



CODE OF ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

According to the ethical principles of *COPE - Code of Conduct for Journal Editors*, the **general duties and responsibilities** for **ASHUES editors** consists in:

1. To be accountable for everything published in ASHUES journal. This means the editors should:

- strive to meet the needs of readers and authors;
- strive to constantly improve ASHUES journal;
- to assure the quality of the material they publish;
- champion freedom of expression;
- maintain the integrity of the academic record;
- preclude business needs from compromising intellectual and ethical standards;
- always be willing to publish corrections, clarifications, retractions and apologies when needed.

Best practice for ASHUES editors would include:

- actively seeking the views of authors, readers, reviewers and editorial board members about ways of improving ASHUES journal's processes
- encouraging and being aware of research into peer review and publishing and reassessing the ASHUES journal's processes in the light of new findings
- supporting initiatives designed to reduce research and publication misconduct
- supporting initiatives to educate researchers about publication ethics
- assessing the effects of ASHUES journal policies on author and reviewer behaviour and revising policies, as required, to encourage responsible behaviour and discourage misconduct

2. Relations with readers

Best practice for ASHUES editors would include:

- ensuring that all published reports and reviews of research have been reviewed by suitably qualified reviewers
- ensuring that non-peer-reviewed sections of their journal are clearly identified
- adopting processes that encourage accuracy, completeness and clarity of research reporting, including technical editing and the use of appropriate guidelines and checklists
- considering developing a transparency policy to encourage maximum disclosure about the provenance of non-research articles
- adopting authorship or contributorship systems that promote good practice
- informing readers about steps taken to ensure that submissions from members of the ASHUES journal's staff or editorial board receive an objective and unbiased evaluation

3. Relations with authors

- ASHUES editors' decisions to accept or reject a paper for publication should be based on the paper's importance, originality and clarity, and the study's validity and its relevance to the remit of the ASHUES journal.
- ASHUES editors shall not reverse decisions to accept submissions, unless serious problems are identified with the submission.
- New ASHUES editors shall not overturn decisions to publish submissions made by the previous ASHUES editor, unless serious problems are identified.
- A description of peer review processes shall be published and ASHUES editors shall be ready to justify any important deviation from the described processes.
- ASHUES editors shall publish guidance to authors on everything that is expected of them.
- ASHUES editors shall provide guidance about criteria for authorship and/or who shall be listed as a contributor following the standards within the relevant field.

Best practice for ASHUES editors would include:

- reviewing author instructions regularly and providing links to relevant guidelines
- publishing relevant competing interests for all contributors and publishing corrections if competing interests are revealed after publication
- ensuring that appropriate reviewers are selected for submissions
- respecting requests from authors that an individual shall not review their submission, if these are well-reasoned and practicable
- publishing submission and acceptance dates for article.

4. Relations with reviewers

- ASHUES editors shall provide guidance to reviewers on everything that is expected of them, including the need to handle submitted material in confidence.
- ASHUES editors shall require reviewers to disclose any potential competing interests before agreeing to review a submission.
- ASHUES editors shall have systems to ensure that peer reviewers' identities are protected unless they use an open review system that is declared to authors and reviewers.

Best practice for ASHUES editors would include:

- encouraging reviewers to comment on ethical questions and possible research and publication misconduct raised by submissions
- encouraging reviewers to comment on the originality of submissions and to be alert to redundant publication and plagiarism
- considering providing reviewers with tools to detect related publications (e.g. links to cited references and bibliographic searches)
- sending reviewers' comments to authors in their entirety unless they contain offensive or libellous remarks
- seeking to acknowledge the contribution of reviewers to the journal
- encouraging academic institutions to recognise peer review activities as part of the scholarly process



- monitoring the performance of peer reviewers and taking steps to ensure this is of high standard
- developing and maintaining a database of suitable reviewers and updating this on the basis of reviewer performance
- ceasing to use reviewers who consistently produce discourteous, poor quality or late reviews
- ensuring that the reviewer database reflects the community of their journal and adding new reviewers as needed
- using a wide range of sources (not just personal contacts) to identify potential new reviewers (e.g. author suggestions, bibliographic databases)

5. Relations with editorial board members

ASHUES Editors shall provide new editorial board members with guidelines on everything that is expected of them and should keep existing members updated on new policies and developments.

Best practice for ASHUES editors would include:

- having policies in place for handling submissions from editorial board members to ensure unbiased review
- identifying suitably qualified editorial board members who can actively contribute to the development and good management of the journal
- regularly reviewing the composition of the editorial board
- providing clear guidance to editorial board members about their expected functions and duties, which might include:
 - acting as ambassadors for the journal
 - supporting and promoting the journal
 - seeking out the best authors and best work (e.g. from meeting abstracts) and actively encouraging submissions
 - reviewing submissions to the journal
 - accepting commissions to write editorials, reviews and commentaries on papers in their speciality area
 - attending and contributing to editorial board meetings
- consulting editorial board members periodically (e.g. once a year) to gauge their opinions about the running of the journal, informing them of any changes to journal policies and identifying future challenge

6. Relations with ASHUES Journal publisher

- the relationship of ASHUES editors to Romania de Maine Publishing House, as publisher, is complex but shall be based firmly on the principle of editorial independence.
- ASHUES editors should make decisions on which articles to publish based on quality and suitability for the journal and without interference from the ASHUES journal publisher.
- ASHUES editors shall have a written contract(s) setting out their relationship with the journal's publisher.

