

Research and Publication Ethics

RPE17001

*A Textbook for Research Scholars
As per the Prescribed Research and Publication Ethics
(RPE) Syllabus*

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Preface

Research and publication ethics has moved from the margins of graduate training to its centre. Every research scholar is now expected to understand not only how to conduct research but how to conduct it responsibly, and to know the standards that govern authorship, publication, and the assessment of scholarly work. This book is written to meet that expectation for the two-credit course on Research and Publication Ethics prescribed for research scholars, and to serve as a lasting reference well beyond the examination.

The book follows the six units of the prescribed syllabus, moving from the philosophical foundations of ethics, through the conduct of science and the integrity it demands, to the specific machinery of publication: the standard-setting bodies, the rules of authorship, the identification and handling of misconduct, the open-access landscape, the software used to detect similarity, and the databases and metrics by which research is indexed and measured. The order is deliberate. Each idea is built on the one before, so that the rules of good practice are never presented as a bare list to be memorised but as conclusions that follow from a small number of principles a scholar can carry into the cases the rules did not anticipate.

Three commitments shape the treatment throughout. The first is that integrity is a positive standard and not merely the avoidance of the three cardinal offences. The second is that the line between honest error and misconduct is drawn by intent and disclosure, not by the outward act, so that the same decision can be sound practice or serious wrongdoing depending on how it is made and reported. The third is that every rule of research ethics exists to protect an identifiable stakeholder: the shared record, a co-author, a research subject, a reader, or the public that funds and trusts research. These themes recur across the chapters and bind them into a single argument.

Each chapter opens with measurable learning outcomes, develops the material in a formal and definition-led style, and closes with a summary and a graded self-assessment of short-answer, long-answer, and multiple-choice questions with model answers. Figures and tables are original and designed for print. The worked calculations, in particular the Impact Factor and the h-index, are set out step by step so that the reader can reproduce them.

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Course Objectives

At the end of this course the learner is expected:

1. To understand the philosophy of science and ethics, research integrity and publication ethics; and to identify research misconduct and predatory publications.
2. To understand indexing and citation databases, open access publications, and research metrics (citations, h-index, Impact Factor, and the like); and to understand the usage of plagiarism tools.

Course Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Explain the philosophy of science and the foundations of ethics, and locate publication ethics within them.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of research integrity and intellectual honesty, and identify scientific misconduct such as falsification, fabrication, and plagiarism.
3. Apply the best-practice guidelines of bodies such as COPE, WAME, and ICMJE to questions of authorship, conflicts of interest, and publication misconduct.
4. Recognise predatory publishers and journals, and use open-access resources and journal-selection tools responsibly.
5. Use plagiarism-detection software correctly and interpret a similarity report.
6. Use indexing and citation databases and compute and interpret research and author metrics.
7. Develop awareness of publication ethics and publication misconduct in their own research and writing.

Syllabus

Unit	Topics	No. of lectures
I	Philosophy and Ethics a) Introduction to philosophy: definition, nature and scope, concept, branches. b) Ethics: definition, moral philosophy, nature of moral judgements and reactions.	3 Hours
II	Scientific Conduct a) Ethics with respect to science and research; intellectual honesty and research integrity. b) Scientific misconduct: falsification, fabrication and plagiarism (FFP). c) Redundant publications: duplicate and overlapping publications, salami slicing. d) Selective reporting and misrepresentation of data.	5 Hours
III	Publication Ethics a) Definition, introduction and importance; best practices and standard-setting initiatives (COPE, WAME, etc.). b) Conflicts of interest; publication misconduct: concept, problems, types. c) Violation of publication ethics; authorship and contributorship. d) Identification of publication misconduct, complaints and appeals; predatory publishers and journals.	7 Hours
IV	Open Access Publishing a) Open access publications and initiatives; SHERPA/RoMEO copyright and self-archiving policies. b) Software tools to identify predatory publications. c) Journal finder / journal suggestion tools (JANE, Elsevier Journal Finder, Springer Journal Suggester, etc.).	4 Hours
V	Publication Misconduct a) Group discussion: subject-specific ethical issues, FFP, authorship; conflicts of interest; complaints and appeals; cases from India and abroad. b) Software tools: use of plagiarism software such as Turnitin, Urkund and other open-source tools.	4 Hours
VI	Databases and Research Metrics a) Databases: indexing databases; citation databases (Web of Science, Scopus, etc.). b) Research metrics: Impact Factor (Journal Citation Reports), SNIP, SJR, IPP, CiteScore. c) Metrics: h-index, g-index, i10-index, altmetrics.	7 Hours

Table of Contents

Preface.....	iii
Abbreviations.....	x
Chapter 1. Philosophy: Nature, Scope and Branches	1
Learning outcomes	1
1.1 Introduction: why an ethics course opens with philosophy	1
1.2 The nature of philosophical questions.....	2
1.3 The scope of philosophy	3
1.4 The branches of philosophy	3
1.5 How the branches connect, and why ethics is not isolated	6
1.6 The philosophy of science and the idea of scientific method	7
1.7 Self-assessment	9
References	11
Chapter 2. Ethics and Moral Reasoning	12
Learning outcomes	12
2.1 Introduction: a dilemma and the question it raises.....	12
2.2 The divisions of ethics.....	13
2.3 The nature of moral judgements.....	14
2.4 The three normative theories.....	15
2.5 The nature of moral reactions.....	19
2.6 Reasoning to a conclusion: the dilemma resolved	21
2.7 Self-assessment	22
References	24
Chapter 3. Ethics in Science: Intellectual Honesty and Research Integrity.....	25
Learning outcomes	25
3.1 Introduction: integrity is more than staying out of trouble	25
3.2 Ethics with respect to science and research	26
3.3 Intellectual honesty	27
3.4 The values of responsible conduct	28
3.5 Integrity across the research life cycle	29
3.6 Honest error, questionable practice, and misconduct.....	31
3.7 Building and sustaining integrity	33
3.8 Self-assessment	35
References	38
Chapter 4. Scientific Misconduct: FFP, Redundant Publication and Data Distortion.....	39
Learning outcomes	39
4.1 Introduction: the taxonomy of misconduct	39

