Publication Integrity and Ethics

PIE (п)

General P.I.E. Guidelines

Practice Guidelines

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Introduction

With the established PIE Guidelines, the organisation plans to define and promote the best practices in the ethics of publishing sector; the designated aim is to assist all the parties involved to achieve optimum standards by promoting best practice within the industry. This applies to personnel across the board, whether they are editors, authors, peer-reviewers, publishers or owners of journals. The methodology implemented by the organisation to fulfil its mission is by guiding individuals involved in the publishing sector, encouraging them to register with PIE and to follow the guidelines that define the best practices in this branch of activity.

By asserting highest possible standards of ethical editorial conduct, PIE sets the benchmark in the publishing industry. All individuals who are registered with PIE are expected to defer to the guidelines and formulate complaints against any other party that fail to follow and comply with the code. This in the mutual interest of all parties in order that best practice is followed, maintained and, where possible, improved upon to the respect of all concerned. Individuals are expected, therefore, to assume the role of guardians of the publishing sector; they should summarily take action against breaches in the guidelines or misconduct of individuals related to this branch.

General PIE Guidelines summary

1. Publications and the individuals involved in the publication process should collectively take reasonable steps and actions to ensure that all the reports are informative, fair, balanced and accurate. To this effect, they will not deliberately try to misinform their readers whether they are doing it by ordinance or omission. Whereupon no formal complaints or suspected cases of misconduct have been filed against them, if team members of the publishing sector signal errors and inaccuracies in the published materials, the editorial staff must correct the problem with due and proper prominence. The amendments should be done in an expedient manner.

2. Any unconfirmed report or rumour should be identified as such and news, comments and other types of data should be presented honestly to the readers. In accordance with the agenda set out in the PIE guidelines for code of conduct, this should be done with due respect for the privacy of individuals. The personnel involved should be afforded the opportunity for a balanced response if necessary, with their own views and interpretations listened to and noted in an amicable way. The journalistic investigations must also be conducted in a fair and balanced way; any information that has been obtained by unfair means or by breach of confidence should not be released to the public.

3. Publications are free to present or advocate their own views and opinions within their journals regarding any fact or event; however this must be done in the knowledge that relevant data will not be misrepresented or suppressed. In such cases, the readers will be systematically informed about what constitutes fact, what is deemed opinion and what is fiction. Readers should be advised of potential conflicts of interest and manipulations of data such as image modification.

4. Editors and publishers must balance the public interest and the informative aspect of the publishing materials with the readers' sensibilities. They should fully abstain from publishing articles or images that may cause offence. Offensive and seriously deleterious materials are considered to be the articles or images that place inequitable emphasis on religion, race, colour, gender, disability, illness, age, sexual orientation or place of origin of individuals or groups of individuals. However, if such errors are reported and the PIE's Council issues adjudications on the matter, the culpable journal should immediately correct the editorial errors and publish the adjudication with prominence.

5. Publishers and editors are required to respect personal privacy of individuals. Personal information should only be sought when it is in the public's interest to do so and report on a matter. Whilst undertaking research for their materials, editors and authors should not intrude upon the privacy of individuals whether or not they are public figures.

Public figures knowingly sacrifice part of their privacy but intrusions should only be related to their public activities and not impinge on their personal life. Personal information should only be used for the purpose of which they were collected and any individual who provides such information is entitled to seek anonymity. In the case of a request for anonymity, the publisher will not disclose the identity of the individual.

Duty to follow best practice

1. Publishers and editorial board members who support the PIE membership and the code of conduct should adhere to the guidelines implemented in the document.

2. Members of the editorial staff should follow the recommendations in an equally exemplary fashion, with full support.

3. Individuals working in the publishing industry should be informed about the benefits of PIE membership, together with the principles defined by the organisation, including conflicts of interest between editors, publishers, authors, reviewers and other individuals.

Privacy and copyright protection

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

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.

3. An ethical working environment should be maintained by defining and protecting the policy of the journal.

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

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.

Duties of the publisher

1. All publishers who are adherent to PIE membership should act according to the PIE's guidelines of ethical editorial conduct. They must advise the staff under them to support and follow the guidelines and register with the organisation.

2. Publishers are required to provide support for editors and authors so that they can follow the proper code of conduct, respect privacy, protect intellectual property, copyright and editorial independence.

Responsibilities and duties of the editors

1. According to the ethical principles and the PIE Guidelines for the publishing sector, all editors are responsible for all material published in their journals or other types of media with which they work.

