

# **JOURNAL POLICY**

## **PEER REVIEW POLICY**

All submitted manuscripts are reviewed through a single-anonymized peer review process, which means that the identities of reviewers are kept confidential from the authors. After submission, manuscripts are initially evaluated by the Editor. Manuscripts that do not fall within the journal's scope are 'desk-rejected'. Additionally, papers that fail to meet the minimum threshold for quality research are also rejected without being sent to reviewers for technical evaluation. The Editor holds the authority to accept or reject a paper at the initial stage. All submitted manuscripts are uniquely judged on their scientific merits.

Manuscripts that pass the initial editorial review are referred for evaluation to the experts in the relevant field, and a minimum of two satisfactory review reports are required to make a decision for further processing. A reviewer must not be from the same institute as the author(s). The editor may decide whether to accept, reject, or invite authors for revision, which can be major or minor revisions, depending on the technical evaluation by the reviewers.

The review period may take around one to two months or longer, depending primarily on the reviewers' response time. Once the review process is complete, the author will receive the Editor's decision on the manuscript: (a) in the case of rejection, the authors may appeal against the decision; (b) in the case of revisions, the author(s) must provide a point-by-point response to the review comments and incorporate the suggested changes appropriately into the manuscript. The revised manuscript is then evaluated to determine whether the revisions are satisfactory or not. (c) If the revisions are deemed unsatisfactory, the Editor has the authority to reject the manuscript at this stage. Key reasons for rejection may include insufficient novelty or depth of content, issues with data quality or analysis, unsatisfactory response to the review comments, or any ethical concerns (e.g., plagiarism, conflict of interest, copyright infringement, or forged data). The Proceedings of the Pakistan Academy of Sciences considers review articles, research articles and short notes as letter to the Editor for publications.

Review article should provide a critical summary of the existing literature to explain the current state of scientific information on a particular topic and its significance. The author(s) should have a narrow focus and an explicit research question. A well-written review article must summarize key research findings, reference must-read articles, describe current areas of agreement as well as controversies and debates, point out gaps in current knowledge, and depict unanswered questions. Author(s) must have comprehensive intellectual contribution on the topic, and suggest directions for future research.

A research article must present a concise, accurate account of the original experimental or theoretical research performed by the author(s) having an objective discussion of its significance. These results should not have been published earlier or after acceptance for publication by the Pakistan Academy of Sciences journals, these must not be published anywhere else in the future. Authorship should be limited to those who have a substantial contribution to the conceptualization, design, execution or interpretation of the reported study.

Letter to the Editor may be a brief report of research findings having particular interest to the community, or make corrections, offer alternate theories, or request clarification about

content published in the journal. Letter to the Editor may be peer reviewed at the editors' discretion.

## **PUBLICATION ETHICS**

It is the responsibility of the researchers, involved in human-related research, to take all possible precautions to protect the life, health, autonomy, dignity, privacy, integrity, and confidentiality of the personal information of the participants. The researchers must not disclose any personal information of participants, even though they have given consent.

To handle different aspects of publication ethical concerns, matters are referred to COPE guidelines: (<https://publicationethics.org/guidance/Guidelines>). To maintain and ensure the integrity, quality, and validity of scientific publications, the editorial board maintains high standards of publication ethics, strictly enforcing policies against plagiarism and counterfeit data. We are committed to issuing corrections, explanations, retractions, and apologies as needed to maintain intellectual and ethical standards.

### **1. ETHICAL GUIDELINES FOR THE EDITOR**

The Editor's responsibilities include:

- Ensuring the publication of high-quality research with novelty, integrity, and credibility
- Respecting cultural, legal, and constitutional frameworks while supporting freedom of expression
- Bridging the intellectual gap between readers and authors for readability
- Supporting innovative ideas from authors, reviewers, and readers
- Enforcing strict and confidential single-anonymized peer review processes
- Upholding an anti-plagiarism policy and ethical research practices
- Implementing journal policies without institutional bias, revising as necessary
- Establishing a diverse and capable editorial board

#### **1.1. Retraction**

- Retractions follow COPE guidelines (<https://publicationethics.org/retraction-guidelines>). Any published work found to contain significant errors, false statements, or biased reports will be promptly corrected or retracted if proven fraudulent. Retractions will be marked for readers and indexing services.
- A retraction note titled, "Retraction: [article title]" is published in a subsequent issue of the journal and listed in the table of contents. In the electronic version, a link is provided to the original article.
- The original article remains unchanged, except for a watermark on each page of the PDF indicating that it has been "retracted".

