

Ethical Policy for Journals

Updated January 2024

The London Mathematical Society is committed to research integrity, and we strive to ensure that our journals' contribution to the published record is reliable and meets the ethical standards expected by the global mathematical community.

All journals published by the Society are members of, and subscribe to the principles of, the [Committee on Publication Ethics \(COPE\)](#). The journals adhere to the [COPE core practices](#) for good publishing ethics.

The Society has developed the following code of ethics to support editors, authors, and peer reviewers in understanding the standards of behaviour they should follow in carrying out their roles in the journal publishing process.

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1. Diversity and inclusion principles

The Society requires the equal and respectful treatment of all people. The Society will not tolerate discrimination or bias based on, but not limited to, sex, gender identity, disability, age, nationality, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, belief system, neurodiversity, political philosophy, or socioeconomic status.

In addition, any action or behaviour which the Society considers to be bullying and/or harassment is considered unacceptable.

Behaviour contrary to these principles, where it can reasonably be interpreted that the individual is acting in the capacity of an author, reviewer, or member of the Editorial Board of the journal, will be considered misconduct and handled as a violation of our codes of ethics.

2. Author Code of Ethics

2.1. Authorship

2.1.1. Authorship Criteria

The Society considers that an author of a mathematical work is a person who has had significant involvement in its production by performing at least one of the following actions:

- Substantially contributing to the conception or design of the work; or the creation of research results; or the creation of new software used in the work; OR
- Drafting the work or substantially revising it.

All named authors should:

- Agree the authorship of their paper prior to submission.
- Have confidence that each of their co-authors has made a substantial contribution and therefore meets the authorship criteria (above).
- Have confidence in the integrity of the contributions of their co-authors.
- Agree that no one who meets the definition of authorship has been excluded from the paper.
- Approve the submitted version of the article (and any substantially modified version that involves the author's contribution to the study).
- Agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

The [CRediT taxonomy](#) may be helpful as a reference to understand the contributions made by individuals when determining authorship. Optionally, authors may choose to make specific attributions of contribution and responsibility in the acknowledgements of the article.

In the unfortunate scenario in which an author has died or is otherwise unable to give consent, before a paper has been submitted or during peer review, we require consent from a familial or legal proxy of the deceased for the paper to be reviewed for potential publication. Deceased authors are still eligible for co-authorship if they made a significant intellectual contribution to the article.

Prior to submission, all authors should agree the order in which the authors are to be listed on the paper. There is a general convention in mathematics that authors are listed alphabetically by surname, and authors are advised to check the submission guidelines for their chosen journal to see if there are any specific instructions regarding the author order.

A large collective of authors may choose to be represented by a single consortium name in the author list. In these cases, all authors within the consortium must be listed individually at the end of the paper.

In very rare cases, the Society may allow publication under a pseudonym (e.g. Bourbaki), without the requirement for individual authors to be listed in the paper. Publication in this way is at the discretion of the journal Editors and will only be permitted if there are appropriate arrangements for ensuring accountability for the article.

2.1.2. Responsibility of the corresponding author

The corresponding author has specific responsibilities which include:

- Agreeing to and signing the Copyright form, Publishing Agreement or equivalent, on behalf of relevant co-authors and/or arranging for any third-party copyright owners' signature.
- Corresponding with the journal on behalf of co-authors and handling the revisions and re-submission of revised manuscripts up to the acceptance of the manuscripts.
- Arranging for payment of an Article Publication Charge (APC) where one is required or requesting a discretionary waiver if necessary. The affiliation of the corresponding author may be used to determine eligibility for discounted or waived APCs under transformative agreements and author equity initiatives.
- Acting on behalf of all co-authors in responding to queries from all sources post-publication, including questions relating to publishing ethics, reuse of content, or the availability of data, materials, resources etc.

It is understood that different authors may take on the roles of submitting the article, corresponding with the journal prior to publication, and responding to queries after publication. For this policy, the term corresponding author is used to refer to all of these.

