



DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH INNOVATION
AND CONSULTANCY

JOURNAL MANAGEMENT POLICY

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List of Acronyms

COPE	Committee on Publication Ethics
DRIC	Directorate of Research, Innovation and Consultancy
UCC	University of Cape Coast

Background

The University of Cape Coast (UCC) recognises the importance of providing services to support scholarly communication and to increase the visibility of our academic research. The UCC currently has over 50 journals strewn across five colleges with no overarching system to host or regulate the scholarly content. This makes quality control and management of the journal content very difficult. Establishing and promoting the hosting of journals in locally specific areas has become an imperative, at least for two reasons. First, researchers in locality specific areas occasionally are denied publication of empirical manuscripts in other geographical jurisdictions on the grounds that the content of their manuscripts is not appealing to the readership of a journal. Second, the quest to address knowledge gaps and follow up to realise its impact requires a balance in the dissemination of research results. Implicit in the second reason is the fact that most empirical papers are initiated and focused on other geographical jurisdictions leading to researchers in locality specific areas being followers of academic discourses rather than leaders.

However, the emergence and proliferation of predatory journals during the past decade has brought into question the issues of quality and reproducibility of scientific data as well as replicability of research studies. In the past, it was assumed that unsuspecting colleagues fall prey to these predatory journals. However recently, evidence to the contrary, particularly the fact that some authors are complicit, has emerged. It is now well-documented that the lure of rapid turnaround and acceptance, low publication fees, and lack of rigor in the review process of these journals make them attractive to authors who prefer the easy way to academic and professional progression. Publication of research without the conscientious implementation of peer-review and other scholarly editorial practices can easily result in dissemination of sub-standard or even patently false data. The harm to the entire scientific community is obvious, but it can be particularly detrimental to young scholars and scientists in developing countries who may rely more heavily on open access material than articles from peer-reviewed subscription journals.

Without a doubt, these issues jointly undermine the reputation and credibility of academics and the confidence that policymakers repose in the results of scientific studies.

In response to these challenges, the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) (<https://publicationethics.org/>) has developed a comprehensive set of core international best practices and guidelines that the topmost universities and journals around the globe have unreservedly adopted. The ten core elements include systematic ways to address allegations of misconduct, authorship contribution, complaints and appeals, conflicts of interest, data and reproducibility, ethical oversight, intellectual property, journal management, acceptable peer-review processes, and post publication discussions and corrections. UCC is committed to this initiative and encourages all members to embrace these principles and guidelines in our collective bid to make UCC a University with world-wide acclaim.

The UCC is a regional leader in academic excellence. This pedigree has emerged from our longstanding (over half a century) delivery of top quality teaching and research products. UCC intends to consolidate these credentials by making four main commitments. First, UCC is committed to ensuring the highest standards of integrity in all aspects of our research, founded on basic principles of good research practice to be observed by all researchers and their internal and external collaborators. Second, UCC is committed to maintaining an institution-wide research environment that is founded upon a culture of integrity, embracing internationally recognised good practice and a positive, proactive approach to promoting research integrity. This will include support for the development of our researchers through education and promotion of good research practices, as these constitute the foundations of research integrity. Third, UCC is committed to working together to reinforce and safeguard the integrity of the internal research system (especially the quality of the journals at UCC) and to reviewing progress regularly. Fourth, UCC is committed to using transparent, fair and effective processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct when they arise.

In giving expression to the foregoing commitments and our mandate as the unit responsible for coordinating and administering research at UCC, the Directorate of Research, Innovation and Consultancy (DRIC) has developed this policy on the hosting of journals to ensure that we meet the highest standards of research integrity and data management. The scope of this policy is two-fold: Processes of establishing, sustaining and accrediting journals in UCC; and Support services and returns for hosting a journal in UCC.

Collation, Evaluation and Approval of UCC Journals

This journal policy provides the framework for coordinating all journals published by departments and faculties across the University and will ensure that the credibility of each journal and the University, as a whole, is preserved. DRIC will collate the list of all journals on UCC campus and evaluate their quality based on international best practices. In the context of the UCC Journal Policy, international best practices primarily refer to the guidelines and practices developed by COPE. All journals that meet the DRIC evaluation criteria will be approved/accredited/starred/sealed by DRIC for one calendar year only. Journals will be re-evaluated annually and those found to be sub-standard will be dropped from the list of DRIC sealed/starred/accredited journals. From the onset, all UCC journals will be included in the preliminary list in the first year. Subsequently, journals may be dropped owing to below par performance. A journal that is dropped from the list may re-apply for inclusion only, if **ALL** the shortcomings identified by DRIC in the previous evaluation have been **FULLY** addressed.

