

Australian Social Work Code of Practice

THIS STATEMENT OUTLINES EXPECTATIONS OF EDITORS, REVIEWERS AND AUTHORS FOR *AUSTRALIAN SOCIAL WORK*, THE JOURNAL OF THE AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS

EDITORS' RESPONSIBILITIES

Introduction

1. The Editor is responsible for the content of the journal and for ensuring the integrity of all work that is published in it. Editors have a responsibility to champion freedom of expression, subject to taking reasonable care to ensure that:
 - 1.1 all work that is published is original and has not previously been published in whole or substantial part;
 - 1.2 no work is published that contains any material that is copied from any other work;
 - 1.3 no work is published that contains material from other copyrighted publications for which necessary permissions have not been obtained by the author(s);
 - 1.4 no work is published that contains material that is defamatory, inaccurate, libellous, misleading, obscene, scandalous, unlawful, or otherwise objectionable, or that infringes any other person's copyright, right of privacy, or other rights.
2. The Editor should strive to improve standards and is responsible for ensuring an appropriate balance of articles published in each issue and volume, taking account of factors including, but not limited to, multiple submissions from individuals or teams and the focus of papers.
3. Where supported by necessary evidence, the Editor must always be willing to publish apologies, clarifications, corrections, and retractions. The Editor welcomes debate in respect of material published in the journal and will normally publish succinct comments (so long as these avoid personal attack and subject to 1.4 above), while affording authors a concurrent right of reply. However, the journal is unable to provide a forum for extended debate.
4. The Editor will publish annual data on the number of manuscripts submitted to the journal and on the number of manuscripts accepted for publication.

Guidance to authors and reviewers

5. The Editor is responsible for publishing guidance to authors on the requirements for submitting manuscripts to the journal, and providing guidance to reviewers on the requirements for undertaking peer review.

Peer review of manuscripts

6. The Editor (including Associate Editors and Guest Editors of Special Issues) is responsible for ensuring that manuscripts are peer reviewed to determine their quality and conformity to high standards in research and academic practice. The Editor must determine if submitted manuscripts are suitable to be sent for review, and exclude from review manuscripts that do not conform to the published 'Instructions for authors'.
7. The Editor should secure timely, independent and anonymous peer review from suitably qualified reviewers who have no disqualifying competing interests, of manuscripts submitted to the journal. The Editor is responsible for ensuring that the journal has access to an adequate number of competent reviewers. Normally the Editor will appoint two or three reviewers for each manuscript, taking account of any reasonable request from authors that a named individual should not review their manuscript.

8. The Editor will provide reviewers with copies of all reviews of manuscripts they have reviewed and advise them of interim and final editorial decisions. Reviewers will be acknowledged by the journal at the end of each year.
9. After considering comments from reviewers, it is the responsibility of the Editor to make the final decision about publication and to provide guidance to authors about the nature of revisions required. If reviewers' comments are very disparate, the Editor may seek another reviewer or advice from a member of the Editorial Board with expertise in the field in question. However, publication is not determined according to the majority views of reviewers; whether to publish is the decision of the Editor.
10. Once a paper has been accepted for publication, the decision to publish should not be reversed, including by any incoming Editor in respect of papers accepted by their predecessor(s), unless serious problems are identified. Such examples could include, but are not limited to, self plagiarism, double publication, data fabrication, fraud, content that is defamatory, inaccurate, libellous, misleading, obscene, scandalous, unlawful or otherwise objectionable or that infringes on any other person's copyright, right of privacy, or other rights.

Book Reviews

11. The Reviews Editor is responsible for ensuring that the journal has access to an adequate number of competent reviewers, and for securing timely and independent review from suitably qualified reviewers, who have no disqualifying or competing interests, of books (s)he has selected for review. Since the journal does not have space to review all books submitted, selection of books for review will be made by the Reviews Editor on the basis of her/his judgment of those of most interest to the journal's readers. In exercising such judgment, the Reviews Editor will act impartially at all times. When a book review has been accepted for publication, the decision to publish should not be reversed, including by any incoming Reviews Editor in respect of reviews accepted by their predecessor(s), unless serious problems are identified (refer to 1.4 above).

Confidentiality of submitted material

12. The Editor will ensure that systems are in place to ensure the confidentiality and protection from misuse of material submitted to the journal while under review and the protection of authors' and reviewers' identities and will themselves take all reasonable steps to preserve the confidentiality of authors' and reviewers' identities.

Appeals against editorial decisions

13. The Editor's decision about whether to accept or reject a manuscript is final and not subject to further debate with authors. The Editor is required to provide as much reasoning as possible when advising authors of their decisions. See clause 28 regarding complaints.