2.1.3. Acknowledgements

Individuals who do not meet the criteria for authorship but have contributed to the study in a lesser capacity should be acknowledged, and the nature of their contribution made clear. Contributions in the form of private communications should be referenced (see 2.2).

Acknowledgements should not be used to misleadingly imply a contribution or endorsement by individuals who have not been involved with the work or given an endorsement.

Prior to submission, the Society strongly encourages authors to contact any individuals they acknowledge to make them aware of the paper. Authors should respect an individual's right to ask not to be named in the acknowledgements.

2.1.4. Authorship disputes

If an unresolvable authorship dispute arises, the institution(s) where the work was undertaken should be asked to investigate.

The Society will not arbitrate in cases where there is disagreement over authorship. The Society has the right to remove an article from the review process until a resolution can be agreed or publish an expression of concern notice, linked to the published work, whilst the investigation is ongoing.

2.1.5. Use of Artificial Intelligence, Large Language Models, and mathematical software

Artificial Intelligences (AI), including Large Language Models (LLMs), may not be listed as an author as they are unable to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

Authors who use AI tools during the work must declare this and provide full transparency within the paper. This includes the use of AI tools or software in generating ideas, performing calculations, constructing proofs, drafting text or in any other manner. This should be documented in the article, providing full transparency of the AI tool used (name, version, model, source).

Where general mathematical software or other forms of computing have been used for substantial aspects of the paper, this should also be declared in the article including the name of the software. Where appropriate, the editors may ask for further details to be included (name, version, model, source).

Authors using AI tools or mathematical software to create any part of their work are requested to check for accuracy and are reminded that they, as named authors on the work, take full responsibility for the full content of the work.

2.1.6. Changes in authorship

Any changes to authorship during the publication process must be approved by all authors of the paper prior to the request, and all authors must confirm to the journal that they give their consent to the change.

Authors will be expected to explain the reasons behind the change in authorship. If additional authors are being added to the manuscript, they may be asked to provide evidence of their significant contribution to the work.

The Society reserves the right to refuse requests to change the author list if there is reason to doubt the legitimacy of the request.

2.1.7. Author name changes

The Society supports authors who wish to change their name following publication.

The Society recognises that name changes may be of a sensitive and private nature for various reasons including (but not limited to) alignment with gender identity, or because of marriage, divorce, or religious conversion. We will respect the author's privacy throughout this process, and all interactions will be

handled sensitively and kept confidential. We will not ask for a reason for the change of name or require documentation demonstrating a legal change of name.

Authors should contact the journal team with their name change request. We will update the author's name, pronouns, and any other relevant biographical information. We will then republish the paper and redeliver the updated metadata to indexing services. No public notice of a name change will be applied to the article(s).

Please note, we may ask to verify that the name change request comes from the author whose name is to be changed. Submitting a name change request for an individual without their consent is considered misconduct.

2.1.8. Identity fraud, impersonation, and fictitious authors

The Society considers any attempt to impersonate another person as serious misconduct. The Society has the right to request proof of identity in cases where identity fraud or impersonation is alleged or suspected.

Authors should not ask or allow anyone to submit their article on their behalf. Only the author assigned the role of corresponding author should submit the work for consideration. The Society reserves the right to immediately reject a manuscript that has been found to have been submitted on an author's behalf.

It is unethical to include the names of fictitious authors in the author list, unless the use of a pseudonym has been agreed with the Editors in compliance with 2.1.1.

Authors must not list an affiliation to an institution to which they have no association, or to a fictitious institution.

2.1.9. Authorship for sale and paper mills

Offering to sell authorship of a publication, or buying authorship of a publication from a third party is misconduct.

COPE defines paper mills as “the process by which manufactured manuscripts are submitted to a journal for a fee on behalf of researchers with the purpose of providing an easy publication for them, or to offer authorship for sale”. The use of paper mills is misconduct.

2.2. Referencing

Authors have a responsibility to fully acknowledge the work of others (published or unpublished) that is used in their research and to cite publications that have significantly influenced the direction and course of their study.