Best practice for ASHUES editors would include:

- establishing mechanisms to handle disagreements between themselves and the ASHUES journal publisher with due process
- communicating regularly with their journal's publisher

7. Editorial and peer review processes

- ASHUES editors shall strive to ensure that peer review at their journal is fair, unbiased and timely.
- ASHUES editors shall have systems to ensure that material submitted to their journal remains confidential while under review.

Best practice for ASHUES editors would include:

- ensuring that people involved with the editorial process (including themselves) receive adequate training and keep abreast of the latest guidelines, recommendations and evidence about peer review and ASHUES journal management
- keeping informed about research into peer review and technological advances
- adopting peer review methods best suited for their journal and the research community it serves
- reviewing peer review practices periodically to see if improvement is possible

8. Quality assurance

ASHUES editors shall take all reasonable steps to ensure the quality of the material they publish, recognising that journals and sections within journals will have different aims and standards.

Best practice for ASHUES editors would include:

- having systems in place to detect falsified data (e.g. inappropriately manipulated photographic images or plagiarised text) either for routine use or when suspicions are raised
- basing decisions about ASHUES journal house style on relevant evidence of factors that raise the quality of reporting rather than simply on aesthetic grounds or personal preference

9. Protecting individual data

ASHUES editors must obey laws on confidentiality in their own jurisdiction. Regardless of local statutes, however, they should always protect the confidentiality of individual information obtained in the course of research or professional interactions. It is therefore almost always necessary to obtain written informed consent for publication from people who might recognise themselves or be identified by others (e.g. from case reports or photographs). It may be possible to publish individual information without explicit consent if public interest considerations outweigh possible harms, it is impossible to obtain consent and a reasonable individual would be unlikely to object to publication.

Best practice for ASHUES editors would include:

- publishing their policy on publishing individual data (e.g. identifiable personal details or images) and explaining this clearly to authors
- Note that consent to take part in research or undergo treatment is not the same as consent to publish personal details, images or quotations.

10. Encouraging ethical research

ASHUES editors should endeavour to ensure that research they publish was carried out according to the relevant internationally accepted guidelines ASHUES editors should seek assurances that all research has been approved by an appropriate body (e.g. institutional review board). However, editors should recognise that such approval does not guarantee that the research is ethical.

Best practice for ASHUES editors would include:

- being prepared to request evidence of ethical research approval and to question authors about ethical aspects if concerns are raised or clarifications are needed
- appointing a journal ethics advisor or panel to advise on specific cases and review journal policies periodically

11. Dealing with possible misconduct

11.1. ASHUES editors have a duty to act if they suspect misconduct or if an allegation of misconduct is brought to them. This duty extends to both published and unpublished papers.



11.2. ASHUES editors should not simply reject papers that raise concerns about possible misconduct. They are ethically obliged to pursue alleged cases.

11.3. ASHUES editors should follow the COPE flowcharts where applicable.

11.4. ASHUES editors should first seek a response from those suspected of misconduct. If they are not satisfied with the response, they should ask an appropriate body (an internal USH regulatory body) to investigate.

11.5. ASHUES editors should make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a proper investigation into alleged misconduct is conducted; if this does not happen, editors should make all reasonable attempts to persist in obtaining a resolution to the problem. This is an onerous but important duty.

12. Ensuring the integrity of the academic record

12.1. Errors, inaccurate or misleading statements must be corrected promptly and with due prominence.

12.2. ASHUES editors should follow the COPE guidelines on retractions.

Best practice for ASHUES editors would include:

- taking steps to reduce covert redundant publication
- ensuring that published material is securely archived
- having systems in place to give authors the opportunity to make original research articles freely available

13. Intellectual property

13.1. ASHUES editors should be alert to intellectual property issues and work with their publisher to handle potential breaches of intellectual property laws and conventions.

Best practice for ASHUES editors would include:

- adopting systems for detecting plagiarism (e.g. software, searching for similar titles) in submitted items (either routinely or when suspicions are raised)
- supporting authors whose copyright has been breached or who have been the victims of plagiarism
- being prepared to work with their publisher to defend authors' rights and pursue offenders (e.g. by requesting retractions or removal of material from websites) irrespective of whether their journal holds the copyright

14. Encouraging debate

14.1. ASHUES editors should encourage and be willing to consider cogent criticisms of work published in their journal.

14.2. Authors of criticised material should be given the opportunity to respond.

14.3. Studies reporting negative results should not be excluded.

Best practice for ASHUES editors would include:

- being open to research that challenges previous work published in the journal

15. Complaints

15.1. ASHUES editors should respond promptly to complaints and should ensure there is a way for dissatisfied complainants to take complaints further. This mechanism should be made clear in the journal and should include information on how to refer unresolved matters to COPE.

15.2. ASHUES editors should follow the procedure set out in the COPE flowchart on complaints.

16. Commercial considerations

16.1. ASHUES Journal is having policies and systems in place to ensure that commercial considerations do not affect editorial decisions

16.2. ASHUES editors are having declared policies on advertising in relation to the content of the journal and on processes for publishing sponsored supplements.

16.3. Reprints will be published as they appear in the journal unless a correction needs to be included, in which case it should be clearly identified.

17. Conflicts of interest

17.1. ASHUES editors are having systems for managing their own conflicts of interest as well as those of their staff, authors, reviewers and editorial board members.

17.2. ASHUES Journal has a declared process for handling submissions from the editors or members of the editorial board to ensure unbiased review

Best practice for ASHUES editors would include:

- publishing lists of relevant interests (financial, academic and other kinds) of all editorial staff and members of editorial boards (which should be updated at least annually)