

Publishing Agreement

This agreement is made between

Springer Nature Switzerland AG, Gewerbstrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland
(hereinafter called **Publisher**)

and

Sapienza Università di Roma / Sapienza University of Rome, c/o Department of Statistical Sciences, Piazzale Aldo Moro 5, 00185 Rome, Italy
(hereinafter called **University**)

For good and valuable consideration, the receipt and sufficiency of which is acknowledged, the parties, intending to be legally bound, agree as follows by signing this Publishing Agreement ("**Agreement**"):

1. Definitions and Interpretation

1.1 In this Agreement the following words and expressions shall have the meanings set out opposite them:

"Commencement Date": 01 January 2019

"Journal": means the open access publication published under the title *Genus: Journal of Population Sciences*.

"Party": means each of Publisher and University, and together they shall be referred to as the "Parties".

1.2 In this Agreement:

- a. Reference to any statute or statutory provision includes a reference to that statute or statutory provision as amended, extended or re-enacted and to any regulation, order, instrument or subordinate legislation under the relevant statute or statutory provision.
- b. A person includes a natural person, corporate or unincorporated body (whether or not having separate legal personality) and that person's personal representatives, successors and permitted assigns.
- c. Unless the context otherwise requires, words in the singular shall include the plural and in the plural shall include the singular.
- d. The headings to the clauses are for ease of reference only and shall not form any part of this Agreement for the purposes of construction.

2. Publication

The University and the Publisher shall collaborate to publish the Journal in accordance with the terms and for the duration of this Agreement.

3. Designation of the Journal

During the term of this Agreement the Journal shall be designated as the official publication of the University. The Journal's website shall refer to the University affiliation, and the Publisher shall

appropriately acknowledge that the Journal is an official publication of the University in major promotional activities of the Journal.

4. Open Access, Article Licensing and Copyright

- 4.1 All articles published in the Journal shall be published on an open access basis.
- 4.2 The Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY) shall apply to all articles published in the Journal. In order to reflect updates to the CC BY license the Publisher reserves the right to update its Copyright Policy and License Agreement.
- 4.3 The Parties acknowledge that copyright in articles published in the Journal shall remain vested in the authors or original copyright holders (*e.g.* authors' institution).
- 4.4 Occasionally a different licensing and copyright arrangement may be required for individual articles, for instance if mandated by funding agencies. To the extent possible the open access nature of such articles shall not be affected.

5. Ownership and Intellectual Property

The Parties acknowledge that all Intellectual Property Rights in the Journal, including the title of the Journal and all associated goodwill are, and shall remain, the sole and exclusive property of the University. Subject to the terms and conditions of this Agreement, the University hereby grants to the Publisher, for the term of this Agreement, a non-exclusive royalty free license to use the name of the University, the title of the Journal, and any trademarks, trade names or logotypes associated with them in connection with the exercise of any rights granted to the Publisher in this Agreement and reasonably exercised in the pursuit of its rights as the publisher of the Journal. Nothing in this Agreement shall be construed to give the University a claim to ownership of any intellectual property owned or provided by the Publisher or third parties and used in, or in conjunction with, the Journal. For the avoidance of doubt it shall be stated that the Journal's Internet domain name (URL) containing a brand name owned by the Publisher or any acronym or any abbreviation of a brand name owned by the Publisher are, and shall remain, the sole and exclusive property of the Publisher. This Ownership and Intellectual Property clause shall survive the termination of this Agreement.

6. Responsibilities of the Publisher

The Publisher's obligations include:

- 6.1 Publishing the Journal as an English language, open access, online journal, under the SpringerOpen or a successor brand. The Publisher shall be responsible for all matters relating to the production, design, promotion, marketing, and hosting of the Journal. The Publisher may also make the Journal's content available through further portals provided by other members of the Springer Nature group of companies, including but not limited to the portal currently known as SpringerLink. The Publisher retains the right to alter the name of its platforms, brands, and rights acquisition documentation.
- 6.2 Providing a Manuscript Tracking System that allows online submission of manuscripts by authors, tracking of peer review and decision making concerning acceptance/rejection of submitted manuscripts.
- 6.3 Providing Journal Editorial Office services to support administration of the peer-review process for all articles submitted to the Journal.
- 6.4 Providing copy-editing services for all manuscripts accepted for publication in the Journal.
- 6.5 Producing PDF and XML formats (and/or any other formats as may become standard for digital journal content) of accepted articles and hosting these articles on the Journal website.

