

[PUBLISHING POLICIES](#) · FULL POLICY

Originality and Plagiarism

A journal is only worth citing if its articles are original and honestly sourced. This policy says what counts as a breach, how we check, and what we do when we find one.

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 we mean by originality

A manuscript is original when it presents the authors' own work, has not been published before in any form that is accessible to the public, and is not under consideration anywhere else. Where it builds on other work, it says so clearly and gives credit. Originality is a minimum, not a measure of merit: a manuscript can be original and still not meet the journal's standard.

02

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is presenting someone else's words, ideas, data or structure as one's own without proper acknowledgement. It can be deliberate or careless; either way the journals take it seriously, and a careless breach is not excused by lack of intent, although intent is taken into account when deciding what to do.

- **Copying text.** Using sentences or passages from another source without quotation marks and a citation.
- **Paraphrase that stays too close.** Changing a few words in someone else's sentence is still copying. A paraphrase restates the idea in the author's own words and structure and cites the source.
- **Using ideas without credit.** Presenting another person's argument, framework or finding as the author's own, including from unpublished work the author saw as a reviewer or colleague.

- **Translation plagiarism.** Translating another author's work and presenting it as new.
- **Self-plagiarism.** Reusing one's own earlier published text or data without saying so (see below).

The right way to use another's words: put short quotations in quotation marks and cite them; set longer quotations apart as block quotes with the source; and for paraphrase, restate the idea in your own words and still cite. Use the journal's citation style (OSCOLA) for all of it.

03

Duplicate and redundant publication

Authors must not publish the same work twice, split one study into several overlapping papers to increase their number of publications, or submit a manuscript that substantially overlaps with their own earlier work without saying so. Where earlier material is reused (for example a thesis chapter, a conference paper or a preprint), the author discloses it in the cover letter and in the manuscript, cites it, and makes clear what is new. A thesis, a preprint on a recognised server, or a talk is not prior publication, but it must be disclosed.

Text recycling in the methods or background section of related work is judged by the editor in context, with a view to whether the reader would be misled about what is new.

04

How we check

Every submission is screened for originality **before** it is sent to reviewers, using similarity-checking software run on the anonymised manuscript. Reviewers and editors also read with originality in mind, and any reader who suspects a problem in a published article can report it.

A similarity report is a tool, not a verdict. We do not apply a single percentage as an automatic pass or fail. The editor looks at the report and judges what the overlap consists of: quotations that are properly marked and cited, standard phrases, references and the author's own earlier disclosed work are treated differently from unmarked passages copied from other sources. Overlap concentrated in one source, or in the argument or the analysis rather than in the background, counts for more than a scattering of short matches.

05

What happens when a problem is found

FINDING	TYPICAL RESPONSE
Minor and clearly careless: missing quotation marks or citations, close paraphrase of a few passages	The manuscript is returned for correction and a revised similarity check before review continues.
Substantial overlap with other work, or undisclosed reuse of the author's own work	The manuscript is declined. The author is told why and may be asked for an explanation.
Serious or deliberate plagiarism, fabrication or falsification	The manuscript is declined, the matter is handled under the Publication Ethics procedure , and the journal may report it to the author's institution or funder and refuse later submissions for a set period.
Found after publication	The article is corrected or retracted as described in the Corrections and Retractions policy .

Authors are always given a fair chance to respond before a final decision on a case of suspected misconduct.

06

Images, data and quotations

Images, tables and long quotations from other works need permission or an appropriate licence, which the author supplies with the submission. Data, where the work relies on any, must be reported honestly and be available to the editor on request. Images or data that have been created or altered with generative AI are covered by the [Generative AI policy](#).

07

Preprints and earlier versions

Posting a preprint, thesis or working paper does not stop an author from submitting the work. The author should say so in the cover letter, give the link, and keep the preprint's wording consistent with the submitted version. Because review is double-blind, authors should remember that a public preprint can reveal their identity; this is the author's choice and does not by itself prevent review.