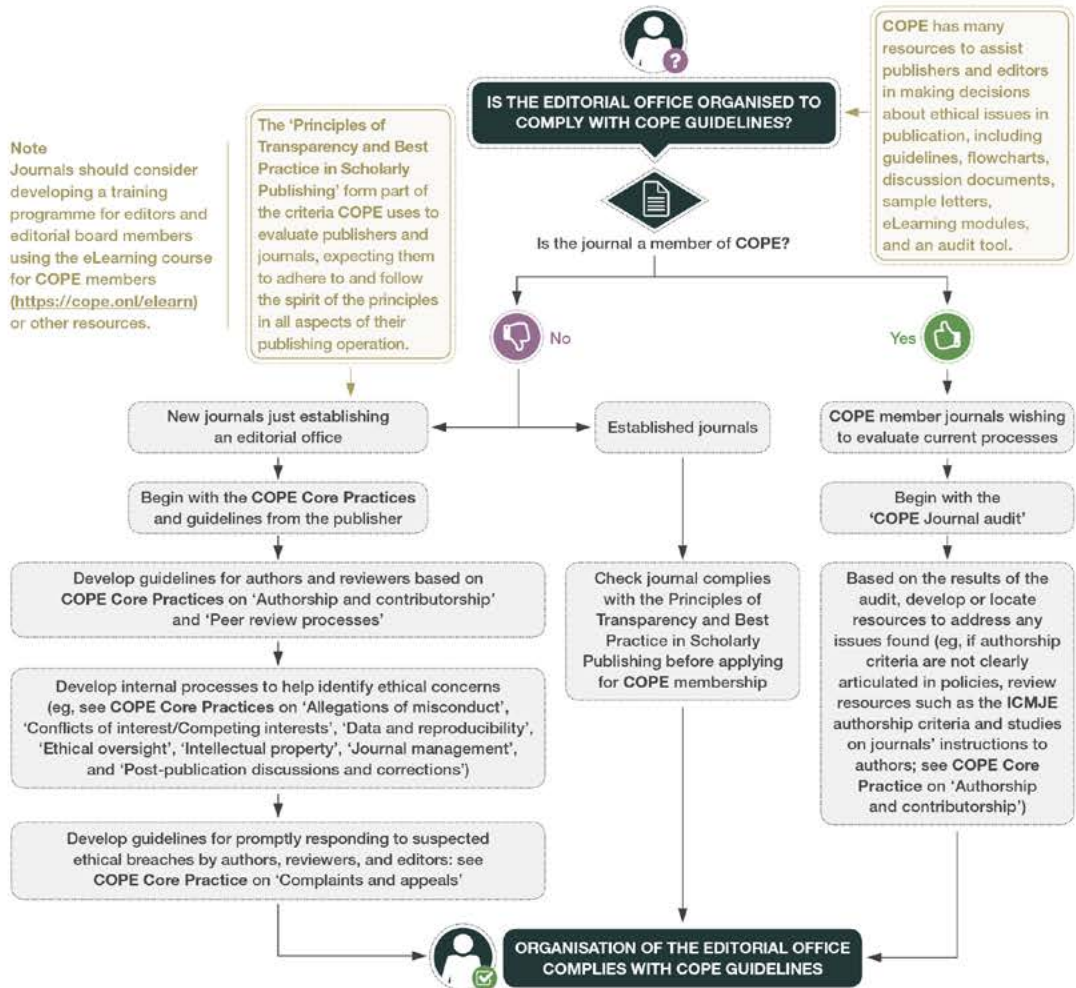
4. Develop guidelines for promptly responding to suspected ethical breaches by authors, reviewers, and editors



**Note**  
Journals should consider developing a training programme for editors and editorial board members using the eLearning course for COPE members (<https://cope.onl/elearn>) or other resources.

The 'Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing' form part of the criteria COPE uses to evaluate publishers and journals, expecting them to adhere to and follow the spirit of the principles in all aspects of their publishing operation.

COPE has many resources to assist publishers and editors in making decisions about ethical issues in publication, including guidelines, flowcharts, discussion documents, sample letters, eLearning modules, and an audit tool.



### Best practice to handle ethical issues

Ethical issues are often complex and the approach will vary depending on the specific problem and the resources of the journal. In general, COPE expects that member journals will adhere to these three basic principles to resolve ethical issues and cases of alleged misconduct:



**Further reading**

- Yentis S, on behalf of COPE Council. Sharing of information among editors-in-chief regarding possible misconduct, version 1, March 2015. <https://doi.org/10.24318/cope.2019.1.7>
- Wager E, Kleinert S, on behalf of COPE Council. Cooperation between research institutions and journals on research integrity cases: guidance from the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), version 1, March 2012. <https://doi.org/10.24318/cope.2018.1.3>

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Figure 1. General approach to publication ethics for the editorial office (<https://doi.org/10.24318/cope.2019.2.24>)

## 1. Develop guidelines for authors

### Core Practice **CCP 2**: Authorship and contributorship

Clear policies (that allow for transparency around who contributed to the work and in what capacity) should be in place for requirements for authorship and contributorship as well as processes for managing potential disputes.



In your guidelines for authors, consider including the following, in addition to providing information about the journal, submission criteria, manuscript preparation, and the submission process:

- a clear definition of authorship
- responsibilities of authors and corresponding author
- how author contributions should be declared on submission (and in the publication)
- how to acknowledge non-authors
- how potential authorship disputes are managed
- any author fee
- data and intellectual property policies, including copyright and licence arrangements
- research and publication ethics, including conflicts of interest
- peer review process, including if authors can nominate or exclude reviewers, and procedure for appeals

### Resources to help you develop policies and guidelines for authors

- COPE discussion document: Authorship (<https://doi.org/10.24318/cope.2019.3.3>)
- COPE guideline: How to handle authorship disputes: a guide for new researchers (<https://doi.org/10.24318/cope.2018.1.1>)
- COPE flowcharts (<https://cope.onl/flowcharts-3>)
- COPE focus: Authorship and contributorship: an editor view and research institution view (<https://cope.onl/news-author>)
- Cases on authorship from COPE's cases database (<https://cope.onl/cases-authorship>)
- COPE webinar: Standards in authorship (<https://cope.onl/news-standard>)
- An analysis of peer review cases brought to COPE from 1997 to 2016 (<https://cope.onl/news-cases>)
- COPE's China Seminar: Good authorship practices (<https://cope.onl/seminar-authorship>)
- Authorship and publication training programme produced by Queensland University of Technology (QUT) (<https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.c.3980448>)
- ORCID (<https://b.link/orcid>)
- CRediT taxonomy (<https://b.link/CRediT-1>)

## 2. Develop guidelines for reviewers

### Core Practice **CCP 9** : Peer review processes

All peer review processes must be transparently described and well managed. Journals should provide training for editors and reviewers and have policies on diverse aspects of peer review, especially with respect to adoption of appropriate models of review and processes for handling conflicts of interest, appeals and disputes that may arise in peer review.