4.2 Fabrication.....	41
4.3 Falsification.....	42
4.4 Plagiarism.....	43
4.5 The three offences compared	45
4.6 Redundant publication.....	46
4.7 Salami slicing	47
4.8 Selective reporting and misrepresentation of data	48
4.9 Consequences of misconduct	50
4.10 Self-assessment	51
References	55
Chapter 5. Publication Ethics: Foundations and Standard-Setting Bodies (COPE, WAME, ICMJE).....	56
Learning outcomes	56
5.1 Introduction: how publication ethics acquired its rules	56
5.2 Publication ethics: definition, importance, and the four actors.....	57
5.3 The peer-review system	59
5.4 Standard-setting bodies and their guidance.....	62
5.5 Ethical responsibility across the publication workflow	65
5.6 Self-assessment	67
References	71
Chapter 6. Authorship, Contributorship and Conflicts of Interest.....	72
Learning outcomes	72
6.1 Introduction: two common beliefs about who deserves to be an author.....	72
6.2 Authorship and contributorship: why the distinction matters	73
6.3 The ICMJE criteria for authorship	74
6.4 The CRediT contributor-roles taxonomy	76
6.5 Abuses of authorship.....	77
6.6 The corresponding author.....	78
6.7 Conflicts of interest: definition and types	79
6.8 Managing conflicts of interest.....	81
6.9 Comparative worked cases.....	83
6.10 Self-assessment	84
References	88
Chapter 7. Publication Misconduct, Predatory Journals, Complaints and Appeals.....	89
Learning outcomes	89
7.1 Introduction: an invitation that should not be accepted	89
7.2 Publication misconduct: definition, concept and types.....	90

7.3 Violation of publication ethics by authors, reviewers and editors	92
7.4 Identification of publication misconduct.....	93
7.5 Complaints and appeals: the formal process	94
7.6 Retraction and correction of the scholarly record	97
7.7 Predatory publishers and journals	98
7.8 Consequences, self-protection and the Indian context	100
7.9 Self-assessment	101
References	105
Chapter 8. Open Access Publishing and Author Tools.....	107
Learning outcomes	107
8.1 Introduction	107
8.2 Open access: definition and rationale.....	108
8.3 Open-access routes and models.....	109
8.4 Repositories and self-archiving.....	111
8.5 SHERPA/RoMEO and publisher self-archiving policies.....	113
8.6 Tools to identify predatory publications	113
8.7 Journal finder and journal suggestion tools.....	114
8.8 A comparative worked case	116
8.9 Self-assessment	117
References	122
Chapter 9. Detecting Misconduct: Similarity Software and Case Studies.....	123
Learning outcomes	123
9.1 Introduction: the number that is mistaken for a verdict	123
9.2 Why screening matters, and where it stops	124
9.3 How text-similarity software works	124
9.4 The central point: the similarity index is not the plagiarism percentage	127
9.5 A comparative worked case: high but honest against low but plagiarised.....	129
9.6 What similarity software cannot catch	130
9.7 Good practice for authors	131
9.8 Case studies for discussion.....	131
9.9 Self-assessment	133
References	136
Chapter 10. Indexing and Citation Databases.....	138
Learning outcomes	138
10.1 Introduction	138
10.2 Indexing databases and the citation link	139
10.3 What "indexed" means, and why it matters	140

10.4 Web of Science.....	141
10.5 Scopus	142
10.6 Google Scholar.....	143
10.7 Other and regional databases.....	144
10.8 Searching a database well	144
10.9 A comparative worked case	146
10.10 Choosing a database, and what follows	147
10.11 Self-assessment	148
References	151
Chapter 11. Research and Author Metrics.....	153
Learning outcomes	153
11.1 Introduction: the number that is asked to say too much.....	153
11.2 What metrics are for, and the danger built into them.....	155
11.3 Journal-level metrics	155
11.4 Author and article-level metrics	159
11.5 Altmetrics: attention, faster and wider	163
11.6 Using metrics responsibly: the closing synthesis.....	163
11.7 Self-assessment	164
References	169
Glossary	171
Prescribed and Further Reading.....	173
Subject Index	174

Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Expansion
APC	Article processing charge
COI	Conflict of interest
COPE	Committee on Publication Ethics
CRedit	Contributor Roles Taxonomy
CSE	Council of Science Editors
DOAJ	Directory of Open Access Journals
DORA	San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment
FFP	Fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism
ICMJE	International Committee of Medical Journal Editors
IPP	Impact per Publication
JCR	Journal Citation Reports
JIF	Journal Impact Factor
OA	Open access
OASPA	Open Access Scholarly Publishing Association
ORI	Office of Research Integrity (United States)
QRP	Questionable research practice
RCR	Responsible conduct of research
SJR	SCImago Journal Rank
SNIP	Source Normalized Impact per Paper
UGC	University Grants Commission (India)
WAME	World Association of Medical Editors