

## ALA Journal Publication Ethics Policy

### I. Preamble

These guidelines establish and sustain a culture of journal publication practices for the American Library Association (ALA) that are both ethical and transparent. They provide a common standard for ALA journals to follow. These ethical and transparent practices also align with ALA's values of equity, diversity, and inclusion (<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/diversity>). Any exceptions to the policy should be rare and must be approved individually upon the recommendations of individual editors or editorial boards and approved by the ALA Publishing Committee. Additional information regarding the responsibility of ALA publications can be found in the *ALA Policy Manual* (Section A.8.1).

### Definitions

Book—a monograph or edited compilation.

COPE—Committee on Publication Ethics (<https://publicationethics.org>).

Magazine—a publication with editorially reviewed publication.

Peer review—1) *The dissemination venue (e.g., publisher) employs and internally documents an externally verifiable review process* involving appropriately qualified experts in the same or related occupation, profession, or industry (peer reviewers) outside its operating staff or directors. 2) *The work submitted for review is complete in the full form intended for dissemination.* 3) *The review process is conducted so that reviewers' substantive comments or critiques are returned to the author(s) for integration, revision, or reconstruction of the work before it is accepted for formal dissemination, unless reviewers recommend the work in its submitted form without revision (except formatting for stylistic consistency and routine copyediting).* All three elements must be demonstrable for a work to be considered peer reviewed. A work that has been through a process demonstrating two or fewer of these three elements cannot be considered peer-reviewed.

Peer reviewers—colleagues in the field of librarianship who offer their expertise, knowledge, and other input on fellow colleagues' manuscripts in the form of written and/or oral feedback.

Scholarly journal—a publication that is primarily a venue for peer-reviewed/scholarly content.

### II. Scope

All of ALA's peer-reviewed journals—including organization- and division-level journals and print and electronic formats—must follow these practices. Non-peer-reviewed publication formats, such as magazines, newsletters, Web pages, reports, books/monographs (including multi-author and edited compilations), or advertising, may benefit from adhering to the principles outlined in this policy.

### III. Guidelines for Authors

Authors are responsible for the proper citation of sources and obtaining any permissions that are needed. They are also responsible for making sure that the data is true and has not been manipulated. Any data that is used are either owned by the author(s) or the appropriate permissions to use the data have been obtained. Authors must follow all appropriate research ethics. Any conflicts of interest must be declared.

1. The corresponding author is expected to respond to all inquiries from the editor in a timely manner.
2. Authors are responsible for the original creation and writing of the work. Authors are encouraged to use ORCID (<https://orcid.org/>) for proper attribution of their work.
3. Contributions by non-authors must be declared by the author in an acknowledgment section according to the individual journal style guidelines. The ALA Publishing Committee recommends using the CRediT Taxonomy (<https://credit.niso.org/>).
4. Large Language Model Policy (Based on SAGE) - Large Language Models (LLMs), generative artificial intelligence (AI), and other AI bots may not be listed as an author on submissions. If one chooses to use language models or similar tools in the manuscript development process (including, but not limited to, conceptualization, analysis, and writing) this must be disclosed in the manuscript. Sources used to generate content including prompts must also be disclosed. The author is responsible for the accuracy, validity, and appropriateness of all content in the manuscript, including any content generated by language models. See COPE Position Statement here: <https://publicationethics.org/cope-position-statements/ai-author>
5. ALA does not charge any fees to authors, including for processing, submission, review, or publication.
6. Copyright policies vary across individual journals. Please see Author Copyright Agreements for ALA Division Journals and Newsletters: <https://www.ala.org/aboutala/offices/publishing/sundry/rightspermissions/divisioncopyright>.
7. Each ALA journal has its own guidelines for the peer review and appeals process. The ALA Publishing Committee recommends the use of NISO standard terminology for peer review: <https://www.niso.org/standards-committees/peer-review-terminology>.