Conflict of interest

14. The Editor may submit a manuscript to the journal during their period of office, however, they may not be involved in any decision-making about such manuscripts. An Associate Editor or the Chair of the Editorial Board will handle all manuscripts submitted by the Editor.
15. A manuscript submitted by an author who is employed at the same institution as the Editor will be handled by an Associate Editor. The Editor who is employed at the same institution as the author will not be involved in selecting referees or making any decisions on the paper.

16. Where a manuscript is submitted by a family member of the Editor, or by an author whose relationship with the Editor might create the perception of bias (for example, in terms of close friendship, conflict or rivalry), the Editor will declare a conflict of interest and the manuscript will be handled by an Associate Editor. The Editor who has declared a conflict of interest will not be involved in selecting referees or making any decisions on the paper.
17. If the Editor or Reviews Editor consider that there is likely to be a perception of a conflict of interest in relation to their handling of a manuscript or book for review, they will declare it to the other Editors or to the Editorial Board. Arrangements for review will be handled by an Associate Editor. The Editor who has declared a conflict of interest will not be involved in selecting referees or making any decisions relating to the review.
18. Where the Reviews Editor is the sole author, co-author, editor, co-editor or contributor of a book that may be considered for review in the journal, or such a book is authored, co-authored edited, co-edited or contains material written by a person whose relationship with the Reviews Editor may create a perception of a conflict of interest (as described above), the Editor will handle the process. This will include the initial decision as to whether the book should be reviewed, the selection of reviewer and the decision whether to accept the review for publication. If the Editor is employed at the same institution as the Reviews Editor, this process will be handled by the Associate Editor or by an Editorial Board member who is not at the same institution. The process will be handled in such a way that the Reviews Editor does not have access to information or correspondence relating to the review.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF AUTHORS

Ethics approval for research

19. Authors are required to outline in the manuscript how their research conforms to internationally accepted ethical guidelines and/or relevant professional ethical guidelines. Authors may refer to the approval decision of an institutional ethics review committee or otherwise provide evidence in the manuscript of their adherence to ethical guidelines.

Integrity of manuscripts

20. Authors must ensure that:
 - no part of their work is copied from any other work, either authored by themselves or others;
 - the work is original and has not previously been published in whole or substantial part; the work does not contain any defamatory, libellous, obscene, scandalous, unlawful or otherwise objectionable material or material which is inaccurate or misleading or that infringes on any other person's copyright, right of privacy, or other rights;
 - all necessary permissions required for both print and electronic use for any material used from other copyrighted publications have been obtained;
 - author attributions – and the order of authorship – accurately reflect all contributions to the paper.
21. On acceptance, authors will be required to disclose all sources of funding relating to their paper. This declaration will be published with the paper.
22. Authors must disclose all relevant competing interests, and publish acknowledgement if competing interests are revealed following publication.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF REVIEWERS

Timely and fair reviews

23. Reviewers who accept an invitation to review a manuscript or a book should provide a fair review within the agreed timescale. Where unanticipated events make it impossible to meet the agreed deadline, reviewers must contact the editorial office or, in the case of a book review, the Reviews Editor, as soon as possible, either to schedule a mutually-agreed alternative deadline or to withdraw from reviewing the manuscript or book.
24. Reviewers must provide substantiated and fair reviews. These must avoid personal attack, and not include any material that is defamatory, inaccurate, libellous, misleading, obscene, scandalous, unlawful, or otherwise objectionable, or that infringes any other person's copyright, right of privacy, or other rights.
25. Reviewers must maintain the confidentiality of manuscripts sent to them for review and uphold the anonymous peer review process.

Conflict of interest

26. Reviewers of manuscripts and books are required to declare any potential conflict of interest that may arise because they know or think they know the identity of the author, (e.g. in terms of close friendship, conflict or rivalry) or for any other reason. The Editor will assume that acceptance of the invitation to undertake the review indicates that there is no potential conflict of interest.
27. Normally, a reviewer will not be used to review a manuscript or book where a conflict of interest has been declared. However, the Editor may use their discretion, after appropriate consultation with Associate Editors or the Chair of the Editorial Board, to allow a reviewer who has declared a potential conflict of interest to undertake the review.

COMPLAINTS

28. Any complaint relating to the journal's decision-making processes or breaches of this code of practice should, in the first instance be directed towards the Editor. The Editor is responsible for the timely and thorough investigation of all complaints and for reporting the outcome of their investigation to the complainant. The Chair of the Editorial Board must be advised of such appeals and their outcomes. In the event that the complainant is not satisfied with the Editor's response, or where the complaint is made against the Editor, the complainant may pursue his/her concerns with the Chair of the Editorial Board.

SOURCES

ASW acknowledges that we have adapted material from the following sources to develop this Code:

British Journal of Social Work Code of Practice

Committee on Publications Ethics (2007) *Code of Conduct and Best Practice Guidelines for Journal Editors*