

Publication Ethics

Publication Ethics and Malpractice Statement

Poslovna izvrsnost – Business Excellence is committed to upholding the highest standards of ethical conduct in scholarly publishing. The journal is guided by the [COPE Core Practices](#) and by recognized principles of editorial integrity, transparency, accountability, and academic honesty. All parties involved in the publishing process, including authors, editors, reviewers, and the publisher, are expected to comply with the ethical responsibilities outlined below.

Authorship & Contributions

Authorship is limited to individuals who have made substantial contributions to the conception, design, execution, or interpretation of the research. All listed authors must approve the final version of the manuscript and agree to be accountable for its content.

The journal follows the authorship definition of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE), which requires:

- Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data; AND
- Drafting the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content; AND
- Final approval of the version to be published; AND
- Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

Contributions that do not meet these criteria (e.g. general supervision, funding acquisition, technical help, formatting, proofreading) must be acknowledged in the Acknowledgments section.

Inappropriate forms of authorship such as gift, guest, ghost, or anonymous authorship are strictly prohibited.

All authors are required to declare their individual contributions according to the [CRedit](#) (Contributor Roles Taxonomy). The CRedit statement must be included on the Title page at the time of submission and it will be published with the final version. Only roles that are relevant to the specific manuscript should be listed (e.g., Conceptualization; Methodology; Formal analysis; Writing – original draft; Writing – review & editing; Supervision).

Any request to add or remove an author after manuscript submission must be submitted in writing to the Editorial Office, with a clear explanation and a revised CRedit author contribution statement. The request must include written agreement from all originally listed authors and from any author being added or removed. Authorship changes after acceptance are permitted only in exceptional and fully justified cases. The journal may request supporting documentation, contact authors individually, reject unjustified changes, or refer disputed cases to the relevant institution. After publication, any approved authorship change will be handled through a formal correction notice linked to the published article, as appropriate.

Editorial Responsibilities

Journal policies guarantee that editorial decisions are based solely on scholarly merit and do not discriminate on any personal or demographic basis. The publisher does not interfere with editorial decisions. The Editorial Board is responsible for:

- Fair editorial decisions: Manuscripts are evaluated for relevance, originality, and scientific merit, without regard to authors' race, gender, nationality, religion, institutional affiliation, or political beliefs.

- Confidentiality: Editors must protect the confidentiality of all manuscript details, including content and reviewer identities
- Conflict of Interest: Editors must withdraw from handling manuscripts in which they have a competing interest
- Institutional independence in editorial handling: If any author of a submitted manuscript is affiliated with the same institution as the Editor-in-Chief or the assigned editor, editorial responsibility for that manuscript must be delegated to a handling editor who is not affiliated with the same institution as the author
- Independent reviewer selection: Editors must not appoint reviewers who are currently affiliated with the same institution as any of the authors of the manuscript.
- Suspected research misconduct is handled in accordance with the journal's [Research Misconduct and Investigation Procedure](#), and post-publication amendments are implemented under the [Correction and Retraction Policy](#)

Editorial Decision-Making and Accountability

As a rule, the handling editor makes editorial decisions on manuscripts based on independent peer-review reports. In cases of conflicting reviews, ethical concerns, appeals, or complex submissions, the Editor-in-Chief (and/or the Editorial Board) is involved. The Editor-in-Chief retains final authority and accountability for all editorial decisions, including those delegated to handling editors.

All decisions are communicated to authors via the journal's OJS system.

Special Issues, Conference-Based Content, and Guest Editors

Special issues, and conference-based content are subject to the same peer review, editorial independence, conflict-of-interest safeguards, and ethical standards as regular submissions. Guest editors may assist in the editorial process, but the Editor-in-Chief retains final authority and accountability for all editorial decisions. Where a competing interest exists, editorial responsibility is reassigned to an independent editor. Any relevant conference affiliation or external partnership must be disclosed and must not influence editorial evaluation or acceptance.

Author Responsibilities

Authors must:

- Ensure originality: Submitted work must be original, unpublished, and not under consideration elsewhere
- Avoid plagiarism: Any content from other sources must be clearly cited. All submissions are screened for plagiarism (see [For authors / Section 7](#))
- Ethical citation practice: Authors must cite sources accurately and only where genuinely relevant. The Journal does not tolerate citation manipulation (e.g., excessive self-citation, irrelevant citation stacking/padding, or coercive citation). Citation suggestions received during peer review are not mandatory unless the authors judge them essential to the manuscript's scholarly quality and completeness
- Funding disclosure and competing interests: Authors must openly disclose all sources of research funding, including the names of funding organizations, grant numbers, and the specific role of each funder (e.g., study design, data collection, analysis, decision to publish, manuscript preparation). All financial and non-financial competing interests that could influence the work must also be declared in a separate statement. Required statements in the manuscript:

- *Funding*: “This work was supported by [Funder name] (grant [number]). The funder [had no role / had the following role: ...].”
- *No funding*: “No specific funding was received for this article.”
- *Competing interests*: “The authors [declare no competing interests / disclose: ...]”
- Authors must also ensure compliance with funder open access mandates (license, data sharing). Refer to our '[Open Access](#)' policy for details on no APCs, licensing (CC BY-NC 4.0) and repository deposit of the Version of Record
- Ensure authorship integrity: All individuals listed as authors must have made substantial contributions to the work and approve the final version
- Acknowledge contributions: Individuals who contributed to the work but do not meet authorship criteria should be acknowledged appropriately
- Comply with data sharing and transparency: Authors may be asked to provide raw data for editorial review and should be prepared to make it publicly available where appropriate
- Ethical compliance: Research involving human or animal subjects must include a statement of ethical approval and, where applicable, confirmation of informed consent.
- Data Availability Statement: Authors may provide a DOI or permanent link to data deposited in a recognized repository or institutional repositories. Where data cannot be shared due to confidentiality, privacy, or licensing restrictions, this must be clearly stated in the article. At a minimum, sufficient methodological details and, where applicable, code should be provided to ensure reproducibility.

