

PUBLICATION ETHICS AND MALPRACTICE STATEMENT

The following Publication Ethics and Malpractice Statement aligns with the recommendations of COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics): *Code of Conduct and Best Practice Guidelines for Journal Editors* and the *Code of Conduct for Journal Publishers*. In accordance with these guidelines, *Studia UBB* requires full transparency regarding the use of Generative AI (GenAI) tools in research and manuscript preparation. It is essential that authors clearly indicate whether such tools were used and specify the type of assistance provided. GenAI may be employed for minor tasks in the publishing process (e.g., language editing, data visualization), but must not replace human intellectual contributions or produce fabricated content.

PUBLISHING ETHICS: ACADEMIC RESEARCH

1. Research Integrity

We uphold the same high standards as our University, and expect research published by to abide by the principles within the Art. 21. of the Babeş-Bolyai University Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct and of the Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai Publication Ethics and Malpractice Statement.

These principles cover:

- accepting and indicating as authors of a work only the persons who created the work.
- in research, the avoidance of plagiarism of any kind and the observance of intellectual property rights, including those deriving from the common ownership of data where research is carried out in collaboration with a supervisor or other researchers. The validation of new discoveries based on previous research/ experiments is acceptable provided the data is confirmed and explicitly cited.
- acknowledging the source of an idea, an expression, a result of previous research, regardless of whether they were published or not. This rule also applies to data taken from papers of any kind by students or doctoral students and subsequently used by a teacher in their own research; explicitly acknowledging the contribution of any person who has participated in a research activity. Where the contribution consisted in a supervisory or advisory activity only, a formal acknowledgement of the contribution is not required. In these cases, however, it is recommended to include a message of appreciation;
- the university will ensure that all categories of researchers will be able to enjoy the potential exploitation of their research and development results, in line with legal provisions, by securing effective protection of intellectual property rights;

- compliance with the purpose and the provisions for use of funds allocated to a research project. The funding that financed the research will be mentioned in the publications in which the research results are published;
- compliance with the principles of sound, transparent and efficient financial management and cooperation with audit bodies authorized to review the activity, regardless of whether they have been requested by employers/ sponsors or by ethics commissions;
- compliance with the norms of ethics regarding the research on human subjects or experiments with animals and of any other elements pertaining to the research ethics;
- scientific procedures should be carried out only in fields that contribute to the well-being of humans, animals, and the environment.

In addition to the general principles above, we expect our journal editorial team to provide specific guidelines and policies for authors on research integrity and ethics appropriate to their topics and disciplines.

Anyone who believes that research published by Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai has not been carried out in line with the UBB Code of ethics and professional conduct or the Publication Ethics and Malpractice Statement should raise their concern with the relevant editor or contact Editorial Office.

Concerns will be addressed by following COPE guidelines where possible and/or by escalating the matter to our Rector's Office if necessary.

Any person, within and outside the university, can inform the University Ethics Commission of possible violations committed by members of the university community. All complaints received are treated in confidence by the Ethics Commission.

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For filing complaints: etica@ubbcluj.ro.

2. Editorial Process

We are committed to editorial independence and strive in all cases to prevent this principle from being compromised through competing interests, fear, or any other corporate, business, financial or political influence. Our editorial processes reflect this commitment to editorial independence.

We do not discriminate against authors, editors or peer reviewers based on personal characteristics or identity. We are committed to embedding diversity, removing barriers to inclusion, and promoting equity at every stage of our publishing process. We actively seek and encourage submissions from scholars of diverse backgrounds, including race and ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation,

nationality, religion, and disability according to the GUIDE TO COMBATING DISCRIMINATION AND CODE OF CONDUCT ON ANTISEMITISM and GUIDELINES ON GENDER EQUALITY.

Our academic publishing programme is overseen by the UBB Ethics Commission, consisting of academics from the Babes-Bolyai University. The structure and composition of the university ethics commission are proposed by the administration council, endorsed by the university Senate and approved by the Rector. Professional prestige and moral authority are the underlying criteria for the composition of the Commission, with ethics and legal experts.