Information obtained in private correspondence or conversation should only be used with the explicit permission of the individuals involved. Information obtained whilst providing confidential services, such as

refereeing research articles or grant applications, should not be used without permission of the original author.

All sources for the article must be clearly disclosed and permissions obtained from the original authors (and original publishers if they hold the copyright) for any figures or significant extracts that are to be reproduced or quoted. Collection of such permissions is the responsibility of the authors.

References should be helpful to the reader and advance the article, so authors should ensure they are relevant and easy to find.

Authors should ensure that citations add value and are not unfairly biased towards an individual, group or organisation. Only sources drawn upon in the work should be referenced, and citations should support the points which they reference. The practice of including superfluous references to the authors' own work, or the works of others, merely to promote and inflate citation scores is unethical.

2.3. Originality

For the avoidance of doubt:

- The use of the word 'content' in this section includes mathematical material, as well as text and figures.
- Making the preprint of an article available on a server does not count as prior submission or publication with respect to 2.3.2, 2.3.3, and 2.3.4.

2.3.1. Plagiarism

Submitted articles must be the authors' own work, expressed in their own words. Plagiarism constitutes unethical scientific behaviour and is never acceptable.

Plagiarism ranges from the unreferenced use of ideas or the unacknowledged replication of content from other sources to submission of a complete paper under different authorship.

2.3.2. Duplicate publication

Duplicate publication is the production of multiple papers with the same, or essentially the same, content by the same authors and is viewed as unacceptable. Submitted research articles must be novel and original.

Exceptions apply in the case of articles that expand upon previously published conference proceedings, or brief/rapid communications of results. In all instances, articles must clearly cite their sources and present some new contribution to the published literature, otherwise such articles will be rejected.

Multiple publications arising from a single research project should be clearly identified as such and the primary publication should be referenced. Translations and adaptations for different audiences should be clearly identified, should acknowledge the original source, and should respect relevant copyright

conventions and permission requirements. If in doubt, authors should seek permission from the original publisher before republishing any work.

2.3.3. Content recycling / self-plagiarism

Content recycling occurs when authors publish essentially the same content in more than one of their own publications. We acknowledge there are some instances where repetition may be acceptable or even necessary, and others where it is unacceptable.

Authors should always be clear and cite any re-used content in the manuscript, respecting relevant copyright conventions and permission requirements. Authors should reference sources appropriately, and state in their cover letter if there are sections of the article where essentially the same content has already been published elsewhere.

2.3.4. Parallel submission

It is also unethical to submit the same, or essentially the same, article to a second primary research journal whilst it remains under active consideration by another.

It is the corresponding author's responsibility to ensure the paper is not under consideration by any other journal at the time of submission.

2.4. Research Results

Authors must not fabricate, falsify, or misrepresent data or results, or their degree of rigour or verification. They should strive to be objective, unbiased and truthful in all aspects of their work. The modification of any data or images in a way that misrepresents the findings, or the fabrication of images, data or results is clear misconduct and may lead to a retraction of the publication affected.

Authors should strive to avoid mistakes in research and exercise due diligence in presenting high quality work for publication. Where possible they should conduct an internal review to assess the validity of their work before submission.

2.5. Errors

If a non-trivial error is discovered in a submitted or accepted work, authors should inform the journal team promptly so that the peer-review or publication process can be paused, and appropriate next steps decided on.

If an error is discovered in published work, a correction should generally be published. If a major error has been made and the article is unreliable, the article should be retracted in line with the [COPE retraction guidelines](#). Authors should contact the journal team to discuss the nature of the error and the appropriate course of action.

Corrections and Retractions should be approved by all authors of the original article unless there is a particular reason why this is not possible.

2.6. Appeals

Authors are entitled to appeal against a rejection decision made by a journal where it is clear that the decision was based on a factual error in the review process. Decisions based on editorial judgement of novelty or significance may not be appealed.

To be considered, appeals must directly address the reason(s) given for the initial rejection decision. If reviewer reports were included with the decision letter, then these criticisms must be responded to in the appeal; however, authors should not prepare and submit a revised version of the article with the appeal.