State on your website what is peer reviewed, what model of peer review you use, and how the peer review process is managed and by whom. Consider including the following in your guidelines for reviewers:

- how peer reviewers are selected and trained
- how many peer reviewers review each manuscript
- responsibilities of reviewers
- ethics of reviewing, including conflicts of interest, policies on confidentiality of the process and author materials, and the procedure when a reviewer wishes to nominate a co-reviewer
- how to perform a review and time allowed
- what reviewers should do if they suspect research or publication misconduct
- how to prepare the review report, who owns the review, and transferability of reviews
- how decisions on acceptance, revision, and rejection are made
- procedures for review of submitted revisions and handling appeals

### Resources to help you develop policies and guidelines for reviewers

- COPE discussion document: Ethical guidelines for peer reviewers (<https://doi.org/10.24318/cope.2019.1.9>)
- COPE discussion document: Who 'owns' peer reviews? (<https://doi.org/10.24318/rouP8ld4>)
- COPE guideline: Editing peer reviews (<https://doi.org/10.24318/AoZQlusn>)
- COPE focus: Peer review (<https://cope.onl/digest-peer>)
- COPE flowcharts (<https://cope.onl/flowcharts-3>)
- Cases on peer review from COPE's cases database (<https://cope.onl/cases-peer>)
- COPE statement on inappropriate manipulation of peer review processes (<https://cope.onl/news-peer>)

### 3. Develop processes to help identify ethical concerns

#### Develop processes for these ethical concerns:

- Allegations of misconduct
- Conflicts of interest/Competing interests
- Data and reproducibility
- Ethical oversight
- Intellectual property
- Journal management
- Post-publication discussions and corrections

#### Core Practice **CCP 1**: Allegations of misconduct

Journals should have a clearly described process for handling allegations, however they are brought to the journal's or publisher's attention. Journals must take seriously allegations of misconduct pre-publication and post-publication. Policies should include how to handle allegations from whistleblowers.



Journal editors should have mechanisms for receiving and responding to allegations of research, publication, and review misconduct. It is the responsibility of the journal editor to define the types of misconduct for their journals and to outline their policies and procedures for handling such issues when they arise. Consider implementing processes on the following, documenting the processes on the website, and linking to relevant COPE resources:

- designating a contact person to handle allegations of misconduct
- designating a person or panel to handle ethics issues, review allegations, and initiate impartial and confidential investigations of cases
- how to contact institutions and other journals
- how to handle allegations made by whistleblowers

#### Resources to help you develop policies and guidelines for allegations of misconduct

- COPE guideline: Sharing of information among editors-in-chief regarding possible misconduct (<https://doi.org/10.24318/Y18YSSbNrv>)
- COPE discussion document: Addressing ethics complaints from complainants who submit multiple issues (<https://doi.org/10.24318/qiW7mhWw>)
- COPE discussion document: Responding to anonymous whistleblowers (<https://doi.org/10.24318/Z9gtPzCa>)
- COPE flowcharts (<https://cope.onl/flowcharts-3>)
- COPE focus: Allegations of misconduct (<https://cope.onl/news-misconduct>)
- Cases on allegations of misconduct from COPE's cases database (<https://cope.onl/cases-allegations>)



### 3. Develop processes to help identify ethical concerns (cont.)

#### Core Practice **CCP 4**: Conflicts of interest/Competing interests

There must be clear definitions of conflicts of interest and processes for handling conflicts of interest of authors, reviewers, editors, journals and publishers, whether identified before or after publication.



Conflicts of interest are situations that have the potential to influence people's judgements. Conflicts of interest could influence peer review, editorial decisions and publication management. Journals need clear, consistent and well publicised policies on conflicts of interest, including mandatory disclosure of funding of the study and the role of the funder. Consider implementing processes on the following, documenting the processes in the website, and linking to relevant **COPE** resources:

- defining, disclosing, and handling conflicts of interest for authors, reviewers, editors, staff, and journal publisher/owner
- defining what needs to be disclosed by all parties, including type of competing interest, extent, and time frame
- how and when such information is collected

#### Resources to help you develop policies and guidelines for conflicts of interest/ competing interests

- **COPE** discussion document: Handling competing interests (<https://doi.org/10.24318/EITeSLhp>)
- **COPE** guideline: Editorial board participation (<https://doi.org/10.24318/F3lrGybw>)
- **COPE** guideline: Cooperation between research institutions and journals on research integrity cases (<https://doi.org/10.24318/cope.2018.1.3>)
- **COPE** flowcharts (<https://cope.onl/flowcharts-3>)
- **COPE** focus: Conflicts of interest (<https://cope.onl/news-conflict>)
- Cases on conflicts of interest from **COPE's** cases database (<https://cope.onl/cases-coi>)
- **COPE** European Seminar 2014: Conflicts of interest and other ethical problems in German medical publishing (<https://cope.onl/seminar-coi>)
- **COPE** Asia-Pacific Seminar 2011: The range of conflicts of interest and how they should be managed (<https://cope.onl/seminar-range>)
- International Committee of Medical Journal Editors disclosure of interest form (<https://b.link/icmje-form>) 

### 3. Develop processes to help identify ethical concerns (cont.)

#### Core Practice **CCP 5** : Data and reproducibility





Journals should include policies on data availability and encourage the use of reporting guidelines and registration of clinical trials and other study designs according to standard practice in their discipline.