The GUIDE TO COMBATING DISCRIMINATION is an official document regarding the non-discrimination policy of Babeş-Bolyai University and it is based primarily on the provisions of the Romanian Constitution; Government Ordinance no. 137/2000 on the prevention and sanctioning of all forms of discrimination; Law no. 202/2002 on equal opportunities between women and men; Law no. 1/2011 on national education; Law no. 206/2004 on good conduct in scientific research, technological development and innovation, intellectual property rights; Babeş-Bolyai University adheres to all European and national laws and regulations on combating discrimination, while its representatives have a vested interest in identifying, better understanding and avoiding any other forms of discrimination. The purpose of developing these guidelines is to: a) uphold the commitment of Babeş-Bolyai University to equal opportunities and affirmative action for the protection of vulnerable and/or underprivileged groups; b) establish consistent criteria for assessing situations that may amount to discrimination or harassment; c) promote a safe and non-discriminatory educational and professional university environment and comply with applicable laws by: preventing any acts of discrimination; introducing special measures, including affirmative action, to protect the disadvantaged who do not enjoy equal opportunities; mediation by amicable settlement of conflicts arising from facts or acts of discrimination; taking action against discriminatory behaviour following a complaint filed with the University Ethics Committee; providing assistance and support following discrimination or harassment.

Gender equality is one of the fundamental values fostered and safeguarded at Babeş-Bolyai University with the aim of ensuring that all members of the academic community, regardless of sex or gender identity, enjoy the same opportunities, rights and obligations. The GUIDELINES ON GENDER EQUALITY is an official document regarding the policy and action plans for fostering gender equality within Babeş-Bolyai University and draws mainly on the provisions of the Romanian Constitution, the Labour Code, Government Ordinance no. 137/2000 on the prevention and sanction of all forms of discrimination, Law no. 202/2002 on equal opportunities between women and men, Law no. 1/2011 on national education and Law no. 206/2004 on good conduct in scientific research, technological development and innovation, intellectual property law. Babeş-Bolyai University complies with all European and national laws and regulations on equal opportunities and equality between women and men and fosters it at all levels and in all areas of its activity.

We do not tolerate abusive behaviour or correspondence towards our staff, and others involved in the publishing process on our behalf. If anyone involved in this process engages in such behaviour, we have the right to take action to protect others from this abuse. This may include, for example, withdrawal of a manuscript from consideration, or challenging clearly abusive peer review comments.

3. Editor's duties and responsibilities

Publication decisions

The editor-in-chief is responsible for the selection of the articles to be published in the journal, based on the recommendations and comments received from the peer reviewers, at the end of the double-blind peer review process. The editor-in-chief consults the other editors and guest-editors, as appropriate, in making the selection and in deciding the timing of publication for each submission. The manuscripts submitted for publication shall be evaluated and selected for publication based exclusively on the quality of the manuscript, the policies of the journal's editorial board, and the legal provisions in force regarding libel, copyright, and plagiarism, without taking into consideration the author's age, career status, race, gender, sexual orientation, religious and political beliefs, ethnicity, national origin or citizenship.

Conflict of interest

Editors who find themselves in a situation of conflict of interests should notify the editor-in-chief and recuse themselves from handling a particular manuscript. The conflict of interests may include personal, commercial, financial, intellectual, professional, political or religious considerations.

Confidentiality

The editorial staff shall only disclose information about a journal submission to the people directly involved in the peer review and publication process, as required and appropriate. Exception to this provision is the allegation of plagiarism and/other fraudulent behaviour, when the content of the manuscript shall be disclosed to third parties, as described below, under **Prevention and Fight Against Plagiarism**.

The editors shall not disclose any information about ongoing processes of editorial decisions to any unauthorised third parties. Exception to this is the case of unethical editorial behaviour.

Since the journal uses a double-blind peer review process, the identity of the author shall not be disclosed to the peer reviewers during the peer-review process, nor should the identity of the reviewers be divulged to the author or any third parties. The identity of the reviewer can be made public, with the reviewer's express permission, at the end of the peer-review process, in the journal's yearly reviewers acknowledgement list, which does not link the reviewers to the manuscript they had reviewed, nor with the specific issue in which the manuscript might have been published.

The editorial staff shall not use the information in an unpublished manuscript for their own professional gain, nor to the advantage of colleagues or associates, without the author(s)'s explicit written consent.