#### **1.2. Post-Publication Corrections**

The Journal will publish corrections only for significant errors resulting from author(s) errors (Corrigenda) or editorial mistakes (Errata). In cases of serious complaints regarding journal procedures, the editor will consult with the corresponding author and relevant

editorial board members to address the issue. The journal's advisory board will be involved if additional guidance is necessary.

- A correction notice will be published promptly, detailing changes from and citing the original publication; this will appear on an electronic or numbered print page and be included in an electronic or print Table of Contents for accurate indexing.
- The journal will post a new article version, specifying changes from the original version and the dates of these changes.
- All previous versions of the article will be archived and made accessible to readers.
- Previous electronic versions will prominently indicate the existence of more recent versions.
- The citation will refer to the most recent version.
- The journal reserves the right to retract any published article if scientific errors invalidate its results or interpretations.

## **2. ETHICAL GUIDELINES FOR THE AUTHOR(S)**

All authors must survey the following ethical guidelines. Violations may result in penalties imposed by the editor, including, but not limited to, the suspension or revocation of publishing privileges.

- Authors are responsible for ensuring that their research report and data contain sufficient detail and references to information sources, allowing others to reproduce the results.
- Fraudulent or knowingly inaccurate statements constitute unethical behavior and are unacceptable.
- Authors must ensure that their submission is an entirely original work and that they give proper credit, through accurate citations, to the works or words of others where they have been used.

### **2.1. Plagiarism/Similarity of the Work**

- Plagiarism in any form is considered unethical publishing behavior and is unacceptable.
- If a manuscript has an overall similarity index above 19% (and from any single source exceeding 5%), it will be rejected or conditionally accepted at the discretion of the Editorial Board, where a high similarity score is due to valid reasons (e.g., common terminology in a specific field, commonly accepted methods/procedures, or self-plagiarism from authors previous papers).
- The Journal strictly follows the HEC Plagiarism Policy: (<https://www.hec.gov.pk/english/policies/Documents/Plagiarism-Policy.pdf>).

### **2.2. Originality of the Work**

- Authors are liable for confirming the originality and authenticity of their research work. They must appropriately acknowledge and cite all sources used during their research, including ideas, data, figures, and text.

- Authors may re-publish prior research if it has been substantially revised, corrected, or expanded with new data or more meticulous analysis.
- Secondary publications must be approved by both the authors and editor, cite the primary source, and reflect consistent data and interpretation.
- Concurrent submission of the same manuscript to multiple journals is considered unethical and unacceptable.
- Papers must include proper acknowledgment of others' work, with clear citation of sources except for common knowledge.
- Authors should acknowledge the contributions of individuals, organizations, and institutions involved in the research, including those who provided technical facilities, writing support, or financial assistance (in the acknowledgments).
- Authors are responsible for reviewing and properly citing original publications related to their work.

### **2.3. Authorship Guidelines**

- Authorship should be assigned only to those who made significant contributions to the conceptualization, design, execution, data analysis, and writing of the manuscript.
- The corresponding author is responsible for listing only those who made substantial contributions as co-authors.
- The corresponding author must confirm that all co-authors have reviewed and approved the final manuscript and consented to its submission.
- Contributors to specific aspects of the research should be recognized in an "Acknowledgements" section.
- Permission has been obtained for the use of copyrighted material from other sources.
- The corresponding author must ensure all significant contributors are included in the author list and agree to the order of authorship.
- Changes to the author(s) names should only occur before acceptance and require editor approval and written consent from all authors involved.
- Authorship changes after acceptance are only considered in exceptional cases and may delay publication.
- Approved post-publication authorship changes will be documented through a corrigendum.
- Unauthorized authorship changes may lead to manuscript rejection or retraction if already published.

### **2.4. Declaration of Interest**

- Authors must declare that (i) the work is original, (ii) it is not published or under consideration for publication elsewhere, (iii) all authors approve its submission, and (iv) copyright will be assigned to the Pakistan Academy of Sciences upon acceptance. Authors must also secure permission to reproduce any copyrighted material.
- Authors should provide a statement related to the conflict of interest.
- Authors must confirm that the manuscript contains only their original work and is not submitted elsewhere in any form.

## **2.5. Human and Animal Rights**

All human and animal studies must be approved by an appropriate ethics committee or review board, with a statement confirming this in the manuscript. If not required, the reasons should be explained. Clinical investigations must align with the Declaration of Helsinki principles (<https://www.wma.net/policies-post/wma-declaration-of-helsinki/>).

