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://publicationethics.org/about/cope-strategic-plan](https://publicationethics.org/about/cope-strategic-plan)

Member benefits: [https://publicationethics.org/become-member](https://publicationethics.org/become-member)
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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 24–27. 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 28). 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
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:

1. Develop guidelines for authors and reviewers based on COPE Core Practices on ‘Authorship and contributorship’ and ‘Peer review processes’.
2. Develop internal processes to help identify ethical concerns (e.g., see COPE Core Practices on ‘Allegations of misconduct’, ‘Conflicts of interest/Competing interests’, ‘Data and reproducibility’, ‘Ethical oversight’, ‘Intellectual property’, ‘Journal management’, and ‘Post-publication discussions and corrections’).
3. Develop guidelines for promptly responding to suspected ethical breaches by authors, reviewers, and editors: see COPE Core Practice on ‘Complaints and appeals’.

Further reading

1. 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.2018.1.7
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 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)
- 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://orcid.org/)
- 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/AoZQlwn)
• 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
- 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)
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)
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)
- TOP Guidelines (https://b.link/initiatives)
- EQUATOR Network homepage (https://b.link/equator)
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
  - fabrication
  - peer review manipulation
  - 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)
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/R4WBya02)
- COPE flowcharts (https://cope.onl/flowcharts-3)
- 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/R4WBByao2)
- 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)
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 (e.g., 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 (e.g., irregularities in editorial processes or complaints that journal staff are unresponsive). Journals should develop guidelines for responding to suspected ethical breeches 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 (e.g., 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/Y18YSSbNry)
- 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:

**Journal Members**
Peer reviewed academic journals. Individual journal applications for 1 to 4 journals by the same publisher.
Apply using the application form at: [https://cope.onl/journal-app](https://cope.onl/journal-app)
See page 18

**Publisher Members**
Companies that publish 5 or more peer reviewed academic journals.
Apply using the application form at: [https://cope.onl/publisher-app](https://cope.onl/publisher-app)
See page 20

**Individual Members**
Individuals who are not journal editors or publishers but who are interested in publication ethics and are working in or associated with the publication of peer reviewed scholarly journals.
Apply by emailing the administrative assistant for an application form admin@publicationethics.org

**Corporate Members**
Companies who are not publishers but who are interested in publication ethics and are working in or associated with the publication of peer reviewed scholarly journals.
Apply by emailing the administrative assistant for an application form admin@publicationethics.org
### 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](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](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](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](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](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)

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| 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](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](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](https://cope.onl/fees)). |
| 5. | Fill in the publisher application form on the COPE website, ([https://cope.onl/publisher-app](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](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.

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• 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.

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<tr>
<th>Key</th>
<th>CCP 1</th>
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<th>COPE Core Practices</th>
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<td>PoT</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Principles of Transparency</td>
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### Allegations of misconduct (CCP 1)
Journal 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.

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<tr>
<th>Ethical oversight</th>
<th>CCP 6</th>
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<tr>
<td>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.</td>
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<th>Intellectual property</th>
<th>CCP 7</th>
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<td>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.</td>
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<th>Journal management</th>
<th>CCP 8</th>
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<td>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.</td>
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<th>Peer review process</th>
<th>CCP 9</th>
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<tr>
<td>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.</td>
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<th>Post-publication discussions and corrections</th>
<th>CCP 10</th>
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<td>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.</td>
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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 Publishers Association (OASPA), and the World Association of Medical Editors (WAME) are scholarly organisations that have seen an increase in the number, and broad range in the quality, of membership applications. Our organisations have collaborated to identify Principles of Transparency and Best Practice for Scholarly Publications (https://doi.org/10.24318/cope.2019.1.12). These principles form the basis of the criteria by which suitability for membership is assessed by COPE, DOAJ and OASPA, and part of the criteria on which membership applications are evaluated.

Note that additional membership criteria may also be used by each of the scholarly organisations. The organisations will not share information about applications received. We do not intend to develop or publish a list of publishers or journals that failed to demonstrate they met the criteria for transparency and best practice.
Website

A journal’s website, including the text that it contains, shall demonstrate that care has been taken to ensure high ethical and professional standards. It must not contain information that might mislead readers or authors, including any attempt to mimic another journal/publisher’s site. An ‘Aims & Scope’ statement should be included on the website and the readership clearly defined. There should be a statement on what a journal will consider for publication including authorship criteria (e.g., not considering multiple submissions, redundant publications) to be included. ISSNs should be clearly displayed (separate for print and electronic).