4. Plagiarism. Prevention and Fight against Plagiarism and other forms of fraudulent conduct

ANTI-PLAGIARISM PROCEDURE IN THE SCHOLARLY WORKSPUBLISHED BY STUDIA UBB (EN) / PROCEDURĂ PENTRU EVITAREA PLAGIATULUI ÎN LUCRĂRILE REVISTEI STUDIA (RO)

Authors of the journal must be aware and understand that *Studia Universitatis Babeș-Bolyai* intends to prevent, and also sanctions attempts and acts of plagiarism **and other forms of fraudulent conduct, including but not limited to the fabrication and/or falsification of data**. Therefore, authors are hereby advised that:

- Plagiarism attempts or other fraudulent actions discovered and documented during the review process (Editorial Office, peer review) may lead to: a) rejection of the manuscript for publication; b) official information of the higher education or research institution of the author's affiliation; and c) information of the scholarly community and public opinion.
- Upon notification on allegation of plagiarism or other fraudulent actions for any article that has been already published in *Studia Universitatis Babeș-Bolyai*, and following the thorough verification of the notification, the Editorial Office may take the following steps: a) contact the Index of allegations of plagiarized works in Romania; b) follow the procedure in place for plagiarism attempts or other fraudulent actions discovered and documented during the review process; c) officially inform the higher education or research institution of the author's affiliation, making available all necessary documents (including the author's responsible declaration of originality); d) advise the most important international databases about the allegation of plagiarism; and e) publish (on the site, etc.) its official position on the matter.

As conceptual and general guidelines on plagiarism, the journal Studia UBB refers to: "What Constitutes Plagiarism?", <https://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu/what-constitutes-plagiarism-0>; *Plagiarism. Decision Making & Dealing with Grey Zones across Academic Fields*, presented by Michael Seadle, Thorsten Beck & Melanie Rügenhagen.

Prohibited Uses of Generative AI

Fabrication or Manipulation: AI must not be used to generate false data, references, or conclusions. Plagiarism: Using AI-generated content without proper attribution is a violation of ethical publishing standards. Misrepresentation: Authors must not misrepresent AI-generated work as their own intellectual contribution.

Disclosure Requirements

Generative AI is not an author. These tools should only be used to improve language and readability, with caution. All authors must provide a clear disclosure statement regarding the use of GenAI if they used it in writing the paper (e.g., "Generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT, were used for language editing and improving the clarity of the manuscript"). If you used generative AI or AI-assisted technology, include the following statement directly before the references at the end of your manuscript: "All intellectual content, research design, and data analysis were conducted solely by the authors".

The statement should include the name(s) of the tool(s) used; specific tasks where the tool was applied (e.g., language editing, visualization).

Declaration of generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process:

During the preparation of this work the author(s) used [NAME TOOL / SERVICE] in order to [REASON]. After using this tool/service, the author(s) reviewed and edited the content as needed and take(s) full responsibility for the content of the publication.

Consequences of Misuse

In alignment with COPE's misconduct policies, violations of this policy may result in: Rejection of the manuscript; Retraction of published articles if ethical breaches are discovered post-publication; Notification to institutions, funders, or other stakeholders, where appropriate.

5. Author's duties and responsibilities

Reporting standards

The author(s) should submit original manuscripts based on their own research. The paper should be objective and accurate and should not contain libellous, discriminatory, illegal or confidential content.

All sources used in the paper must be referenced appropriately. The misrepresentation and/or distortion of the cited sources is unacceptable.

The author(s) is/are solely responsible and accountable for the content of the manuscript.

Before submission, the author(s) should make sure that they respect the journal's guidelines for authors, available on the journal website.

Authorship

Authorship of the manuscript includes the person or people who was/were actively and creatively involved in generating the idea of the manuscript, in the research from which the manuscript derives, in building the argumentation, in the design, writing, interpretation, development of the paper, and who take(s) responsibility for the entire content of the manuscript.

The author(s) can list in the Acknowledgements section of the manuscript the name of all parties who might have contributed to the completion of the article (by funding the research project, supervising or mentoring the research, making comments and suggestions for the draft, contributing to an intellectual debate on the topic etc.), but who cannot claim authorship.

Disputes referring to authorship should be solved between/among the authors. The editorial staff will not investigate, judge, nor mediate such disputes. The resolutions should, however, be communicated to the editors, if such disputes emerge post-publication and in case a correction has to be made public. "Ghost", "Gift", or "Guest" authorship is considered unacceptable. More information on the terms is available here: <https://publicationethics.org/resources/flowcharts-new/changes-authorship>

Copyright

If the manuscript includes copyrighted materials, the author shall have obtained express written permission for their use from the copyright owner before submitting the manuscript to *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai*.

Multiple, redundant or parallel publication

The authors should not simultaneously submit the manuscript to other journals while under consideration by *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai*.

