



## GUIDELINES FOR EDITORS CONCERNING ETHICAL ISSUES

### INTRODUCTION

The responsibilities of an editor of a journal include the scrutinizing and reviewing of articles submitted for publication. Although in general this process is quite upfront, in some cases, ethical issues may arise either during the scrutinizing and reviewing process or even after publication on receipt of complaints.

The ethical problems that may be encountered are the following:

- Research results not original as claimed by author
- Plagiarism
- Contentions about authorship of submissions
- Double submission

### Research results not original as claimed by author

Authorship of research results is usually a comprehensible enquiry of information. In case of any doubt as to the originality of reported research results, investigations of the authors and/or their affiliations should be made. The editors are capable of finding out the research being conducted by different authors and their affiliations. The editors are in a position to verify the authenticity of research claims. Editors are free to solicit guidance from experts in the particular area of research.

### Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the use of materials from another work (normally the work of other author(s)) without permission, credit, or acknowledgment. Plagiarism can vary from literal copying to paraphrasing the work of another. In judging whether an author has plagiarized, the following definitions may be instructive:

#### *Literal copying*

Reproducing a report, in totality or in parts, without due permission and acknowledgment of the original source can be defined as literal copying. Literal copying is evident plagiarism and can easily be detected.

#### *Substantial copying*

Substantial copying refers to the reproduction of a substantial part of a reported work without due permission and acknowledgment of the original source. 'Substantial' relates to both the quantity as well as the quality of the copied material.

Quality denotes the comparative worth of the copied material in proportion to the complete work. Even if the crux of a work has been reproduced, it may be considered as a case of plagiarism. For example, a relatively short extract from a piece of music may be instantly recognizable and may constitute a substantial part.



In addition to judging the quantity and quality of the copied content, you should consider the following question: Has the author benefited from the skill and judgment of the original author? The degree to which the answer to this question is “yes” will indicate whether substantial copying has taken place.

### *Paraphrasing*

Copying may take place without reproducing the exact words used in the original work. This type of copying is known as paraphrasing, and it can be the most difficult type of plagiarism to detect.

To decide whether unacceptable paraphrasing has occurred, a test similar to that for substantial copying can be adopted. The quantity and quality of what has been taken needs to be properly assessed and also it is important to observe whether the second author has benefited from the reports of the original author. If it is evident that the second author has taken a substantial part of the original work and used it to present a second work, even if expressed in altered words, without permission or acknowledgment, then this can be considered to be a case of plagiarism.

## **Allegations about authorship of contributions**

Authorship should be credited as per involvement in a manuscript. It is not fair to include as authors those who have minimal or no contribution to a research document.

The term “Authorship” is not an evidently defined notion. To be considered an “author” one must be responsible for a specific part of the research (that is not minimal) or the preparation of the manuscript. In other words, one must have a noteworthy involvement in the conceptualization, design, execution, or interpretation and analysis of the results in the reported study. All authors must be aware of the submission of the manuscript to ADBU Journals and must have approved the final form of the submission. Essentially, an author has to be prepared to take responsibility of publicly defending the work.

An inconsequential contribution would not be appropriate to give the status of ‘author’. Small contributions to a work should be recognized by acknowledging such persons at the end of the manuscript in the “Acknowledgement” subsection.

The corresponding author submitting an article should be able to identify all co-authors and any other contributors (and to obtain consent from them for the publication of the article). The editors should, where necessary, seek clarification from authors and contributors as to the exact contribution in relation to the article and the research. The editor should try their level best to ensure those who satisfy the test of authorship are given credit as co-authors.

## **Duplicate submission**

Manuscripts submitted for publication must be original and not submitted to any other journals simultaneously. Occasionally, authors are found to ignore this obligation. The same paper or papers based on the same research with slightly modified presentation is submitted to multiple journals. Similar to plagiarism, duplicate submission may be of different forms: literal duplication, partial but substantial duplication or



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duplication through paraphrasing. ADBU journals discourage the publication of numerous papers based on the same research.

Literal duplication should be easier to identify and rectify. However, paraphrasing or multiple reports from the same research are considerably more difficult to detect. This is especially when an author presents his or her own research in two or more articles from different perspectives or on different aspects of the research. In such cases, an objective judgment of whether duplicate submission has taken place will have to be made, based on the Editor's knowledge of that particular domain of research. In complex cases, Editors have the freedom to consult other specialists in that field of research.