To achieve greater transparency, replicability, and trust in scientific findings, research authors are increasingly expected to enhance reporting by registering clinical trials, using standardised guidelines, and sharing associated data, code, and materials. Cooperative practices are needed between journal editors and institutional oversight bodies regarding issues such as alleged data fabrication and falsification. Consider developing and implementing processes and guidelines on the following:

- if data sharing is encouraged or mandated, when exceptions are allowed, and if a data availability statement is needed
- how data should be cited
- if relevant, sharing/uploading anonymised data on a specific online repository or website, handling confidential data, registering clinical trials, using reporting guidelines, and requiring the submission of relevant reporting checklists

#### Resources to help you develop policies and guidelines for data and reproducibility

- COPE focus: Data and reproducibility (<https://cope.onl/news-data>)
- COPE Digest: Data and reproducibility, the role of research institutions (<https://cope.onl/news-role>)
- COPE flowcharts (<https://cope.onl/flowcharts-3>)
- Cases on data and reproducibility from COPE's cases database (<https://cope.onl/cases-data>)
- COPE Forum discussion: data sharing (<https://cope.onl/forum-data>)
- COPE funded research: data sharing policies in scholarly publications: interdisciplinary comparisons (<https://b.link/research-data>) 
- Creating and implementing research data policies: COPE webinar report (<https://cope.onl/news-research>)
- Joint FORCE11 & COPE Research Data Publishing Ethics Working Group Recommendations (<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.5391293>) 
- TOP Guidelines (<https://b.link/initiatives>) 
- EQUATOR Network homepage (<https://b.link/equator>) 

### 3. Develop processes to help identify ethical concerns (cont.)

#### Core Practice **CCP 6** : Ethical oversight

Ethical oversight should include, but is not limited to, policies on consent to publication, publication on vulnerable populations, ethical conduct of research using animals, ethical conduct of research using human subjects, handling confidential data and ethical business/marketing practices.



Journals must adopt and publish clear guidelines regarding ethical conduct of research. Regulations and norms of the journal's discipline should be consulted to ensure that the journal policies reflect those standards. Journals must diligently review submitted work to ensure that it conforms with research ethics guidelines. Consider implementing processes on the following, documenting the processes in the website, and linking to relevant **COPE** resources:

- recommended practices for handling issues such as informed consent, institutional oversight, prior ethics approval, and compliance with international research guidelines
- investigating concerns raised about the ethics of any study that has been published
- preventing potential cases of misconduct—for example, routines for checking for:
  - plagiarism
  - falsification
  - peer review manipulation
  - fabrication
  - citation manipulation
  - authorship misconduct

#### Resources to help you develop policies and guidelines for ethical oversight

- **COPE** guideline: Cooperation between research institutions and journals on research integrity cases (<https://doi.org/10.24318/cope.2018.1.3>)
- **COPE** guideline: Journals' best practices for ensuring consent for publishing medical case reports (<https://doi.org/10.24318/cope.2019.1.6>)
- **COPE** focus: Ethical oversight (<https://cope.onl/news-oversight>)
- **COPE** flowcharts (<https://cope.onl/flowcharts-3>)
- Cases on ethical oversight from **COPE's** cases database (<https://cope.onl/cases-ethical>)
- **COPE** Forum discussion: Publication ethics issues in the social sciences (<https://cope.onl/forum-social>)
- **COPE** Forum discussion: Fair play for "researchers": Can editors and regulators develop a common approach to the need (or lack of need) for ethical review? (<https://cope.onl/forum-review>)

### 3. Develop processes to help identify ethical concerns (cont.)

#### Core Practice **CCP 7** : Intellectual property

All policies on intellectual property, including copyright and publishing licenses, should be clearly described. In addition, any costs associated with publishing should be obvious to authors and readers. Policies should be clear on what counts as prepublication that will preclude consideration. What constitutes plagiarism and redundant/overlapping publication should be specified.



Intellectual property laws, such as copyright, give authors certain rights of control and exclusivity over the products of their research. Journals must properly address those rights while obtaining permission to publish an author's work. Commonly journals require authors to sign agreements transferring copyright to the publisher. In open access publishing, journals may allow authors to retain copyright and grant a publishing licence and/or one of several types of Creative Commons licences for reuse. Some journals allow authors to upload the accepted, but not yet finalised, manuscript to certain repositories, whereas some allow the final publication to be uploaded. With multiple options and variations possible, it is crucial that journals clearly and comprehensively state their intellectual property policies in their websites.

Consider including the following in your guidelines:

- clearly stating all author and reader fees (or that there are no fees)
- clearly explaining:
  - copyright procedures, publishing licences, and/or Creative Commons licences to authors/readers
  - what versions authors are allowed to archive
  - plagiarism and duplicate/redundant or overlapping publication
  - how to reproduce copyrighted material and what counts as previous publication

#### Resources to help you develop policies and guidelines for intellectual property

- COPE guideline: Text recycling guidelines for editors (<https://cope.onl/guidelines-text>)
- COPE discussion document: Who 'owns' peer reviews? (<https://doi.org/10.24318/rouP8ld4>)
- COPE discussion document: Preprints (<https://doi.org/10.24318/R4WByao2>)
- COPE flowcharts (<https://cope.onl/flowcharts-3>)
- COPE focus: Intellectual property: (<https://cope.onl/news-intellectual>)
- SHERPA/RoMEO publisher copyright policies and self-archiving (<https://b.link/sherpaac>)

### 3. Develop processes to help identify ethical concerns (cont.)

#### Core Practice **CCP 8** : Journal management



A well-described and implemented infrastructure is essential, including the business model, policies, processes and software for efficient running of an editorially independent journal, as well as the efficient management and training of editorial boards and editorial and publishing staff.



