

Operations Research & Decisions

Ethical Standards

Operations Research & Decisions is published by Wrocław University of Technology Press (Oficyna Wydawnicza Politechniki Wrocławskiej) and aims to disseminate novel methods and applications of operations research and decision theory, particularly in economics, engineering and the social sciences. Publication is a direct reflection of the quality of work carried by the authors. In addition, the concept of peer-reviewed articles plays a key role in the scientific process. It is therefore important to agree upon standards of expected ethical behaviour.

On one hand, the journal adopts a neutral position on the issues raised in its publications, while on the other hand it employs a submission process designed to ensure the publication of objective scientific research and is responsible for clarifying any errors or misconduct in an efficient and open manner. The journal serves to further academic discussions of operations research and decision theory to any reasonable topic in an objective manner, however potentially or topically contentious and irrespective of its nature.

Publishing in an academic peer-reviewed journal serves several functions, one of which is to validate and preserve the results of research. Thus, it is of utmost importance that these results and the data/methods used to obtain them are accurate and trustworthy. The publishing process involves various parties, each one having a crucial role in achieving these aims. It therefore follows that the authors, journal editors, peer-reviewers and publisher each have the responsibility of satisfying appropriate ethical standards at each stage of their involvement from the submission to the publication of an article.

Operations Research & Decisions is committed to meeting and upholding agreed standards of ethical behaviour at all stages of the publication process. We follow closely industry associations, such as the [Committee on Publication Ethics \(COPE\)](#), that set standards and provide guidelines for best practices in order to meet these requirements. Below is a summary of our key expectations regarding the ethical behaviour of editors, peer-reviewers and authors and a description of the procedures employed to deal with misconduct.

1. ETHICAL EXPECTATIONS

Authors' responsibilities

- Authorship is limited to those who have made significant contributions to the conception, design, execution and interpretation of the reported study. Where there are others who have participated in a lesser way to certain substantive aspects of the research project, they should be acknowledged or listed as contributors. The corresponding author should ensure that all those who have made a significant contribution are listed as co-authors and no others. All co-authors must have seen and approved the final version of the paper and agreed to its submission for publication. Any use of ghostwriting or guest authorship represents a lack of academic integrity and violates norms governing research. Such behaviour will be dealt with according to the procedures dealing with unethical behaviour outlined below
- Authors should confirm that the manuscript as submitted is not under consideration or accepted for publication elsewhere. Where portions of the content overlap with

published or submitted content, they must acknowledge and cite those sources. Additionally, they should provide the editor with a copy of any submitted manuscript that might contain overlapping or closely related content. Submitting the same manuscript to more than one journal concurrently constitutes unethical publishing behaviour and will be dealt with according to the procedures dealing with unethical behaviour outlined below. Should authors choose not to wait for the final decision on a paper, for whatever reason, you may withdraw your paper and then submit it to another, not before.

- Authors must confirm that all the work in the submitted manuscript is original. Proper acknowledgment of the work of others must always be given. Permission to reproduce any content from other sources must have previously been obtained. Authors should cite publications that have been influential in determining the nature of the reported work. Information obtained privately, as in conversation, correspondence, or discussion with third parties, must not be used or reported without explicit, written permission from the source.

Plagiarism can take many forms, from copying or paraphrasing substantial parts of another's paper (without attribution) to claiming that the work of others is the author's own. Plagiarism in any form constitutes unethical publishing behaviour and will be dealt with according to the procedures dealing with unethical behaviour outlined below.

Accurate records of the raw data associated with any submitted manuscript must be maintained, and access to these data ensured in line with the [ALPSP-STM Statement on Data and Databases](#). Where appropriate and when permitted by an employer, funding body or others who might have an interest, data should be deposited in a suitable repository or storage location, for sharing and further use by others.

- Authors should ensure that any studies involving human or animal subjects conform to national, local and institutional laws and requirements (regarding studies using human subjects see e.g. the [Helsinki Declaration](#) and [the Ethical Guidelines for International Comparative Social Science Research in the Framework of MOST, UNESCO](#)) and confirm that approval has been sought and obtained where appropriate. Authors should obtain express permission from human subjects and respect their privacy.
- All sources of financial support for the project should be disclosed. This declaration should be made in a separate section of the text and placed before the References. If necessary, authors must describe the role of the study's sponsor(s) in planning, carrying out or writing the paper submitted and in the decision to submit it for publication.
- Authors should declare any potential conflicts of interest. A conflict of interest may exist when any author or author's institution has a financial or other relationship with other people or organizations that may inappropriately influence that author's work. Examples of potential conflicts of interest which should be disclosed include employment, consultancies, stock ownership, honoraria, paid expert testimony, patent applications/registrations, and grants or other funding. Potential conflicts of interest should be disclosed at the earliest stage possible. Such a conflict can be actual or potential, and full disclosure to the journal is the safest course. All submissions must include disclosure of all relationships that could be viewed as presenting a potential conflict of interest. The journal may use such information as a basis for editorial decisions and may publish such disclosures if they are believed to be important to readers in judging the manuscript. A decision may be made by the journal not to publish

