

Al-Quds Open University

Academic Affairs

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Palestinian Journal for Open Learning & e-Learning

Publication Ethics and Malpractice Statement



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The publication ethics and malpractice statement of the Palestinian Journal for Open Learning & e-Learning is entirely based on the code of conduct and best-practice guidelines for journal editors published by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

The Deanship of Graduate Studies and Scientific Research, the publication unit at the University, promotes the best practices and standards of publication ethics and takes all the necessary actions against any kind of publication malpractice such as plagiarism, or unauthorized re-reprint, which is considered one of the imperative responsibilities of the editorial board. It keeps a watchful eye on all phases and procedures involved in the publication process.

The Deanship of Graduate Studies and Scientific Research at al-Quds Open University does not tolerate any kind of unethical behavior and is fully aware of its responsibilities and ethical commitments.

PS: The term author below expresses the sole author or group of authors in case the research is a joint research.

Editorial Board Responsibilities

The editorial board of the Palestinian Journal for Open Learning & e-Learning comprises acknowledged experts in the field from Arab countries and the world. The editor-in-chief provides the names of the members, their specializations, their academic ranks, their biography, and their contact information on the Journal's webpage.

Publication Decision

1. The editor-in-chief is responsible for deciding which of the papers submitted to the Journal will be published.
2. The decision will be based on the paper's scientific value, originality, intelligibility, the validity of its topic, and its relevance to the Journal's scope.
3. The editor-in-chief may check with other editors or expert reviewers in deciding the submitted manuscript.

Confidentiality

1. The editor-in-chief and the editorial board members must not disclose any information about a submitted paper.
2. As appropriate, the editorial board may disclose information about a submitted paper to the corresponding author, reviewers, potential reviewers, other editorial advisers, and the publisher.
3. Submitted articles shall be confidential while under review, and the Journal adopts the double-blind peer-review process.



Peer Review Process

1. All papers submitted to the Palestinian Journal for Open Learning & e-Learning for publication are subjected to a double-blind, peer-review process.
2. The editor-in-chief initially reviews papers. He may reject them because they are irrelevant to the scope and subject's matter of the journals or because they are visibly of no added value to the scope.
3. Papers that are deemed eligible for review are sent to at least two reviewers who are experts in the field of the submitted paper.
4. The reviewers of a paper shall be unknown to each other.
5. The reviewers are required to fill the evaluation form [[view file](#)], decide whether the paper is publishable immediately, publishable with minor changes, publishable with major changes, or not publishable at all. The reviewers shall send a detailed report to the editorial board, which includes the final evaluation result of the paper, disclosing no information about the reviewers.
6. The reviewers' reports are to be sent to the editor. Their comments are forwarded to the author(s) for feedback disclosing no information about the reviewers.
7. If there is a conflict in the evaluation result of the two reviewers, the editor-in-chief will appoint a third reviewer to review the paper. The final decision will be made on the result of the third reviewer. The third evaluation result should be in line with one of the two reviewers' results.
8. A letter of apology is sent to the author for rejecting his/her paper for publication. Authors are entitled to publish their papers in other journals only after receiving an official rejection from the Journal.
9. Papers applications are prioritized based on the date of submission of the application for publication on the Journal's website.
10. The papers accepted for publication are issued on the Journal's next issue according to the date of their acceptance for publication.
11. The peer-review process takes three months from the submission date of the publication request. Accepted papers are usually published within six months.

Transparency of the Review Process

1. The editor-in-chief and the reviewers shall evaluate papers irrespective of the authors' race, gender, religious beliefs, ethnicity, citizenship, or intellectual attitude and political views.
2. The editor and reviewers' decision to accept or reject a submitted paper needs to be based on the work's importance, originality, and pertinence to the aims and scope of Journal.
3. The editor-in-chief, and the reviewers who are appointed with the tasks of evaluating papers within their specializations and field of expertise, must adhere to the deadlines for completing the tasks assigned to them, and deliver the results of the evaluation within the specified period.



Integrity of Ethics and Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

1. The editor-in-chief, the members of the editorial board, and the reviewers must not use unpublished materials disclosed in a submitted paper for their own research purposes without the written consent of the author.
2. Innovative ideas or data acquired in the blind peer-review process must strictly be kept confidential and must not be used for personal interests, and act decisively in such matters.
3. In case of conflicts of interest, the editor-in-chief has the right to ask the reviewers to disclose the reasons for accepting or rejecting a paper.
4. The reviewer shall inform the editorial board of conflicts of interest in the paper he/she is evaluating and submit a written report.
5. The editor-in-chief should also inform the reviewer in writing of the withdrawal of the paper he/she is evaluating and appoint another reviewer.
6. The editor should also ask reviewers to decline the request for review where circumstances might not allow to write an unbiased review.
7. A consulting or guest editor shall handle papers authored or co-authored by a collaborator who has published with the editor-in-chief within 3 years at the time of submission.
8. Papers involving the participation of people and/or animal must be approved by the Research Ethics Committee and/or animal care institutions and should be used in the institution to which the researcher belongs.
9. The editor-in-chief reserves the right to decline any paper deemed to have been done in a manner contrary to the ethics of scientific research.

