CODE OF ETHICS
BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

FOR **JOURNAL EDITORS**

CONTACTS

UC Digitalis
Web: http://digitalis.uc.pt

Instituto de Investigação Interdisciplinar da Universidade de Coimbra
Casa Costa Alemão - Pólo II
Rua Dom Francisco de Lemos
3030-789 Coimbra, Portugal

Telefone: + 351 239 708 450
E-mail: iii@uc.pt
Web: http://www.uc.pt/iii

Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra
Rua da Ilha, nº1
3000-214 Coimbra, Portugal

Telefone: + 351 239 410 098
E-mail: imprensauc@ci.uc.pt
Web: http://www.uc.pt/imprensa_uc

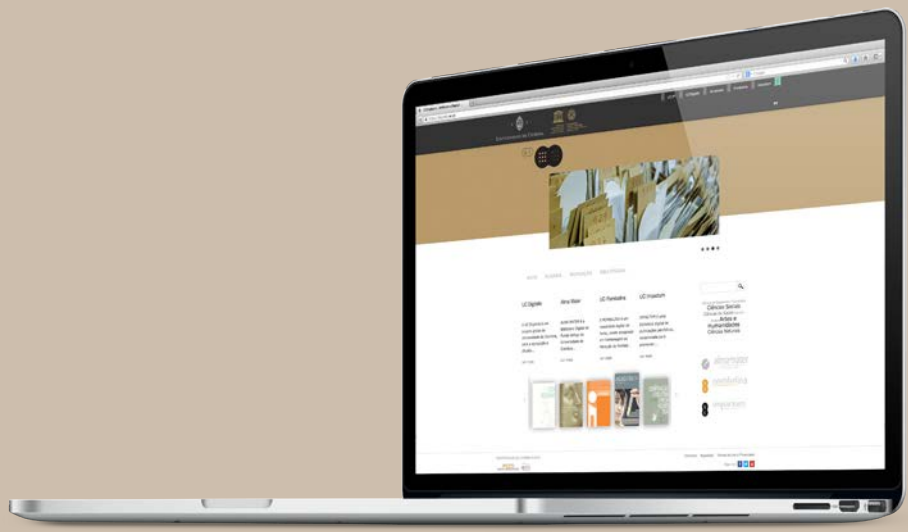
Serviço Integrado das Bibliotecas da Universidade de Coimbra
Edifício da Biblioteca Geral
da Universidade de Coimbra
Largo da Porta Férrea
3000-447 Coimbra

Telefone: + 351 239 859 800/900
E-mail: sibuc@sib.uc.pt
Web: http://www.uc.pt/sibuc

The Code of Ethics for Journal Editors is designed to provide a set of standards to which all editors are expected to adhere.

The Best Practice Guidelines aims to respond the requests for guidance about a wide range of increasingly complex ethical issues.

It is expected that all members adhere to the Code of Ethics and Best Practice Guidelines for Journal Editors although not all editors may be able to implement all the Best Practice recommendations.



UC DIGITALIS

A digital platform for the Portuguese-speaking World
http://digitalis.uc.pt/

The UC Digitalis is an innovative project of the University of Coimbra, which aims to promote the aggregation and dissemination of digital content of Lusophone matrix, through an active policy of knowledge transfer and upgrading of the science produced in the Portuguese-speaking World.

This project, which encompasses the platforms ***Alma Mater***, ***Pombalina*** and ***Impactum***, was developed over several years of research and practical application of technologies related to digital publishing, that are now largely enhanced..

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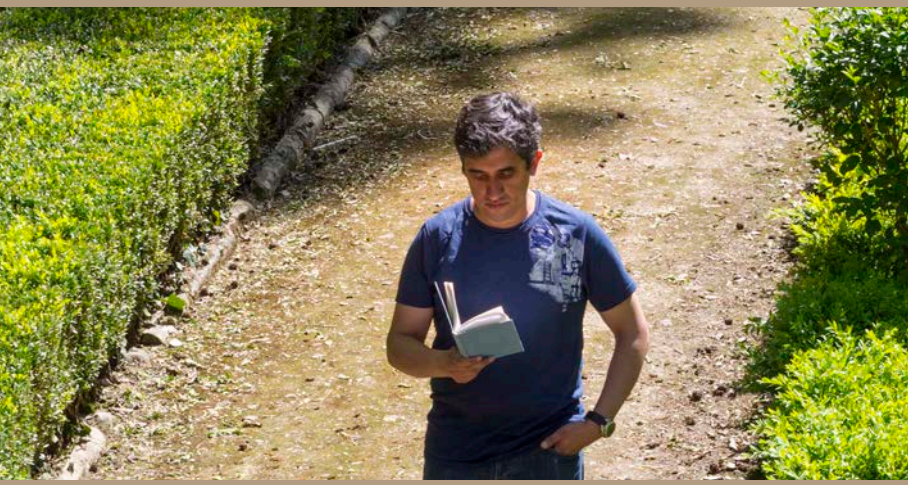
CODE OF ETHICS
FOR JOURNAL EDITORS

