

Editors' responsibilities

The Editors have to:

- ✓ Act in a balanced, objective and fair way while carrying out their expected duties;
- ✓ Handle submissions for sponsored supplements or special issues in the same way as other submissions, so that articles are considered and accepted solely on their academic merit and without commercial influence;
- ✓ Adopt and follow reasonable procedures in the event of complaints of an ethical or conflict nature, in accordance with the policies of the Journal. To give authors a reasonable opportunity to respond to any complaints. Documentation associated with any such complaints should be retained.

Procedures for dealing with unethical behaviour

Identification of unethical behaviour

- ✓ Misconduct and unethical behaviour may be identified and brought to the attention of the editor and publisher at any time, by anyone;
- ✓ Misconduct and unethical behaviour may include, but need not be limited to, examples as outlined above;
- ✓ All allegations should be taken seriously and treated in the same way, until a successful decision or conclusion is reached.

Investigation

- ✓ An initial decision should be taken by the editor, who should consult with or seek advice from the publisher, if appropriate;
- ✓ Evidence should be gathered, while avoiding spreading any allegations beyond those who need to know.

Minor breaches

- ✓ Minor misconduct might be dealt with without the need to consult more widely. In any event, the author should be given the opportunity to respond to any allegations.

Serious breaches

- ✓ Serious misconduct might require that the employers of the accused be notified. The editor, in consultation with the owner / publisher, should make the decision whether or not to involve the employers, either by examining the available evidence themselves or by further consultation with a limited number of experts.

Outcomes (in increasing order of severity; may be applied separately or in conjunction)

- ✓ Informing or educating the author or reviewer where there appears to be a misunderstanding or misapplication of acceptable standards;
- ✓ A more strongly worded letter to the author or reviewer covering the misconduct and as a warning to future behaviour;
- ✓ Publication of a formal notice detailing the misconduct;
- ✓ Publication of an editorial detailing the misconduct;
- ✓ A formal letter to the head of the author's or reviewer's department;
- ✓ Formal retraction or withdrawal of a publication from the journal, in conjunction with informing the head of the author or reviewer's department, Abstracting & Indexing services and the readership of the publication;
- ✓ Imposition of a formal embargo on contributions from an individual for a defined period;
- ✓ Reporting the case and outcome to a professional organisation or higher authority for further investigation and action.