

## CREATING AN EDITOR CODE OF CONDUCT: A GUIDE FOR PUBLISHERS

### What is an Editor Code of Conduct?

An Editor Code of Conduct is a set of principles and expectations that guide the professional behaviour of journal and book editors. It outlines how editors should approach their roles with integrity, fairness, and a commitment to inclusive and ethical publishing practices.

### Why is it important?

Editors hold significant responsibility in shaping scholarly communication. Their decisions influence what research is published, how peer review is conducted, and how inclusive and equitable the publishing process is. A clear, public code of conduct:

- Promotes transparency and accountability
- Supports consistent editorial decision-making
- Helps embed equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) into publishing workflows
- Builds trust with authors, reviewers, and readers.

### What should a Code of Conduct include?

Although each publisher, journal or book series may tailor their code to reflect specific contexts, an Editor Code of Conduct typically includes guidance on:

- Editorial independence and integrity
- Mitigating bias in decision-making and inclusive practices
- Respectful and professional conduct
- Transparent peer review, research integrity and appeals processes
- Commitment to EDI regards Editorial Boards and reviewer pools
- Use of inclusive language and citation practices
- Ethical use of data and AI tools
- Handling of harmful or discriminatory content.

### How to create or adapt a Code of Conduct

You can develop your own Editor Code of Conduct by:

- Reviewing existing publisher and industry frameworks, such as [Springer Nature's Inclusive Language Guide](#); or [COPE](#) on ethical editing; [The SAGER Guidelines](#) on inclusive research; or the [Joint Commitment for Action on Inclusion and Diversity in Publishing](#) on "Establishing Accountability" for progress on inclusion and diversity.
- Announce and formalize Code of Conduct by sharing with stakeholders and incorporating with existing publishing policy structures (e.g. contracts, web pages).
- Engaging editors and stakeholders to ensure the Code reflects shared values and practical realities.
- Providing support and training, for example, from [C4DISC](#), so editors understand and can meet expectations.

Last Updated: May 5, 2026

- Making it public to promote transparency and accountability.
- Reviewing regularly to keep pace with evolving best practices.

**Publisher Examples (not comprehensive)**

- [Elsevier Publishing Ethics](#)
- [Taylor & Francis Editor Code of Conduct](#)
- [PLOS Editorial Board Code of Conduct](#)
- [Sage DEI Actions](#)
- [Springer Nature Code of Conduct](#)
- [AGU Editor Obligations](#)
- [Wiley Ethics Guidelines](#)

Last Updated: May 5, 2026

### **Using the Joint Commitment Code of Conduct (Model Document)**

The Joint Commitment's Editor Code of Conduct provides a comprehensive but adaptable model. It includes detailed guidance on:

- Editorial board composition
- Conflicts of interest
- Peer review integrity
- Inclusive authorship
- Data ethics and AI
- EDI training and reporting

Publishers or journals may use this model as a foundation for their own code. It can be adapted to suit individual publishing contexts while maintaining core principles of inclusion, equity, and ethical publishing.