Typically, the evaluation will be based on five main areas, namely Journal Policy, Quality of Content, Journal Standing, Regularity and Online Availability. Journal Policy includes the aims and scope of the journal (convincing and relevant to UCC scholars and beyond; clarity on why an author might want to publish in the journal; type of peer review, namely single blind, double blind, and open; and diversity in geographical distribution of editors and authors).

Quality of Content includes academic contribution to the field (clarity of abstracts, quality of and conformity with stated aims, readability of articles, checking of hypotheses and conclusions, iThenticate/Turnitin - plagiarism

check, frequent problems: vague, descriptive reports; not adding to extant literature; small sample sizes; not in line with the journal's aims and scope; poor figures and graphs). Journal Standing includes citedness and indexing of journal (percentage of articles cited, number of times individual articles are cited, how recent are the citations; Editor standing: widely published, widely cited, and recognised in their field).

Regularity refers to the number of issues per year, number of articles per issue, number of issues delayed as well as periodicity monthly, bimonthly, quarterly, yearly, or biennially.

Online Availability includes access to online (check content available online, number of issues per year, number of articles per issue, English-language homepage option available, and quality of homepage: ease of use, how comprehensive).

Defining Characteristics of UCC Journal Editors

Editors of UCC journals must possess general scientific knowledge of the fields covered in the journal and be skilled in the arts of writing, editing, critical assessment, negotiation, and diplomacy. S/he must be an academic of international repute evidenced by:

- A minimum Google Scholar Citation of 500 and H-Index of 8 for an Editor-in-Chief.
- A minimum of Google Scholar Citation of 500 and H-Index of 7 for an Editor.
- At least 15 articles indexed in Scopus for an Editor-in-Chief.
- At least 10 articles indexed Scopus for an Editor.
- A minimum of 25 verified reviews on Publons for an Editor-in-Chief.
- A minimum of 15 verified reviews on Publons for an Editor.
- A minimum RG Score of 15 on ResearchGate for either Editor-in-Chief or Editor.
- Presence on ORCID with a profile that is linked to a verified UCC email account.

Members of the Editorial Board of UCC Journals should have at least half of each of the credentials of the Editor-in-Chief.

Term of Office of UCC Journal Editors

Editors of UCC journals should be appointed for a term of 5 years. An Editor can serve multiple terms, however, no Editor can serve two consecutive 5-year terms. An Editor can serve on not more than two editorial boards of UCC journals.

Statement on Predatory Journals

With the recent emergence of predatory journals around the world, UCC is forthwith taking a stand against publishing in or encouraging citations from these journals. It is obvious that publishing in such journals will detract significantly from the quest of UCC to become a University of world-wide acclaim. For the time being, Beall's Lists on predatory publishers and stand-alone journals will be used as standard reference for determining predatory journals. Any other publishers and stand-alone journals not present in the defunct Beall's List but exhibits the defining characteristics of a predatory outlet, as shown below, will be considered as such. For the avoidance of doubt, the operational definition of predatory journals in the context of this Policy is one that is characterised by the following:

- Charging exorbitant rates for publication of articles in conjunction with a lack of peer-review or editorial oversight.
- Notifying authors of fees only after acceptance.
- Targeting scholars through mass-email spamming in attempts to get them to publish or serve on editorial boards.
- Quick acceptance of low-quality papers, including hoax papers.
- Listing Scholars as members of editorial boards without their permission or not allowing them to resign.
- Listing fake scholars as members of editorial boards or authors.
- Copying the visual design and language of the marketing materials and websites of legitimate, established journals.
- Fraudulent or improper use of ISSNs.
- Giving false information about the location of the publishing operation.
- Fake, non-existent, or mis-represented impact factors.

All UCC faculty members are encouraged to visit <https://predatoryjournals.com/journals/> and <https://predatoryjournals.com/publishers/> for more information on the modus operandi and evidence-based characteristics of predatory journals and publishers.

The University of Cape Coast prohibits all faculty members from publishing in predatory journals. All faculty members should ensure that they have done proper due diligence before submitting their manuscripts to any journal.