Procedures for Dealing with Unethical Behaviour

1. Any kind of unethical behaviour that is revealed in the review process or prior to it or after publication must be immediately communicated to the editor-in-chief.
2. Anyone who informs the editor-in-chief or publisher of unethical behaviour has to provide sufficient evidence and details.
3. Following the disclosure of such conduct, the editor-in-chief must start an investigation on the matter and take the allegations seriously until an evidence-based decision is taken.
4. Investigations about unethical behaviour may be initiated even when revealed long after publication.
5. If violation of publication ethics is proved, the editor-in-chief, in coordination with the Deanship of Graduate Studies and Scientific Research, must inform the author of the paper in writing and give him/her the chance to respond to the complaints or allegations.
6. If unethical conduct is minor, the editor-in-chief may resolve the issue internally without the need to consult external parties.
7. If unethical conduct is serious, the editor-in-chief may consult relevant institutions and research bodies for further investigation and evaluation of the seriousness of the misconduct.



8. Measures ensuing serious misconduct may include:
 - Publishing an official notice of the unethical conduct and its details.
 - Sending an official letter to the head of the author's or reviewer's department or sponsor.
 - Withdrawing the paper from the Journal and informing the head of the author's or reviewer's department or sponsor
 - The concerned author or reviewer is blacklisted and has no right to deal with them in the future.

The Author's Responsibilities

1. Authors should adhere to the standards and submission guidelines specified in the Journal [[view publication guidelines](#)]
2. Authors must adhere to the paper formatting guidelines [[view formatting guidelines](#)].
3. Authors of original research work should present an accurate account of the work and an appropriate discussion of its significance.
4. Authors should include sufficient details and references in the submitted paper to allow other researchers to cite the work.
5. Authors must sign the commitment form and enclose it in the publication form [[download form](#)]
6. Authors must fill the e-form after submitting the publication form [[view e-form](#)].
7. The paper is subjected to proofreading (Arabic and English) by specialists after the approval of the final amendments by the reviewers, and the provision of an audited copy accompanied by a duly signed proofreading notice [[download form](#)]. While the editorial board reserves the right to take appropriate measures in the event of serious errors that are inconsistent with the proofreading guidelines, which include:
 - Suspension of the publication process until rectifying the errors.
 - Requesting the author to re-proofread the paper from a specialized party.
 - Proofreading the paper from a specialized party chosen by the editorial board and requesting the author to pay the fees.
 - The author is sent an apology letter and is requested to pay the peer-review fees.
 - The relevant parties are communicated to enforce the instructions.
8. Conducting a final and comprehensive review of the design copy of the paper after the design department has included it in the Journal's template, and providing the editorial board with any remarks for modification or confirmation that it is free of any errors within the specified deadline.
9. Reply to the correspondences of the editorial board, and provide any additional information.
10. Adhere to the deadlines and modifications that are required of him/her during the research review process.



Responsible Authorship Conduct

To avoid unethical behaviour, the author must:

1. Avoid unethical behaviour such as plagiarism, forgery, and manipulation.
2. Submit the same paper to more than one journal at the same time.
3. Authors may be asked to provide the raw data of their work together with the paper for editorial review and should be ready to make the data publicly available if need be.
4. Authors shall submit only fully original works.
5. Authors shall properly cite the work of others.
6. Research works that have been influential in determining the nature of the submitted manuscript should equally be cited.
7. Authors shall be asked to confirm that they have received a written authorization from all their co-authors who have significantly contributed to the work.
8. If an author discovers a serious error in his/her published work, it is his/her responsibility to notify the editor or publisher to withdraw or correct the error.

Copyright of the Submitted Paper

Authors are requested to transfer copyright of their work to the Palestinian Journal for Open Learning & e-Learning. If the author wishes to reprint or translate the paper, prior permission must be obtained from the editorial board of the Journal.

The paper published in the Journal expresses the opinion of the researcher, and does not express the opinion of the Journal in any way.

Disclosure and Conflicts of Interest

1. Authors must disclose their sources of funding and should disclose any financial or other conflicts of interest that may influence the evaluation of their papers.
2. If there are any potential conflicts of interest during or after the peer-review process, authors should disclose them to the editor-in-chief or publisher immediately.

Reviewers' Responsibilities

Contribution to Editorial Decisions

The Palestinian Journal for Open Learning & e-Learning adopts the double-blinded peer review method. Reviewers assist the editor in making editorial decisions and may also serve the author in improving the paper through their comments.



Responsible Review Conduct

1. Reviewers are not supposed to accept submissions that fall out of the scope of their specialization.
2. Any external reviewer who feels unqualified or not ready to review the submitted paper should notify the editor-in-chief and withdraw from the review process.
3. Reviewers must not use any information or data obtained from the reviewed paper for their personal advantage.
4. Reviewers must not accept to review papers where they have conflicts of interest as a result of competitive, collaborative, or other connections with the author(s).
5. Reviewers shall notify the editor-in-chief of any considerable similarity or overlap between the reviewed manuscript and any other published work of which they have knowledge.

Confidentiality and Objectivity

1. All reviewers who carry out peer-review should abide by the standards of confidentiality relating to the peer-review process.
2. Reviewers must treat papers received for review as confidential documents. They must not disclose or discuss them with others except as authorized by the editor-in-chief.
3. Reviewers should conduct the review process objectively and should not address any personal criticism of the author.
4. Reviewers should also express their views impartially and clearly with supporting arguments.
5. Reviewers shall fill out the paper evaluation form and an enclosed report and submit them to the editor-in-chief.

All users' data (Authors, Reviewers and Readers) saved on this website will be used exclusively for the stated purposes provided by the Journal, and will not be available for any other purposes or to any third party.