

Festung Journal Code of Conduct and Ethical Guidelines

The editorial board of Festung is committed to the highest ethical standards in all phases of publication. The ethical principles and standards of the journal are based on the guidelines of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) and the European Code of Conduct for Scientific Research. All participants in the publication process – editors, reviewers and authors – are required to adhere to the following principles:

1. Ethical guidelines and participant responsibilities

1.1. Responsibilities of the Editor-in-Chief and the Editorial Board

Objectivity and non-discrimination: The Editor-in-Chief considers and evaluates manuscripts solely with regard to their content and scientific/professional value, without discrimination on any grounds.

Confidentiality: The Editor-in-Chief and the Editorial Board maintain confidentiality and ensure the confidentiality of all data on received manuscripts throughout the entire processing process.

Plagiarism check: Before entering the peer review process, all papers are checked using plagiarism detection software. In case of established plagiarism, publication of the work is refused.

Publication decision: The final decision on acceptance or rejection of the paper is made by the Editorial Board based on the opinions of the reviewers, ensuring an objective double-blind review. The decision on publication or non-publication of the paper is confirmed by the Editorial Board.

Ethical behavior: The Editorial Board encourages responsible behavior of all participants in the process of receiving, handling, and publishing papers. In the event of complaints of unethical behavior, the Editor-in-Chief acts in accordance with practices in the scientific community, allowing authors to state any potential conflict and collecting all documentation related to the problem while the Editorial Board jointly investigates the violation of ethical standards.

Communication: All communication between the editorial board and other participants must be appropriate and in accordance with professional ethics in the academic community.

Journal integrity: The editor-in-chief is responsible for the scientific and professional integrity of the journal and ensures regular publication for the sake of recognition and excellence.

1.2. Responsibilities of Reviewers

Timeliness and objectivity: Reviewers are obliged to perform reviews in a timely, objective and clear way, arguing their points of view.

Citing sources: Reviewers warn of shortcomings in citing sources and overlapping with publications of similar content.

Confidentiality: Reviewers protect the integrity of the author and the manuscript; information obtained through review is treated as confidential and may not be used for personal purposes. The review process is confidential and secret.

Qualifications: Reviewers must be established scientists or scientific and teaching staff from the relevant scientific field. Reviewers from the Republic of Croatia must be registered in the register of scientists of the Republic of Croatia, and reviewers from abroad must have the status of scientists according to the regulations of their country.

Categorization and recommendations: The reviewer assesses whether the paper can be accepted for publication and indicates whether any changes or additions are required. In the event of conflicting opinions between two reviewers, the editor may request the opinion of a third reviewer.

Adherence to guidelines: Reviewers are required to adhere to the Ethical Guidelines for Journal Publishing published on the journal's website and/or the HRČAK portal.

Communication: All communication with other participants must be appropriate and in accordance with professional ethics in the academic community.

1.3. Author's Responsibilities

Adherence to guidelines: Authors must adhere to the Guidelines for Authors published on the journal's website.

Scientific integrity: The authors adhere to generally recognized standards and practices regarding scientific integrity, in accordance with the publicly published European Code of Scientific and Research Integrity.

Objectivity and accuracy: Authors must present results, professional and scientific contributions objectively and accurately, and support them with sources using the guidelines for citing literature (APA 7th edition).

Originality of the work: The author is responsible for the originality of his/her work. By submitting a manuscript to the journal, the author accepts all necessary checks of the originality of the work. Authors are required to submit a signed statement of authenticity of the manuscript.

Amendments and additions: If a reviewer requests changes, the author must remove them, and the corrected version is checked by the reviewer or editor.

Republishing: Published works may not be published elsewhere without the permission of the Editorial Board.

Communication: All communication with other participants must be appropriate and in accordance with professional ethics in the academic community.

2. Resolving conflicts of interest

A conflict of interest exists when personal relationships or financial interests may affect the objectivity or integrity of scholarly publishing.

2.1. Authors

Authors must declare all potential conflicts of interest (financial, personal, academic) that could influence their results or interpretation of the data.

2.2. Reviewers

Reviewers must inform the editor of any conflict of interest that could compromise the objectivity of the review and decline the review if they cannot be impartial.

2.3. Editorial staff

Members of the editorial board may not participate in decisions on manuscripts in which they have a conflict of interest with authors or institutions. The editor-in-chief acts in accordance with practices in the scientific community, allowing authors to declare any potential conflict and collecting all documentation related to the problem while the Editorial Board jointly investigates violations of ethical standards.

3. Withdrawal and correction of works

The editors of Festung magazine are dedicated to maintaining the integrity of the published scientific literature.

3.1. Withdrawal

Papers will be withdrawn from publication in the following cases:

- Proven scientific fraud (e.g., falsification of data).
- Plagiarism.
- Multiple publication of the same work without adequate citation or permission.
- Serious errors that invalidate the results and conclusions. The withdrawal process is carried out in accordance with COPE guidelines, with a clear indication of "RETRACTED" on the withdrawn paper and publication of an official statement of withdrawal.

3.2. Correction

Minor errors that do not affect the validity of the results or conclusions, but are nevertheless important to the reader, will be corrected by publishing an Erratum or Corrigendum in the next available issue of the journal. The corrigendum will clearly state what has been corrected and where the error was located.

4. Terms of use of magazine content

Festung magazine is published in Open Access, which means that the entire content of the magazine is available free of charge to users and/or their institutions.

4.1. License

Works published in Festung magazine are available under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0).

Copying and distribution of the material in any medium and format is permitted, solely for non-commercial purposes and without modification, provided that the authorship (source) is appropriately cited.

4.2. Archiving

The journal will be available on its own website and on the HRČAK portal (Central Portal of Croatian Scientific Journals), ensuring long-term archiving and accessibility. The authors retain copyright, but grant the publisher the right of first publication.