Re-publishing the same research with another journal is considered unacceptable conduct.

Translated versions of the articles published in *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai* can be published elsewhere only if the author(s) acknowledge(s) the journal as the first venue of publication, in a complete bibliographical entry, published with the translation.

When submitting a manuscript, the author(s) must present to the editor all related papers, such as conference presentations, drafts on preprint servers etc.

Errors in published works

If the author or a third party discovers a serious error in a published paper, they should immediately contact the journal and present relevant evidence. In such cases, the author and the editor shall work together for the retraction or correction of the paper, as appropriate.

Conflict of interests

The author(s) shall disclose any situation of conflict of interests in which they might find themselves, if relevant to the content of the manuscript or its publication. The conflict of interests may derive from personal, commercial, financial, intellectual, professional, political or religious considerations.

AI Statement

Authors must include a statement on the use of Generative AI or AI-based tools in the Declarations section of the manuscript.

6. Copyright

The editors shall do everything in their power to protect the rights of the author by addressing the relevant copyright regulations.

Transfer of copyright

1. By agreeing to publish with *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai*, the author grants the Journal the right to:

- publish, republish, transmit, sell, and distribute the published article, either partially or in full, in digital and printed editions, through all media used by the Journal at present or available in the future,

- deposit copies of the Contribution in the journal's archive (electronic and printed) and in the archives of third parties authorised by the journal.

2. The Journal shall be appropriately acknowledged and cited as the article's first venue of publication in case the author decides to:

- reproduce, transmit, disseminate the published article, either partially or in full,
- include the published article in a thesis or dissertation, either partially or in full,
- expand the published article in book-length form or include it in a future volume by the author, either partially or in full,
- translate the contribution and publish the respective translation elsewhere,
- read the contribution and disseminate copies thereof at conferences or other professional meetings.

3. The author is entitled to use the published article as follows:

- to make printed or electronic copies for their own personal and professional use,
- to distribute printed or electronic copies of the published article to research associates and colleagues, for their personal and professional use,
- to retain patent rights and other similar rights deriving from the published article.

The author does not need the journal's express permission for any of the situations detailed in sections 2 and 3.

4. The author shall not republish the article or fragments thereof in any other journal or in conference proceedings. Translated versions can be published, as long as the author respects the relevant provisions in section 2.

7. Peer Reviewer's duties and responsibilities

Proposals submitted for our Academic Journal Studia Universitatis Babes-Bolyai are initially reviewed by in-house Editorial Staff, who may also consult relevant external book series editors or subject specialists. If the proposal is suitable for consideration by Studia UBB, the proposal, along with sample content, will be sent to a minimum of two external and independent peer reviewers. The content will be reviewed by two prestigious persons, who have to fill up a review standard form. Their suggestions are sent to the author, for further changes. The reviewers are not aware of the authors' names, as well as the authors don't have the information regarding reviewers' names (double blind review system).

Peer review is critical to maintaining the standards of our publications. The reviewer:

- assists the editor in selecting the manuscripts for publication;
- should accept the invitation to review a manuscript only if they have the required expertise and can perform an unbiased evaluation;
- the peer review shall be done using the peer-review sheet made available by the editor;
- anonymously assists the author in improving his/her manuscript by making pertinent recommendations and giving clear explanations and instructions, even if they do not recommend the publication;
- the reviewer's feedback shall be constructive and respectful;

- the reviewer can suggest the consideration of bibliographical sources, initially omitted by the author, with a view to improving the scientific standing of the manuscript, but shall refrain from recommendations to include references to their own work (or the work of an associate) solely with a view to increasing their own (or their associate's) visibility. Such suggestions shall be made exclusively on legitimate scientific reasons;
- shall recommend the rejection of/ notify the editor if the manuscript includes slanderous, discriminatory or illegal content.

Conflict of interest

If the reviewer suspects the identify the author of the article received for evaluation and they believe they might be or find themselves in a situation of competing interests, they should notify the editor and refuse the invitation to review the article. The conflict of interests may include personal, commercial, financial, intellectual, professional, political or religious considerations.

Suspicion of misconduct and unethical behaviour

If the text of the manuscript submitted for review or any step related to the peer review process raises questions of misconduct (e.g., considerable similarity between the manuscript and other published or unpublished work that the reviewer might be familiar with; suspicion of fabrication or falsification of data; attempts to influence the reviewer towards a particular publication decision), the reviewer shall immediately notify the editor.

