Notes
- Reviewers' instructions should state that submitted material is confidential and may not be used in any way until after publication.
- *Cases with published papers may be handled as plagiarism (see flowchart 'Plagiarism in a published article', https://doi.org/10.24318/cope.2019.2.2).

**REVIEWER SUSPECTED TO HAVE APPROPRIATED AN AUTHOR’S IDEAS OR DATA**

**AUTHOR ALLEGES REVIEWER MISCONDUCT**

Thank author and say you will investigate

If files are no longer available at journal, request copy from author

Retrieve files (submitted manuscript and reviews)

OPEN REVIEW (reviewer’s identity is disclosed to author)

Get as much documentary evidence as possible from author and other sources (eg, publication*, abstract, report of meeting, copy of slides, grant application): do not contact reviewer until you have assessed this

Review evidence (or get suitably qualified person to do this) and decide whether author’s allegations are well founded

Not well founded

Discuss with author/request further evidence

Appear well founded

Write to reviewer explaining concerns and requesting an explanation

Satisfactory explanation

No or unsatisfactory response

**DISCUSS WITH AUTHOR**

Contact reviewer’s institution requesting an investigation

If no response, keep contacting institution every 3-6 months

Reviewer exonerated

**KEEP AUTHOR INFORMED OF PROGRESS**

Reviewer found guilty

**REMOVE REVIEWER PERMANENTLY FROM DATABASE**

Consider reporting case in journal

**EXPLAIN SITUATION TO AUTHOR**

Decide whether you wish to reveal actual reviewer name(s). However, if your journal uses anonymous review you must get the reviewer’s permission before disclosing their identity to the author

Consider contacting actual reviewer(s) to comment on allegation and check they performed the review themselves/did not discuss the paper with others

Check for links between accused person and named reviewer (eg, same department, personal relationships)

Consider removing reviewer from review database during investigation and inform reviewer of your action

Author accuses actual reviewer of misconduct

Author accuses somebody who was not asked to review the article for your journal

**ANONYMOUS REVIEW** (reviewer’s identity is NOT disclosed to author)

Author accuses somebody who was not asked to review the article for your journal

Contact reviewer’s institution requesting an investigation

If no response, keep contacting institution every 3-6 months

Reviewer found guilty

**REMOVE REVIEWER PERMANENTLY FROM DATABASE**

Consider reporting case in journal

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