Appeals should be submitted to the journal team, and we must receive a valid appeal within four weeks of the original decision, otherwise it will not be considered. An appeal is considered to be an extension of the peer review process and so authors should not submit their article to another publication whilst an appeal is ongoing.

Appeals that are received late, do not address reviewers' criticisms, are dismissive of the reviewer comments, or contain offensive language will not be considered.

Valid appeals will be sent to a member of the journal's Editorial Board for consideration. Where possible, an independent member of the Editorial Board who was not connected to the original decision will oversee the appeal.

If successful, an appeal may result in the decision being rescinded and a continuation of the peer-review process.

If the appeal is rejected, then the original rejection decision is upheld, and no further consideration of that article is possible.

2.7. Funding declarations

The Society requires all authors to declare any funding they received related to their research. Declaring this information helps authors to meet their funder requirements as well as making their research more discoverable and transparent.

2.8. Conflicts of interest

All authors and co-authors are required to disclose any potential conflicts of interest when submitting their article. Any conflicts of interest should be included in an acknowledgements section.

2.9. International sanctions

The Society's journals welcome contributions from all over the world; however, we will comply with applicable legal sanctions. This means that there may be times where an article cannot be published because an author is a sanctioned individual, is affiliated to a sanctioned institution or is resident in a sanctioned country or territory.

2.10. Breaches of the Author Code of Ethics

Should any author be found to be in breach of this code of ethics, the Society reserves the right to reject/retract or withdraw the paper and inform all interested parties including relevant journal editors and authors, the author's department head and/or institutional office of research misconduct.

3. Reviewer Code of Ethics

The Society's journals may seek quick opinions from reviewers, before deciding if a full review should be performed. For the avoidance of doubt, this ethical policy applies to those reviewers providing quick opinions as well as those performing a full review.

3.1. Anonymity

The Society operates a single-anonymous reviewing policy, in which the identity of reviewers is not disclosed to authors, but the identity of the authors is known by reviewers. Reviewers should not contact authors and identify themselves as a reviewer of their work.

3.2. Objectivity

Reviewers should evaluate each manuscript for its intellectual content without regard to sex, gender identity, disability, age, nationality, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, belief system, neurodiversity, political philosophy, or socioeconomic status.

Reviewers should objectively judge the quality of the research reported and give fair, frank and constructive criticism. Reviewers should refrain from personal criticism of the authors.

Reviewers' judgements should be explained and supported so that authors and editors can understand the basis of the comments and judgements.

3.3. Conflicts of interest

To uphold impartiality, reviewers should consider any potential conflict of interest before agreeing to review and should inform the editor of any potential conflict before accepting an invitation to review.

Examples of potential conflicts include being:

- In direct competition with the authors
- A relative, co-worker, or collaborator of one of the authors

- A recent supervisor or student of one of the authors
- In a position to exploit the authors' work (commercially or otherwise)
- Legally prohibited due to national sanctions
- In a position which prevents the reviewer from giving an objective opinion of the work.

In case of doubt, if an external observer might reasonably decide that a conflict of interest exists, the reviewer should consider that there is indeed a conflict.

Minor conflicts do not disqualify a reviewer from reporting on an article but will be taken into account when considering the reviewers' recommendations. Major conflicts of interest do disqualify reviewers.

3.4. Confidentiality and collaboration

Reviewers should consider a manuscript for review to be a confidential document and must respect the confidentiality of the peer-review process.

Reviewers must not:

- Share any manuscript files that they obtain in their capacity as a reviewer.
- Discuss, disclose, or otherwise gain any competitive advantage from information or ideas that they could only obtain in their capacity as a reviewer.
- Disclose that they have reviewed an article, unless it has since been published in a peer-reviewed journal. A reviewer may, however, disclose to the editor that they have previously reviewed the same article at another journal.

Reviewers are expected to perform the review of the work themselves. If a reviewer wishes to consult or collaborate with another person in performing the review, they should inform the Editor first.