Use of Artificial Intelligence Tools

Generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT or other large language models) cannot be listed as authors, as they do not meet the accountability requirements of authorship. Authors must fully disclose any use of AI tools in manuscript preparation or research, including text generation, data analysis, image or figure creation, or translation. Such disclosure must be made transparently in the Methods or Acknowledgments section.

All responsibility for the accuracy, originality, and integrity of the content remains with the human authors. The use of AI for grammar correction or language editing does not require disclosure. Reviewers are strictly prohibited from uploading manuscripts into AI systems.

Detailed requirements for authors regarding AI use and transparency are provided (see [For authors](#) / Section 6).

Reviewer Responsibilities

Reviewers are expected to maintain confidentiality, provide objective and constructive feedback, and report any ethical concerns. Detailed responsibilities are provided in the '[For reviewers](#)' guidelines.

Research Ethics Compliance

The Journal requires compliance with ethical standards in all stages of research:

- Human and animal research: All studies must have prior approval from an appropriate ethics committee. Authors must state the name of the committee and approval number
- Informed consent: Participants must be informed of the purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits of research and must voluntarily consent
- Privacy and data protection: Confidential information and participant anonymity must be preserved unless explicit consent is obtained.

Conflicts of Interest

All authors, reviewers, and editors must disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest, including:

- Financial interests (e.g., grants, employment)
- Institutional affiliations
- Personal relationships
- Competitive or political interests.

Disclosures must be declared in a dedicated statement in the Title page of the manuscript. Editors will act to avoid bias in handling such submissions.

 See our [Conflict of Interest Policy](#)

Publication Misconduct and Corrections

The journal treats all allegations of publication misconduct seriously. Allegations that indicate potential research misconduct are handled in accordance with the journal's [Research Misconduct and Investigation Procedure](#). Post-publication editorial actions are implemented under the journal's [Correction and Retraction Policy](#) and are guided by the [COPE Retraction Guidelines](#).

Misconduct allegations may include (but are not limited to):

- Plagiarism
- Data fabrication or falsification (including inappropriate image manipulation)
- Authorship misconduct (gift, guest, or ghost authorship)
- Undisclosed conflicts of interest.

If misconduct is confirmed, appropriate actions may include:

- Rejection of the manuscript (pre-publication)
- Publication of a Correction, Retraction, or Expression of Concern (post-publication), as appropriate, with each notice issued separately, assigned its own DOI, and linked to the original article
- Notification to relevant institutions and/or funders where appropriate.

Post-Publication Discussion

The journal welcomes scholarly comments and letters to the editor submitted after publication. Such comments should be concise, evidence-based, and written in a respectful tone. Please send submissions to Editorial Office:

✉ editor-be@net.efzg.hr

Subject: *Letter to the Editor - [Manuscript Title]*

Accepted items will be published with their own DOI and linked to the original article.

Correction, Expressions of Concern, and Retraction

- Corrections: issued to fix minor errors (e.g., factual or typographical mistakes) that do not alter the overall conclusions.
- Expressions of Concern: issued when there are unresolved or pending investigations regarding the integrity of the article.
- Retractions: issued when findings are invalid due to major errors or confirmed misconduct (e.g., plagiarism, data falsification, unethical research).

All updates are published as separate notices with their own DOIs, clearly linked to the original article, and archived permanently to maintain the scholarly record.

🔗 See our [Correction and Retraction Policy](#)

Complaints and Appeals

Authors, readers, or reviewers may file complaints or appeals concerning:

- Editorial decisions
- Peer review process concerns
- Publication ethics concerns (e.g., conflicts of interest, plagiarism, authorship disputes)

🔗 See our [Complaints Policy](#)

Credible allegations of research misconduct are handled under the journal's [Research Misconduct and Investigation Procedure](#).

Long-term Digital Preservation

Since June 2025, the journal has operated on Open Journal Systems (OJS) and enrolled in the PKP Preservation Network (PKP PN), which uses LOCKSS technology [link] to provide decentralized, distributed, and permanent preservation, ensuring perpetual access to the published content.

The journal ensures permanent digital preservation of all published content through Hrčak - Portal of Croatian Scientific and Professional Journals, the national platform that promotes and secures open access in Croatia. This guarantees perpetual availability and accessibility of all published content.

In addition, all content is preserved in the international independent repository Internet Archive (archive.org) within the dedicated collection *Poslovna izvrsnost – Business Excellence*, thus providing global redundancy and guaranteeing perpetual availability.

Self-Archiving Policy

Authors are permitted to deposit all versions of their manuscripts - including the submitted version (preprint), accepted version (postprint), and published version (Version of Record), in institutional or subject repositories. It is mandatory to include a full bibliographic citation of the article, including the Journal name and DOI.

The Journal's self-archiving policy is registered with the Jisc Open Policy Finder, where it is clearly stated that Poslovna izvrsnost – Business Excellence supports the Green level of self-archiving, in line with best practices in open scholarly communication.

 See our [Open Access & Copyright Policy](#)

If you have questions or concerns regarding publication ethics, please contact:

✉ editor-be@net.efzg.hr

Subject: *Disclosure – [Manuscript Title or Concern]*

Editor-in-Chief
Tonći Lazibat