1.

GENERAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF EDITORS



2.

RELATIONS WITH READERS

1.1. Editors should be accountable for everything published in their journals.

This means the editors should:

1.2. strive to meet the needs of readers and authors;

1.3. strive to constantly improve their journal;

1.4. have processes in place to assure the quality of the material they publish;

1.5. champion freedom of expression;

1.6. preclude business needs from compromising intellectual and ethical standards;

1.7. always be willing to publish corrections, clarifications, retractions and apologies when needed.

2.1. Readers should be informed about the affiliated institution and who has funded research.

3.

RELATIONS WITH AUTHORS

3.1. Editors' decisions to accept or reject a paper for publication should be based on the paper's importance, originality and clarity, and the study's validity and its relevance to the remit of the journal.

3.2. Editors should not reverse decisions to accept submissions unless serious problems are identified with the submission.

3.3. New editors should not overturn decisions to publish submissions made by the previous editor unless serious problems are identified.

3.4. A description of peer review processes should be published, and editors should be ready to justify any important deviation from the described processes.

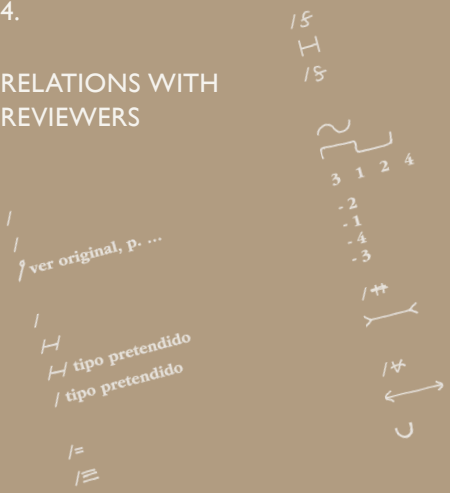
3.5. Journals should have a declared mechanism for authors to appeal against editorial decisions.

3.6. Editors should publish guidance to authors on everything that is expected of them. This guidance should be regularly updated and should refer or link to this code.

3.7. Editors should provide guidance about criteria for authorship and/or who should be listed as a contributor.

4.

RELATIONS WITH REVIEWERS



5.

RELATIONS WITH EDITORIAL BOARD MEMBERS

4.1. Editors should provide guidance to reviewers on everything that is expected of them including the need to handle submitted material in confidence. This guidance should be regularly updated and should refer or link to this code.

4.2. Editors should require reviewers to disclose any potential competing interests before agreeing to review a submission.

4.3. Editors should have systems to ensure that peer reviewers' identities are protected unless they use an open review system that is declared to authors and reviewers.

5.1. Editors should provide new editorial board members with guidelines on everything that is expected of them and should keep existing members updated on new policies and developments.

6.

RELATIONS WITH JOURNAL OWNERS AND PUBLISHERS

6.1. The relationship of editors to publishers and owners is often complex but should be based firmly on the principle of editorial independence.

6.2. Editors should make decisions on which articles to publish based on quality and suitability for the journal and without interference from the journal owner/publisher.

6.3. Editors should have a written contract(s) setting out their relationship with the journal's owner and/or publisher.

6.4. The terms of this contract should be in line with the Code of Conduct for Journal Publishers Code (as attached).

7.

EDITORIAL AND PEER REVIEW PROCESSES

8.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

7.1. Editors should strive to ensure that peer review at their journal is fair, unbiased and timely.

7.2. Editors should have systems to ensure that material submitted to their journal remains confidential while under review.

8.1. Editors should take all reasonable steps to ensure the quality of the material they publish, recognizing that journals and sections within journals will have different aims and standards.