- 6.6 Liaising with indexing services, including Web of Science, PubMed, Scopus and other relevant services in order to ensure that the Journal is included in their databases and services in a timely fashion.
- 6.7 Delivering published articles to appropriate repositories that are free to access, such as PubMed Central, as well as to digital preservation entities such as Portico (www.portico.org) or any other repository of similar nature or co-operating with other companies developing new forms of archiving later devised or perfected.
- 6.8 Ensuring that digital object identifiers (DOIs) are assigned to all articles published in the Journal.
- 6.9 Nominating an in-house member of staff who shall act as the primary contact for the Director-in-Chief and support the Director-in-Chief as well as the Editorial Board Members concerning the strategic development of the Journal.
- 6.10 Ensuring the Journal adheres to recognized standards of good editorial practice, as defined in the Publisher's Code of Conduct for Editors-in-Chief of academic journals. This Code of Conduct is attached to this Agreement as Appendix 1. The Publisher reserves the right to conduct confidential audits of the Journal in this context and provide feedback and help to the Director-in-Chief and the Editorial Board Members, as required.
- 6.11 Marketing and promoting the Journal to the relevant community in consultation with the Editor-in-Chief.
- 6.12 Providing customer services to authors, readers, librarians and other parties with an interest in the Journal.

7. Responsibilities of the University

The obligations of the University include:

- 7.1 The University shall have the responsibility, in consultation with the Publisher, for nominating and securing the services of a Director-in-Chief, who has the legal responsibility for the Journal.
- 7.2 The University shall support the Director-in-Chief and the Publisher in their responsibilities pursuant to this Agreement.
- 7.3 The University shall ensure that the Director-in-Chief, in consultation with the Publisher, nominates one or more Editors-in-Chief who have the scientific responsibility for the Journal.
 - 7.4 The University shall ensure that at all times there is in place a Director-in-Chief with legal responsibility for the Journal or at least one active Editor-in-Chief.
- 7.5 The University shall use all reasonable efforts to ensure that the Journal publishes not fewer than 24 articles a year. The Publisher welcomes an increase of the annual article number during the term of this Agreement.
- 7.6 The University agrees to use its best efforts to deal in a timely fashion with all queries received relating to the Journal.

8. Director-in-Chief

- 8.1 The appointment of the Director-in-Chief shall be confirmed in a separate agreement which lays out the responsibilities of the Director-in-Chief. This separate agreement shall be between the Director-in-Chief and the Publisher but shall also require, as confirmation and condition of this separate agreement becoming effective, the signature of the Director of the Department of Statistical Sciences acting on behalf of the University.
- 8.2 If the Director-in-Chief has not been appointed within three months of the Commencement Date, the Publisher reserves the right to withdraw from this Agreement with immediate effect.

- 8.3 The validity of this Agreement shall not be affected if a new Director-in-Chief replaces the Director-in-Chief, or if the agreement with the Director-in-Chief is terminated. In the event that the agreement with the Director-in-Chief is terminated, the University shall appoint a new Director-in-Chief as laid out above under paragraph 7.1
- 8.4 In the event that the Director-in-Chief is in material breach of the Publisher's Code of Conduct for Editors-in-Chief of academic journals, or otherwise in material breach of the agreement or accepted ethical standards in research and scholarship, the Publisher reserves the right to suspend publication of further articles in the Journal until the breach has been addressed. Furthermore the Publisher reserves the right to terminate the separate agreement between the Publisher and the Director-in-Chief with regard to the rights and obligations of the Director-in-Chief stipulated in it and to require that the University nominate a new, suitably qualified Director-in-Chief.

