

Sage Research Integrity- FAQs for Editors

Why does Sage prioritize Research Integrity?

- To protect journal and publisher reputation, maintain public trust in scientific research, and ensure the publication of high-quality, reliable content.

What is Sage's approach to ethics concerns?

- Prompt & proactive: All concerns are investigated seriously.
- Transparency: Actions align with COPE guidelines.
- Early detection: Prevents costly investigations and reputational damage.

What types of publishing ethics concerns should I watch for?

- Reviewers or Academic Editors requesting citations to their own work that may not be relevant.
- Manipulated images.
- Tortured phrases (e.g., 'counterfeit consciousness' for AI- see <https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2107.06751> for more information).
- Unusual or excessive changes to author byline that cannot be explained.
- Reviewers that provide templated and brief review reports with no substance.
- Undeclared AI use.
- Duplicate and simultaneous submissions.

What is COPE and why is it important?

- The Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) provides guidance, flowcharts, and case studies for best practices.
- Sage is a COPE member; journals can register for membership.
- Editors should apply COPE principles and maintain a clear complaints process.

What resources are available to COPE members?

- [Getting started in publication ethics](#)
 - [Ethics toolkit for a successful editorial office](#)
 - [A short guide to ethical editing for new Editors](#)
 - [COPE Newsletter](#)- updates on new guidance and resources/events
- [COPE Guidance](#)- various types of guidance documents on different publication ethics scenarios (e.g., case studies, flow charts, guidelines, COPE position, webinars, etc.)
- [COPE Focus](#)- collections of resources for specific topics
- [COPE Forum](#)- anonymous cases brought by Members to be discussed between participants of the Forum- e.g., when Editors suspect AI

- [COPE eLearning](#)- 10 modules designed to equip editors with tools and knowledge needed to address issues they may face on their journals
- [Publication Integrity Week](#)- sessions from previous years available to watch online

What are Sage's key publishing ethics policies?

- Authorship: No changes after acceptance; changes during review require full author approval.
- Reviewers: No author-suggested reviewers.
- Corrections & Retractions: Issued in line with COPE guidelines.
- Complaints & Appeals: Investigated fairly; appeals require evidence.
- Editorial Independence: Decisions based on academic rigor.
- AI Policy: Assistive AI (grammar/language): No disclosure needed; Generative AI (creating content): Must be disclosed.
- Citation Manipulation: Excessive/gift citations may lead to rejection or institutional notification.
- **All external-facing publishing ethics policies can be found in detail [here](#).**

How does Sage handle ethics investigations?

- **Problem identified (internal tools, whistleblowers, complaints)**
 - The RI team undertakes an internal assessment of the situation, assesses risk to the reader and to the journal. RI will contact the Editor to inform them of the situation along with our process.
- **Investigation conducted by Research Integrity team with Editor input**
 - The RI team will lead on communications with the complainant(s) and author(s) to understand the issue and investigate possible breaches of policy and publication ethics. The team keeps the Editor informed of major developments, reaching out for input where needed.
- **Resolution (e.g. correction, retraction, expression of concern)**
 - The RI team will complete the investigation in line with COPE guidelines and provide the Editor with a recommendation on next steps. The Editor will retain responsibility to approve any notices. RI will work with the Production, Corporate Communications and Legal teams where needed to ensure resolution. RI will also contact the complainant(s).

What are post-publication notices?

- Retraction: For unreliable conclusions or misconduct.
- Correction: For minor errors that do not impact conclusions.
- Expression of Concern: An early notice to readers when an investigation begins or for when investigations are inconclusive.
- Removal: Rare, only for legal reasons.

What are my responsibilities as an Editor?

- Disclose conflicts of interest and recuse yourself when necessary.
- Ensure proper peer review (2 independent reviewers).
- Verify ethical disclosures (human/animal studies, funding, COI).
- Escalate complaints or media queries to your Sage contact.
- Do not use generative AI for reviews or decision letters.
- Use Sage-approved tools and maintain confidentiality.

How should I contact the Research Integrity team?

- Initial queries: publication_ethics@sagepub.com
- Ongoing cases: sageresearchintegrity@sagepub.com

Where can I find more resources?

- **COPE**
 - <https://publicationethics.org>
 - <https://publicationethics.org/guidance/guideline/retraction-guidelines>
- **Sage links**
 - <https://www.sagepub.com/journals/publication-ethics-policies/ethics-responsibility>
 - <https://www.sagepub.com/journals/information-for-editors/editor-guide-to-peer-review-best-practice>
 - <https://www.sagepub.com/journals/information-for-editors/editor-guide-to-sage-editorial-publishing-policies>