Artificial Intelligences (AI), including Large Language Models (LLMs), must not be used to write peer review reports. It is misconduct to upload a manuscript for review to an AI tool.

Submitting a review in the name of another person (real or fictional) is misconduct.

3.5. Timeliness

Reviewers should inform the journal if they are unable to review a paper or can only do so with some delay. Reviewers should not delay the peer review process unnecessarily, either deliberately or inadvertently.

3.6. Citations

Reviewers are expected to point out relevant work that has not been cited, and use citations to explain where elements of the work have been previously reported. When writing a report, reviewers should justify any literature references suggested for inclusion in the work.

Citations should add value, and should not be biased towards an individual, group or organisation. The practice of including superfluous references, including to the reviewer's own work, to promote and inflate citation scores is unethical.

The Society reserves the right to:

- Challenge excessive citation suggestions, especially to the reviewer's own work.
- Exclude citation suggestions from reports if these are considered to be potential acts of citation manipulation, and/or to protect reviewers' anonymity.

3.7. Reviewer suspects author misconduct

Reviewers should report any suspicions of misconduct to the journal staff for investigation. This includes, but is not limited to, suspicions of:

- Plagiarism
- Duplicate publication
- Parallel submission
- Data fabrication / falsification
- Incorrect authorship
- Author conflict of interest
- Unethical research practices
- Content that could be considered offensive.

3.8. Breaches of the Reviewer Code of Ethics

Should any reviewer be found to be in breach of this code of ethics, the Society reserves the right to cease working with that reviewer and inform interested parties, including relevant journal editors and authors, the reviewer's department head and/or institutional office of research misconduct. Even if a reviewer is found to have behaved unethically, the Society will not disclose the identity of the reviewer to the authors.

4. Editorial Board Code of Ethics

4.1. Editorial independence

The Editors of a peer-reviewed journal have full authority over the editorial decisions for the journal.

The Society does not interfere in the evaluation, selection, or editing of individual articles either directly or by creating an environment that strongly influences decisions.

Editorial decisions are made based on the validity of the work and its importance to the journal's readers, not on the commercial implications for the journal.

4.2. Objectivity

Editors should handle any submitted manuscript based on its intellectual content without regard to sex, gender identity, disability, age, nationality, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, belief system, neurodiversity, political philosophy, or socioeconomic status.

4.3. Conflicts of interest

To uphold impartiality, editors should consider any potential conflict of interest before handling a submission. If an editor judges that they may have a conflict of interest, they should inform an independent member of the journal team (which might be the Section Editor, Managing Editor, or journal staff).

Examples of potential conflicts include being:

- In direct competition with the authors
- A relative, co-worker, or collaborator with one of the authors
- A recent supervisor or student of one of the authors
- In a position to exploit the authors' work (commercially or otherwise)
- Legally prohibited due to national sanctions
- In a position which prevents the editor from handling the work objectively.

In case of doubt, if an external observer might reasonably decide that a conflict of interest exists, the editor should consider that there is indeed a conflict.

If an editor has a conflict of interest, the manuscript will be handled by an alternative editor.

4.4. Confidentiality

Editors should consider a submitted manuscript to be a confidential document and must respect the confidentiality of the peer-review process.

Outside the normal editorial process for a journal, editors must not:

- Share any manuscript files that they obtain in their capacity as an editor.
- Discuss, disclose, or otherwise gain any competitive advantage from information or ideas that they could only obtain in their capacity as an editor.
- Disclose that an article was considered by a journal, unless it has since been published in that journal.

4.5. Timeliness

Editors should inform the journal so that cover can be put in place if they are unable to do their editorial work for a substantial period of time. Editors should not unreasonably and unnecessarily delay the peer review process whether inadvertently or deliberately.

4.6. Submissions from Editors

Some of the Society's journals allow members of the Editorial Board to submit articles.

Where a member of the Editorial Board has submitted a manuscript to the journal, the peer review process should be handled entirely independently of that editor - they must not know who reviewers are and must have no influence on the publication decision.

