

SALT University College

Policy for Journal Management

1. Introduction

This Journal Management Policy establishes a framework for the effective governance, operation, and ethical management of academic journals published or hosted by SALT University College. The policy aims to promote high-quality scholarly communication, enhance research visibility, foster integrity in publishing, and align with international standards such as those outlined by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), and the Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing. By adhering to these standards, SALT University College ensures that its journals contribute meaningfully to global knowledge while safeguarding against predatory practices and maintaining academic credibility.

1.1 Scope

This policy applies to all journals managed, published, or affiliated with SALT University College, including those hosted on university platforms, department-specific journals, and collaborative publications. It covers aspects such as governance, editorial processes, peer review, ethics, licensing, and compliance monitoring.

1.2 Objectives

- To ensure transparency, ethical integrity, and quality in journal operations.
- To support open access and equitable dissemination of research.
- To comply with international publishing standards and best practices.
- To provide clear guidelines for editors, authors, reviewers, and readers.

2. Governance and Oversight

2.1 Ownership and Management

SALT University College owns and manages all its journals, with oversight provided by the University Research Committee (URC). Journal ownership information, including affiliations with university departments or external partners, must be clearly stated on each journal's website. Misleading use of organizational names is prohibited. If a journal is affiliated with a society or sponsor, links to their websites must be provided.

2.2 Editorial Board and Advisory Bodies

Each journal shall have an Editorial Board composed of recognized experts in relevant fields, with full names, affiliations, and contact details listed on the journal website. Board members must consent to serve and be periodically reviewed (every 3-5 years) to ensure diversity in expertise, geography, gender, and career stage. The Editor-in-Chief must possess international reputation, demonstrated by metrics such as a minimum H-Index of 8, at least 15 indexed publications, and relevant editorial experience. Terms of office are limited to 5 years, non-renewable consecutively, with no individual serving on more than two university journal boards simultaneously.

2.3 Editor Responsibilities

Editors are responsible for:

- Overseeing submission, peer review, and publication processes.
- Ensuring editorial independence from commercial influences.
- Handling conflicts of interest transparently.
- Promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in decision-making.

Contact information for the editorial team, including a physical mailing address, must be prominently displayed on the journal website.

2.4 Forum for Editors

A university-wide Forum of Journal Editors shall convene annually, organized by the URC, to discuss challenges, share best practices, and receive training on international standards.

3. Submission and Author Guidelines

3.1 Manuscript Preparation

Authors must prepare manuscripts following COPE recommendations, using structures like IMRAD (Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion) for research articles. Key requirements include:

- **Title Page:** Article title, author details (including ORCID IDs), affiliations, funding sources, word count, and disclosures of relationships/activities.
- **Abstract:** Structured for research articles, including objectives, methods, results, conclusions, and trial registration numbers if applicable.
- **Methods:** Detailed for reproducibility, including ethics approvals, statistical methods, and use of AI technologies.
- **References:** Follow APA or Harvard style, citing original sources and avoiding retracted or predatory publications.

Manuscripts must use neutral, precise language and report data by demographic variables where appropriate.

3.2 Submission Process

Submissions must be original, not under consideration elsewhere, and disclosed if posted as preprints. Authors should submit via the university's online system, including a cover letter confirming authorship criteria, no redundant publication, and any prior reviewer comments if resubmitted from another journal. Permissions for reproduced material must be provided.

3.3 Authorship Criteria

Authorship requires substantial contributions to conception, data acquisition/analysis, drafting/revising, and final approval, with accountability for integrity. All authors must approve the final version and disclose conflicts. Guest or gift authorship is prohibited.

4. Peer Review Process

4.1 Type and Procedures

All research content undergoes rigorous peer review, typically double-blind, conducted by external experts or board members. The process, including reviewer selection criteria, masking of identities, and timelines (e.g., 4-6 weeks for reviews), must be clearly stated on the journal website. Exceptions (e.g., editorials) must be noted in articles.

4.2 Reviewer Responsibilities

Reviewers must maintain confidentiality, declare conflicts, and provide timely, constructive feedback. Journals may post anonymized reviews with articles for transparency.

4.3 Decision-Making

Editors make final decisions based on reviews, ensuring no guarantee of acceptance. Authors are informed of delays and may withdraw if needed. Submission, acceptance, and publication dates are published with articles.

5. Publication Ethics

5.1 Ethical Standards

Journals adhere to COPE Core Practices, addressing plagiarism, data fabrication/falsification, and misconduct. Plagiarism checks are mandatory. Allegations are handled per COPE guidelines, potentially involving institutional investigations.

5.2 Conflicts of Interest

All parties (authors, editors, reviewers) must disclose financial or non-financial conflicts using standardized forms.

5.3 Corrections, Retractions, and Expressions of Concern

Errors are corrected promptly with notices linking to originals. Retractions follow COPE standards for misconduct, with retracted articles remaining accessible but clearly labeled.

5.4 Research Misconduct

Defined as fabrication, falsification, plagiarism (FFP), or other unethical practices. The URC oversees investigations, ensuring transparency and fairness.

6. Open Access, Licensing, and Access

6.1 Open Access Policy

SALT University College promotes open access. Journals should use Creative Commons licenses (e.g., CC-BY) for OA content, clearly stated on articles and websites. Policies on repository posting must be explicit.

6.2 Copyright

Copyright terms are separate from website copyright, with holders named on articles. Authors may retain copyright under OA models.

6.3 Fees and Revenue

Any author fees (e.g., APCs) must be transparent, stated pre-submission, and not influence decisions. Waiver policies for low-income authors are required. Revenue sources (e.g., subscriptions, ads) must be disclosed and separated from editorial processes.

6.4 Advertising

Advertising policies must be stated, ensuring separation from content and no influence on editorial decisions.

7. Publishing Schedule, Archiving, and Preservation

7.1 Schedule

Journals must maintain a stated frequency (e.g., quarterly) and adhere to it, with exceptions communicated transparently.

7.2 Archiving

Electronic backup and preservation plans (e.g., via institutional repositories or services like PMC) must be indicated on websites.

8. Quality Control and Indexing

Journals must obtain ISSN/e-ISSN and DOI, aim for indexing in databases like Scopus, Arts and Humanities Indexed and Google Scholar, and undergo annual URC evaluation based on criteria such as content quality, regularity, and ethics compliance. Non-compliant journals may be decommissioned after 10 years without major indexing.

9. Complaints, Appeals, and Marketing

9.1 Complaints and Appeals

Procedures for handling complaints about editorial decisions, ethics, or misconduct follow COPE guidelines, with appeals directed to the URC.

9.2 Direct Marketing

Solicitations must be truthful, targeted, and non-misleading.

10. Compliance, Monitoring, and Review

10.1 Evaluation

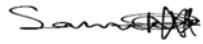
The URC conducts annual reviews of all journals against this policy and international standards. Training workshops are provided for editors.

10.2 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years or as needed to reflect evolving standards.

10.3 Resources

Journals must link to resources like COPE, and DOAJ

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Samuel Nkrumah-Pobi". The signature is written in a cursive style with some overlapping letters.

Samuel Nkrumah-Pobi, Ph.D.