

SLJB policy on publication best practices and publication ethics

Outline

Sri Lankan Journal of Biology (SLJB) is an open access journal that provides biologists to publish their high-quality research findings without a publication fee. It follows a double-blind peer-review process and publishes biannually while adhering to high publication ethics. All stakeholders of the journal, editorial board, authors, reviewers and publisher have to follow the journal's publication ethics and practices. SLJB's publication ethics and publication malpractices are based on code of conduct and best practice guidelines for journal editors of the committee of publication ethics-COPE.

1. Responsibilities of the editor-in-chief and the editorial board
 - Maintain the quality and standard of the journal and its published articles.
 - Ensure necessary author guidelines are provided to authors for preparing, revising, and submitting the manuscript.
 - Review the author guidelines time to time in order to update the standard of the journal.
 - Inform the authors upon receiving the articles.
 - Ensure that all authors accept and are aware of the progress of their submission.
 - Evaluation of the manuscripts received for the peer review process exclusively on the originality of the research, quality, academic and intellectual merit without considering the authors institution, country, race, gender etc.
 - Section editors ensure the originality of submissions and be alert on redundant publication and plagiarism.
 - Ensure appropriate reviewers are selected for submissions who are able to judge the work independently and without having conflicts of interest.
 - Ensure that all articles suitable for the peer-review process have been reviewed by at least two suitably qualified reviewers of the subject area.
 - Ensure that the peer-review process is conducted in a double-blind manner.
 - Respect requests from authors if informed by names who should not be considered for reviewing their submission.
 - Publish submission and accepted dates of articles.
 - Encourage reviewers to comment freely on the article, including ethical questions and publication misconduct raised by the submissions.
 - Section editors ensure the peer-review process of the journal is fair, unbiased and a timely processed.
 - Send reviewers' comments to authors despite of the decision made on the article.
 - Send letters of appreciation for the contribution made by reviewers to the journal
 - Cease to use reviewers who consistently produce late reviews.
 - Language editors ensure that the expressions are clear and follows scientific writing guidelines and style after an article is accepted for publication. Editorial comments will be provided to maintain the journal standards.
 - Managing editor ensures accepted articles proof-read and accepted by authors before publication.

- The responsibilities of the editorial board members are shared among all editorial board members.
- Identify qualified editorial board members who can actively contribute to the development of the journal.
- Editorial board ensures materials submitted to the journal remains confidential until review process is completed.

2. Responsibilities of the authors

- Authors should ensure and declare that the manuscript was seen and approved by all authors and the authorities responsible where the work was carried out.
- Authors should ensure that they have read, understood and agreed to the submission guidelines and policies of the journal.
- Authors should confirm that all authors of the manuscript have no conflict of interests to declare.
- Authors should confirm that the manuscript is the authors' original work and the manuscript has not been published and is not under consideration for publication elsewhere.
- Authors should ensure that all authors listed on the title page have contributed significantly to the work, have read the manuscript, attest to the validity and legitimacy of the data and the interpretation, and agree to its submission.
- Authors should confirm that the paper submitted or a part of it is not copied or plagiarized version of some other published work.
- Authors should ensure that necessary ethical clearance has been obtained and indicated where relevant
- Authors should confirm that the submitted paper will not be submitted for publication in any other journal or magazine until the decision is made by editors of SLJB.
- Authors should understand that submission of false or incorrect information/undertaking would invite appropriate penalty actions as per norms/rules of the journal.
- Authors should accept that Editor-in-Chief's decision over acceptance or rejection of the article for publication is final.
- Authors should agree that author list/order is correct and no modifications and additions are required unless editors receive agreement from all authors with proper explanation.
- The responsibility for the accuracy of statements, the authenticity of scientific findings or observations, expressions of scientific or other opinion and any other material published in the journal rests solely with the authors of the article in which such statements etc. appear.

3. Responsibilities of the reviewers

- Peer review process must be conducted confidentially and without any bias. The content written in the submission should not be discussed with outside parties or revealed to any outside party before publication or should not be multiplied in any form.
- If a selected reviewer is not competent to review a given article or cannot review within the given time period, should immediately inform to the relevant section editor without any delay.