9. Editor(s)-in-Chief

- 9.1 The appointment of the Editor(s)-in-Chief shall be confirmed in a separate agreement which lays out the responsibilities of the Editor(s)-in-Chief. This separate agreement shall be between the Editor(s)-in-Chief and the Publisher but shall also require, as confirmation and condition of this separate agreement becoming effective, the signature of the Director-in-Chief.
- 9.2 The validity of this Agreement shall not be affected if a new Editor-in-Chief is adjoined or replaces one (of the) Editor(s)-in-Chief, or if the agreement with one (of the) Editor(s)-in-Chief is terminated.
- 9.3 In the event that the Editor(s)-in-Chief is(are) in material breach of the Publisher's Code of Conduct for Editors-in-Chief of academic journals, or otherwise in material breach of their agreement or accepted ethical standards in research and scholarship, the Publisher reserves the right to suspend publication of further articles in the Journal until the breach has been addressed. Furthermore, the Publisher reserves the right to terminate the separate agreement between the Publisher and the Editor(s)-in-Chief with regard to the rights and obligations of the Editor(s)-in-Chief stipulated in it.

10. Warranties

The University represents and warrants:

- 10.1 that it will not publish any material on behalf of the University in the Journal to which the rights have been granted or assigned to any other person or entity; that any material published on behalf of the University will not infringe upon any third party Intellectual Property Right; that it will not invade the right of privacy or publicity of any person or entity; that it will not contain any libelous matter; that all statements asserted as facts will be true or based upon reasonable research for accuracy. The University indemnifies the Publisher against all actions, suits, proceedings, claims, demands, damages and costs occasioned to the Publisher in consequence of any breach of this warranty. If there is reasonable doubt whether any content submitted by the University for publication in the Journal on the behalf of the University is in breach of this warranty, the Publisher is entitled to refuse to publish such content.
- 10.2 that it shall cooperate fully with the Publisher in relation to any concerns, claims or legal action that might arise from the publication of the Journal and the University shall give the Publisher access at reasonable times to any relevant accounts, documents and records within the power or control of the University.
- 10.3 that at all times the University shall comply in full with: (i) all applicable anti-bribery and corruption laws; and (ii) the Publisher's anti-bribery and corruption policy as amended from time to time (and currently entitled Business Partner Code of Conduct and available at <http://www.springernature.com/gp/group/responsible-business>).
- 10.4 that no person acting on behalf of the University: (i) has directly or indirectly: (a) paid, provided, offered or authorised any payment, gift, inducement or other benefit to any person including any

governmental or regulatory entity or official in any territory for the purpose of improperly obtaining, retaining or directing business or to secure or obtain any improper business advantage; nor (b) received, accepted or authorised any such benefit from any such person for any such purpose; nor (ii) shall directly or indirectly do any of the foregoing at any time whilst the cooperation between the University and the Publisher continues. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Agreement, any breach by the University of this clause may be regarded by the Publisher as incapable of remedy and permitting the Publisher, without prejudice to its other rights and remedies, to terminate this Agreement on immediate written notice.

11. Advertising

The Publisher shall decide on the inclusion of appropriate advertisements in the Journal and retains the sole right to establish rates and to invoice for advertisements. If the University or the Director-in-Chief feel that a specific advertisement is inappropriate, they may request that the Publisher remove this from the Journal website, and no reasonable request shall be denied.

12. Article-Processing Charge

As laid out in **Schedule 1**, the Publisher shall charge an article-processing charge (“**APC**”) for articles accepted for publication in the Journal.

13. Term and Termination

- 13.1 The cooperation between the Parties shall begin on the Commencement Date and remain in force until 31 December 2021 unless terminated earlier in accordance with the provisions of this Term and Termination clause.
- 13.2 The Publisher reserves the right to terminate this Agreement with immediate effect by giving written notice on the occurrence of any of the following:
 - a. Fewer than fifteen articles are published in the Journal in any period of twelve months.
 - b. The University commits a breach of this Agreement, provided that written notice of the alleged breach is given to the University and that the University fails to address the breach within 30 days.
- 13.3 Either Party may terminate this Agreement with immediate effect by giving written notice if the other Party becomes bankrupt, an order is made or resolution is passed for its winding-up, any distress or execution is levied on any of its property or effects, a receiver or an administrative receiver is appointed over any of its assets, it compounds or makes any voluntary arrangements with its creditors or any class thereof, it becomes subject to an administration order, it is dissolved or otherwise ceases to exist, or such dissolution or ceasing to exist is imminent.
- 13.4 The termination of this Agreement for any reason shall not prejudice or affect the rights and remedies of either Party against the other in respect of any breach of this Agreement on or prior to the date of termination.