## **2.6. Vulnerable Population**

Research involving vulnerable populations (e.g., children, prisoners, persons with reduced mental capacity, and those who are educationally or economically deprived) must follow ethics standards for consent (e.g., parent/guardian) and observe guidelines from the WMA Declaration of Helsinki (<https://www.wma.net/policies-post/wma-declaration-of-helsinki/>), the UK Economic and Social Research Council (<https://www.ukri.org/councils/esrc/guidance-for-applicants/research-ethics-guidance/research-with-potentially-vulnerable-people/>), and The Belmont Report (<https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/regulations-and-policy/belmont-report/index.html>).

## **2.7. Informed Consent**

All authors must read the journal's policy and the manuscript must be read and double-checked by all the contributing authors before submitting it to the journal.

# **3. ETHICAL GUIDELINES FOR THE REVIEWERS**

Reviewing manuscripts is a vital part of scholarly engagement and the publication process, as it supports the Editor's decision-making and helps authors to improve their work. Scholars who agree to review have an ethical responsibility to carry out this task with professionalism, as the quality and reputation of the journal depend on the integrity of the peer review process. Reviewers are trusted to uphold the following key ethical standards, though this list is not limited.

- Inform the Editor promptly if you lack the required expertise or cannot complete the review on time, and suggest an alternative submission date if necessary.
- Conduct the review promptly, avoid unnecessary delays, and refrain from requesting excessive additional information from authors or the Editor.
- Treat all manuscript content as confidential, refraining from discussing the research with others without the Editor's authorization and from using unpublished material for personal research.
- Disclose any potential conflicts of interest (personal, financial, intellectual, etc.), and if unable to remain unbiased, return the manuscript to the Editor without review.
- Persist objective and report any issues with the manuscript, such as similarity to other works, unrealistic findings, or insufficient acknowledgment of previous studies.
- Notify the Editor if any ethical concerns regarding the treatment of human subjects in the research (e.g., issues related to vulnerable populations) are observed.
- Report suspected plagiarism or replication of previous work without proper acknowledgment.

- Avoid disclosing or discussing any details of the research paper before publication, ensuring confidentiality and respect for the journal's publication process.

## **4. SPECIAL ISSUE POLICY**

### **4.1. Editorial and Peer Review Processes**

Special issues may include editorials, full-length articles, short communications, case reports, and/or reviews. Articles submitted to special issues will be assigned to the leading guest editor, who will manage the review process. These submissions will follow the editorial and publication policies applied to regular issues, as well as the submission procedure via the editorial management system. Each article will undergo single-anonymized peer review by at least two experts, following the review guidelines for regular issue articles.

### **4.2. Guidelines for Guest Editors of Special Issues**

Guest editors are responsible for efficiently managing the workflow of the special issue, ensuring quality submissions, and following editorial and publication policies. Their duties include:

- Inviting authors to submit manuscripts and reviewers to evaluate the submitted manuscript.
- Rejecting articles outside the scope of the special issue without peer review.
- Initiating the peer review process once manuscripts pass technical checks and are assigned to an editor, ensuring reviews begin promptly without waiting for the submission deadline.
- Managing manuscripts through to final decisions.
- Informing authors of decisions regarding their submissions.
- Sending accepted manuscripts to the editorial office for publication.
- Optionally write an editorial for the special issue, summarizing its scope and introducing the included articles.
- Guest editors may contribute one manuscript to the special issue, which will be handled by the editor-in-chief, who will manage all editorial and peer review decisions for guest editors' submissions.
- Guest editors must not request authors to cite their own or affiliated journal articles.
- The leading guest editor is responsible for ensuring the timely completion of the special issue by managing deadlines and coordinating authors and reviewers.

### **4.3. Guidelines for Authors of Special Issues**

- Authors should submit their articles through the journal's online system and select the appropriate special issue.
- Invitations to submit to a special issue do not guarantee acceptance.
- Authors must follow the timetable set by the guest editors; failure to meet deadlines for submission, revision, and/or proofreading may result in exclusion from the special issue.

## 5. APC/APF

Proceedings of the Pakistan Academy of Sciences publishes articles free of charge. Authors do not have to pay Article Processing Charge (APC) and Article Publication Fee (APF) to cover the costs of peer review, administration, management, and professional production of articles in PDF and other formats.

