



Publication Integrity and Ethics

PIE (π)

# P.I.E. General Code of Conduct



*Practice Guidelines*



Version 1 1<sup>st</sup> Aug 2013

## **Introduction**

The aim of the Publication Integrity and Ethics (PIE) is to define, impose and maintain the best practices in the ethical conduct of the publishing world; this will promulgate a healthy editorial environment in which standards can be perceived and maintained. The organisation will assist authors, potential contributors, editors, reviewers and publishers in their efforts to achieve these ideals.

All members of the PIE organisation are expected to adhere to these guidelines with their full effort and co-operation. While the guidelines are offered as a simplified set of rules for the publishing sector, the Code of Conduct defines the standards for the diverse range of individuals involved in the publishing sector, especially for the publishers, authors, editors, editors-in-chief and peer reviewers.

## **Maintenance of Best Practice**

### *1 Duties and responsibilities*

1.1 Publishers and editorial board members who support the PIE membership and the code of conduct published below are expected to follow its ideology as closely as possible. All members of the editorial staff working under the publishers should comply with the recommendations.

1.2 Individual members of the publishing community should be advised to register with PIE and adhere respectfully to the guidelines and the code of conduct.

1.3 Colleagues of those in the publishing industry and the editorial staff under them should be informed about the PIE membership benefits, together with the ethical rules and principles defined by the organisation.

1.4 Support should be proffered to the authors, editors, editors-in-chief and reviewers in order to help them understand and follow the code of conduct.

1.5 No conflicts of interests should arise between editors, publishers, authors, reviewers and other individuals involved in the editorial process.

### *2 Privacy and copyright protection*

2.1 Privacy of individuals and their right to seek anonymity must be respected and this applies whether or not they are connected with the publishing sector.

2.2 Copyright and intellectual property must be respected and protected and action sought immediately against breaches of plagiarism rules or other similar issues. Support and advice must be accorded to colleagues whose copyright has been breached or who have been the victims of plagiarism, whether their cases were analysed internally or by the PIE's Sub-Committee.

2.3 A healthy work environment should be fostered and maintained by protecting editorial independence. This can be enhanced by setting out and protecting the journal policy.

2.4 Confidentiality, consent for publication, authorship, integrity, transparency and the peer-review process should be respected in the same way, following strict guidelines.

2.5 Individual data must be protected. All members of the editorial staff and publishers should protect the confidentiality of individual information and the right to privacy of every human being.

### *3 Communications and complaints*

3.1 Appeals and complaints submitted to or against editors and publishers must be dealt with in the proper manner, with expedient, unambiguous communication.

3.2 The journal policies should be clearly communicated to all members of the staff under the publishers, to editors and reviewers. Reasonable space must be accorded to the many subtleties and nuances that exist in the world of publishing.

3.3 Reviewers who have been assigned a particular piece of work should have the policy of the journal clearly and succinctly communicated to them before their analysis commences. They should understand the policy well in advance of publication and readership viewing.

3.4 Publishers and editors should give thorough analysis to any complaints submitted against them, their journals or any members of their editorial staff. They must ensure corrections, retractions, clarifications and apologies are published as soon as possible.

#### *4 Recommendations*

4.1 The journal policies should be regularly and periodically given thorough review; these policies must then be adapted in accordance with the recommendations received from the PIE Council in a timely manner.

4.2 The integrity of their journals must be upheld and proper assistance given to the complainants.

4.3 Content that is unique, original and informative must be published on a regular basis.

#### *5 General duties and responsibilities*

5.1 Members of the editorial staff have a general duty of responsibility. Editors will spearhead the overall strategy by adhering to the code of conduct and being aware of their accountability for everything that was, is and will be published in their journals.

5.2 An editor should avoid distortion of the facts and entropy inherent within their systems. To meet the needs of their readers, authors and reviewers must be their ultimate aim. Constant improvement of the quality of their publications and to implement this wherever possible is the aim.

5.3 Editors must ensure that all the published materials are of the highest quality, according to the ethical requirements of the publishing sector.

5.4 Striving to protect copyright and intellectual property, promote and advocate editorial freedom and freedom of expression should be high on the in-house policy list of editors; they must be willing to publish corrections, retractions, apologies and clarifications when needed and with expediency to resolve argument or dissatisfaction.

#### *6 Correct procedures*

6.1 As befits the PIE's recommendations, editors should regularly be in communication with authors, readers, editorial board members and peer-reviewers in order to improve the quality of their journals and the efficiency of the editorial process; the accuracy and informative character of published materials can also be greatly enhanced in this manner.

6.2 The publisher should provide the editorial staff with the appropriate resources needed to perform their roles and complete their duties to optimum standard. This should also embrace guidance for experts in parallel or complimentary areas of interest.

6.3 Authors, reviewers and other members of staff need to be informed and educated according to the standards set out in the ethical code of conduct.

6.4 Those involved in the editorial industry must be prepared to cross check the articles and other editorial matters they are working with. The editorial team are responsible and accountable for any editorial problems that may occur.

6.5 The published materials must be thoroughly checked to ensure that articles or images have not been published elsewhere and for plagiarism. Whilst this can be difficult to achieve, authors must take full responsibility if such an incident took place.

6.6 The editing process must be supervised, including final edits to the content in order to ensure it is according to the line, style and the ethical and professional concept of the journal.