14. Confidentiality

- 14.1 The University shall not use or disclose to any person or entity either during or after this Agreement any confidential information about the business or affairs of Publisher or any other company or affiliate in its group or any of its business contacts, or about any other confidential matters which may come to the University knowledge during the Term. Confidential information means any information or matter which is not in the public domain and which relates to the affairs of Publisher or any other company in its group or any of their business contacts.
- 14.2 The restriction in this Confidentiality provision does not apply to:

- a. any use or disclosure authorised by Publisher or as required by judicial, administrative, governmental or regulatory process in connection with any action, suit, proceedings or claim or otherwise by applicable law; or
- b. any information which is already in, or comes into, the public domain otherwise than through unauthorised disclosure by the University.

14.3 This Confidentiality clause shall survive the termination of this Agreement for five years.

15. Force Majeure

Neither Party shall be liable for its delay or failure to perform to the extent caused by circumstances beyond its reasonable control, including, without limitation, fire, flood, strike, terrorism, civil, governmental or military authority or acts of God. Should a Party's delay or non-performance continue for a period of at least 60 days, however, the other Party may terminate this Letter of Agreement with immediate effect by giving written notice.

16. Limitation of Liability

- 16.1 Nothing in the Agreement shall limit or exclude the Publisher's liability for, (a) death or personal injury caused by its negligence, or the negligence of its employees, agents or subcontractors; (b) fraud or fraudulent misrepresentation; or (c) breach of the terms implied by section 2 of the Supply of Goods and Services Act 1982 (title and quiet possession) or any other liability which cannot be limited or excluded by applicable law.
- 16.2 Subject to subsection 1 of this Limitation of Liability clause, the Publisher shall not be liable to the University, whether in contract, tort (including negligence), breach of statutory duty, or otherwise, arising under or in connection with this Agreement for: (a) loss of profits; (b) loss of sales or business; (c) loss of agreements or contracts; (d) loss of anticipated savings; (e) loss of use or corruption of software, data or information; (f) loss of damage to goodwill; and/or (g) any indirect or consequential loss.
- 16.3 Subject to subsection 1 of this Limitation of Liability clause, the Publisher's total liability to the University, whether in contract, tort (including negligence), breach of statutory duty, or otherwise, arising under or in connection with this Agreement shall be limited to the greater of EUR 12,000 or 125% of the amount paid by the Publisher to the University under this Agreement in the 12 months preceding any such liability claim by the University.

17. General

- 17.1 The Parties warrant that they have the full power and authority to enter into this Agreement.
- 17.2 The Parties shall adhere to all applicable data protection regulations.
- 17.3 This Agreement including its Schedules constitutes the whole understanding between the University and the Publisher and no waiver or modification of this Agreement shall be valid unless in writing and signed by both Parties. The Parties agree to waive the requirement to sign on paper and to accept as binding such documents signed electronically by all Parties provided they use an industry accepted electronic signature service such as, but not limited to, DocuSign.
- 17.4 Any dispute or claim arising out of this Agreement or in connection with it shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of Switzerland and subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of Zug, Switzerland.
- 17.5 Nothing in this Agreement or to be done under this Agreement shall be deemed to constitute a partnership or a relationship of principal and agent or of employer and employee.
- 17.6 No person other than a Party shall have any rights to enforce any term of this Agreement.

- 17.7 This Agreement may be entered into in any number of counterparts and by the Parties to it on separate counterparts, each of which when so executed and delivered shall be an original but all the counterparts shall together constitute one and the same instrument.
- 17.8 Neither Party shall assign, transfer, mortgage, charge, subcontract, declare a trust over or deal in any other manner with any or all of its rights and obligations under this agreement without the prior written consent of the other Party. Notwithstanding the aforementioned, the Publisher may assign, transfer or subcontract any or all of its rights and obligations under this agreement to an affiliated company or a member of its group.
- 17.9 If any provision or part-provision of this Agreement is or becomes invalid, illegal or unenforceable, it shall be deemed modified to the minimum extent necessary to make it valid, legal and enforceable. If such modification is not possible, the relevant provision or part-provision shall be deemed deleted. Any modification to or deletion of a provision or part-provision under this paragraph shall not affect the validity and enforceability of the rest of this Agreement.
- 17.10 This Agreement replaces and supersedes any previous agreement between the University and the Publisher to publish the Journal.

