ETHICAL ISSUES IN PUBLISHING RESEARCH PAPERS

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

FOR FURTHER INQUIRIES

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SUMMARY OF THE PUBLICATION AND ETHICAL POLICIES OF *THE ACADEMIC TIMES JOURNAL*

This document serves as a comprehensive guide for researchers and authors, addressing key ethical concerns in scholarly publishing, including plagiarism, authorship, data integrity, conflicts of interest, peer review ethics, human and animal research approval, and retraction policies.

Plagiarism, including direct copying, paraphrasing without citation, and self-plagiarism, is strictly prohibited. Authors are required to use plagiarism detection tools and adhere to a similarity threshold of 15% or less, excluding references. The use of AI-generated content is permitted only for assistance, provided its usage is properly disclosed.

Additionally, translating someone else's work without citation and reproducing data or figures without permission are considered unethical practices. Authorship criteria align with the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) guidelines, ensuring that only individuals who have made substantial intellectual contributions are credited. Unethical practices such as gift and ghost authorship are strictly discouraged. Changes to authorship after submission require formal approval from all involved parties. The corresponding author bears the responsibility of manuscript submission, communication with the journal, and ensuring co-author agreement on the final version.

Maintaining data integrity is crucial, and any form of data falsification or selective reporting is considered scientific misconduct. Researchers are required to report all findings transparently, including negative or unexpected results. Reusing previous datasets is permitted only if properly cited and used to derive new insights.

Conflicts of interest (COI) and funding disclosures are mandatory to ensure transparency. Any personal, financial, or professional relationships that may influence the research must be disclosed. Failure to do so may result in retraction or editorial notices regarding undeclared conflicts.

Ethical publication practices prohibit simultaneous submissions to multiple journals, and any detected breach may lead to rejection or a ban from future submissions. Authors are encouraged to report errors in published works for prompt correction or retraction. Additionally, conference papers may be considered for journal publication if they are significantly expanded with new research findings.

Research involving human participants or animals requires prior ethical approval from an Institutional Review Board (IRB) or Ethics Committee. Adherence to international ethical guidelines, such as the Helsinki Declaration and the Belmont Report, is mandatory. Researchers must obtain informed consent from participants, ensure confidentiality, and avoid collecting data from private sources without permission.

Retracted papers typically result from ethical violations, including plagiarism, data fabrication, and undisclosed conflicts of interest. Republishing retracted studies is permitted only if the issues were minor and fully disclosed in the new version. However, retracted studies due to misconduct are permanently disqualified from re-publication.

By adhering to these ethical standards, researchers and authors contribute to the credibility and reliability of academic literature. Ethical compliance is essential for fostering a trustworthy research environment and ensuring that published findings serve as valuable contributions to the global knowledge base.

The following presents key questions you may ask as an author seeking publication in *The Academic Times Journal*, along with their corresponding answers.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

PLAGIARISM & ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Q1)   What constitutes plagiarism in research publication?

♦ Plagiarism occurs when an author presents someone else's work, ideas, or text as their own **without proper citation**. This includes:

✔ Copying text verbatim without quotation marks or citation.

✔ Paraphrasing without proper acknowledgment.

✔ Using unpublished data or ideas from others without permission.

Q2)   What is self-plagiarism, and is it allowed?

♦ **Self-plagiarism (text recycling)** happens when an author reuses significant portions of their own previously published work **without proper citation**.

✔ **Acceptable:** Expanding on previous work with proper citation.

✘ **Unacceptable:** Republishing the same data in multiple papers as "new" research.

Q3)   How can I check for plagiarism before submission?

♦ Use plagiarism detection tools like **Turnitin, iThenticate, or Grammarly Premium** to ensure originality before submission.

Q4)   Can I use AI-generated text in my research paper?

✔ **Allowed:** If AI tools are used **for assistance** and are properly disclosed.

✘ **Unethical:** If AI is used to **generate entire sections** of the paper without author contribution or review.

Q5: How much text similarity is considered plagiarism?

♦ **T.A.T Journal allows ≤ 15% similarity**, excluding references. If the similarity is higher, the paper might be rejected for plagiarism.

Q6: How can I avoid plagiarism?

A: Follow these best practices:

- **Cite all sources properly** using a standard referencing style (APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.).
- **Use quotation marks** for direct quotes and provide citations.
- **Paraphrase correctly** without altering the original meaning and provide attribution.
- **Check your work using plagiarism detection software** before submission.

Q7: Is it plagiarism if I translate someone else's work into another language?

A: Yes. Translating and presenting someone else's work as your own **without proper attribution** is still plagiarism.

Q8: Can plagiarism occur in data and figures?

A: Yes. Using another researcher's data, graphs, tables, or figures **without citation** is plagiarism. If modifying or adapting figures, authors must state how they were changed and cite the source.

AUTHORSHIP & CONTRIBUTOR ROLES

Q9)   Who qualifies as an author of a research paper?

⬥ The **ICMJE (International Committee of Medical Journal Editors) guidelines** state that an author must:

✔ Contribute **significantly** to the conception, design, execution, or analysis of the research.

✔ Participate in drafting, revising, and final approval of the manuscript.

✔ Agree to be accountable for the work.

Q10   Can I add or remove an author after submission?