## 6. GUIDELINES FOR WRITING AND FORMATTING THE MANUSCRIPT

### 6.1. Manuscript Writing

*The manuscript may contain a Title, Abstract, Keywords, INTRODUCTION, MATERIALS AND METHODS, RESULTS, DISCUSSION (or RESULTS AND DISCUSSION), CONCLUSIONS, ETHICAL STATEMENT (if applicable), ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS, CONFLICT OF INTEREST and REFERENCES, and any other information that the author(s) may consider necessary.*

**Title** (Bold and font size 16): The title should be expressive, concise, and informative to the entire readership of the journal. It may include common terms, to make it more identifiable when people search online. Please avoid the use of long pervasive terms and non-standard or obscure abbreviations, acronyms, or symbols.

**Abstract** (font size 10, max 250 words): Must be self-explanatory, stating the rationale, objective(s), methodology, main results, and conclusions of the study. Abbreviations, if used, must be defined on the first mention in the Abstract as well as in the main text. Abstracts of review articles may have a variable format.

**Keywords** (font size 10): Provide five to eight keywords consisting of words and phrases that are closely associated with the topic depicting the article.

**INTRODUCTION** (font size 11): Provide a clear and concise statement of the problem, citing relevant recent literature, and objectives of the investigation. Cite references in the text by number in square brackets, the reference must be cited in a proper English sentence [1]. or "... as previously described [3, 6–8]". For a single author: Bednorz [2] investigated the environmental pollution ... When there are only two authors: Bednorz and Allan [2] investigated the environmental pollution ... and for three or more authors: Bednorz *et al.* [2] investigated the environmental pollution ..; and list them in the REFERENCES section, in the order of citation in the text.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS** (font size 11): Provide an adequate account of the procedures or experimental details, including statistical tests (if any), concisely but sufficiently enough to replicate the study. Relevant references to methodology must be cited.

**RESULTS** (font size 11): Be clear and concise with the help of appropriate Tables, Figures, and other illustrations. Data should not be repeated in Tables and Figures but must be supported with statistics. The data presented in Tables and Figures must be elaborated in the main text.

**DISCUSSION** (font size 11): Provide interpretation of the RESULTS in the light of previous relevant studies, citing published references.

**CONCLUSIONS** (font size 11): Briefly state the implication of your study findings, and carefully address the study questions. Confine your conclusions according to the objectives of your study and the aspects covered in the abstract. Discuss both positive and negative findings.

**ETHICAL STATEMENT** (font size 10): The statement of ethical approval by an appropriate ethics committee or review board must be included in the manuscript (if applicable), as per the Journal's policy.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:** (font size 10): In a brief statement, acknowledge the financial support and other assistance.

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST** (font size 10): State if there is any conflict of interest.

**REFERENCES** (font size 10): References must be listed in numerical order as listed in the main text. Only published (and accepted for publication) journal articles, books and book chapters, conference proceedings, online reports, a degree thesis, and materials available on the website qualify for REFERENCES.

**Declaration:** Provide a declaration that: (i) the results are original, (ii) the same material is neither published nor under consideration for publication elsewhere, (iii) approval of all authors has been obtained, and (iv) in case the article is accepted for publication, its copyright will be assigned to the *Pakistan Academy of Sciences*. Authors must obtain permission to reproduce, where needed, copyrighted material from other sources and ensure that no copyrights are infringed upon.

## 6.2. Manuscript Formatting

Manuscripts must be submitted in Microsoft Word (Latest Version .doc or .docx format); pdf files are not acceptable. Figures can be submitted separately in TIFF, GIF, JPEG, EPS, or PPT. Manuscripts, in *Times New Roman*, 1.15 spaced (but use single-space for Tables, long headings, and long captions of tables and figures). The Manuscript sections must be numbered, i.e., **1. INTRODUCTION, 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS**, and so on... (a) **Title** of the article (Capitalize the initial letter of each main word, font-size 16, **bold**), max 160 characters (no abbreviations or acronyms), depicting article's contents; (b) Author's complete name (font size 12, **bold**), and professional affiliation (i.e., each author's Department, Institution, Mailing address, and Email and Contact number, but no position titles) (font size 12); (c) Indicate the corresponding author with \*; and (d) **Short running title**, max 50 characters (font size 10).