Please sign if the above terms as well as the terms in Schedule 1 and in Appendix 1 to this Agreement are acceptable.

Signed, for and on behalf of

Sapienza University of Rome

DocuSigned by:
Eugenio Gaudio
866A4B766C29468...

Professor Eugenio Gaudio
Rector
Sapienza University of Rome

Springer Nature Switzerland AG

DocuSigned by:
William F Curtis
CA62CA7E36D1427...

ppa. William F Curtis
Executive Vice President

DocuSigned by:
Eric Schmitt
E75C3EAAD71343A...

Eric Schmitt
Managing Director

14 novembre 2018
Date _____

15. November 2018
Date _____

For internal use only:

Journal Number: 41118

PU/PD/PS/Date: 20/133/1750/July 2018

Legal Entity Number: 1128 Springer Nature Switzerland AG

BMC/SO Journal Society 5/2018

Schedule 1

1. The Publisher shall charge an article-processing charge (“**APC**”) for each article accepted by the Editor(s)-in-Chief, or an Editorial Board member authorized by the Editor(s)-in-Chief to make final decisions on article acceptances, for publication in *Genus: Journal of Population Sciences* (“**Journal**”).
2. The Journal’s APC for articles submitted in 2019 shall be EUR 960 and may be varied by the Publisher from time to time.
3. Where VAT or a similar tax applies, it shall be added to the APC amount payable.
4. The Publisher shall ensure that the APC remains competitive with the charges of comparable publishers offering open access.
5. The APC shall be charged by the Publisher to the corresponding author of an editorially accepted article. No other payment than the APC that is payable to the Publisher shall be charged to the corresponding author or another author of an editorially accepted article, neither by the Publisher nor by the University, in connection with the online publication of the article. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Publisher may charge an extra fee to authors who select to pay the APC not by credit card but request an invoice from the Publisher.
6. The University chooses to cover the APCs for approximately 14 invited and editorially accepted articles per calendar year. The University shall not charge any fee to the corresponding author or another author of an editorially accepted article in connection with the online publication of any article in the Journal.
7. In the event that the University considers a change to the arrangements regarding APC coverage, the University shall first discuss with the Publisher the impact of such a change on the Journal’s development. Any such change before the expiry date of this Agreement requires mutual written agreement by the Parties. The University shall give the Publisher not less than 1 month’s notice if it wishes to discuss a change to the arrangements regarding APC coverage. For the avoidance of doubt it shall be stated that any change of the Journal’s policy regarding APC coverage may only apply to articles submitted after implementation of the policy change and that the University therefore remains obliged to continue paying the APCs for accepted articles that were submitted before the change of policy and that the University would have paid for before the change of policy.
8. The University shall deposit monies into a Journal-specific Prepay Membership account (“**Account**”) to cover the APCs for approximately 14 invited and editorially accepted articles per calendar year. The Publisher shall invoice the University, using as the invoicee’s address Sapienza Università di Roma c/o Department of Statistical Sciences, Piazzale Aldo Moro 5, 00185 Rome, Italy.
9. The Publisher shall apply a discount on the APC for articles that are paid from the Account. The discount shall be 15%.
10. The University shall make a deposit of EUR 24,000 into the Account within 10 weeks of the Commencement Date of the Agreement. Further deposits will be made according to the provisions set out below.
11. The Account shall be debited each time an article covered by the Account is accepted for publication.
12. The Publisher shall provide the University with access to an online reporting tool to access the Account balance, statements detailing deposits into the Account, listings of published articles covered by the Account, and the APCs applicable to such articles.
13. The University shall ensure that at all times the balance remaining in the Account is sufficient to cover the costs that would be incurred if all submitted articles that the University has chosen to cover (as laid out in the preceding paragraphs of this Schedule) through the Account were accepted for publication. If after deduction of such potential costs the amount left in the Account is nearing depletion, the Publisher shall contact the University to request additional payments by the University into the Account.