Forum of UCC Journal Editors

This journal policy establishes a Forum of UCC Journal Editors, which shall be a forum to update all Editors on context-specific challenges, international best practices and emerging trends regarding the day-to-day operations of journals. All UCC Journal editors and their associates are automatic members of the forum of UCC Journal Editors. Members will work closely with DRIC to streamline the entire publication quality management process. DRIC will also organise training workshops and refresher courses for UCC Journal Editors at least once a year.

Basic Features and Defining Characteristics of UCC Journals

Each journal must have an Editor-in-Chief with the following responsibilities:

Editor Responsibilities toward Authors	Editor Responsibilities toward Reviewers	Editor Responsibilities toward Readers and the Scientific Community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing guidelines to authors for preparing and submitting manuscripts • Providing a clear statement of the Journal's policies on authorship criteria (i.e., substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work; AND Drafting the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content; AND Final approval of the version to be 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assigning papers for review appropriate to each reviewer's area of interest and expertise • Establishing a process for reviewers to ensure that they treat the manuscript as a confidential document and complete the review promptly • Informing reviewers that they are not allowed to make any use of the work described in the manuscript or to take advantage of the knowledge they gained by reviewing it before publication • Providing reviewers with written, explicit instructions on the journal's expectations for the scope, content, quality, and timeliness of their reviews to promote thoughtful, fair, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluating all manuscripts considered for publication to make certain that each provides the evidence readers need to evaluate the authors' conclusions and that authors' conclusions reflect the evidence provided in the manuscript • Providing literature references and author contact information so that interested readers may pursue further discourse

<p>published; AND Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treating all authors with fairness, courtesy, objectivity, honesty, and transparency • Establishing and defining policies on conflicts of interest for all involved in the publication process, including editors, staff (e.g., editorial and sales), authors, and reviewers • Protecting the confidentiality of every author's work 	<p>constructive, and informative critique of the submitted work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requesting that reviewers identify any potential conflicts of interest and asking that they recuse themselves, if they cannot provide an unbiased review • Allowing reviewers appropriate time to complete their reviews (8 weeks maximum) • Requesting reviews at a reasonable frequency that does not overtax any one reviewer. Scirev (https://scirev.org/statistics/first-found/) should be used as a guide in this regard • Finding ways to recognise the contributions of reviewers, for example, by publicly thanking them in the journal; providing letters that might be used in applications for academic promotion; offering professional education credits; or inviting them to serve on the editorial board of the journal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying individual and group authorship clearly and developing processes to ensure that authorship criteria are met to the best of the editor's knowledge • Requiring all authors to review and accept responsibility for the content of the final draft of each paper or for those areas to which they have contributed; this may involve signatures of all authors or of only the corresponding author on behalf of all authors. Journals may also ask that one author to be the guarantor and take responsibility for the work as a whole
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing a system for effective and rapid peer review • Making editorial decisions with reasonable speed and communicating them in a clear and constructive manner • Being vigilant in avoiding the possibility of editors and/or referees delaying a manuscript for suspect reasons • Establishing clear guidelines for authors regarding acceptable practices for sharing experimental materials and information, particularly those required to replicate the research, before and after publication 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining the journal's internal integrity (e.g., correcting errors; clearly identifying and differentiating types of content, such as reports of original data, opinion pieces [e.g., editorials and letters to the editor], corrections/errata, retractions, supplemental data, and promotional material or advertising; and identifying published material with proper references) • Ensuring that all involved in the publication process understand that it is inappropriate to manipulate citations by, for example, demanding that authors cite papers in the journal • Disclosing sources (e.g., authorship, journal ownership, and funding)
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing a procedure for reconsidering editorial decisions • Describing, implementing, and regularly reviewing policies for handling ethical issues and allegations or findings of misconduct by authors and anyone involved in the peer review process • Informing authors of solicited manuscripts that the submission will be evaluated according to the journal's standard procedures or outlining the decision-making process, if it differs from those procedures 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating mechanisms to determine if the journal is providing what readers need and want (e.g., reader surveys) • Disclosing all relevant potential conflicts of interest of those involved in considering a manuscript or affirming that none exist. • Providing a mechanism for a further discussion on the scientific merits of a paper, such as by publishing letters to the editor, inviting commentaries, article blogs, or soliciting other forms of public discourse • Explicitly stating journal policies regarding ethics, embargo, submission and publication fees, and accessibility of content (freely
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing mechanisms, in cooperation with the publisher, to ensure timely publication of accepted manuscripts • Clearly communicating all other editorial policies and standards 		<p>available versus subscriber only)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with the publisher to attract the best manuscripts and research that will be of interest to readers • Resisting pressure from publishers to publish a review or article in an effort to increase reprint sales. The editor has a responsibility to readers and the scientific community to resist such pressure
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Each journal must have a functional Editorial Board. Editors must show evidence of a two-way correspondence with each editorial board member regarding his/her acceptance to be part of the Board. The Editorial Board of each journal must consist of a diverse team in terms of age, gender, career phase, ethnicity, language, research areas, methodology knowledge, and geographical location. Editorial Board membership should be for fixed pre-defined term only (preferably five years) and not in perpetuity.