#### **IV. Guidelines for Peer Reviewers**

Peer reviewers must share their research and professional interests with the editor who will then assign them appropriate manuscripts to review. Peer reviewers play an important role in ensuring the integrity of a scholarly record. The peer review process depends on the trust and willing participation of the reviewers, authors and editors. All parties are expected to work both responsibly and ethically. ALA journals have symmetrical review policies (either double anonymous or double open).

Journals have an obligation to provide transparent, written policies for peer review, and reviewers have an obligation to conduct reviews in an ethical and accountable manner. Peer reviews, for the purposes

of these guidelines, refer to reviews provided on manuscript submissions to journals or other publications, but can also apply to public commenting that can occur pre- or post-publication. Each ALA publication publishes its own guidelines for peer reviewers on the publication's website to show the process, offer reference, and enhance transparency.

1. ALA publications follow COPE's Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers.
2. Reviewers must meet ALA publications' required qualifications in order to become a peer reviewer. In order to become a peer reviewer, one should contact the editor of the ALA publication to indicate an interest.
3. The type of publication will also influence elements of the process, such as criteria and/or the amount of time given to complete an assigned review.
4. Prior to reviewing a manuscript, peer reviewers are expected to consider:
  - a. The review model and evaluation criteria.
  - b. Potential conflicts of interest they may have with regard to the item under consideration.
  - c. Whether they have the necessary time and expertise.
5. Peer reviewers are given instructions such as guiding questions and other points to consider in order to focus their feedback toward the publication's focus. These instructions are publicly available on the publication's web site.
6. Peer reviewers must follow the policies of the ALA publication for which they are reviewing.
7. Peer reviewers offer feedback that is in alignment with:
  - a. The criteria required for a particular publication.
  - b. Offering clarity of constructive feedback.
  - c. Submitting it within the deadline agreed upon by the Editor.
  - d. Supplying comments that are both constructive and respectful to the author(s).
8. After an ALA publication has been disseminated for peer review, the type of feedback and amount of time given to complete the assigned review may vary.
9. Within the Author Guidelines or other publication instructions, each ALA publication includes the following:
  - a. Peer review model(s) conducted.
  - b. Time period allotted to accept the review assignment.
  - c. Time period allotted to the reviewer to review the submission once the assignment has been accepted.

## **V. Guidelines for Editors, Editorial/Advisory Boards, and Editorial Offices (Adapted from COPE Guidelines)**

### **V.1. Editors:**

Editors of ALA-published journals should review and follow the recommendations from COPE's Short Guide to Ethical Editing for New Editors (<https://doi.org/10.24318/cope.2019.1.8>), along with the guidelines and policies of ALA and any additional publishing unit, such as ALA divisions. These guidelines and recommendations include:

1. Familiarize yourself with the journal's current workflows, policies and practices.
2. Refer to the COPE's Core Practices and COPE's Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing, along with relevant ALA guidelines and policies, to review (or establish, if a new journal) the journal's infrastructure, editorial policies, and ethical processes.
3. Establish relationships with the journal community (outgoing editor, editorial board, reviewers, authors) to learn from their experiences, establish expectations and guidelines, and identify areas for development.
4. Build a relationship with the publisher of the journal (both at the unit/division and ALA level), along with your editorial, production, and marketing contacts to understand their processes, establish expectations, and understand the support they can offer for your role and editorial activities.
5. Review the journal's peer review process to ensure it reflects the best current practices, is transparent, meets the needs of the journal, and is consistent with the Guidelines for Authors (see Section III).
6. Ensure the journal has transparent procedures in place to address and respond to complaints and cases of possible misconduct/inappropriate behavior, following COPE's Allegations of Misconduct resources (<https://publicationethics.org/misconduct>).
7. Follow discussions on new publishing models, new models of peer review and changing practices, and be continuously thinking about ways your journal might develop within the guidelines and policies of ALA, and any additional publishing unit, such as ALA divisions.