14. If the Publisher has requested further payments by the University into the Account to ensure that at all times the balance remaining is sufficient to cover the costs that would be incurred if all submitted articles that the University has chosen to cover (as laid out in the preceding paragraphs of this Schedule) through the Account were accepted for publication and such further payment have not been received within 60 days of receipt of invoice, the Publisher shall have the right to suspend the coverage of APCs through the Account and introduce APCs payable by all authors until the invoice has been paid.
15. Notwithstanding the above sections 10 to 14 of this Schedule 1, the University shall not be obliged to pay more than EUR 36,000 into the Account over the term of the Agreement. In the event that the aggregate amount of the APC paid from the Account and chosen to cover through the Account, as set out in section 13 above, approaches EUR 36,000 over the term of the Agreement, the Parties shall discuss a strategy so that invited papers submitted to the account do not exceed the account balance.
16. In the event the Publisher ceases to publish the Journal, the balance left in the Account shall be returned to the University within 60 days of publication of the last article accepted for publication.
17. If a corresponding author is affiliated with an institution or organisation that has a BMC Membership that is in credit, the corresponding author shall have the APC covered in part or in full through the Membership. Depending on the type of Membership the institution has, the Journal's APC shall be discounted for this author. The Publisher shall have the right to agree discounts, for Membership and other arrangements. Discounts cannot be combined; only one discount can apply to any one submitted article.
18. Authors who do not have sufficient funds to pay the APC may request a discretionary full or partial waiver. Responsibility for administering requests for APC waivers shall rest with the Publisher, and eligibility for such waivers will be dependent on the authors demonstrating genuine lack of funds.
19. The Publisher shall in every calendar year waive the APCs for up to four articles that are either Editorials or commissioned contributions (such as Reviews) or other solicited articles that are useful for the Journal's development. The Publisher and the Editor shall strive to align such waivers with an overall development plan for the Journal.
20. The Journal may publish abstract and full-paper supplements, subject to approval by the Journal's Editor-in-Chief. The Publisher retains the sole right to establish publication charges and to invoice for supplements. Supplements originating from University-affiliated meetings are entitled to a discount of 20% off the Publisher's standard charges applicable to supplements. Waivers of or discounts to APCs are not available for supplements or for abstracts and articles accepted for publication in such supplements, and charges for supplements or individual articles in supplements cannot be covered through any of the Publisher's Membership arrangements.

Appendix 1

The Publisher's Code of Conduct for Editors-in-Chief of academic journals

In this Appendix the term "Journal" shall mean the journal for which the Editor-in-Chief is editorially responsible. For the avoidance of doubt, in the case of *Genus: Journal of Population Sciences* this Code of Conduct applies to the Director-in-Chief as well as to the Editor(s)-in Chief.

COPE

1. The Journal is a member of the (COPE). Editor(s)-in-Chief are expected to follow the COPE guideline entitled *Code of Conduct and Best Practice Guidelines for Journal Editors*.
2. The Publisher has responsibility to ensure that journals published by the Publisher adhere to editorial and publication ethics standards recommended by COPE, and the Publisher will support Editor(s)-in-Chief in their pursuit of adhering to such COPE standards. When dealing with publication and research ethics issues, Editor(s)-in-Chief are expected to follow COPE guidance and flowcharts or any guidance provided by the Publisher. The final course of action should be decided by the Editor(s)-in-Chief. In difficult cases, or where there is no existing COPE guidance, the Editor(s)-in-Chief may seek advice from the Publisher, and some cases may need to be resolved in collaboration between Editor(s)-in-Chief and the Publisher. The *Code of Conduct and Best Practice Guidelines for Journal Editors* and general guidelines and flowcharts are available from the COPE website (<http://publicationethics.org>).
3. Editor(s)-in-Chief are expected to be aware of the editorial policies and information provided for authors by the Journal.
4. If there is more than one Editor-in-Chief for the Journal, it is understood that the responsibility concerning Editorship of the Journal is shared between them.