9.

PROTECTING INDIVIDUAL DATA

9.1. Editors must obey laws on confidentiality in their own jurisdiction. Regardless of local statutes, however, they should always protect the confidentiality of individual information obtained in the course of research or professional interactions (e.g. between doctors and patients). It is therefore almost always necessary to obtain written informed consent for publication from people who might recognise themselves or be identified by others (e.g. from case reports or photographs). It may be possible to publish individual information without explicit consent if public interest considerations outweigh possible harms, it is impossible to obtain consent and a reasonable individual would be unlikely to object to publication.

10.

ENCOURAGING ETHICAL RESEARCH (E.G. RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMANS OR ANIMALS)

10.1. Editors should endeavour to ensure that research they publish was carried out according to the relevan t internationally accepted guidelines (e.g. the Declaration of Helsinki8 for clinical research, the AERA and BERA guidelines for educational research9-11).

10.2. Editors should seek assurances that all research has been approved by an appropriate body (e.g. research ethics committee, institutional review board) where one exists. However, editors should recognize that such approval does not guarantee that the research is ethical.

II.

DEALING WITH POSSIBLE MISCONDUCT

11.1. Editors have a duty to act if they suspect misconduct or if an allegation of misconduct is brought to them. This duty extends to both published and unpublished papers.

11.2. Editors should not simply reject papers that raise concerns about possible misconduct. They are ethically obliged to pursue alleged cases.

11.3. Editors should follow the COPE flowcharts[2] where applicable.

11.4. Editors should make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a proper investigation into alleged misconduct is conducted; if this does not happen, editors should make all reasonable attempts to persist in obtaining a resolution to the problem

11.5. Editors should follow the COPE guidelines on retractions.

12.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

12.1. Editors should be alert to intellectual property issues and work with their publisher to handle potential breaches of intellectual property laws and conventions.

13.

ENCOURAGING DEBATE

113.1. Editors should encourage and be willing to consider cogent criticisms of work published in their journal.

13.2. Authors of criticised material should be given the opportunity to respond.

13.3. Studies reporting negative results should not be excluded.

14.

COMMERCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

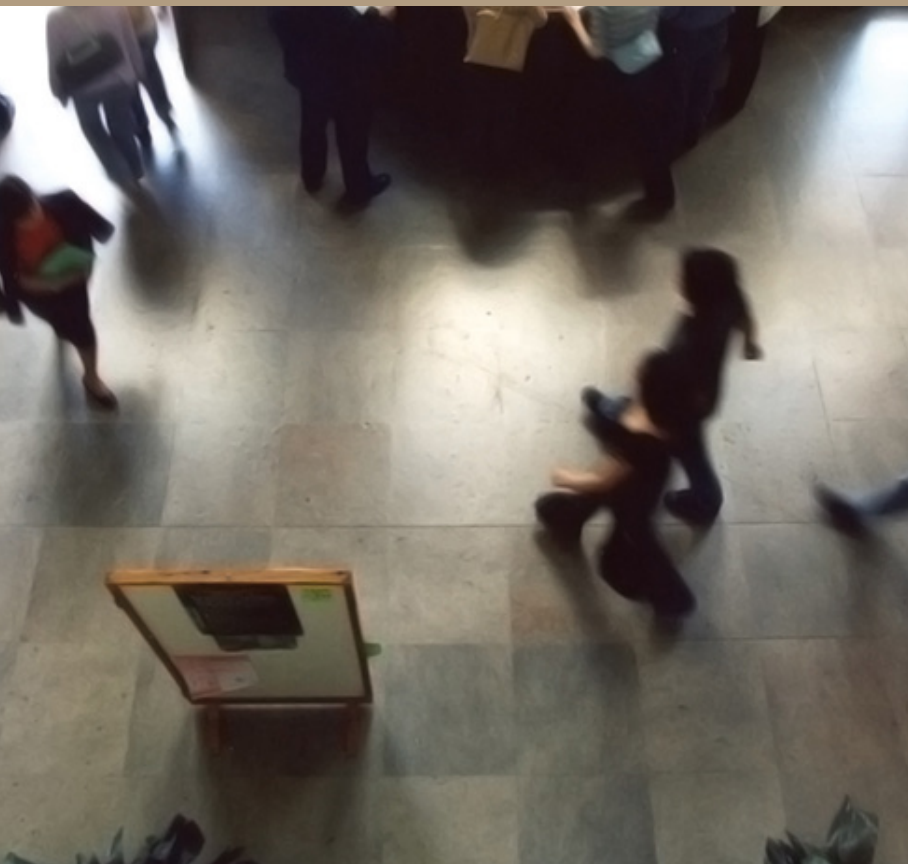
14.1. Journals should have policies and systems in place to ensure that commercial considerations do not affect editorial decisions (e.g. advertising departments should operate independently from editorial departments).

