

## BEST PRACTICES CODE FOR UAM ELECTRONIC JOURNALS

According to the *National Declaration on Scientific Integrity* adopted by the CRUE (Conference of Spanish Universities Rectors) in December 2015, it is of high importance that universities, as centers where knowledge is developed and transmitted, make an active defense for the transparency and integrity of the scientific research.

The Publishing Service of the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (UAM) has elaborated the following Best Practices Code. It aims to be common to all the publications that conform the Electronic Journals Portal of the UAM. This aims to be a basis that each journal could complement according to its specific activity and research field.

In order to achieve a total transparency and integrity, the compromise of everyone involved during the journal edition process is necessary. Therefore, the following best practices are described depending on the interested person (author, editor or reviewer) that should consider them.

### **Journal editors:**

*-Editors:* Must make sure that everyone involved during the edition process is aware and following the best practices in attention to ethical principles.

*-Editorial Board:* Editorial Board members must be experts in the research field of the journal. Name, surname and affiliation of each of them must be stated on the journal's website as well as in the print issues.

*-Contact:* Editors must provide a contact address open for submissions, comments and complaints.

*-Review Process:* Editors must indicate the kind of review process that the journal uses and those sections that are held to a peer review process. A submission must be judged by at least two reviewers. In case that they cannot reach a decision, the presence of a third reviewer must be assured. Editors must guarantee an anonymous (blind) review. If the author specifically wishes to avoid that the submitted work be reviewed by a particular reviewer, the author must send a justified request to that respect the Editorial Board and wait for its decision.

*-Author Guidelines:* Editors must keep the latest and complete version of author guidelines publicly accessible. A link to this Best Practices Code must be included. Author guidelines must outline, at least, the standards that a submission must follow including the use of illustrations and other graphics, as well as the citation format. The journal must publish original articles. It must clearly specified whether the author has to pay or not article processing charges (APC).

Likewise, the frequency of the journal and the approximate time that the journal requires to review and accept an article must be included.

*-Reviewer Guidelines:* Editors must provide reviewers with a document with specific instructions and include the questioners needed during the review process.

*-Reviewers List:* Editors must publish a list of the reviewers and thank them for their collaboration. The Editorial Board must check the quality of the reports made by the reviewers.

*-Publishing Articles:* Editors will publish original, scientific, high quality and relevant articles for the journal. Authors will be notified of the approval or rejection of their work and the reasons for the decision. Editorial Board will approve or reject articles based on reviewers' reports. Editorial Board cannot reject an article only because it is based on the negative outcomes of a research program. Additionally, editors must be sure that the research has been approved by the appropriate organization/institution, if applicable according to international ethical guidelines, and ensure individual information confidentiality.

*-Bad Practices:* Those articles that, being in review, are found to represent a breach of ethical rules such as forgery, data manipulation, plagiarism, self-plagiarism, redundant publication or unnecessary fragmentation will be rejected. If the article has already been published by the journal, the journal will remove it and consult the authors. Regarding further course of action, the journal will follow its own rules or protocol.

*-Publishing Corrections:* If a substantial mistake has been found in an article, editors will publish a correction in the form of a note, editorial or errata sheet. The journal will correct the material concerned by these mistakes as the earliest possible convenience.

*-Copyright policy:* The journal must publish the terms of its copyright policy. We recommend the journal to have a document in which authors could sign to confirm the authorship of the article, the cession of the rights, etc. We also recommend journals to protect their contents under a [Creative Commons](#) license and specify it on the website.

*-Transparency and conflict of interests:* The journal must assure that no one involved during the editorial process is in a conflict of interests. It is regarded as positive if the journal elaborates and publishes statistics showing the figures of received, accepted and rejected submissions.

## **Authors:**

*-Ethical Principles:* Authors must follow the ethical principles gathered in the main international codes and declarations. Human rights, animal and environmental rights and laws regarding to data protection will be respected and observed. Any kind of discrimination will be avoided. Falsification, data manipulation, plagiarism, self-plagiarism, redundant publication and unnecessary fragmentation are considered breach of ethics.

*-Authorship:* Authors will be responsible for the authorship of the article. In case there are multiple authors, the responsible must confirm that all of them have approved the final version and have participated in the article in order to avoid fictional authorship. Collaboration and external help must be acknowledged.

*-Submitting articles:* Authors are expected to submit original and previously unpublished manuscripts. They will not present submissions to UAM journals that are already undergoing a review with another journal.

*-Conflict of interests and transparency:* Authors must acknowledge any source of funding that supported the research, as well as whether the research was part of a project. They must take special care regarding the references and the bibliography, specially where oral sources are involved. If the article contains images, the author must declare the origin and make sure to obtain the necessary permissions for reproduction. The analyzed data and the conclusions derived from them must be included in their entirety, as well as the methodology employed, so the results can be replicated by other researchers. Authors must declare whether their particular circumstances could have affected the results of the research.

*-Errors:* If an author discovers a substantial mistake in an accepted or published submission, they will communicate this to the journal so it can be corrected as the earliest possible convenience.

*-References:* Authors must acknowledge any source used in the production of the manuscript. We highly encourage authors to check through [CrossRef](#) to verify whether the referenced works have a Digital Object Identifier (DOI), and, if so, add it.

#### **Reviewers:**

*-Commitment:* In accepting to review a submission, a reviewer declares themselves to be qualified in the given academic field. They commit to respect the deadline, and to communicate to the journal should that not be possible.

*-Confidentiality:* Reviewers must not reveal information regarding the submissions under review. They may not use this information for the benefit of their own or other persons. The task of reviewer is not transferable to another person. If a reviewer needs advisory help from another person, they will seek the approval of the Editorial Board. They must not have any contact with authors unless the journal's Editorial Board is aware of the situation and gives its expressed approval.

*-Reviewing reports:* Reviewers must be objective and impartial. Their criticism must be specific and constructive and the recommendation clear and concise. Reviewers should notify the editors if the submission falls short of the standards of originality, has been published before; do not follow the journal's author guidelines or in other ways contains examples of bad practices. Reviewers will evaluate every aspect of the submission: data, methodology and references. In case they find any evidence of possible breach of ethical standards, they will communicate this to the editor.

*- Conflict of interests and transparency:* Reviewers will abstain from evaluating an article if they believe they might find themselves in a conflict of interests, such as being the submission in question being a work related to the research of the reviewers themselves.