Peer review

5. Editor(s)-in-Chief are expected to comply with the Journal's peer review policy (e.g. open, single- blind, double-blind).
6. Peer review is an essential component of the research publication. It aims to assess the validity of the reported research and suitability for journals' scope and aims. In order to maintain the integrity of the published record the Editor(s)-in-Chief are expected to ensure that all manuscripts reporting primary research, or secondary analysis of primary research, accepted for publication in the Journal are peer reviewed by reviewers who are competent in a relevant field and/or have expertise in a relevant methodology, as judged by their publication record, and are free of potential bias. Such bias includes, but is not limited to, any recent collaboration between the peer reviewers and the authors of the manuscript. The requirement for Editor(s)-in-Chief to ensure absence of conflicts of interest amongst peer reviewers expressly applies to peer reviewers suggested by the authors of the manuscript.
7. Editor(s)-in-Chief are expected to obtain a minimum of two peer reviewers for manuscripts reporting primary research or secondary analysis of primary research. It is recognized that in some exceptional circumstances, particularly in niche and emerging fields, it may not be possible to obtain two independent peer reviewers. In such cases, Editor(s)-in-Chief may wish to make a decision to publish based on one peer review report. When making a decision based on one report, Editor(s)-in-Chief are expected to only do so if the peer review report meets the standards set out in section 8 below.
8. Peer review reports should be in English and provide constructive critical evaluations of the authors' work, particularly in relation to the appropriateness of methods used, whether the results are accurate, and whether the conclusions are supported by the results. Editorial decisions should be based on peer reviewer comments that meet these criteria rather than on recommendations made by short, superficial peer reviewer reports which do not provide a scientific rationale for the recommendations.
9. Editor(s)-in-Chief are expected to independently verify the contact details of reviewers suggested by authors or other third parties. Institutional email addresses should be used to invite peer reviewers

wherever possible. Each manuscript should be reviewed by at least one reviewer who was not suggested by the author.

10. Manuscripts that do not report primary research or secondary analysis of primary research, such as Editorials, Book Reviews, Commentaries or Opinion articles, may be accepted without two peer review reports. Such manuscripts should be assessed by the Editor(s)-in-Chief if the topic is in the area of expertise of the Editor(s)-in-Chief; if the topic is not in area of expertise of the Editor(s)-in-Chief, such manuscripts should be assessed by at least one independent expert reviewer or Editorial Board Member.

Manuscript handling

11. Editor(s)-in-Chief are expected to provide a professional service to authors. Correspondence should be handled in a timely and professional manner. Arrangements should be in place to ensure editorial staff absences do not result in a reduced service to authors.
12. Editor(s)-in-Chief are expected to make full use of the online submission and peer-review system provided by the Publisher and, where necessary, maintain offline tracking systems, in order to preserve a full record of the peer review of each manuscript, where offline tracking is used, Editor(s)-in-Chief should upload offline records to the online submission and peer-review system as soon as possible.

Confidentiality

13. Editor(s)-in-Chief are expected to respect and uphold the confidential status of materials submitted to the Journal and should ensure that material remains confidential while under review.

Libelous and defamatory content

14. Editor(s)-in-Chief are expected to seek advice from the Publisher if they believe a manuscript contains potentially libelous or defamatory content.

Human subjects, data and tissue

15. Concerning any data from human subjects, Editor(s)-in-Chief are expected to ensure that manuscripts accepted for publication comply with the Journal's editorial policies and specific research requirements and ethics standards for their field.
 - a. Editor(s)-in-Chief should be satisfied that all research involving human subjects, human material or human data that is accepted for publication in the Journal is ethical and has been performed in accordance with the World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki (<https://www.wma.net/policies-post/wma-declaration-of-helsinki-ethical-principles-for-medical-research-involving-human-subjects/>) or a comparable national standard that aims to protect the safety and rights of human research participants. Such research has to comply with the authors' national and institutional ethics committee requirements for ethics approval and informed consent.
 - b. Where some or all of the research has taken place in a country that is different from that of the authors', ethics committee approval should be obtained from an ethics committee that is local to where the research took place.
 - c. Regulations regarding what type of study requires ethical approval vary world-wide. Where there are no local or national ethics committees or established regulations, Editor(s)-in-Chief should use the standards set out in the Declaration of Helsinki to decide whether there are any ethical concerns about the conduct of the research that would preclude publication. Guidance is available from COPE, in particular from the COPE document entitled *Guidance for Editors: Research, Audit and Service Evaluations*. Editor(s)-in-Chief should seek advice from the Publisher in difficult cases.

