

# PUBLICATION ETHICS GUIDELINES

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## 1. Preamble

The Press is committed to upholding the highest standards of publication ethics at every stage of the publishing process – from manuscript submission, through peer review and editing, to publication and post-publication activities. These guidelines constitute the foundation of the Press’s operations and are binding on all participants of the publishing process: authors, reviewers, editors and Press staff.

The guidelines have been developed on the basis of the recommendations of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), as well as best practices of leading academic publishers.

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## 2. Duties and responsibilities of authors

### 2.1. Originality and integrity of work

1. Authors shall submit a declaration that the submitted text is their original intellectual work, has not been previously published in whole or in substantial part, and is not simultaneously under consideration by another publisher.
2. Authors guarantee the integrity of the research data presented. Fabrication, falsification or selective omission of data in order to confirm a preconceived thesis constitutes a serious breach of research ethics.
3. Authors are obliged to cite and reference the work of other researchers in a reliable manner. Plagiarism – including self-plagiarism, paraphrasing without attribution, and appropriation of others’ ideas – is inadmissible.
4. Where materials subject to the copyright of third parties are used (illustrations, tables, text excerpts), authors must obtain the appropriate permissions and cite the source.

### 2.2. Authorship and co-author contributions

1. A person shall be recognised as an author if they meet all of the following criteria jointly (in accordance with ICMJE recommendations):
  - a) made a substantial contribution to the conception or design of the study, data acquisition, or data analysis and interpretation;
  - b) participated in drafting the text or critically revising its intellectual content;
  - c) approved the final version of the text intended for publication;
  - d) accepts responsibility for all aspects of the work and guarantees the integrity of each part thereof.
2. All persons meeting the above criteria must be listed as co-authors. Persons who made contributions that do not meet the authorship criteria should be named in the acknowledgements (with their consent).
3. The practices of ghostwriting (concealing actual authorship) and guest/gift authorship (honorary listing of co-authors who have not made a substantial contribution) are inadmissible.

4. The corresponding author is responsible for communication with the Press and shall ensure that all co-authors have approved the final version of the text and have consented to its submission.
5. Any changes to the author list after submission of the text (addition, removal or change in the order of authors) require the written consent of all co-authors and the approval of the Press's Academic Editor.

### **2.3. Conflicts of interest and funding sources**

1. Authors are obliged to disclose any potential conflicts of interest that could affect the objectivity of the research or its interpretation. Conflicts may be financial, personal, professional or institutional in nature.
2. Authors must declare all sources of research funding, indicating the grant number, the funding institution and the scope of support.
3. Failure to disclose a conflict of interest or funding source constitutes a breach of publication ethics and may result in the withdrawal of the text.

### **2.4. Research ethics**

1. Research involving human subjects must be conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki and must have the approval of the competent bioethics or ethics committee. The committee's approval number must be stated in the text.
2. Research involving animals must be conducted in accordance with the applicable regulations on the protection of laboratory animals, and the relevant permits must be indicated.
3. Where research requires the informed consent of participants, authors shall declare that such consent has been obtained.
4. Authors must comply with data protection regulations (GDPR) and anonymise the data of research participants unless they have obtained explicit consent for disclosure.

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## **3. Duties and responsibilities of reviewers – see the Peer Review Procedure.**

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## **4. Duties and responsibilities of the Press's Academic Editor**

### **4.1. Independence and impartiality of decisions**

1. The Editor shall make decisions on the acceptance or rejection of a text solely on the basis of its scholarly merit, originality, clarity of argumentation and conformity with the Press's profile.
2. Editorial decisions must not be influenced by non-substantive factors such as origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion, political views, citizenship or institutional affiliation of the author.

3. The Editor shall observe the principle of editorial independence and shall not yield to pressure from the publisher, sponsors, institutions or third parties.

#### **4.2. Management of the peer review process**

1. The Editor shall ensure the efficient, timely and transparent conduct of the peer review process in accordance with the applicable review procedure.
2. The Editor shall select reviewers who possess the appropriate subject-matter expertise and are free from conflicts of interest with the authors.
3. The Editor shall protect the anonymity of authors and reviewers under the double-blind peer review system.
4. The Editor shall monitor the quality of reviews and take action in the case of reviews that do not meet the required standards (overly brief, biased or lacking in substantive merit).