2. The primary duty of an editor is to constantly seek to improve their publication, to ensure that all the published materials are of optimum quality, balanced and grammatically and politically correct.

3. An editor should seek to meet the needs of the readers and of the contributing authors and other individuals directly involved in the production of the journal.

4. Editors must comply with the designated ethical standards and be willing to take action when errors are signalled by publishing corrections, retractions or even apologies if needed. These must be done in an expedient manner to achieve an accepted level of satisfaction to all injured or potentially injured parties.

Editors and authors

1. As direct managers of the editorial team, editors must guarantee quality of the materials accepted for publishing is informative in nature.

2. They should evaluate the texts with emphasis on originality, transparency and relevance and not by personal means.

3. Objectivity is one of the required qualities of an editor. Therefore, if peer-reviews were conducted and editors decide there must be deviations from their recommendations, the changes have to be balanced and justified.

4. Editors should consistently guide the authors and offer them regular training for the purpose of improving the quality of the publication. However, the guidance offered to the authors must be regularly and consistently updated; it should be in accordance with the accepted PIE code of conduct. Authors must also be advised of the correct and acceptable ways in which they can appeal against the editorial decisions.

Authors, editors and peer-reviewers

1. Editors are required to guide the staff serving under them in the methodology for best practice. They should also advise the individual reviewers too, by constantly updating them about the desired level of expectation of their work and ethics.

2. Unless the publication has an open review system, the identity of the reviewers must be protected. While under review, all the materials submitted to peer-reviewers must remain confidential. The guides for peer-reviewers must also be linked to the code of conduct presented in the PIE guidelines.

Dealing with complaints

1. When dealing with complaints from third parties, editors must follow the proper channels of communication as certified by PIE; reasonable expediency in response to complainants should be ensured and immediate action taken to rectify the highlighted errors.

2. Editors have a duty of responsibility to take swift action if they suspect misconduct or ethical uncertainties relating to the publishing sector; this applies whether they appear on published or unpublished papers. Editors must endeavour to ensure proper investigations are conducted in such cases and, if possible, to obtain immediate resolutions to the problems.

3. Whereby editors are required to publish retractions, they must be clearly formulated and easily identifiable to readers. Retractions and corrections should be published as soon as an inaccuracy, error or misleading information is recognised.

Journal owners and publishers

1. Editors' relationship with their publishers or journal owners must be always based on the principles of editorial independence.

2. The decision on what subjects are of interest for the readers and which articles should be published has to be based on quality, accuracy and informative character and not on political, financial or other immediate gains that are in contradiction to the professional ethics.

3. Misleading advertisements must be refused and the policies regarding advertising in relation to the content of the publication must also be declared public.

4. Editors and publishers must take prompt action when they detect conflicts of interest. These conflicts have to be managed professionally whether they are by the authors, editors, publishers, the editorial team or the peer-reviewers.

Complaints referred to PIE

1. Whereby an individual carries concerns about breaching of the ethical editorial guidelines, a complaint may be formulated by submission of PIE's complaint forms. A complaint may be raised by editors, authors, publishers, readers or peer-reviewers.

2. Before asking the sub-committee of the PIE council for a proper investigation and resolution, the problem must, in the first instance, be presented to the author, publisher or the editor in written form.

3. Whereupon the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, he or she may pass the complaint to the overseeing body of the individual to whom they have initially sent the form.

4. If an overseeing body does not exist, complaints must be sent to PIE along with all the relevant correspondence that was exchanged during the first step of the process

5. When the complaint is referred to PIE's council sub-committee, an administrator will verify whether it is formulated against a member of the organisation.

6. It must be authenticated that the complaint has passed through the proper initial steps before being addressed to the council and its sub-committee that will deal directly with it.

7. Furthermore, it will be ascertained if the problem is within the remit of the guidelines provided by PIE.

8. The complainant must provide all the documents and evidence related to the problem, including the correspondence exchanged with the publisher or the editor of the journal.

9. PIE will immediately inform the author/reviewer/editor/publisher that there is a complaint against him or her.

10. There are two possible outcomes when disputing a complaint: 1) the council sub-committee decides that the editor or publisher has dealt with the complaint and the complainant was satisfied. In this case both the complainant and the editor will be notified there is a resolution to the problem. 2) the council sub-committee may decide that there is a need for further investigation, in which case they will advise the complainant and the publisher or editor accordingly.

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