## **V.2. Editorial/Advisory Boards:**

Editorial/Advisory Boards of ALA-published journals should review and follow the recommendations from the COPE Editorial Board Participation Guidelines (<https://doi.org/10.24318/F3lrGybw>), along with the guidelines and policies of ALA and any additional publishing unit, such as ALA divisions. These guidelines and recommendations include:

1. Editorial roles should be clearly defined to include the number of reviews expected, definitions of review quality and expectations; the level of editorial decisions to be made; and details of decision chains.
2. Appointment terms should be clearly defined and aligned with ALA and division policies with details such as appointment criteria, length of term, renewal terms, and reasons to end the appointment early.
3. Journals should define the types or levels of conflicts of interest that are not permissible for their editors which, if present, should preclude an editor from joining the board or result in an editor's removal if not resolved, in accordance with ALA policies and procedures.
4. Journals should ask potential editorial board members to provide a list of their potential conflicts of interest.
5. Journals should seek content from a wide range of contributors to include varied points of view.

6. When journals recruit editors at any level, they might need to decide whether it is appropriate for any individual to be a member of more than one editorial board at the same time within the same field, with the same levels of decision-making, or article commissioning responsibility, in accordance with ALA policies and procedures.

### **V.3. Copy Editors**

Many ALA publications employ the services of a copy editor. In addition, some journal editors act as copy editors for their respective journals. According to the Editorial Freelancers Association (<https://www.the-efa.org/hiring/member-skills/>), “Copyeditors correct spelling, grammar, usage, and punctuation, check cross-references, and prepare the style sheets that guide consistency and accuracy across the manuscript.” The role of the copy editor is to work with authors after manuscript acceptance to ensure the overall quality of the publication content and to help maintain a consistent standard for manuscripts published within the journal. Copy editors should avoid making or suggesting significant revisions to the work without consulting the journal editor or, in the case of journal editors acting as copy editors, without consulting the author. Guidelines for the responsibilities of this position include:

1. Review and edit copy for errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, and syntax.
2. Ensure consistency, clarity, and correctness in text.
3. Ensure accuracy of facts and figures.
4. Ensure compliance with formatting standards areas as established by the journal.
5. Ensure consistency of style and tone within the manuscript.
6. Ensure accuracy of legal and regulatory requirements in materials that require permissions for use.
7. Collaborate with journal editors and authors to suggest a final version of the manuscript that is ready for print.

### **V.4. Editorial Offices:**

Editorial Offices of ALA-published journals should review and follow the recommendations from the COPE Ethics Toolkit for a Successful Editorial Office (<https://doi.org/10.24318/AkFpEBd1>), along with the guidelines and policies of ALA and any additional publishing unit, such as ALA divisions. These guidelines and recommendations include:

1. Journals should have robust and well-described practices for all the areas within the COPE Core Practices, along with the guidelines and policies of ALA and any additional publishing unit, such as ALA divisions.
2. Journals should be transparent about their policies, processes, and business practices according to the Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing, along with any applicable ALA policies, processes, and practices, and apply these policies, processes, and practices in their work.
3. Clear and transparent policies should be in place describing requirements for authorship and contributorship.

4. Peer review processes, including what is peer reviewed, which model of peer review is used, and how the process is managed must be transparent and align with the guidelines and policies of ALA and any additional publishing unit, such as ALA divisions.
5. Journals must have processes in place to respond to allegations of research, publication, and review misconduct whether before or after publication.
6. Journals should clearly describe definitions of what, and how, conflicts of interest must be disclosed by authors, reviewers, editors, journals and publishers.
7. Requirements for data availability, use of reporting guidelines, and registration of clinical trials and other study designs should be clear in journal guidelines.
8. Journals must publish clear guidelines on the ethical conduct of research, according to the research discipline along with the guidelines and policies of ALA and any additional publishing unit, such as ALA divisions.
9. Copyright and publishing licenses and policies must be clearly described.
10. Transparency of journal management is required including the business model, policies, processes, and systems for the efficient running of the journal.
11. Journals must describe how they manage debate and perform corrections and retractions in alignment with the guidelines and policies of ALA and any additional publishing unit, such as ALA divisions.
12. The journal and publisher must have guidelines in place to handle complaints against the journal, its staff, editorial board, or the publisher in alignment with the guidelines and policies of ALA and any additional publishing unit, such as ALA divisions.