The key element of ethical journal management is transparency. Journals should have a unique name; the website should identify the publisher or owner and governing body, and show print and/or online ISSNs, full journal contact details, publication frequency, peer review model, and a clear aims and scope statement. Journals should ensure ethical and efficient management—for example:

- the website is not misleading, shows names and affiliations of all editorial board members, and documents how editors/reviewers are selected and trained
- there is a transparent business model, and ownership, revenue sources, and advertising policies/practices are independent of editorial decisions
- suitable software is used to increase office efficiency and a suitable online platform is used to backup/archive journal content
- any direct marketing is done ethically

#### Resources to help you develop policies and guidelines for journal management

- COPE discussion document: Predatory publishing (<https://doi.org/10.24318/cope.2019.3.6>)
- COPE guideline: Guidelines for the board of directors of learned society journals (<https://doi.org/10.24318/cope.2019.1.5>)
- COPE guideline: A short guide to ethical editing for new editors (<https://doi.org/10.24318/cope.2019.1.8>)
- COPE discussion document: Preprints (<https://doi.org/10.24318/R4WByao2>)
- COPE discussion document: Artificial intelligence (AI) in decision making (<https://doi.org/10.24318/9kvAgrnJ>)
- COPE focus: Journal management (<https://cope.onl/news-journal>)
- Cases on journal management from COPE's cases database (<https://cope.onl/cases-journal>)
- COPE flowcharts (<https://cope.onl/flowcharts-3>)
- Council of Science Editor's (CSE) white paper on publication ethics (<https://b.link/cse-resources>) 
- CSE short courses (<https://b.link/cse-courses>) 



### 3. Develop processes to help identify ethical concerns (cont.)

#### Core Practice **CCP 10** : Post-publication discussions and corrections

Journals must allow debate post publication either on their site, through letters to the editor, or on an external moderated site, such as PubPeer. They must have mechanisms for correcting, revising or retracting articles after publication.



Journals must have in place methods to correct the literature after content publication. Some form of post-publication commentary or discussion should be allowed when alternative interpretations of published data are brought to light. Consider implementing processes on the following, documenting the processes in the website, and linking to relevant **COPE** resources:

- systems for post-publication discussion, correction, and retraction
- systems to correct papers that are not so seriously flawed as to warrant retraction (eg, expressions of concern, editorial note)

#### Resources to help you develop policies and guidelines for post-publication discussions and corrections

- **COPE** guideline: Retraction guidelines (<https://doi.org/10.24318/cope.2019.1.4>)
- **COPE** Forum discussion: Expressions of concern (<https://cope.onl/forum-eoc>)
- **COPE** flowcharts (<https://cope.onl/flowcharts-3>)
- **COPE** focus: Post-publication discussions and corrections (<https://cope.onl/news-correct>)
- Cases on post-publication discussions and corrections from **COPE**'s cases database (<https://cope.onl/cases-corrections>)

## 4. Develop guidelines for promptly responding to suspected ethical breaches by authors, reviewers, and editors

### Core Practice **CCP 3** : Complaints and appeals

Journals should have a clearly described process for handling complaints against the journal, its staff, editorial board or publisher.



Complaints may arise over the conduct of editors and/or peer reviewers (eg, breaches of confidentiality, undisclosed conflicts of interest, or misuse of privileged information), or they may arise from disputes about substantive decisions, such as retractions. Still others may be more administrative in nature (eg, irregularities in editorial processes or complaints that journal staff are unresponsive). Journals should develop guidelines for responding to suspected ethical breaches and in addition, consider the following:

- designating a contact person for ethics enquiries and appeals/complaints
- editorial offices should focus on promptly correcting the literature but request authors' institutions or employers/funding agencies to investigate and follow-up on author misconduct and discipline
- have a process for author appeals against editorial decisions
- have processes to investigate and manage editor, reviewer, or staff misconduct (eg, undeclared conflicts of interest)
- when needed, contacting other journals or contacting institutions (of authors, editors, reviewers) and seeking independent and legal advice

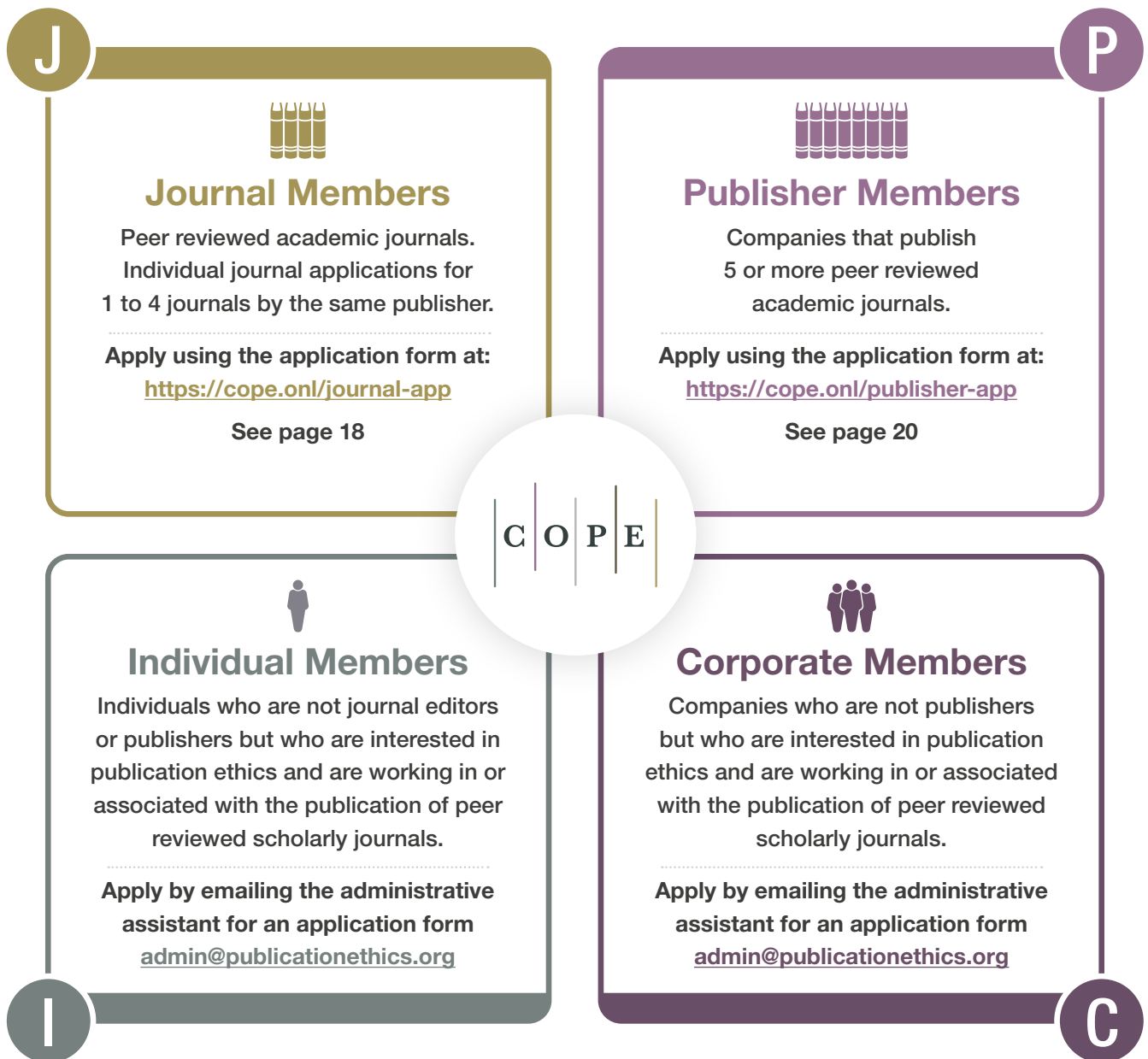
### Resources to help you develop policies and guidelines for complaints and appeals