- d. In the case of use of human tissue, expressly including but not limited to stem cells, the research should comply with national and international regulations and guidelines on the use of such tissue for research.
- e. Regardless of any local ethics committee approval, research that appears to violate the Declaration of Helsinki or comparable national standards that aim to protect the safety and rights of human research participants, or any guidelines on the use of human tissue, should be investigated in accordance with COPE guidelines. Editor(s)-in-Chief should seek guidance from the Publisher in difficult cases.
- f. Manuscripts reporting research on human subjects, tissue or data should include a statement of independent ethics committee approval including the name of the ethics committee that approved the study and a statement of informed consent obtained from the human subjects to participate in the study.
- g. Where the manuscript reports information, data, images or videos that might potentially identify an individual, the manuscript should include a statement of informed consent to publish those details.

Animals used for research, education and testing

16. Work reporting animal research, including that used for education and testing, should have been approved by an appropriate ethics committee. In the absence of an animal research ethics committee or any institutional or national guidelines or regulations, Editor(s)-in-Chief should use their discretion when deciding whether there are any ethical concerns about the research that may preclude publication. Research on endangered animal and plant species should be carried out in compliance with standards set out in the IUCN Policy Statement on Research Involving Species at Risk of Extinction and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. Editor(s)-in-Chief should seek advice from the Publisher in difficult cases.

Conflicts of interest of Editor(s)-in-Chief

17. Editor(s)-in-Chief are expected to inform the Publisher of any interests that may influence, or may be perceived to influence, their decisions as Editor(s)-in-Chief of the Journal. Financial and non-financial interests (including, but not limited to personal relationships, professional interests or personal beliefs) should be disclosed. Please note that the declaration of these interests does not disqualify the Editor(s)-in-Chief from the role as Editor(s)-in-Chief of the Journal.
18. Although Editor(s)-in-Chief may publish in the journal for which they are Editor(s)-in-Chief, they are expected to ensure that a (senior) member of the Editorial Board is assigned to assume responsibility for overseeing peer review and making decisions regarding acceptance or rejection of any manuscript submitted and/or co-authored by the Editor(s)-in-Chief.
19. Where Editor(s)-in-Chief have a conflict of interest regarding a specific manuscript, a (senior) member of the Editorial Board should be assigned to assume responsibility for overseeing peer review and decisions making on that manuscript.
20. Editor(s)-in-Chief are expected to ensure that Editorial Board members are not involved with the peer review or decision-making process on any manuscript on which they are an author or on any manuscript where they may have a conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest.
21. Editor(s)-in-Chief submitting to the Journal any manuscript on which they are authors are expected to comply with the Journal's editorial policies for authors on disclosures of potential conflicts of interests.

Complaints, appeals and post-publication issues

22. Editor(s)-in-Chief are expected to have a written appeals and complaints procedure for the Journal and should seek advice from the Publisher where one does not exist. The Editor(s)-in-Chief should respond promptly to complaints (from non-anonymous and anonymous complainers alike) and, in collaboration with the Publisher, where applicable, follow guidance set out in the COPE flow charts on whistleblowers. All reasonable complaints should be handled within a timely manner. The Editor(s)-in-Chief should seek advice from the Publisher in difficult situations, particularly where an issue may

necessitate the publication of a retraction or expression of concern. Unresolved cases may be referred to COPE for advice.

23. Complaints against the Editor(s)-in-Chief will be investigated by the Publisher in the first instance, but may be referred to an independent ombudsman or COPE for advice if appropriate.

Miscellaneous

24. Editor(s)-in-Chief should not act as representatives of the Publisher or make statements to the media, post comments or write editorials claiming to represent the Publisher without the Publisher's prior agreement.