The International Journal of the First Year in Higher Education
Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers

COPE Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers

The following guidelines were developed by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE). The International Journal of the First Year in Higher Education is aligned with COPE’s best practice guidelines for dealing with ethical issues in journal publishing and has adopted the COPE guidelines which the journal members (Advisory Board, editors and the journal manager) have agreed meet the purposes and objectives of the Journal.

Introduction

The COPE Ethical Guidelines for Peer Review note:

Peer review in all its forms plays an important role in ensuring the integrity of the scholarly record. The process depends to a large extent on trust, and requires that everyone involved behaves responsibly and ethically. Peer reviewers play a central and critical part in the peer-review process, but too often come to the role without any guidance and may be unaware of their ethical obligations. The COPE Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers set out the basic principles and standards to which all peer reviewers should adhere during the peer-review process.

(Hames, I. 2013, retrieved from http://publicationethics.org/files/Ethical_guidelines_for_peer_reviewers_0.pdf)

Below is a summary of the basic principles, provided by COPE, of which peer reviewers of submissions to The International Journal of the First Year in Education should adhere to (The complete guidelines, developed by COPE can be downloaded here):

Peer reviewers should:

- only agree to review manuscripts for which they have the subject expertise required to carry out a proper assessment and which they can assess in a timely manner
- respect the confidentiality of peer review and not reveal any details of a manuscript or its review, during or after the peer-review process, beyond those that are released by the journal
- not use information obtained during the peer-review process for their own or any other person’s or organisation’s advantage, or to disadvantage or discredit others
- declare all potential conflicting interests, seeking advice from the journal if they are unsure whether something constitutes a relevant interest
- not allow their reviews to be influenced by the origins of a manuscript, by the nationality, religious or political beliefs, gender or other characteristics of the authors, or by commercial considerations
- be objective and constructive in their reviews and approach the review in a courteous and professional manner
- acknowledge that peer review is largely a reciprocal endeavour and undertake to carry out their fair share of reviewing and in a timely manner
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- provide journals with personal and professional information that is accurate and a true representation of their expertise
- recognise that impersonation of another individual during the review process is considered serious Misconduct

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