- COPE focus: Complaints and appeals (<https://cope.onl/news-complaints>)
- COPE discussion document: Sharing of information among editors-in-chief regarding possible misconduct (<https://doi.org/10.24318/Y18YSSbNrv>)
- COPE guideline: Cooperation between research institutions and journals on research integrity cases (<https://doi.org/10.24318/cope.2018.1.3>)
- Cases on complaints and appeals from COPE's cases database (<https://cope.onl/cases-complaints>)
- COPE flowcharts (<https://cope.onl/flowcharts-3>)

## HOW TO APPLY FOR COPE MEMBERSHIP

Signing up to COPE shows that your journal (or company) intends to follow the highest standards of publication ethics and to apply COPE principles of publication ethics outlined in the Core Practices. By joining COPE you will help support our work in promoting publication ethics and providing advice for editors and publishers.

There are four types of membership available:





## APPLYING FOR JOURNAL MEMBERSHIP (1-4 JOURNALS)



1. The journal must be publishing for at least a year before applying for membership. Complete a separate application form for each journal.



2. Refer to the **COPE Core Practices** (<https://cope.onl/core-4>) and related resources. Journal editors must agree to adhere to these.



3. Read the **Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing** (<https://doi.org/10.24318/cope.2019.1.12>) on the **COPE** website, and make sure the journal adheres to these best practices and follows the spirit of the principles in all aspects of their publishing operation. The website must show the journal policies and other information required.



4. Check the subscription rates on the **COPE** website (<https://cope.onl/fees>).



5. Have the editor-in-chief's CV ready to attach to the journal application form. The CV should be no more than four pages, include current employment, employment over the past five years, and details of five recent publications, and publishing experience.



6. Fill in the journal application form on the **COPE** website (one form per journal) (<https://cope.onl/journal-app>).



7. If you wish to apply for a waiver or reduction in fees, check our policy on the **COPE** website and complete the bottom part of the form if you meet the criteria. (<https://cope.onl/reduction>).



## What happens next

- Only complete forms will be assessed.
- **The Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing** (<https://doi.org/10.24318/cope.2019.1.12>) form part of the criteria we use to evaluate publishers and journals, expecting applicants to adhere to and follow the spirit of the principles in all aspects of their publishing operation.
- The membership administrator will evaluate the application by:
  - using the information and supporting documentation supplied on the application form
  - reviewing the publisher and journal websites to research the application
  - consulting other sources, if deemed relevant (eg, feedback from editorial board members and publicly available information).
- **COPE** will research reports of practices that do not apply our principles of publication ethics outlined in the **COPE Core Practices** (<https://cope.onl/core-4>).
- The membership administrator will supply the Membership subcommittee with the relevant documentation based on review and research of the application. The Membership subcommittee will make the final decision on membership, based on the application, the information reviewed, and more subtle forms of assessment using the Membership subcommittee's experience.

- All correspondence to members is sent via email unless otherwise requested
- **COPE** reserves the right to withdraw membership if incorrect information is given in this form or comes to light after membership is approved.
- **COPE** may ask for additional information in relation to your application.
- Unsuccessful applicants will be sent advice on which areas need attention or revision. Applicants can reapply after 12 months from the date of decision and will not be considered before then.

## APPLYING FOR PUBLISHER MEMBERSHIP (5 OR MORE JOURNALS)



1. To apply for publisher membership, you must publish 5 or more journals. (see journal membership for less than 5 journals).



2. Refer to the **COPE Core Practices** (<https://cope.onl/core-4>) and related resources. Publishers and journal editors must agree to adhere to these.



3. Read the **Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing** (<https://doi.org/10.24318/cope.2019.1.12>) on the **COPE** website and make sure all of the journals adhere to these best practices and follow the spirit of the principles in all aspects of their publishing operation. The individual journal websites and/or the publisher website must show the journal policies and other information required.



4. Check the subscription rates on the **COPE** website (<https://cope.onl/fees>).



5. Fill in the publisher application form on the **COPE** website, (<https://cope.onl/publisher-app>). Fill in the downloadable Excel spreadsheet, completing the details for all your journals using the dropdown lists where appropriate, and attach the spreadsheet to the form.



6. If you wish to apply for a waiver or reduction in fees, check our policy on the **COPE** website and complete the bottom part of the form if you meet the criteria (<https://cope.onl/reduction>).

## What happens next

- Only complete forms will be assessed.
- **The Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing** (<https://doi.org/10.24318/cope.2019.1.12>) form part of the criteria we use to evaluate publishers and journals, expecting applicants to adhere to and follow the spirit of the principles in all aspects of their publishing operation.
- The membership administrator will evaluate the application by:
  - using the information and supporting documentation supplied on the application form
  - reviewing the publisher and journal websites to research the application
  - consulting other sources, if deemed relevant (eg, feedback from editorial board members and publicly available information).
- **COPE** will research reports of practices that do not apply our principles of publication ethics outlined in the **COPE Core Practices** (<https://cope.onl/core-4>).
- The membership administrator will supply the Membership subcommittee with the relevant documentation based on review and research of the application. The Membership subcommittee will make the final decision on membership, based on the application, the information reviewed, and more subtle forms of assessment using the Membership subcommittee's experience.