#### **4.3. Confidentiality**

1. The Editor and all Press staff shall maintain the confidentiality of all information relating to submitted texts. Information may be disclosed only to the author, reviewers, members of the editorial board and the publisher to the extent necessary for the conduct of the publishing process.
2. Unpublished materials may not be used by Press staff for their own research purposes without the written consent of the author.

#### **4.4. Editor's conflict of interest**

1. The Editor shall recuse themselves from the decision-making process concerning texts in respect of which a conflict of interest arises (co-authorship, a relationship of professional subordination, close personal ties with the author, direct academic rivalry).
2. In the event of the Editor's recusal, the decision shall be taken by another member of the editorial board or a deputy editor.

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### **5. Duties and responsibilities of the Press**

1. The Press shall provide the organisational and technical conditions enabling the reliable conduct of the publishing process.
  2. The Press shall not exert pressure on editorial decisions and shall respect the Editor's autonomy in substantive matters.
  3. The Press shall maintain documentation of the peer review process and archive it for a period of at least 5 years.
  4. The Press shall use anti-plagiarism systems to verify the originality of submitted texts.
  5. The Press shall make publicly available on its website these publication ethics guidelines, the peer review procedure and the author guidelines.
  6. The Press shall ensure digital accessibility of publications and shall use persistent identifiers (DOIs) for all published works.
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## 6. Guidelines on the use of artificial intelligence (AI)

The Press recognises the growing role of artificial intelligence tools in scholarly work and the publishing process. The following guidelines regulate the permissible and impermissible uses of AI, ensuring transparency, accountability and scholarly integrity. These guidelines are consistent with the COPE position statement on authorship and AI tools and with the policies of leading international publishers.

### 6.1. Fundamental principle: AI is not an author

1. AI tools (including large language models such as ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Copilot and others) may not be listed as the author or co-author of a scholarly publication.
2. AI tools, as entities that are not legal persons, cannot bear responsibility for the content of a work, make declarations regarding conflicts of interest, or manage copyright.
3. Full responsibility for the content of a publication – including passages generated or modified using AI – rests solely with the authors (natural persons).

### 6.2. Classification of AI uses

The Press distinguishes three categories of AI tool use:

Category of use	Examples	Requirements
<b>Assistive AI</b>	Grammar correction, spell-checking, translation of fragments, text formatting, bibliography management.	Disclosure not required
<b>Generative AI</b>	Creating text fragments, generating images, tables, charts, data analysis, coding, literature summarisation.	Mandatory disclosure in the Materials and Methods section
<b>Prohibited use</b>	Generating the entirety or the majority of the text without a substantial intellectual contribution by the author; using AI to fabricate data or falsify results.	Constitutes a breach of publication ethics

### 6.3. Author obligations regarding AI

1. Where generative AI has been used, authors must disclose this fact in the “Materials and Methods” section or in a dedicated “AI Disclosure Statement” section.
2. The disclosure should include: the name and version of the tool used, the scope and purpose of its use, the stage of the research or editorial process at which it was used, and the date of use.
3. Authors are obliged to critically verify all content generated by AI for substantive accuracy, data reliability, adequacy of citations and potential bias.
4. The use of AI to generate research data, analytical results or conclusions requires a detailed description of the methodology, including the prompts used, the model parameters and the method of result validation.
5. Authors may not cite AI tools as primary sources in the bibliography. All data and assertions must be supported by references to verifiable scholarly sources.

6. The use of AI to generate illustrations, graphics or visualisations must be disclosed in the caption of the relevant graphic element.

#### **6.4. Restrictions and prohibitions concerning AI**

1. It is inadmissible to submit a text that has been generated in its entirety or in its predominant part by AI without a substantial, creative intellectual contribution by the author.
2. It is prohibited to use AI to fabricate or falsify research data, to generate fictitious bibliographic sources, or to manipulate results.
3. Failure to disclose the generative use of AI constitutes a breach of publication ethics and may result in the rejection of the text, the withdrawal of a published work, or other sanctions.

#### **6.5. Guidelines on AI in the peer review process**

1. Reviewers may not enter the content of a reviewed manuscript into AI tools (chatbots, language models), as this constitutes a breach of the confidentiality of the peer review process.
2. Reviewers may not use AI to generate the content of a review. The review must be an expression of the reviewer's independent substantive assessment.
3. A reviewer may use AI tools solely for assistive purposes (e.g. grammar correction of their own review text), provided that no content from the reviewed manuscript is entered into the tool.
4. Where there is a suspicion that a review has been generated by AI, the Editor reserves the right to reject the review and to exclude the reviewer from future collaboration.