Promptness

The reviewer shall respect the deadline for the review. In the event the reviewer is no longer able to meet the deadline (or requires an extension), he/she should contact the editor as soon as possible.

Ownership of the review

The review belongs to the journal and shall only be used as part of the peer review process, with a view to selecting manuscripts for publication and assisting the authors in improving their work.

Confidentiality

Since the journal uses a double-blind peer review process, the reviewer shall not attempt to find the identity of the author, nor shall he/she disclose their own identity as the manuscript's reviewer. The reviewer can authorize the editor to disclose their identity as a reviewer for the journal, without any mention of the manuscript they have reviewed, nor the issue for which the manuscript was submitted or in which it might have been published. Alternatively, the reviewer can choose to remain anonymous at all time.

The reviewer is not authorised to use or disseminate the manuscript or fragments thereof, to their own advantage or to the advantage of a third party. In case the manuscript includes ideas, concepts, analyses relevant to the reviewer's professional activity, these can be used with proper acknowledgement after the publication of the manuscript.

The reviewer shall not use, nor disclose the information obtained during the peer review process, without the express permission of the editor or author, as appropriate. The reviewer shall evaluate the manuscript on his own/ her own, without including anyone else in the peer-review process. In case additional expertise is required, the reviewer shall notify the editor and they shall decide together on the best course of action. If a third party becomes involved in the peer review process, with the express permission of the editor, they become a reviewer and will comply with the provisions of the present Publication Ethics and Malpractice Statement.

8. Fraudulent research and research misconduct

We work with the relevant editor(s), COPE, and other appropriate institutions to investigate fraudulent research or research misconduct. If the text of the manuscript submitted for review or any step related to the peer review process raises questions of misconduct (e.g., considerable similarity between the manuscript and other published or unpublished work that the reviewer might be familiar with; suspicion of fabrication or falsification of data; attempts to influence the reviewer towards a particular publication decision), the reviewer shall immediately notify the editor.

9. Confidentiality

Since the journal uses a double-blind peer review process, the reviewer shall not attempt to find the identity of the author, nor shall he/she disclose their own identity as the manuscript's reviewer. The reviewer can authorize the editor to disclose their identity as a reviewer for the journal, without any mention of the manuscript they have reviewed, nor the issue for which the manuscript was submitted or in which it might have been published. Alternatively, the reviewer can choose to remain anonymous at all time.

The reviewer is not authorised to use or disseminate the manuscript or fragments thereof, to their own advantage or to the advantage of a third party. In case the manuscript includes ideas, concepts, analyses relevant to the reviewer's professional activity, these can be used with proper acknowledgement after the publication of the manuscript.

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10. Transparency

Studia Universitatis Babes-Bolyai follows COPE's Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing and encourage our publishing partners to uphold these same principles.

11. Ethical business practices

Academic Freedom

See Babeş-Bolyai University Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct for further details. Academic Freedom.

Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai Journal will never be complicit in censorship. The journal is part of the Babeş-Bolyai University which, as the oldest, the largest and, in many ways, the most prestigious academic educational public institution in Romania born under the distinct sign of multiculturalism, is fully committed to the principle and promotion of freedom of speech and expression. As an international publisher, our goal is to serve the academic community in all countries around the world. As a member of COPE we support COPE's Statement on Censorship, and we follow the provisions of the Art. 9. of the GUIDE TO COMBATING DISCRIMINATION and the principles of the University Ethics Commission.

Communication and public relations

Babeş-Bolyai University is present on a series of media outlets and social networking sites to publicize the educational offer, activities and events held within the institution and to disseminate our publications. However, such onward communication should always be in line with the Communication and Public Relations Unit policies, best practice in media use, and to follow the standards of the External and Internal Communication Service.

Useful contacts

For all enquiries relating to the integrity of *Studia Universitatis* Babeş-Bolyai content or COPE Core Practice areas, please contact our EDITORIAL OFFICE. All queries will be handled sensitively and as confidentially as possible within the scope of any necessary subsequent investigation.

Babeş-Bolyai University provides access for anyone to raise concerns (within and outside the university) relating to publishing ethics. All complaints received are treated in confidence by the Ethics Commission. Allegations of possible breaches of the ethical principles as contained in the UBB Code of Ethics will be received in writing, via the UBB Registry or by e-mail to etica@ubbcluj.ro.