

# Recent Updates to the CSE White Paper

Jennifer Deyton, Patricia K Baskin, Erin McMullan, and Kelly A Hadsell

CSE's White Paper on Promoting Integrity in Scientific Journal Publications was first published in 2006, and the full document was updated in 2009 and again in 2012. In 2018, the CSE Editorial Policy Committee (EPC) began making updates on a rolling basis as new sections are added and/or existing sections are updated to reflect new information or best practices. This updated method for amending the document allows for more rapid dissemination of its contents so that they can be put in to practice in journal office operations as quickly as possible.

In this issue of *Science Editor*, the authors of this article aim to advise the readership of the most recent updates. We thank the members of the EPC (along with non-EPC members Carolyn deCourt, Darren Early, Monica Leigh, Megan McCarty, and Lindsey Struckmeyer) for their assistance with these updates.

The full CSE White Paper is available online at <https://www.councilscienceeditors.org/resource-library/editorial-policies/white-paper-on-publication-ethics/>.

## 2.1 Editor Roles and Responsibilities (Jennifer Deyton)

Editors fit into a unique role in the lifecycle of journal articles, acting as guides for the content and strategy as well as contributors to that content. They are integral to both to the strategy of the journal as a whole and the experience of authors, reviewers, and readers of the journal. They therefore have the responsibility to uphold the standards for that journal content and support the efforts of authors and reviewers. It is important to update the standards and ethical responsibilities for editors to ensure this process is confidential when needed, that editors know the expectations for their position, and that the integrity of the peer review process is upheld for every paper. Updated links<sup>1</sup> reflect best practices for Editors.

Editors handle sensitive, sometimes cutting-edge material regularly and may themselves contribute to

research published in their field while being editors for their particular journal. The confidentiality of that material and any potential conflicts of interest for authors, reviewers, and editors themselves are important to the authors of the paper and to the integrity of the journal and their reputation. Handling these critical items with care, and understanding what is expected of them in relation to this information, is central to the editor's role. The updated links<sup>2</sup> reflect best practices for confidentiality.

Ultimately, editors are the guiding hand for their journal in many cases and should understand the intricacies of things like author disputes, errata and retractions, misconduct, and author complaints about rejected manuscripts or questions about the peer review process. The updated links<sup>3</sup> refer Editors to recent cases for guidance.

This portion of the White Paper offers resources for editors, journal offices, and researchers to better understand the responsibilities editors have to their journal, authors, and readers, and the important role they play in the life of every manuscript that moves through the peer review process in their journal. Updates made to this portion of the white paper were made to reflect the changes in the industry and to align our mission with high standards our membership conscientiously apply to their journals.

## 2.2 Authorship and Author Responsibilities (Patricia K Baskin)

Trust is fundamental to scientific communication: Trust that the authors have accurately reported their contributions, methods, and findings, and have disclosed all potential conflicts of interest; and trust that editors have exercised sufficient diligence to ensure accurate reporting and disclosure by authors. The first step in creating transparency for readers is accurate identification of those who participated in the research and the reporting.

This section<sup>4</sup> of the White Paper focuses on principles to guide authorship-related decisions, policies, practices, and responsibilities. Although these often differ from one scientific discipline to another and even within disciplines, this section summarizes common principles to guide authorship across scientific disciplines.

This section of the White Paper has been updated to include discussion of recently published authorship models, in addition to encouraging authors to use the

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ORCID persistent digital identifier to eliminate brand name confusion and ensure accurate attribution and citations. The section also discusses contributions of non-authors and the use of the Contributors Roles (CRediT) Taxonomy.

### 2.3 Reviewer Roles and Responsibilities (Erin McMullan)

The importance of manuscript review by qualified subject-matter experts prior to publication is largely accepted as best practice by journal editors. Seen as both guidance editors in the selection process and as adding value to the authors' original submission, the reviewers comments typically offer perspective on the importance of the research, confirm that the authors' methods and references are current, and that their conclusions correctly drawn.

Updates to this section<sup>5</sup> focused primarily on reviewer selection. While it can be challenging for editors to maintain a large pool of reviewers, it is important that feedback comes from reviewers who are not only qualified, but also are diverse and uncompromised by conflicts of interest. Firstly, while it may be expedient to select reviewers at the top of the list for related published works, that approach does not go far enough to expand the scope of research in a way that reflects the needs of diverse populations. Editors are encouraged to give additional consideration during the selection process that will provide for the perspectives of women, minorities, and geographical regions, among other underrepresented groups. Second, the language in the section describing reviewers responsibilities with regards to conflicts of interest is strengthened, suggesting that beyond disclosing the conflicts, that reviewers should decline the invitation to review if there could be the perception of bias. Decreasing instances of real or perceived bias is important to the integrity of the literature and also to the willingness of the general public to trust in the results of the research.

### 2.4 Sponsor Roles and Responsibilities (Kelly A Hadsell)

Sponsoring organizations\* may be involved in many aspects of the publication process including (but not limited to)

publication planning, authorship, clinical trial registration, and copyright. Sponsors, along with authors and medical communication companies, bear the responsibility to publish medical information in the form of a peer-reviewed manuscript or presentation during a scientific conference in a responsible and ethical manner per recommendations made in various scholarly publishing best practices.

While small updates were made throughout this section<sup>6</sup> of the White Paper, including updating authorship criteria, the majority of edits focused on disclosures of real or potentially perceived conflicts of interest on the part of authors as well as sponsors. Authors should be transparent in disclosing financial or in-kind support provided them by a sponsor. Similarly, authors must disclose all financial or in-kind support received from the sponsors and disclose current relationships with the study's funding source(s). The sponsor's relationship with the authors should be clearly and fully stated in the conflict of interest disclosure signed by the authors and should list all support received from the sponsor, including the provision of research materials, employment, honoraria, grants, and all other types of material and financial support.

### References and Links

1. <https://www.councilscienceeditors.org/resource-library/editorial-policies/white-paper-on-publication-ethics/2-1-editor-roles-and-responsibilities/>
2. <https://www.councilscienceeditors.org/resource-library/editorial-policies/white-paper-on-publication-ethics/2-1-editor-roles-and-responsibilities/#212>
3. <https://www.councilscienceeditors.org/resource-library/editorial-policies/white-paper-on-publication-ethics/2-1-editor-roles-and-responsibilities/#218>
4. <https://www.councilscienceeditors.org/resource-library/editorial-policies/white-paper-on-publication-ethics/2-2-authorship-and-authorship-responsibilities/>
5. <https://www.councilscienceeditors.org/resource-library/editorial-policies/white-paper-on-publication-ethics/2-3-reviewer-roles-and-responsibilities/>
6. <https://www.councilscienceeditors.org/resource-library/editorial-policies/white-paper-on-publication-ethics/2-4-sponsor-roles-and-responsibilities/>

\*In this instance, the term "sponsor" refers to an individual or group providing financial or material support to a study or endeavor, in return for commercial advertisement.