14.2. Editors should have declared policies on advertising in relation to the content of the journal and on processes for publishing sponsored supplements.

14.3. Reprints should be published as they appear in the journal unless a correction needs to be included in which case it should be clearly identified.

15.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST



15.1. Editors should have systems for managing their own conflicts of interest as well as those of their staff, authors, reviewers and editorial board members.

15.2. Journals should have a declared process for handling submissions from the editors, employees or members of the editorial board to ensure unbiased review.

APPENDIX

1. Publishers who are Committee on Publication Ethics members and who support COPE membership for journal editors should:

1.1. Follow this code, and encourage the editors they work with to follow the COPE Code of Conduct for Journal Editors.

1.2. Provide reasonable practical support to editors so that they can follow the Code of Conduct and Best Practices for Journal Editors.

2. Publishers should:

2.1. Define the relationship between publisher, editor and other parties in a contract.

2.2. Respect privacy (for research participants, for authors, for peer reviewers).

2.3. Protect intellectual property and copyright.

2.4. Foster editorial independence.

2.5. Set journal policies appropriately and aim to meet those policies, particularly with respect to:

- Editorial independence;
- Research ethics, including confidentiality, consent, and the special requirements for human and animal research;
- Authorship;
- Transparency and integrity (for example, conflicts of interest, research funding, reporting standards;

– Peer review and the role of the editorial team beyond that of the journal editor;

– Appeals and complaints.

2.6. Communicate journal policies (for example, to authors, readers, peer reviewers)

2.7. Review journal policies periodically, particularly with respect to new recommendations from the COPE

2.8. Code of Conduct for Editors and the COPE Best Practice Guidelines

2.9. Maintain the integrity of the academic record

2.10. Publish corrections, clarifications, and retractions

2.11. Publish content on a timely basis

EN

BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES
FOR JOURNAL EDITORS

I.

GENERAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF EDITORS

1.1. Actively seeking the views of authors, readers, reviewers and editorial board members about ways of improving their journal's processes.

1.2. Encouraging and being aware of research into peer review and publishing and reassessing their journal's processes in the light of new findings.

1.3. Working to persuade their publisher to provide appropriate resources, guidance from experts (e.g. designers, lawyers).

1.4. Supporting initiatives designed to reduce research and publication misconduct.

1.5. Supporting initiatives to educate editors and researchers about publication ethics.

1.6. Assessing the effects of their journal policies on author and reviewer behaviour and revising policies, as required, to encourage responsible behaviour and discourage misconduct.

1.7. Ensuring that any press releases issued by the journal reflect the message of the reported article and put it into context.

2.

RELATIONS WITH READERS

2.1. Ensuring that all published reports and reviews of research have been reviewed by suitably qualified reviewers (including statistical review where appropriate).

2.2. Ensuring that non-peer-reviewed sections of their journal are clearly identified.

2.3. Adopting processes that encourage accuracy, completeness and clarity of research reporting including technical editing and the use of appropriate guidelines and checklists (e.g. MIAME,[1] CONSORT2)[3]

2.4. Considering developing a transparency policy to encourage maximum disclosure about the provenance of non-research articles

2.5. Adopting authorship or contributorship systems that promote good practice (i.e. so that listings accurately reflect who did the work) and discourage misconduct (e.g. ghost and guest authors)

2.6. Informing readers about steps taken to ensure that submissions from members of the journal's staff or editorial board receive an objective and unbiased evaluation.

3.