on the basis of the declared conflict. At the end of the text, under a subheading 'Disclosure Statement', all authors must disclose any actual or potential conflict of interest including any financial, personal or other relationships with other people or organizations in the period starting from three years preceding commencement of the work on the submitted paper that could inappropriately influence (bias) their work. Non-disclosure constitutes unethical publishing behaviour and will be dealt with according to the procedures dealing with unethical behaviour outlined below.

- The authors should promptly notify the journal editor or publisher whenever a significant error in their publication is identified. They should cooperate with the editor and publisher to publish an erratum, addendum, corrigendum notice, or to retract the paper, where this is deemed necessary.

Editors' responsibilities

- The editors must act in a balanced, objective and fair way while carrying out their expected duties, without discrimination on grounds of gender, ethnicity, geographical location of authors, or any other demographic factor.
- They must handle submissions for 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.
- The editors assign two reviewers from different countries, neither of whom are from the same institution as any of the authors, and ensure that reviewing is carried out using a "double-blind" process. This process is aimed at avoiding any conflict of interests between authors and reviewers.
- They should adopt and follow reasonable procedures in the event of complaints of an ethical nature or regarding conflicts of interest, in accordance with the policies and procedures of the journal. They must give authors a reasonable opportunity to respond to any complaints. All complaints should be investigated, no matter when the original publication was approved. The documentation associated with any such complaints should be retained.
- The editors should always be willing to publish corrections, clarifications, retractions and apologies when appropriate.

Reviewers' responsibilities

- As stated above, reviewing is carried out using a "double-blind" process. The reviewers should not comment on a paper under review to anyone except through the journal's review process or via the editor in charge.
- Reviewers should contribute to the decision-making process, and to assist in improving the quality of published papers by reviewing manuscripts objectively and within the reasonably set deadlines.
- Reviewers must maintain the confidentiality of any information supplied by the editor or author. They should not disseminate the manuscript in any way before publication.

- Reviewers should alert the editor to any published or submitted content which is substantially similar to that under review.
- Reviewers should be aware of any potential conflicts of interest (financial, institutional, collaborative or other relationships involving the reviewer and the research subject) and to alert the editor to these, and when necessary decline to review a manuscript for such reasons.

Responsibilities of the Publishers

Wrocław University of Technology Press (Oficyna Wydawnicza Politechniki Wrocławskiej) shall ensure that good practice is maintained to the standards outlined above.

2. PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH UNETHICAL BEHAVIOUR

Section 1 detailed some examples of misconduct and unethical behaviour. Anyone may inform the editors at any time of suspected unethical behaviour of any type of misconduct by giving the necessary information/evidence to start an investigation. All such information and investigations will be subject to the same procedures.

Investigation

- The chief editor will consult with the editor(s) in charge on decisions regarding the initiation of an investigation.
- During an investigation, any evidence should be treated as strictly confidential and only made available to those strictly involved in investigating.
- The accused will always be given the chance to respond to any charges made against them.
- If it is judged at the end of the investigation that misconduct has occurred, then it will be classified as either minor or serious.

Minor breaches

- Minor misconduct will be dealt with directly with those involved without involving any other parties, for example:
- Communicating to authors/reviewers whenever a minor issue involving misunderstanding or misapplication of academic standards has occurred.
- A warning letter to an author or reviewer regarding fairly minor misconduct.

Serious breaches

- The chief editor, in consultation with the board of editors, should make any decision regarding the course of action to be taken using the evidence available and, when

appropriate, further consultation with a small group of experts. The possible outcomes are as follows (these can be used separately or jointly).

- Publication of a formal announcement or editorial describing the misconduct.
- Informing the author's (or reviewer's) head of department or employer of any misconduct by means of a formal letter.
- The formal, announced withdrawal of publications from the journal, including its removal from any abstracting & indexing services.
- A ban on submissions from an individual for a defined period.
- Referring a case to a professional organisation or legal authority for further investigation and action.