- All correspondence to members is sent via email unless otherwise requested
- **COPE** reserves the right to withdraw membership if incorrect information is given in this form or comes to light after membership is approved.
- **COPE** may ask for additional information in relation to your application.
- Unsuccessful applicants will be sent advice on which areas need attention or revision. Applicants can reapply after 12 months from the date of decision and will not be considered before then.

## COPE CORE PRACTICES (CCP)

COPE has 10 Core Practices (<https://cope.onl/core-4>), which are the policies and practices that journals and publishers need to have in place to reach the highest standards in publication ethics.



### Allegations of misconduct

**CCP 1**

Journals should have a clearly described process for handling allegations, however they are brought to the journal's or publisher's attention. Journals must take seriously allegations of misconduct pre-publication and post-publication. Policies should include how to handle allegations from whistleblowers.



### Authorship and contributorship

**CCP 2**

Clear policies (that allow for transparency around who contributed to the work and in what capacity) should be in place for requirements for authorship and contributorship as well as processes for managing potential disputes.



### Complaints and appeals

**CCP 3**

Journals should have a clearly described process for handling complaints against the journal, its staff, editorial board or publisher.



### Conflicts of interest/Competing interests

**CCP 4**

There must be clear definitions of conflicts of interest and processes for handling conflicts of interest of authors, reviewers, editors, journals and publishers, whether identified before or after publication.



### Data and reproducibility

**CCP 5**

Journals should include policies on data availability and encourage the use of reporting guidelines and registration of clinical trials and other study designs according to standard practice in their discipline.



The Core practices are applicable to all involved in publishing scholarly literature, including editors and their journals, publishers, editorial and publishing support services, and institutions.



### Ethical oversight

CCP 6

Ethical oversight should include, but is not limited to, policies on consent to publication, publication on vulnerable populations, ethical conduct of research using animals, ethical conduct of research using human subjects, handling confidential data and ethical business/marketing practices.



### Intellectual property

CCP 7

All policies on intellectual property, including copyright and publishing licenses, should be clearly described. In addition, any costs associated with publishing should be obvious to authors and readers. Policies should be clear on what counts as prepublication that will preclude consideration. What constitutes plagiarism and redundant/overlapping publication should be specified.



### Journal management

CCP 8

A well-described and implemented infrastructure is essential, including the business model, policies, processes and software for efficient running of an editorially independent journal, as well as the efficient management and training of editorial boards and editorial and publishing staff.



### Peer review process

CCP 9

All peer review processes must be transparently described and well managed. Journals should provide training for editors and reviewers and have policies on diverse aspects of peer review, especially with respect to adoption of appropriate models of review and processes for handling conflicts of interest, appeals and disputes that may arise in peer review.



### Post-publication discussions and corrections

CCP 10

Journals must allow debate post publication either on their site, through letters to the editor, or on an external moderated site, such as PubPeer. They must have mechanisms for correcting, revising or retracting articles after publication.

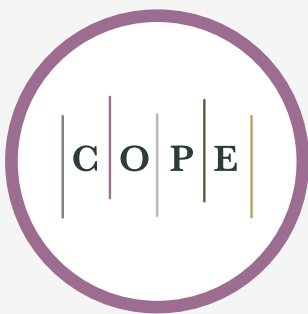


## PRINCIPLES OF TRANSPARENCY AND BEST PRACTICE IN SCHOLARLY PUBLISHING (POT)

The **Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)**, the **Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)**, the **Open Access Scholarly Publishing Association (OASPA)**, and the **World Association of Medical Editors (WAME)** are scholarly organisations that have collaborated to identify principles of transparency and best practice for scholarly publications. This is the fourth version of a work in progress (published 15 September 2022). We encourage its wide dissemination.

The Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing should apply to all published content, including special issues and conference proceedings. Where practices deviate from the standards outlined, editors must transparently communicate the procedures that the journal follows.

These principles also acknowledge that publishers and editors are responsible for promoting accessibility, diversity, equity, and inclusivity in all aspects of the publication. Editorial decisions should be based on scholarly merit. They should not be affected by the origins of the manuscript, including the nationality, ethnicity, political beliefs, race, or religion of the authors. Journals should ensure no policies create an exclusionary environment for anyone wanting to engage with the journal and should regularly assess their policies for inclusivity.



[publicationethics.org](https://publicationethics.org)



[doaj.org](https://doaj.org)



[oaspa.org](https://oaspa.org)



[wame.org](https://wame.org)



## JOURNAL CONTENT



1. Name of journal



2. Website



3. Publishing schedule



4. Archiving



5. Copyright



6. Licensing

## JOURNAL PRACTICES



7. Publication ethics and related editorial policies



8. Peer review



9. Access

## ORGANISATION



10. Ownership and management



11. Advisory body



12. Editorial team/  
contact information

## BUSINESS PRACTICES



13. Author fees



14. Other revenue



15. Advertising



16. Direct marketing

For more information about the Principles of Transparency and Best Practice for Scholarly Publications visit:

<https://doi.org/10.24318/cope.2019.1.12>

## JOURNAL CONTENT



### 1. Name of journal

PoT 1

The journal's name should:

- Be unique and not be one that is easily confused with another journal.
- Not mislead potential authors and readers about the journal's origin, scope, or association with other journals and organisations.



### 2. Website

PoT 2

- Websites should be properly supported and maintained, with particular attention given to security aspects that help protect users from viruses and malware. As a minimum, websites should use https and not http, and all traffic should be redirected through https.
- Those responsible for the website should apply web standards and best ethical practices to the website's content, presentation, and application.
- The website should not contain information that might mislead readers or authors.
- The website should not copy another journal/publisher's site, design, or logo.
- If any text is copied from another website, an acknowledgement to the source website should be declared.

In addition to the requirements outlined below, the following items should be clearly displayed:

- Aims and scope.
- The target readership of the journal.
- The types of manuscripts the journal will consider for publication (for example, that multiple or redundant publication is not allowed).
- Authorship criteria.
- ISSNs (separate for print and electronic versions).