Name of journal

The Journal name shall be unique and not be one that is easily confused with another journal or that might mislead potential authors and readers about the Journal’s origin or association with other journals.

Peer review process

Journal content must be clearly marked as whether peer reviewed or not. Peer review is defined as obtaining advice on individual manuscripts from reviewers expert in the field who are not part of the journal’s editorial staff. This process, as well as any policies related to the journal’s peer review procedures, shall be clearly described on the journal website, including the method of peer review used. Journal websites should not guarantee manuscript acceptance or very short peer review times.

Ownership and management

Information about the ownership and/or management of a journal shall be clearly indicated on the journal’s website. Publishers shall not use organizational or journal names that would mislead potential authors and editors about the nature of the journal’s owner.

Governing body

Journals shall have editorial boards or other governing bodies whose members are recognized experts in the subject areas included within the journal’s scope. The full names and affiliations of the journal’s editorial board or other governing body shall be provided on the journal’s website.

Editorial team/contact information

Journals shall provide the full names and affiliations of the journal’s editors on the journal website as well as contact information for the editorial office, including a full address.
## Copyright and licensing

The policy for copyright shall be clearly stated in the author guidelines and the copyright holder named on all published articles. Likewise, licensing information shall be clearly described in guidelines on the website, and licensing terms shall be indicated on all published articles, both HTML and PDFs. If authors are allowed to publish under a Creative Commons license then any specific license requirements shall be noted. Any policies on posting of final accepted versions or published articles on third party repositories shall be clearly stated.

## Author fees

Any fees or charges that are required for manuscript processing and/or publishing materials in the journal shall be clearly stated in a place that is easy for potential authors to find prior to submitting their manuscripts for review or explained to authors before they begin preparing their manuscript for submission. If no such fees are charged that should also be clearly stated.

## Process for identification of/dealing with allegations of misconduct

Publishers and editors shall take reasonable steps to identify and prevent the publication of papers where research misconduct has occurred, including plagiarism, citation manipulation, and data falsification/fabrication, among others. In no case shall a journal or its editors encourage such misconduct, or knowingly allow such misconduct to take place. In the event that a journal's publisher or editors are made aware of any allegation of research misconduct relating to a published article in their journal, the publisher or editor shall follow COPE's guidelines (or equivalent) in dealing with allegations.

## Publication ethics

A journal shall also have policies on publishing ethics. These should be clearly visible on its website, and should refer to:

i) Journal policies on authorship and contributorship;

ii) How the journal will handle complaints and appeals;

iii) Journal policies on conflicts of interest/competing interests;

iv) Journal policies on data sharing and reproducibility;

v) Journal's policy on ethical oversight;

vi) Journal’s policy on intellectual property; and

vii) Journal's options for post-publication discussions and corrections.
The periodicity at which a journal publishes shall be clearly indicated.

The way(s) in which the journal and individual articles are available to readers and whether there are associated subscription or pay per view fees shall be stated.

A journal’s plan for electronic backup and preservation of access to the journal content (for example, access to main articles via CLOCKSS or PubMed Central) in the event a journal is no longer published shall be clearly indicated.

Business models or revenue sources (e.g., author fees, subscriptions, advertising, reprints, institutional support, and organisational support) shall be clearly stated or otherwise evident on the journal’s website. Publishing fees or waiver status should not influence editorial decision making.

Journals shall state their advertising policy if relevant, including what types of adverts will be considered, who makes decisions regarding accepting adverts and whether they are linked to content or reader behaviour (online only) or are displayed at random. Advertisements should not be related in any way to editorial decision making and shall be kept separate from the published content.

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

Principles of Transparency and Best Practice for Scholarly Publications
(https://doi.org/10.24318/cope.2019.1.12)
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 10

2. Develop guidelines for reviewers
   - CCP 9  Peer review processes  PoT 3

3. Develop processes to help identify ethical concerns
   - CCP 1  Allegations of misconduct  PoT 9
   - CCP 4  Conflicts of interest/Competing interests  PoT 10
   - CCP 5  Data and reproducibility  PoT 10
   - CCP 6  Ethical oversight  PoT 10
   - CCP 7  Intellectual property  PoT 7, 8, 10, 12
   - CCP 8  Journal management  PoT 1, 2, 4–6, 11, 13–16
   - CCP 10  Post-publication discussions and corrections  PoT 10

4. Develop guidelines for promptly responding to suspected ethical breaches by authors, reviewers, and editors
   - CCP 3  Complaints and appeals  PoT 10
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