Criteria for Inclusion of UCC Journals in the DRIC List of Approved/Starred/Accredited Journals

Each UCC Journal must have laid down procedure/flowchart detailing how it addresses allegations of misconduct, authorship contribution, complaints and appeals, conflicts of interest, data and reproducibility, ethical oversight, intellectual property, journal management, acceptable peer-review processes, and post publication discussion and corrections. All UCC journals must be online and be part of a proposed UCC Journal Management System. All UCC journals must have an ISSN, e-ISSN and acquire Digital Object Identifier (DOI) from Cross Reference (CrossRef). Additionally, all UCC journals should be indexed in Google Scholar initially and pursue entry into world leading indexing outlets such as emerging sources citation index, web of science, and Scopus. Any UCC journal that fails to be indexed in Scopus after a decade of operation will be removed from the DRIC list and decommissioned.

Description of Research Misconduct in the Context of the UCC Journal Policy

The issues presented below capture some practices of research misconduct:

Core Research Misconduct	Research Practice Misconduct
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fabrication of Data ● Falsification of Data ● Plagiarism <p>FFP normally includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Selectively excluding data from analysis ○ Misinterpreting data to obtain desired results (including inappropriate use of statistical methods) ○ Doctoring images in publications ○ Producing false data or results under pressure from a sponsor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Using inappropriate (e.g., harmful or dangerous) research methods ● Poor research design ● Experimental, analytical, computational errors ● Violation of human subject protocols ● Abuse of laboratory animals
Data-related Misconduct	Publication-related Misconduct
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Not preserving primary data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Claiming undeserved authorship

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bad data management, storage ● Withholding data from the scientific community <p>NB: <i>The above applies to physical research materials as well</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Denying authorship to contributors ● Artificially proliferating publications (“salami-slicing”) ● Failure to correct the publication record ● Including authors without permission
<p>Personal Misconduct in the Research Setting</p>	<p>Financial and other Misconduct</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inappropriate personal behaviour and harassment ● Inadequate mentoring and counselling of students ● Insensitivity to social or cultural norms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Peer review abuse e.g., non-disclosure of conflict of interest, unfairly holding up a rival’s publication ● Misrepresenting credentials or publication record ● Misuse of research funds for unauthorised purchases or for personal gain ● Making an unsubstantiated or malicious misconduct allegation

Support Services and Returns for Hosting a Journal in UCC

Any department, school or college of UCC that intends to start a journal must take into consideration seven different issues covering the stages of planning, setting up, running, and sustaining the journal:

- Scope and Content Strategy (mission, vision, file formats, periodicity, content strategy)
- People and Workflows (layout graphics, copy editors, proofreaders, web developer, metadata standards, author styles, templates, schedules, etc.)
- Journal Management (entire editorial management workflow, including submission, multiple rounds of peer-review, and indexing, new tools, plugins, and modules)
- Design (how your content is experienced online, on mobile devices, tablets, as well as downloadable pdfs or epub)
- Marketing and Distribution (where your journal will end up, i.e. indexes, university libraries, repositories, directories)
- Financing (ways to create revenue and funding streams)
- Licenses (Open content licences)

The University shall consider requests for financial support for the start-up of journals on a case-by-case basis. The efforts of editors of journals shall be recognised in diverse ways, including support for travel grant and considerations during review of application for promotion.

Links to Useful Resources

<https://publicationethics.org/resources/guidelines-new/cooperation-between-research-institutions-and-journals-research-integrity>

https://www.elsevier.com/___data/assets/pdf_file/0015/90123/EditorWelcomePack.pdf

<https://publicationethics.org/resources/flowcharts>

<https://publicationethics.org/core-practices>

<https://www.elsevier.com/editors/perk>

<http://aom.org/About-AOM/Ethics-of-Research---Publishing-Video-Series.aspx>

<https://peercommunityin.org/>

<https://www.growkudos.com/about/researchers>

<https://publons.com/a>