- Reviewers should comment freely on the scientific content, originality, ethical considerations, plagiarism and quality and the standard of the work objectively with a clear logic so that authors can use the comments for improving their paper.
- Reviewers' evaluation should not be biased to author's institute, country, age, gender, ethnicity, disability or religious beliefs.
- Reviewer should immediately inform the section editor or refuse to review the manuscript if they have conflicts of interest resulting from competitive, collaborative or other relationships or connections with any of the authors or institutes connected to the manuscript.

4. Responsibilities of the publisher

Publisher of the Sri Lankan Journal of Biology is the Institute of Biology, Sri Lanka.

- Publisher ensures and secures the autonomy of the decisions of the editorial board
- Publisher ensures to protect the intellectual property rights, privacy of the authors and copyrights
- Publisher has given the right to the authors to archive and distribute their own articles after publication in SLJB. However, publisher will not be responsible for subsequent uses of the work.
- Publisher assist the editorial board to maintain the overall quality of the journal
- Provides necessary logistic support to the editorial board to maintain the journal publications and standards.

Errata and retraction policy

- All the changes done to the article by the reviewers, editors, language editor or publisher are informed to the corresponding author in subsequent steps during the editorial process and proof documents are sent to the corresponding author for any further corrections or approval.
- Any minor, typing or editorial corrections shown by the author will be corrected while any major corrections to the content will not be entertained at the final stage.
- Article proof will be confirmed and approval from the corresponding author for the final proof document will be obtained before publication of the article.
- Any changes requested after publication of the article will be published as an erratum. An erratum is a statement by the authors of the original paper that briefly describes any correction/s resulting from errors or omissions. The article will not be removed from the online journal but a notice of erratum is given. The erratum is freely available for all readers and will be linked to the original article.
- A notice of retraction will be published if a published article found or informed to be unreliable due to misconduct or honest error, published previously elsewhere without proper referencing or permission, work is plagiarized or unethical. In such case the published article will be removed from the online journal, leaving the bibliographic information. A notice of retraction will be published linked to the issue.
- If an author requests to withdraw an article before publication, such requests are accepted by the editorial board and the article will not be processed further.

Data set policy

Sri Lankan Journal of Biology encourages authors to include all relevant raw data necessary to draw any conclusions, freely available to any researcher wishing to use them for non-commercial

purposes. Authors need to ensure that their datasets are either deposited in publicly available repositories or presented in the main manuscript or additional supporting files whenever possible. Authors should also include a statement where the data supporting the results reported in the article can be found including, where applicable, hyperlinks to publicly archived repositories. If it is not possible to share the dataset publicly, in such cases data availability should still be stated in the manuscript along with any conditions for access.

Research data and peer review policy

Peer reviewers should consider if the authors have complied with the journal's policy on the availability of the research datasets or reasonable attempts been made to share the data to re-use by the other researchers. Peer reviewers should check the manuscripts' data availability statement where applicable and can request to access the underlying data during the peer evaluation process.

Competing interests' policy

To maintain the transparency and judgements of potential bias, Sri Lankan Journal of Biology requires authors to declare any competing financial and/or non-financial interest in relation to the work described in their manuscript.

Process for complains by authors

The authors can complain or ask explanations of any misconduct by the journal by sending a letter/email to sljbiob@gmail.com email address. All complaints or requests will be replied according to the prevailing publication practices of the journal.

Archiving policy

Sri Lankan journal of Biology is available for LOCKSS harvesting through SLJOL platform (<https://sljb.sljol.info/>) to create a distributed archiving system among participating libraries and permits those libraries to create permanent archives of the journal for purposes of preservation and restoration.

Indexing of Sri Lankan Journal of Biology

Sri Lankan Journal of Biology is indexed in the following databases:

- Google Scholar
- Sri Lanka Journals Online (SLJOL)

References

Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) (2013). COPE Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers. March 2013, version 1.

Available at: http://publicationethics.org/files/Ethical_guidelines_for_peer_reviewers_0.pdf

Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) (2013). Code of Conduct and Best Practice Guidelines for Journal Editors, 7 March 2011, version 1.

Available at: http://publicationethics.org/files/Code%20of%20Conduct_2.pdf