RELATIONS WITH AUTHORS

3.1. Reviewing author instructions regularly and providing links to relevant guidelines.

3.2. Ensuring that appropriate reviewers are selected for submissions (i.e. individuals who are able to judge the work and are free from disqualifying competing interests)

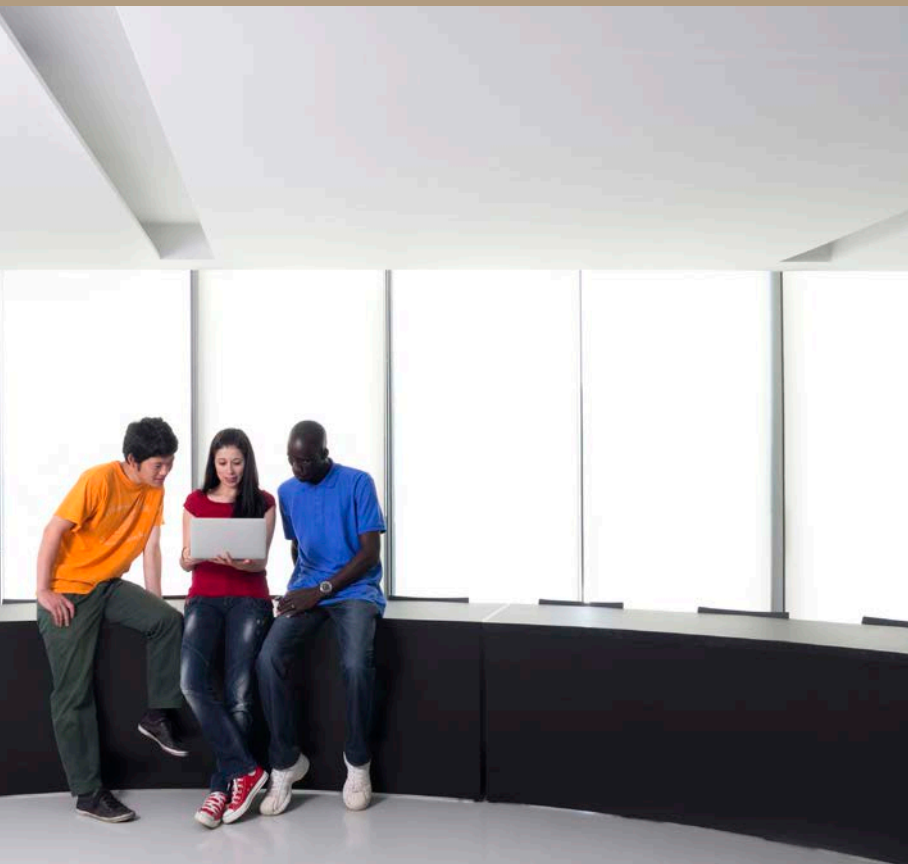
3.3. Respecting requests from authors that an individual should not review their submission, if these are well-reasoned and practicable

3.4. Publishing details of how they handle cases of suspected misconduct (e.g. with links to the COPE.

3.5. Publishing submission and acceptance dates for articles.

4.

RELATIONS WITH REVIEWERS



4.1. Encouraging reviewers to comment on ethical questions and possible research and publication misconduct raised by submissions (e.g. unethical research design, insufficient detail on patient consent or protection of research subjects (including animals), inappropriate data manipulation and presentation).

4.2. Encouraging reviewers to comment on the originality of submissions and to be alert to redundant publication and plagiarism.

4.3. Provide reviewers with tools to detect related publications (e.g. links to cited references and bibliographic searches).

4.4. Sending reviewers' comments to authors in their entirety unless they contain offensive or libelous remarks.

4.5. Seeking to acknowledge the contribution of reviewers to the journal.

4.6. Encouraging academic institutions to recognise peer review activities as part of the scholarly process.

4.7. Monitoring the performance of peer reviewers and taking steps to ensure this is of high standard.

4.8. Developing and maintaining a database of suitable reviewers and updating this on the basis of reviewer performance.

4.9. Ceasing to use reviewers who consistently produce discourteous, poor quality or late reviews.

4.10. Ensuring that the reviewer database reflects the community for their journal and adding new reviewers as needed.

4.11. Using a wide range of sources (not just personal contacts) to identify potential new reviewers (e.g. author suggestions, bibliographic databases).

4.12. Following the COPE flowchart in cases of suspected reviewer misconduct.

5.

RELATIONS WITH EDITORIAL BOARD MEMBERS

5.1. Having policies in place for handling submissions from editorial board members to ensure unbiased review.

5.2. Identifying suitably qualified editorial board members who can actively contribute to the development and good management of the journal.