English translations of papers already published in a different language will not be published by ADBU journals if this comes to the knowledge of the Editors. If the Editor(s) feel it to be appropriate to publish some papers of this type for benefit of the English readership, they may agree to publish the paper. However this will be considered only if the guidelines laid by ADBU JOURNALS for this are followed:

- Complete information has been provided to the editor about all previous publications of the paper in any language.
- The English-language version of the paper should contain a footnote on the title page about the prior publication.
- The publication of the paper should not involve copyright issues with the previous publisher and all permission related to this will have to be taken prior to publication in ADBU JOURNALS.

### HOW TO DEAL WITH ISSUES WHEN THEY ARISE

When doubts or accusations arise regarding any of these issues, Editors are advised to follow the guidelines listed below:

#### General guidelines:

All issues arising after submission of a manuscript should be addressed prior to its publication. Owing to the significance of the core scientific concerns to any such dispute, it is crucial that the Editor play the primary role and be the focal point for all communications with complainants, authors, reviewers and the editors of other journals (as the case may be). The editor's investigation and deliberation will be crucial for the resolution of the dispute.

If the editor suspects any ethics violation taking place in relation to an article submitted to ADBU JOURNALS, or he or she receive an allegation concerning a submitted article, the following steps need to be followed:

1. It is essential that the editor raise the issue with the corresponding author or if necessary with a specific co-author whose actions are under question. In certain cases all the co-authors of the article in question may need to be contacted. The editor should seek an explanation and, where necessary, the submission of evidence supporting the author(s) explanation.

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2. The editor should also seek an explanation from and the opinions of any complainant and request for evidence supporting that explanation.

3. The editor should gather the complainant's opinions on any explanation and evidence provided by the author(s). The views of the author(s) on the evidence provided by the complainant should also be taken. Investigations need to be continued till the editor is convinced that no misconduct has taken place.

4. If the editor is not satisfied with the explanations given by both author(s) and complainant, he or she consult a professional body with an investigative mission e.g. the Committee on Publication Ethics (<http://publicationethics.org/>).

During an investigation, editor(s) need to take great care to act justly and factually and should avoid defaming any author (or complainant) in any way as this could give rise to legal liabilities, including damage claims. In order to avoid defamation claims by authors, editors should go through the following guidelines during investigation:

- Make inquiries of an author's institution which should clearly state the facts and the allegation without impulsive judgment of the author's accountability.
- Information needs to be gathered with care while letting out as little information as possible about the suspicion or accusation.

It should be noted that an editor's role is not to make a final definitive finding of whether a violation has occurred. He or she need only investigate to a level to satisfactorily decide after having made reasonable and diligent inquiries, whether there is or is not, *prima facie*, a concern.

### **Practical consequences of outcomes**

If it is decided that, *prima facie*, there is no matter of concern, the normal publication process may be continued.

If the editor(s) decide that there has been unethical practice, the paper may be rejected. If however unethical practice is discovered after publication of the article ADBU JOURNALS editorial board will contemplate whether retraction/removal of the article is necessary. Alternatives to retraction include notes of concern, corrigendum, editorial statements, letters to the editor, etc.

### **Legal consequences of outcomes**

Plagiarism can infringe upon copyright as also moral rights. The right of an author of a work to be identified as such, as well as the right of an author to prevent changes to his or her work that are of a disparaging nature, can be considered to be moral rights.

In the case allegations about authorship of contributions, infringement of the moral rights may take place. It may also be considered as an infringement of a person's moral right not to have a work credited to him or her when he or she is not an author.



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Ethical misconduct will be a breach of contract by the author, who will have disregarded the terms of his or her publishing agreement with the publisher, Assam Don Bosco University (ADBU) or the relevant instructions to authors.

The Editorial Board of ADBU journals will keep the publisher (ADBU) abreast of any suspected ethical violations. If necessary, especially in cases with possibility of a legal liability, the publisher may wish to seek legal advice internally or externally. Assam Don Bosco University will always have the right to take over the charge of an investigation from an editor if deemed necessary.