6.7 The publication of a document or article needs to be checked to ensure it is technically intact.

#### *7 Editorial relationship with readers*

7.1 The editors have a duty to the readers to encourage accuracy and clarity of the materials published within the pages of their journals.

7.2 It needs to be ascertained by the editors that submitted articles and reports have been reviewed by qualified specialists and cleared to be published.

7.3 Editors must take necessary steps to ensure readers are made aware on the sections of the journal which did not undergo thorough peer-reviewing processes.

7.4 Correct authorship systems must be adopted and promoted according to a respected level of editorial practice. Acts of misconduct such as ghost authorship and omitted authorship must be discouraged.

7.5 Readers must be kept informed about the line, style and the ethical and professional concept of the journal managed by the editorial team.

7.6 It is imperative that editors inform their readers about any conflicting or competing interests or potential areas of conflict that may arise.

#### *8 Editorial relationship with authors*

8.1 Editors-in-chief and editors have a duty to the authors contributing to their journals.

8.2 A decision by the editorial team to accept or reject an article or other written materials must be based solely on the originality, clarity, paper's importance and scientific validity. Manuscript rejection or acceptance should also be based on its relevance to the journal's line and style.

8.3 Editors should not base their acceptance or rejection of submitted articles or manuscripts on personal interests and financial gains.

8.4 If new, the editor should not choose to reject an article previously accepted by other editors, unless serious editorial problems or conflicts of interests are identified.

8.5 Aspects of the peer-review process should be clarified and the authors must be kept informed about the stages of the review.

8.6 Authors and other editors must be informed of the journal's strategy for appeal against an editorial decision.

8.7 Editorial staff and authors must be kept informed about everything that is or will be expected from them.

8.8 Authors and other editorial staff must be informed and given guidance on updates to the code of conduct published by PIE. The instructions given to authors must be regularly reviewed, according to the guidelines.

8.9 The journal's criteria for authorship must be made clear to authors and other editorial staff; this should include a guide about who should be listed or acknowledged as a contributor.

8.10 Appropriate professionals must be selected for the review processes of the articles submitted to them by the contributing authors.

8.11 Authors must be advised about the official procedures the journal has in place for handling cases of suspected misconduct and complaints made by or against them.

#### *9 Editorial relationship with reviewers*

9.1 Reviewers must be kept well informed and updated on all that is expected of them in the normal course of their duty.

9.2 Reviewers must be advised to respect, uphold and maintain full confidentiality before, during and after the review process. A reviewer should disclose any potential conflict of interest before the review commences.

9.3 The identities of peer reviewers must be protected unless the reviewer has specifically requested otherwise or if open peer-review system is upheld by the journal

9.4 Reviewers must be encouraged to give prompt comment on the originality of the articles they have received for review and on any other ethical question that may arise during the review process.

9.5 Reviewers must be provided with all the information available with the tools required to conduct a thorough analysis of the articles, including available links to the cited references.

9.6 The reviewer's contribution to the quality of the journal should be formally acknowledged.



## P.I.E. General Code of Conduct

9.7 The editorial team should develop and regularly update a wide database of suitable reviewers according to the line and style of the journal and the topics debated.

9.8 Reviewers must be advised about the proper ways for dealing with complaints and acts of misconduct.

### 10 Editorial relationship with publishers

10.1 Editors and editors-in-chief must ensure that their relationship with publishers and owners of the journals are based on the principle of editorial independence and freedom of expression.

10.2 Articles should be accepted or rejected based on the quality, informative character and suitability for the journal and not by any interference from the publisher.

10.3 A written contract must be in place clearly stating the relationship the editor has with the publisher or the owner(s) of the journals. The same contract should unambiguously state their duties.

10.4 Contracts drawn up by the editorial team and publishers must be in line with PIE's recommendations and guidelines for ethical editorial activity.

10.5 The journal has a duty to give a set of clearly defined rules to handle any disagreements arising between authors, editors, and reviewers, and the publishers.

10.6 Editors should communicate regularly with the publisher and ask for updates on the style of the journal and on the recommendations from PIE.

### 11 Other duties of the editors-in-chief, editors and publishers

11.1 A programme of quality assurance must be implemented whereupon the editorial team and publishers should take all reasonable steps to ensure the quality of the articles published within the pages of their journals.

11.2 The full available range of the journal's resources should be used in order to detect falsified or manipulated data, images, plagiarised text or any other suspicions of misconduct.

11.3 Suspicions of misconduct must be swiftly dealt with. All members of the editorial staff and publishers should immediately express suspected acts of misconduct or if allegations of such acts are brought to them by third party individuals.

11.4 Debate and constructive criticism from readers and other individuals should be encouraged, regardless of whether they are professional authors or editors.

11.5 Commercial considerations must not be allowed to affect editorial decisions. Editors should openly declare the policies on advertising in relation to the content of the journal.

### Contributors

Colin Hopper  
Waseem Jerjes  
Hiang Boon Tan  
Zaed Z R Hamady

© The Publication Integrity and Ethics  
[www.integrity-ethics.com](http://www.integrity-ethics.com)

*No permission is required for non-commercial use or redistribution of any part of these guidelines as long as a complete citation is provided.*

*While every effort has been made to make these guidelines accurate and comprehensive, research integrity and publication ethics are extensive disciplines and these guidelines make no claim to be exhaustive, nor should they be taken as legal advice.*