## **VI. Processes to help identify ethical concerns**

### **VI.1. Allegations of Misconduct**

The ALA Publishing Committee is the point of contact for allegations of editorial or authorial misconduct. The Committee is the designated group to review, investigate, and recommend action as appropriate in response to allegations of misconduct. Whistleblowers may contact editors directly or raise concerns on social media (see COPE's Responding to Whistleblowers, <https://doi.org/10.24318/cope.2019.2.25>); therefore, editors who learn of allegations must share them with the ALA Publishing Committee in a timely manner.

### **VI.2. Conflicts of Interest/Competing interests**

#### **VI.2.A. Authors**

A conflict of interest may exist when an author has or is likely to be perceived as having a current or likely future financial or reputational stake in the tools, processes, or concepts described in the article. Such conflicts of interest, or the explicit declaration there are none, are declared at the point of submission and included in a note in the body of the article with the heading "Conflicts of interest".

#### **VI.2.B. Other parties to the journal:**

Editors and editorial board members declare, as part of their hiring or appointment, any financial or reputational stakes in companies or processes related to the subjects of the journal. These statements are updated annually.

Reviewers are expected to decline assignments when they recognize a potential conflict of interest (or the likely perception of a conflict of interest) in the article they are asked to review. This expectation is stated when reviewers join the review pool for the journal.

#### VI.3. Data and Reproducibility

Data sharing is not required but encouraged by some ALA publications, either as appendices to the article or in an open-access data repository. When data sets are stored in a data repository, reference to them is included as an endnote/footnote with a link to the appropriate site. In all cases, data are to be anonymized/de-identified, preferably in a non-reversible way.

#### VI.4. Ethical Oversight

Any human-subject research must have been reviewed and approved by the appropriate institutional review board(s) for the authors. A declaration of this review and approval must be included in the submitted manuscript.

Concerns about the research ethics of a study that has been published are first reviewed by the journal's editorial board. Decisions may be appealed to the ALA Publishing Committee.

The ALA Publishing Committee defines guidelines and processes for desk review, peer review, and editorial processes to ensure fair and equitable detection of unethical practices during the pre-acceptance process. Journal editors ensure that manuscripts meet the established guidelines and oversee ethical and equitable review processes.

#### VI.5. Intellectual Property

Each journal clearly states all relevant fees for authors and readers/subscribers, or the lack thereof. Copyright of manuscripts and licensing terms for publication are clearly stated on the journal's website and in each published item.

Authors are able to enter into separate, additional contractual arrangements for the non-exclusive distribution of the journal's published version of the work (e.g., post it to an institutional repository or publish it in a book), with an acknowledgement of its initial publication. Authors are permitted and encouraged to post their work online (e.g., in institutional repositories or on their website).

Manuscripts that are available to the general public (e.g., via a preprint server, as a book chapter, on a personal website, etc.) are considered to be previously published.

#### VI.6. Journal Management

Journal websites list editorial board and reviewer rosters and describe the process for being appointed to either role. Documents outlining how editors/reviewers are selected and trained are posted to journal websites. Journal websites include links to the ALA Publication Committee and the ALA landing page. Advertising rates and policies (when appropriate) are clearly described.

ALA Production Services backs up and archives journal content for historical and data recovery purposes.

ALA Membership Services conducts marketing in an ethical manner.

#### VI.7. Post-publication Discussions and Corrections

ALA journals benefit from engaged readers and welcome feedback from the community. We recognize the obligation to correct errors in work that have been published and to consider readers' criticisms of that work. The respective editorial boards will investigate and respond to concerns raised about published works in their respective publications. Concerns should first be raised with the editor of the corresponding journal and may be elevated to the ALA Publishing Committee in cases where the editorial response is not satisfactory.

Responses to errors in published work will fall in two categories: corrections and editorial responses.