⬥ Changes in authorship must be **justified** and **approved by all authors**. The Academic Times Journal requires:

✔ A signed statement from **all authors** agreeing to the change.

✔ A detailed reason for the addition or removal.

Q11   What is "gift" or "ghost" authorship, and why is it unethical?

✘ **Gift authorship** – Adding a person as an author who made little or no contribution (e.g., a supervisor or funder without direct involvement).

✘ **Ghost authorship** – When a significant contributor is **not credited**, often due to external writing services.

Q12   Can I add my supervisor as an author if they didn't contribute much?

✘ No. Authorship should be based on **significant intellectual contributions**. If a supervisor only provided **guidance but did not contribute to writing, analysis, or methodology**, they should be acknowledged—not listed as an author.

Q13   What is a "corresponding author" and what are their responsibilities?

⬥ The **corresponding author** is responsible for:

✔ Submitting the manuscript.

✔ Handling reviewer feedback.

✔ Ensuring all authors approve the final version.

Q14) Can a research assistant be listed as an author?

✔ Yes, but only if they contributed **intellectually** (e.g., analysis, writing, conceptualization). Otherwise, they should be acknowledged.

DATA INTEGRITY & FABRICATION

Q15) Can I modify or exclude data to improve results?

✖ **No.** Manipulating, fabricating, or omitting data to support a hypothesis is considered **scientific misconduct**.

✔ All collected data should be reported **honestly**, including unexpected or negative results.

Q16: What is data falsification, and what are the consequences?

♦ **Data falsification** involves **manipulating research results** (e.g., altering images, modifying figures, or cherry-picking data).

⚖ Consequences include:

- **Retraction of publication**
- **Legal or disciplinary actions**

Q17: Is it ethical to reuse my previous dataset for a new paper?

✔ **Allowed:** If the dataset is cited properly and the research provides **new insights** beyond the original study.

✖ **Not Allowed:** If the dataset is merely **repackaged** without adding novel contributions.

Q18: Can I selectively report only significant results?

✖ No. **Cherry-picking results** misleads readers. Ethical research requires full transparency, including negative or inconclusive findings.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST (COI) & FUNDING DISCLOSURE

Q19) What is a conflict of interest (COI) in research publication?

♛ A **COI occurs when an author has financial, personal, or professional interests** that could influence their research.

✓ Examples: Funding from companies related to the research, personal relationships with reviewers, or competing interests.

Q20   How should I disclose funding sources?

♛ Clearly state **who funded the research** in the **Acknowledgments or Disclosure section** of the paper.

✓ Example: *"This research was funded by [Organization], Grant No. [XXX]."*

Q21   What happens if I fail to disclose a conflict of interest?

🏛 If discovered, your paper **may be retracted** or marked with an **editorial notice** about undeclared COI.

PEER REVIEW & PUBLICATION ETHICS

Q22) Can I submit my paper to multiple journals at the same time?

✗ **No.** Simultaneous submission is considered **unethical** because journals invest time and resources in peer review.

✓ Always **wait for a decision** from one journal before submitting elsewhere.

Q23) What should I do if I find errors in my published paper?

✓ Notify the journal **immediately** for a correction or retraction, depending on the severity of the error.

Q24) Can I publish a conference paper as a journal article?

✓ Yes, **if the journal allows it**, and the article is **substantially expanded** with new findings.

HUMAN & ANIMAL ETHICS APPROVAL

25)   Do I need ethical approval for my research?

✓ If your research involves **human participants, medical interventions, or animals**, you must obtain ethical clearance **before conducting the study**.

✓ Ethical approval should come from an Institutional Review Board (**IRB**) or Ethics Committee.

26)   What ethical guidelines should I follow for human research?

� Follow internationally accepted principles such as:

✓ **Helsinki Declaration** (for biomedical research)

✓ **Belmont Report** (for human subject protection)

27)   How do I ensure confidentiality in human subject research?

✓ Use **informed consent** with clear details on data protection.

✓ Avoid using **personal identifiers** in publications.

28)   Can I collect data from human participants without informed consent?

✗ No. **Informed consent** is mandatory unless:
✓ The study uses **anonymized public data**.
✓ The ethics committee has **waived consent** for valid reasons (e.g., minimal risk studies).

29)   Can I use data from social media for research?

✓ **Allowed:** If the data is **publicly available** and does not identify individuals.

✗ **Not Allowed:** If private accounts or user identities are exposed **without consent**.

RETRACTION & MISCONDUCT HANDLING

Q30) What can cause The Academic Times Journal to retract my paper?

⚕ Common reasons for retraction:

✖ **Plagiarism or data fabrication**

✖ **Ethical violations (e.g., lack of consent, undisclosed COI)**

✖ **Breaches of the Academic Times Journal*'s* defamation policy, violations of intellectual property rights, failure to adhere to the scientific rigor required for your study, and failure to comply with the *Academic Times* research format.**

Q31) Can I republish my study in another journal after retraction?

✔ Only if the **retraction was due to minor errors**, and the new version **fully discloses** previous issues.

✖ **Not allowed** if the retraction was due to misconduct.

Authors are expected to adhere to these ethical guidelines to maintain scholarly excellence and uphold the integrity of research.