### OTHER JOURNALS/PUBLICATIONS

If a paper has been published in another journal or other publication and it seems that this paper (1) plagiarizes a paper already published in ADBU journals, (2) contains research results that are not original to its author but are original to the author of a paper published in ADBU journals or (3) has already been published in whole or in part in ADBU journals, the following procedure will be adopted:

- The editor of the publication in which the concerned paper appears will be contacted seeking detailed explanation. It is presumed that the editor of that publication will take steps similar to those recommended by these guidelines with respect to ADBU publications.
- If the editor of the journal where the offending paper is published fails to investigate the matter properly, ADBU journals will investigate the suspicion or allegation by initially contacting the author(s) of the concerned publication for an explanation, and continuing the investigation to an acceptable conclusion.

### PLAGIARISM DETECTION

An honest peer-review process is crucial for scientific publishing. As part of ADBU JOURNALS's commitment to protecting the integrity of the scholarly record, ADBU journals feels obliged to support the scientific community in all aspects of research and publishing ethics.

Currently ADBU journals are using Grammarly Plagiarism Checker.



### Article withdrawal

ADBU understands the significance of the reliability and totality of the scholarly record to researchers and librarians and assigns the maximum importance to preserving faith in its electronic archive.

### ADBU Journals' policy

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The editor(s) of ADBU journals is/are solely and independently responsible for deciding which articles submitted to the journal shall be published. In taking this decision the editor acts as per the policies of the journal's editorial board and reserved by such legal requirements in force regarding defamation, copyright infringement and plagiarism. Articles that have been published in ADBU JOURNALS shall remain existent, exact and unaltered as far as possible. However, circumstances may compel the retraction or removal of a published article. Such actions must not be taken up except under unique circumstances. In all cases, the ADBU archives at the ADBU Library will retain all article versions, including retracted or otherwise removed articles.

This policy has been put together to address various concerns and was developed looking into the best practices adopted by the scholarly and library communities. As criteria evolve and transform, ADBU will reexamine this policy document and invite inputs of scholarly and library communities. ADBU believe these issues require international standards and we will try its level best to maintain such standards.

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## Article withdrawal

Articles in Press representing previous versions of articles and submissions with errors, or accidentally submitted in duplicate are eligible for withdrawal. The articles considered for withdrawal may represent infringements of ethical codes like multiple submission, false claims of authorship, plagiarism, and use of falsified data, etc. Articles in Press (articles that have been accepted for publication but which have not been formally published/made available online) that include errors, or are discovered to be accidental duplicates of other published article(s), or are determined to violate ADBU journals publishing ethics guidelines in the view of the editors (such as multiple submission, false claims of authorship, plagiarism, and use of falsified data, etc.), may be "Withdrawn" from the ADBU journals' website. Withdrawn means that the article (in both html and PDF format) is removed and replaced with a html page and PDF simply stating that the article has been withdrawn according to the ADBU Journal Policy on Article in Press Withdrawal with a hyperlink to the current policy document.

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## Article retraction

Article retraction can be initiated in case of infringements of professional ethical codes, like multiple submission, false claims of authorship, plagiarism, and use of falsified data, etc. Occasionally a retraction will be used to correct errors in submission or publication. The retraction of an article by its authors or the editor of a journal under the advice of the scholarly community has been prevalent for long and the standards for dealing with retractions have been developed by a number of library and scholarly bodies, and this best practice is adopted for article retraction by ADBU journals as well:

- A retraction note titled "Retraction: [article title]" signed by the authors and/or the editor is published in the paginated part of a subsequent issue of the journal and listed in the contents list.
- In the electronic version, a link is made to the original article.

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- The online article is preceded by a screen containing the retraction note. It is to this screen that the link resolves; the reader can then proceed to the article itself.
- The original article is retained unchanged save for a watermark on the .pdf indicating on each page that it is "retracted."
- The HTML version of the document is removed.

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### Article removal: legal limitations

It may sometimes be necessary to remove an article from the online database of ADBU JOURNALS. However, such incidences will occur only when the article is evidently offensive, or trespasses others' legal rights, or where the article is, or the editorial board of ADBU JOURNALS have good reason to expect it will be, the subject of a court order, or where the article, if acted upon, might pose a serious health threat. In these circumstances, while the metadata (Title and Authors) will be retained, the text will be replaced with a screen indicating the article has been removed for legal issues.

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### Article replacement

The authors of an article that has been tagged with a possibility of posing serious health threat may wish to retract the unsound original and replace it with a corrected version. In these circumstances the procedures for retraction will be followed with the difference that the database retraction notice will publish a link to the corrected re-published article.