Editors handling a submission from one of their fellow editorial board members should evaluate the submission objectively and without any special treatment.

The editor will declare their membership of the editorial board in the acknowledgements section for any article they publish in the journal.

4.7. Breaches of the Editorial Board Code of Ethics

Should any member of the Editorial Board (including a Managing Editor or Editor-in-Chief) be found to be in breach of this code of ethics, they may be dismissed from the Editorial Board by the owner(s) of the journal. In extreme cases, the Society reserves the right to inform the editor's department head and/or institutional office of research misconduct.

5. Allegations of misconduct

5.1. How the Society handles allegations of misconduct

The Society takes all allegations of misconduct seriously and we follow the [COPE guidelines](#) and the procedures set out in the [COPE flowcharts](#) when handling cases of suspected misconduct or retractions. We follow the [COPE guidelines on responding to whistle-blowers](#), which includes protecting the anonymity of anyone making an allegation of misconduct.

Allegations of misconduct will normally be handled by a member of the Society's publications staff under the oversight of the Publications Secretary, and in conjunction with one or more members of the Editorial Board of the relevant journal. In some instances, we may escalate an investigation to the author's institution(s) for further support or information.

Individuals who are the subject of an allegation of ethical misconduct will be informed and will be given time to respond to the allegation as part of the investigation before any final decision is made. All relevant parties will be informed of the outcome of the investigation.

Allegations of misconduct can be sensitive, complex and can take time to investigate. We endeavour to resolve all investigations as quickly as possible but are unable to guarantee timescales for any individual investigation to be resolved.

The Society reserves the right to:

- Reject a submitted work, or rescind the acceptance of an unpublished article, if it is determined that a breach of ethics has occurred.
- Retract a published article if it meets the [COPE criteria for retractions](#).
- Publish an Expression of Concern notice for a published article which is the subject of an ongoing investigation when unable to resolve a case swiftly or where the outcome of the investigation is inconclusive.
- Contact an author's institution to investigate an allegation.
- Inform the department head and/or institutional office of research misconduct of an individual judged to have committed a breach of ethics.

5.2. How to make an allegation of misconduct

If you suspect or have information about misconduct related to an article submitted to or published in one of the Society's journals, please notify the publication staff at the journal email address. This can be found on the journal's contact page. Please provide as much information as you can about the complaint.

The Society requests that allegations of misconduct are reported to the journal staff directly and not by posting comments on blogs, social media, or other third-party websites. The Society cannot guarantee that allegations will be investigated if they are not submitted to the journal team.

Appeals about publication decisions which do not involve an allegation of ethical misconduct will be handled as part of our Appeals process.

5.3. How to make a complaint about a journal, its staff, or the Society

To make a complaint, please contact publications.secretary@lms.ac.uk clearly outlining the details of the complaint. The Society takes all complaints seriously and all complainants will receive a response detailing what has been investigated and any action that has been taken as a result.

Wherever possible, depending on the nature of the complaint, complaints will be investigated by an independent, senior member of the Society's staff.

6. Journals which adhere to this policy

This policy applies to the following publications of the London Mathematical Society:

- [*Bulletin of the London Mathematical Society*](#)
- [*Journal of the London Mathematical Society*](#)
- [*Journal of Topology*](#)
- [*Proceedings of the London Mathematical Society*](#)
- [*Transactions of the London Mathematical Society*](#)

This policy is also used by the following journals published by the London Mathematical Society on behalf of other organisations.

- [*Compositio Mathematica*](#) (published on behalf of the Foundation Compositio Mathematica*)
- [*Mathematika*](#) (published on behalf of University College London)
- [*Moduli*](#) (published on behalf of the Foundation Compositio Mathematica*)

*The Foundation Compositio Mathematica also acknowledges the following policies, alongside the LMS Ethical Policy for Journals:

- [Cambridge Code of Ethics Policy](#)
- [Cambridge University Press Research Publishing Ethics Guidelines](#)