##### VI.7.A. Corrections

In rare cases, the respective editors may make changes to a previously-published article to correct factual errors that are not essential to the substance of the article and are unlikely to have altered the peer-review decision (e.g., references to websites that are no longer active or URLs that have been repurposed). In such cases, the editors may correct the reference to point to the new location or suppress the reference if no equivalent replacement exists. Changes of this nature will be noted as a "Correction" at the end of the published article and include the date, a description of the change made, and at whose request the change was made.

##### VI.7.B. Editorial Responses

Letters to the editor are welcome; the journals publish signed letters to the editor at the editor's discretion. The editors may publish a note, an expression of concern, or a retraction; in rare instances, ALA may remove a published article.

###### VI.7.B.1. Editor's Note

An editor's note is a notification inserted in the article that the journal has initiated an inquiry in response to concerns raised about a published article. This note will be removed if the investigation does not identify any malfeasance.

###### VI.7.B.2. Editorial Expression of Concern

An editorial expression of concern notifies readers of an addition of information to an article, for example in response to a reader’s request for clarification or correction of a significant omission. Such addenda are published when the editors decide they are crucial to the reader’s understanding of a significant part of the published contribution.

#### VI.7.B.3. Retraction

A retraction notifies the readership of unsound results or misconduct, following an investigation of the issue by the editor and publisher. The original article will remain available but will be marked as retracted through a published note from the editor.

#### VI.7.B.4. Removal of Published Articles

Published articles are removed only in rare instances. ALA may be obliged to remove an article as a consequence of legal action. In these cases, the removal will be marked on the issue table of contents, and a notice indicating removal will replace the article contents.

### References

American Library Association (ALA) Policy Manual

(<https://www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/policymanual>)

COPE Ethics Toolkit: <https://publicationethics.org/sites/default/files/cope-ethics-toolkit-journal-editors-publishers.pdf>

“Standard Terminology for Peer Review,” National Information Standards Organization (NISO) standard ANSI/NISO Z39.106-2023 (<https://www.niso.org/standards-committees/peer-review-terminology>)

"A contextualization of editorial misconduct in the library and information science academic information ecosystem" by Lucy Santos Green & Melissa P. Johnston. JASIST, 2021.

### Publication Ethics Subcommittee Members and Staff Liaisons, 2023-2024

Name	Role
Emily Knox	Publishing Committee member; <i>Journal of Intellectual Freedom &amp; Privacy</i> editor
Lynn M. Dixon	Publishing Committee member

Heather Campbell	Publishing Committee member and chair
George Kendall	Interim Director, ALA Publishing & Media, and Editor & Publisher, <i>Booklist</i> ; ALA Publishing Committee staff liaison
Mary Jo Bolduc	Licensing & Permissions Manager; ALA Publishing Committee staff liaison
Sarah Searles	Publishing Ethics subcommittee member; Knowledge Quest Editorial Board member
Elizabeth A. Burns	Publishing Ethics subcommittee member; <i>School Library Research</i> Co-editor
Sharon Verbeten	Publishing Ethics subcommittee member; <i>Children and Libraries</i> journal editor
Jacque Kociubuk	Publishing Ethics subcommittee member; Children and Libraries Editorial Advisory Committee co-chair
Megan Thomas	Publishing Ethics subcommittee member; Children and Libraries Editorial Advisory Committee co-chair
Kristen Totleben	Publishing Ethics subcommittee member; <i>College &amp; Research Libraries</i> editor
David Free	Publishing Ethics subcommittee member; ALA/ACRL staff; <i>C&amp;RL News</i> editor-in-chief
Richard Saunders	Publishing Ethics subcommittee member; <i>RBM</i> former editor
Diane Dias De Fazio	Publishing Ethics subcommittee member; <i>RBM</i> editor
Ken Varnum	Publishing Ethics subcommittee member; <i>ITAL</i> editor

Rachel Scott	Publishing Ethics subcommittee member; <i>LRTS</i> editor
Joni Bodart	Publishing Ethics subcommittee member; <i>YALS</i> editor