### 3. Publishing schedule

PoT 3

A journal's publishing frequency should be clearly described, and the journal must keep to its publishing schedule unless there are exceptional circumstances.

## JOURNAL CONTENT



### 4. Archiving

PoT 4

A journal's plan for electronic backup and long term digital preservation of the journal content, in the event that the journal and/or publisher stops operating, should be clearly indicated. Examples include PMC and those listed in the Keepers Registry.



### 5. Copyright

PoT 5

- The copyright terms for published content should be clearly stated on the website and in the content.
- The copyright terms should be separate and distinct from the copyright of the website.
- The copyright holder should be named on the full text of all published articles (HTML and PDF).
- If the copyright terms are described in a separate form, this should be easy to find on the website and available to all.



### 6. Licensing

PoT 6

- Licensing information should be clearly described on the website.
- Licensing terms should be indicated on the full text of all published articles (HTML and PDF).
- Content designated as Open Access must use an open licence.
- Licensing policies about the posting of author manuscripts and published articles in third party repositories should be clearly stated.

If Creative Commons licences are used, then the terms of that licence should also link to the correct licence on the Creative Commons website.

## JOURNAL PRACTICES



### 7. Publication ethics and related editorial policies

PoT 7

A journal should have policies on publication ethics (for example, **COPE's Core Practice guidance**). These should be visible on its website, and should refer to:

- Journal's policies on authorship and contributorship (<https://cope.onl/authors-1>).
- How the journal will handle complaints and appeals (<https://cope.onl/appeal-1>).
- How the journal will handle allegations of research misconduct (<https://cope.onl/misconduct-1>).
- Journal's policies on conflicts of interest (<https://cope.onl/coi-1>).
- Journal's policies on data sharing and reproducibility (<https://cope.onl/data-1>).
- Journal's policy on ethical oversight (<https://cope.onl/oversight-1>).
- Journal's policy on intellectual property (<https://cope.onl/ip-1>).
- Journal's options for post-publication discussions (<https://cope.onl/corrections-1>).
- Journal's policies on corrections and retractions (<https://cope.onl/corrections-1>).

Editors and publishers are responsible for ensuring the integrity of the scholarly literature in their journals and should ensure they outline their policies and procedures for handling such issues when they arise. These issues include plagiarism, citation manipulation, and data falsification/fabrication, among others. Neither the journal's policies nor the statements of its editors should encourage such misconduct, or knowingly allow such misconduct to take place. In the event that a journal's editors or publisher are made aware of any allegation of research misconduct relating to a submitted or published article in their journal, the editor or publisher should follow COPE's guidance (or equivalent) (<https://cope.onl/guidance-1>) in dealing with allegations.






### 8. Peer review

PoT 8

Peer review is defined as obtaining advice on manuscripts from reviewers/experts in the manuscript's subject area. Those individuals should not be part of the journal's editorial team. However, the specific elements of peer review may differ by journal and discipline, so the following should be clearly stated on the website:

- Whether or not the content is peer reviewed.
- Who conducts the peer review, for example, external experts or editorial board members.
- The type of peer review process(es) used (<https://b.link/peer-review-2>) .
- Any policies related to the peer review procedures (<https://COPE.org/peer-review-1>), for example:
  - Use of author recommended reviewers.
  - Any masking of identities, and if so who is masked and to whom.
  - Whether or not supplementary material is subjected to peer review.
  - Whether or not reviews are posted with articles.
  - Whether or not reviews are signed or anonymous.
- How a decision about a manuscript is ultimately made and who is involved.
- Any exceptions to the peer review process, such as specific article types that do not undergo peer review.

If an article's peer review is an exception to the usual policy, the article should state what review it received.

Journals should not guarantee acceptance of initial manuscript submissions. Statements of peer review times should be supported by published timeframes on accepted papers. In the event of delays, authors should be informed of the reason for the delay and given the opportunity to withdraw their manuscript if they wish.

The date of publication should be published with all published research. Dates of submission and acceptance are preferred as well.



### 9. Access

PoT 9

If any of the online content is not freely accessible to everyone, the method of gaining access (for example, registration, subscription, or pay-per-view fees) should be clearly described. If offline versions (for example, print) are available this should be clearly described along with any associated charges.

## ORGANISATION



### 10. Ownership and management

**PoT 10**

- Information about the ownership and management of a journal should be clearly indicated on the journal's website.
- Organisational names should not be used in a way that could mislead potential authors and editors about the nature of the journal's owner.
- If a journal is affiliated with a society, institution, or sponsor, links to their website(s) should be provided where available.



### 11. Advisory body

**PoT 11**

Journals should have editorial boards or other advisory bodies whose members are recognised experts in the subject areas stated in the journal's aims and scope.

- The full names and affiliations of the members should be provided on the journal's website.
- The list should be up to date, and members must agree to serve.
- To avoid being associated with predatory or deceptive journals, journals should periodically review their board to ensure it is still relevant and appropriate.



### 12. Editorial team/contact information

**PoT 12**

Journals should provide the full names and affiliations of their editors as well as contact information for the editorial office, including a full mailing address, on the journal's website.

## BUSINESS PRACTICES



### 13. Author fees

PoT 13

- If author fees are charged (such as article processing charges, page charges, editorial processing charges, language editing fees, colour charges, submission fees, membership fees, or other supplementary charges), then the fees should be clearly stated on the website.
- If there are no such fees, this should be clearly stated.
- Author fee information should be easy to find and presented as early in the submission process as possible.
- If the journal is likely to implement author charges in the future, this should be stated.
- If waivers are available for author fees, this information should be stated clearly.
- Waiver information should include:
  - Who is eligible for a waiver.
  - Which author(s) of the group must be eligible for the waiver to apply.
  - When and how to apply for a waiver.
- Author fees or waiver status should not influence editorial decision making, and this should be clearly stated.



### 14. Other revenue

PoT 14

Business models or revenue sources should be clearly stated on the journal's website.

Examples include author fees (see section 13), subscriptions, sponsorships and subsidies, advertising (see section 15), reprints, supplements, or special issues.

Business models or revenue sources (for example, reprint income, supplements, special issues, sponsorships) should not influence editorial decision making.