#### **6.6. Guidelines on AI in editorial work**

1. Editors may not use AI tools to generate editorial decisions, letters to authors containing substantive assessments, or summaries of unpublished works.
2. The Press may use AI tools for support functions: plagiarism detection, formatting verification, bibliography consistency checks, preliminary formal screening of submissions.
3. All uses of AI in the editorial and publishing process are subject to human oversight; no substantive decision may be taken solely on the basis of the output of an AI algorithm.

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### **7. Prevention of plagiarism and self-plagiarism**

1. Every submitted text is verified using an anti-plagiarism system before being sent for review.
2. Plagiarism is the appropriation of the words, ideas, data or results of others without proper citation and attribution. Inaccurate paraphrasing and copying the structure of argumentation are also considered plagiarism.
3. Self-plagiarism (redundant publication) consists in republishing one's own earlier results without proper attribution and reference to the original publication. Authors must disclose all of their own earlier publications thematically related to the submitted text.
4. Where plagiarism or self-plagiarism is established, the Press shall proceed in accordance with COPE flowcharts, which may result in: rejection of the text, withdrawal of the published

work (retraction), notification of the author's affiliated institution, and restriction of the possibility of future publications with the Press.

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## **8. Corrections, retractions and errata**

### **8.1. Errata and corrections**

1. Where errors are detected in a published work that do not affect the main conclusions, the Press shall publish an erratum (corrigendum) specifying precisely the corrected elements.
2. Errata are permanently linked to the original publication and indexed in databases.

### **8.2. Retraction (withdrawal of a publication)**

In accordance with COPE guidelines, the Press shall retract a publication if:

- there is clear evidence of the unreliability of results (fabrication, falsification of data) or serious methodological errors undermining the credibility of the conclusions;
  - the results have previously been published elsewhere without proper disclosure, consent or justification (redundant publication);
  - the work constitutes plagiarism;
  - the research was conducted in breach of research ethics principles;
  - a previously undisclosed significant conflict of interest has been revealed that undermines the credibility of the results.
1. Retraction does not constitute a penalty for the author – its purpose is to correct the published scholarly record and to protect readers.
  2. A retraction notice shall be published stating the reasons for withdrawal, permanently linked to the original text, and made freely accessible.
  3. The retracted text shall remain available in electronic form with a clear “RETRACTED” label.

### **8.3. Expression of concern**

1. In situations where the evidence of an ethics breach is inconclusive or an investigation is ongoing, the Press may publish an expression of concern in accordance with COPE guidelines.
  2. The expression of concern shall be linked to the original publication and shall inform readers of the ongoing proceedings.
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## **9. Open access and research data policy**

1. The Press encourages authors to make the research data underlying a publication available in data repositories, in accordance with the FAIR principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable).
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2. The Press supports the Open Access model and offers authors the option of publishing under Creative Commons licences (CC BY, CC BY-NC, CC BY-NC-ND).
  3. Authors retain copyright in their works unless the publishing agreement provides otherwise.
  4. The Press ensures the long-term preservation and accessibility of digital publications.
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## **10. Procedure in the event of ethics breaches**

5. Every report of a suspected breach of publication ethics is treated seriously and investigated regardless of when the breach may have occurred.
  6. The Press shall proceed in accordance with COPE flowcharts and decision diagrams, adapted to the type of breach.
  7. Investigations shall be conducted with due regard for confidentiality and for the right of the parties to present their position.
  8. Depending on the nature and gravity of the breach, the Press may apply the following measures:
    - a) issuing a written admonition to the author explaining the breach;
    - b) rejection of the submitted text;
    - c) withdrawal of the published work (retraction) together with the publication of a retraction notice;
    - d) notification of the author's affiliated institution or the competent ethics committee;
    - e) temporary or permanent restriction of the possibility of publishing with the Press;
    - f) notification of other publishers and editorial boards if the breach may also concern their publications.
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## **11. Final provisions**

- These guidelines are binding on all participants of the publishing process from the date of their publication on the Press's website.
  - The guidelines shall be reviewed and updated no less frequently than once every two years, taking into account developments in technology (including AI), regulatory changes and new COPE guidelines.
  - The guidelines are published in Polish and English on the Press's website.
  - Submission of a text to the Press is tantamount to acceptance of these guidelines by the author.
  - In matters not regulated by this document, the COPE guidelines, ICMJE recommendations and the applicable provisions of Polish and international law shall apply.
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