5.3. Regularly reviewing the composition of the editorial board.

5.4. Providing clear guidance to editorial board members about their expected functions and duties which might include:

- acting as ambassadors for the journal;
- supporting and promoting the journal;
- seeking out the best authors and best work (e.g. from meeting abstracts) and actively encouraging submissions;
- reviewing submissions to the journal;
- accepting commissions to write editorials, reviews and commentaries on papers in their specialist area;
- attending and contributing to editorial board meetings;

5.5. Consulting editorial board members periodically (e.g. once a year) to gauge their opinions about the running of the journal, informing them of any changes to journal policies and identifying future challenges.

6.

RELATIONS WITH JOURNAL OWNERS AND PUBLISHERS

7.

EDITORIAL AND PEER REVIEW PROCESSES

6.1. Establishing mechanisms to handle disagreements between themselves and the journal owner/ publisher and maintain regular communication.

7.1. Ensuring that people involved with the editorial process (including themselves) receive adequate training and keep abreast of the latest guidelines, recommendations and evidence about peer review and journal management.

7.2. Keeping informed about research into peer review and technological advances.

7.3. Adopting peer review methods best suited for their journal and the research community it serves.

7.4. Reviewing peer review practices periodically to see if improvement is possible.

7.5. Referring troubling cases to COPE, especially when questions arise that are not addressed by the COPE flowcharts, or new types of publication misconduct are suspected.

7.6. Considering the appointment of an ombudsperson to adjudicate in complaints that cannot be resolved internally.

8.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

9.

PROTECTING INDIVIDUAL DATA

8.1. Having systems in place to detect falsified data (e.g. inappropriately manipulated photographic images or plagiarized text) either for routine use or when suspicions are raised.

8.2. Basing decisions about journal house style on relevant evidence of factors that raise the quality of reporting rather than simply on aesthetic grounds or personal preference.

9.1. Publishing their policy on publishing individual data.

9.2. Note that consent to take part in research or undergo treatment is not the same as consent to publish personal details, images or quotations.

10.

ENCOURAGING ETHICAL RESEARCH (E.G. RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMANS OR ANIMALS)

11.

BEST PRACTICE FOR EDITORS

10.1. Being prepared to request evidence of ethical research approval and to question authors about ethical aspects (such as how research participant consent was obtained or what methods were employed to minimize animal suffering) if concerns are raised or clarifications are needed.

10.2. Ensuring that reports of clinical trials cite compliance with the Declaration of Helsinki and other relevant guidelines to safeguard participants.

10.3. Appointing a journal ethics advisor or panel to advise on specific cases and review journal policies periodically.

11.1. Taking steps to reduce covert redundant publication.

11.2. Ensuring that published material is securely archived (e.g. via online permanent repositories).

12.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

13.

ENCOURAGING DEBATE

12.1. Adopting systems for detecting plagiarism (e.g. software, searching for similar titles) in submitted items (either routinely or when suspicions are raised).

12.2. Supporting authors whose copyright has been breached or who have been the victims of plagiarism.

12.3. Being prepared to work with their publisher to defend authors' rights and pursue offenders (e.g. by requesting retractions or removal of material from websites) irrespective of whether their journal holds the copyright.

13.1. Being open to research that challenges previous work published in the journal.

14.

COMMERCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

15.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

14.1. Publishing a general description of their journal's income sources (e.g. the proportions received from display advertising, reprint sales, sponsored supplements, page charges, etc.).

14.2. Ensuring that the peer review process for sponsored supplements is the same as that used for the main journal.

14.3. Ensuring that items in sponsored supplements are accepted solely on the basis of academic merit and interest to readers and decisions about such supplements are not influenced by commercial considerations.

15.1. Publishing lists of relevant interests (financial, academic and other kinds) of all editorial staff and members of editorial boards (which should be updated at least annually).

NOTES

1 The Code is based and adapted from the *Code of Conduct for Journal Publishers* from the Committee on Publication Ethics http://publicationethics.org

2 http://publicationethics.org/resources/flowcharts

3 Statement and reporting guidelines found at www.equator-network.org

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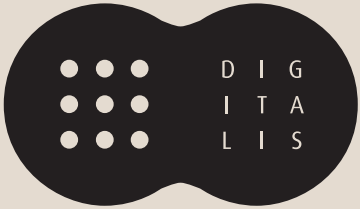

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