### 15. Advertising

Journals should state whether they accept advertising. If they do, they should state their advertising policy, including:

- Which types of advertisements will be considered.
- Who makes decisions regarding accepting advertisements.
- Whether they are linked to content or reader behaviour or are displayed at random.

Advertisements should not be related in any way to editorial decision making and should be kept separate from the published content.

PoT 15



### 16. Direct marketing

Any direct marketing activities, including solicitation of manuscripts, that are conducted on behalf of the journal should be appropriate, well targeted, and unobtrusive. Information provided about the publisher or journal should be truthful and not misleading for readers or authors.

PoT 16

## CHECKLIST

Use this checklist to monitor your progress in setting up your editorial office. If your office has created and implemented the required policies and processes, and related infrastructure and training, for all the guideline items and COPE Core Practices, then you are ready to apply for COPE membership.

The COPE membership application form requires proof that you also comply with the Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing. For each COPE Core Practice (CCP), the corresponding Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing (PoT) are shown below:

### 1. Develop guidelines for authors

**CCP 2** Authorship and contributorship **PoT 7**

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### 2. Develop guidelines for reviewers

**CCP 9** Peer review processes **PoT 8**

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### 3. Develop processes to help identify ethical concerns

**CCP 1** Allegations of misconduct **PoT 7**

**CCP 4** Conflicts of interest/Competing interests **PoT 7**

**CCP 5** Data and reproducibility **PoT 7**

**CCP 6** Ethical oversight **PoT 7**

**CCP 7** Intellectual property **PoT 5, 7, 9, 13**

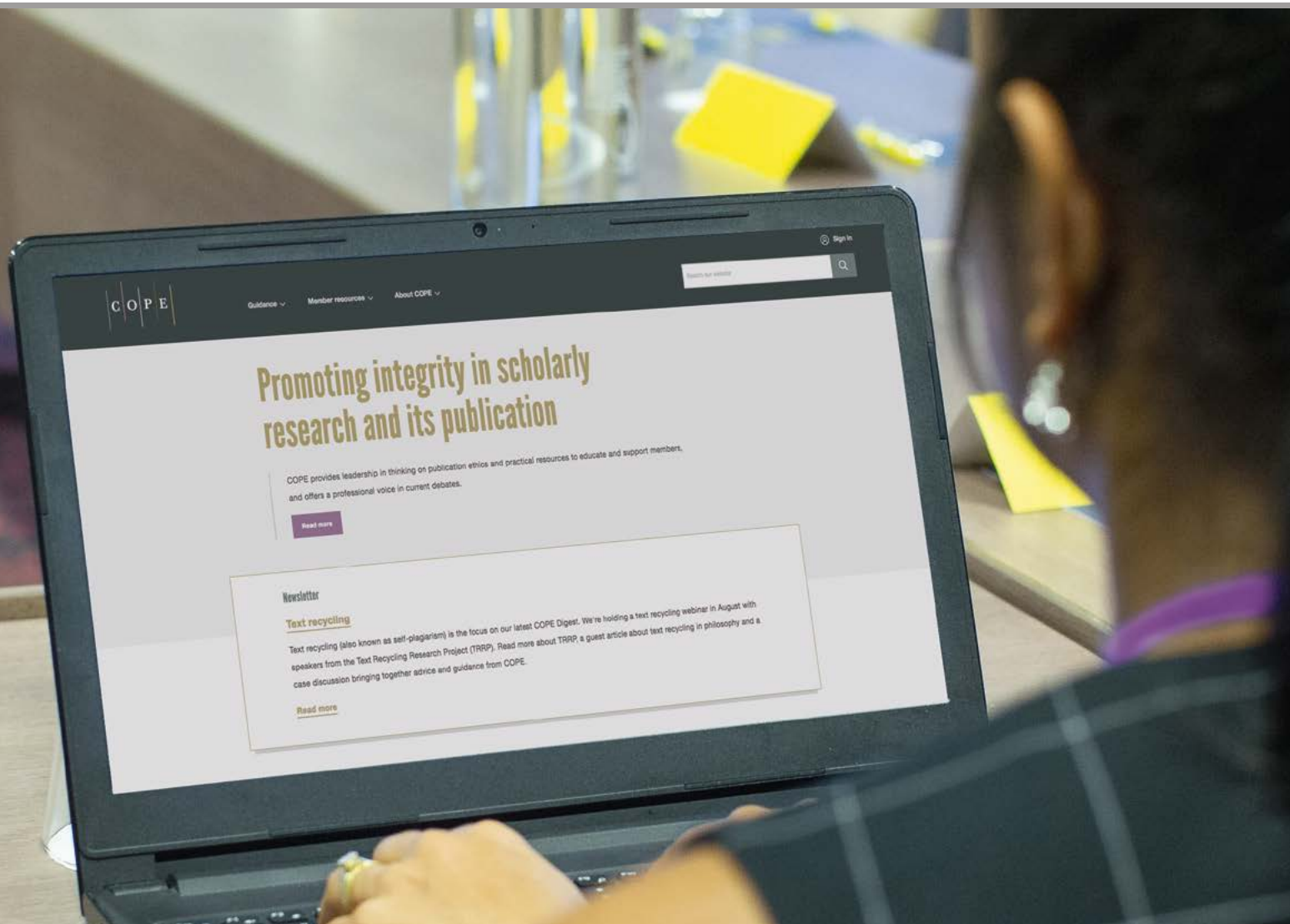
**CCP 8** Journal management **PoT 1-4, 10-12, 14-16**

**CCP 10** Post-publication discussions and corrections **PoT 7**

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### 4. Develop guidelines for promptly responding to suspected ethical breaches by authors, reviewers, and editors

**CCP 3** Complaints and appeals **PoT 7**



## DOS AND DON'TS

- **Do:** Follow the instructions on page 16 for the correct category
- **Do:** Ensure your application is complete and all the required information is supplied
- **Do:** Provide discrete URLs corresponding to webpages showing your journal guidelines and policies
- **Do:** Check all URL links are correct and functional
- **Don't:** Copy and paste COPE or other resources as if they are your own guidelines
- **Don't:** Use the same URL or homepage URL for each required guideline or policy in the application form





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