
PUBLISHING POLICIES · FULL POLICY

Complaints and Appeals

If you believe a journal has treated you or your work unfairly, or you disagree with an editorial decision, this is how to raise it and what you can expect.

Version 1.1 · October 2026 · This is the full text. The [summary](#) on the policies page applies to every journal, book and proceedings volume.

01

What this policy covers

This policy covers (1) **complaints** about how a journal or the publisher has acted, for example delays, poor communication, a breach of confidentiality, or alleged bias, and (2) **appeals** against an editorial decision to decline a manuscript. Concerns about research or publication misconduct, such as plagiarism or fabricated data, follow the [Publication Ethics procedure](#) instead.

02

Making a complaint

1. **Write to the journal's editorial office first** through the contact page of the journal, setting out what happened, when, and what outcome you ask for. Please include the manuscript number if one applies.
2. **The editorial office acknowledges** the complaint within **5 working days** and passes it to someone who was not involved in the matter.
3. **A substantive reply** is sent within **30 days**. If the matter needs longer, you are told why and when to expect an answer.
4. **If you are not satisfied**, you may ask the publisher to review how your complaint was handled, through the publisher's [contact page](#). The publisher looks at the process and the reasoning, and replies within 30 days.

Complaints about an editor-in-chief go straight to the publisher.

03

Appealing a decision

Editorial decisions rest on the editor's judgement and are not reopened lightly. Disagreement with the reviewers' view of the merits is not, on its own, grounds for appeal. An appeal can be made if:

- the decision rested on a **factual or procedural error**, for example a misreading of the manuscript, a review that is clearly mistaken or unprofessional, or a failure to follow the journal's own process;
- there was a **conflict of interest** or evidence of bias affecting the editor or a reviewer; or
- there is **new evidence** bearing on the decision which could not have been provided earlier.

How to appeal

1. Write to the journal within **30 days** of the decision, stating the grounds and attaching any supporting information, together with a point-by-point response to the reasons given for declining.
2. The editor-in-chief, or, if the editor-in-chief made the decision, another senior editor who was not involved, reviews the appeal. They may ask for further comment from the original editor, seek an additional independent review, or decide on the papers.
3. The author is told the outcome and the reasons in writing within **30 days** of the appeal being received. The outcomes are: the decision stands; the manuscript is sent for further review; or the decision is reversed and the manuscript is reconsidered.
4. The decision on an appeal is **final**. A manuscript is appealed once only.

Authors should not submit the same manuscript elsewhere while an appeal is under way.

04

Fair handling

- Complaints and appeals are treated confidentially and shared only with those who need to know to resolve them.
- Nobody is penalised for making a complaint in good faith. We do not treat an author who appeals any differently in later submissions.
- Abusive, threatening or repeated complaints that raise nothing new may be closed with a final reply.

- The journal keeps a record of the complaint and its outcome, and uses the pattern of complaints to improve its process.

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Outside our process

If a complaint is about the publisher's conduct and has been through the publisher's review, COPE publishes a process for complaints about its members, and you may contact COPE after you have used the journal's and the publisher's own procedures first.