**Headings and Subheadings** (font size 11): All flush left

**LEVEL-1: ALL CAPITAL LETTERS; Bold**

**Level-2: Capitalize Each First Letter** (Except prepositions); **Bold**

**Level-3: Capitalize the first letter only** (Sentence case); **Bold, Italic**

**Level-4: Run-in head; Italics, in the normal paragraph position. Capitalize the first letter only and end in a colon (i.e., :)**

A list of REFERENCES must be prepared as under:

### **a. Journal Articles** (*Name of journals must be stated in full*)

1. J. Rashid, A. Ahsan, M. Xu, I. Savina, and F. Rehman. Synthesis of cerium oxide embedded perovskite type bismuth ferrite nanocomposites for sonophotocatalysis of aqueous micropollutant ibuprofen. *RSC Advances* 13(4): 2574-2586 (2023).
2. A. Fayyaz, N. Ali, Z.A. Umar, H. Asghar, M. Waqas, R. Ahmed, R. Ali, and M.A. Baig. CF-LIBS based elemental analysis of *Saussurea simpsoniana* medicinal plant: a study on roots, seeds, and leaves. *Analytical Sciences* 40(3): 413-427 (2024).
3. W. Bialek and S. Setayeshgar. Cooperative sensitivity and noise in biochemical signaling. *Physical Review Letters* 100: 258–263 (2008).

## **b. Books**

1. W.R. Luellen (Ed.). *Fine-Tuning Your Writing*. Wise Owl Publishing Company, Madison, WI, USA (2001).
2. U. Alon and D.N. Wegner (Eds.). *An Introduction to Systems Biology: Design Principles of Biological Circuits*. Chapman & Hall/CRC, Boca Raton, FL, USA (2006).

## **c. Book Chapters**

6. M.S. Sarnthein, J.E. Smolen, and J.D. Stanford. Basal sauropodomorpha: historical and recent phylogenetic developments. In: *The Northern North Atlantic: A Changing Environment*. P.R. Schafer and W. Schluter (Eds.). Springer, Berlin, Germany pp. 365–410 (2000).
7. S. Brown and L.A. Boxer. Functions of Europhiles. In: *Hematology*, (4<sup>th</sup> ed). W.J. Williams, E. Butler, and M.A. Litchman (Eds.). McGraw Hill, New York, USA pp. 103–110 (1991).

## **d. Reports**

8. M.D. Sobsey and F.K. Pfaender. Evaluation of the H<sub>2</sub>S method for Detection of Fecal Contamination of Drinking Water. Report No.-WHO/SDE/WSH/02.08. *Water Sanitation and Health Programme, WHO, Geneva, Switzerland* (2002).

## **e. Online References**

These should specify the full URL for reference, please check again to confirm that the work you are citing is still accessible:

9. UNESCO. Global Education Monitoring Report 2024/5: Leadership in education—Lead for learning. *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Paris, France* (2024). <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4066661?ln=en&v=pdf>
10. L.M. Highland and P. Bobrowsky. The landslide handbook—A guide to understanding landslides. Circular 1325. *US Geological Survey, Reston, Virginia* (2008). [https://pubs.usgs.gov/circ/1325/pdf/C1325\\_508.pdf](https://pubs.usgs.gov/circ/1325/pdf/C1325_508.pdf)

## **f. Conference Proceedings**

11. M. Khalid, A.B. Majid, F. Mansour, and C.R. Smith. Word Representations with Recursive Neural Networks for Morphology. *27<sup>th</sup> European Conference on Signal Processing, (2<sup>nd</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> September 2021), Madrid, Spain* (2021).

## **g. A Degree Thesis**

12. M. Afzal. Investigation of structural and magnetic properties of nanometallic Fe-Mn Alloys. Ph.D. Thesis. *Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan* (2023).

**Tables:** Insert all tables as editable text, not as images. Number tables consecutively following their appearance in the text. A concise but self-explanatory heading must be given. Tables should be numbered according to the order of citation (like **Table 1.**, **Table 2.** (font size 10)). Do not abbreviate the word "Table" to "Tab.". Round off data to the nearest three significant digits. Provide essential explanatory footnotes, with superscript letters or symbols keyed to the data. Do not use vertical or horizontal lines, except for separating column heads from the data and at the end of the Table.

**Figures:** In the main text write Figure, not Fig. Figures may be printed in two sizes: column width of 8.0 cm or page width of 16.5 cm; In the Figure caption, number them as **Fig. 1.**, **Fig. 2.** Captions to Figures must be concise but self-explanatory (font size 10). Laser-printed line drawings are acceptable. Do not use lettering smaller than 9 points or unnecessarily large.

Photographs must be of high quality. A scale bar should be provided on all photomicrographs. All Figures should have sufficiently high resolution (minimum 300 dpi) to enhance the readability. Figures as separate files in JPG or TIFF format may be provided.

## **SUBMISSION CHECKLIST**

The following list will be useful during the final checking of an article before submission to the journal.

1. Manuscript in MS Word format
2. Cover Letter
3. Novelty Statement
4. Copyright Form
5. Figures in JPG or TIFF format

In case of any difficulty while submitting your manuscript, please get in touch with:

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