



CODE OF ETHICS

of the editorial process used by the journal *Revista Española de Educación Comparada (REEC)*

Latest version, approved by the Editorial Board of the *REEC* and the Board of Directors of the *Sociedad Española de Educación Comparada* (Spanish Society of Comparative Education, *SEEC*), in April, 2019

Proper editorial practices foster the establishment of an ethical conduct and practices that become an essential part of publishing culture. The publishing process itself involves many players, all of whom carry out an important role in achieving the deontological objectives set out by the publication. The different agents involved (the editors, the sponsoring and co-editing Society and University, the reviewers and the authors) all have important responsibilities related to ethical questions, from the time a manuscript is received until its publication. At different points in the editing process, any or all of these individuals may have to respond to cases of editorial misconduct, which may include: plagiarism (or self-plagiarism); dual presentation of a manuscript; authorship disputes; conflicts of interest; accusations of misconduct (data fabrication, falsification), etc. Publishing ethics serve as guidelines for those working in the editorial process, enabling them to ensure the highest standard of integrity throughout the procedure of peer review and publishing.

There are a number of associations that have elaborated guidelines for the purpose of satisfying such ethical challenges and establishing a solid, ethical groundwork in an academic publication (i.e., Cambridge University Press, *Committee on Publication Ethics, COPE*; *International Committee of Medical Journal Editors, ICMJE*; *World Association of Medical Editors, WAME*; *Council of Science Editors, CSE*; *Elsevier Publishing Ethics Resource Kit*, *Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, CSIC*, etc.). Based on the outstanding points found in these and other directives, as well as on its own editorial experience, the *Revista Española de Educación Comparada, REEC*, drafted this Code of Ethics, which was approved by the *REEC*'s Editorial Board and by the Board of Directors of the *Sociedad Española de Educación Comparada, SEEC*. This Code of Ethics consists of three parts. The first part, which deals with the most commonly found instances of editorial misconduct, is informative and is meant to help those with a direct role in the editing process of *REEC* manuscripts to guard against such cases of misconduct. The second part of the Code of Ethics details the specific responsibilities of each of the players taking part in the

process with regard to ethical practices. This includes the ethical role of the editors, of the *Sociedad Española de Educación Comparada*, *SEEC*, and of the UNED, of the reviewers and of the authors. The third part of this Code deals with the Ethical Committee of the *REEC*, outlining its structure as well as its functions when dealing with a case of editorial misconduct.

FIRST PART – BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE MOST COMMON FORMS OF EDITORIAL MISCONDUCT

- **Plagiarism** – Plagiarism occurs when an author presents the work of others (facts, words or theories) as if it were his or her own, without acknowledgement. In addition to the plagiarism of others, self-plagiarism – where authors reutilize their own work in a redundant way and without proper acknowledgement – must also be avoided. This violation not only leads to repetition in academic literature, but it can also distort the meta-analysis of a subject by having the same sets of data appear repeatedly as “new” information. The *Revista Española de Educación Comparada*, *REEC*, uses the anti-plagiarism program **Turnitin** to detect non-original material. Authors wishing to publish in the *REEC* should be aware that their article will be checked by the **Turnitin** system at some point during the blind peer review or the production and publication process. The editors of *REEC*, and, in particular, the journal’s Ethics Committee, will investigate any indication of plagiarism or self-plagiarism. If these indications appear to be founded, the *REEC*’s Editorial Board will contact the author or authors of the article in order that they provide an explanation for the suspect material. If said explanation is not convincing, the Editorial Board will reject the submission. In certain cases, the *REEC* may even reject any possible future collaborations from the author/s involved.
- **Authorship disputes** – Any author whose name appears on an article is required to have contributed significantly to the work. Authors and co-authors share responsibility and accountability for the contents of the article. Two scenarios in particular, relating to authorship, are to be rigorously avoided:
 - Invited or gifted authorship – this consists of adding to the list of an article’s authors the names of persons who did not contribute to its elaboration.
 - Ghost authorship – this occurs when the name of a person involved in the elaboration of an article is not included in the list of authors.
- **Conflicts of interest**– It is crucial that authors be completely open and honest with regard to any potential conflict of interest. This may have to do with sources of funding for research, direct or indirect financial support, the provision of equipment or material or any other form of support. If an author submitting an article to the journal fails to declare such potential conflicts of interest and this affects the possible interpretation of the results, the article may be rejected.
- **Fabrication of data /falsification** – It is imperative that all data be precise and representative of the research. The *REEC* is committed to the presentation of pure data as a supplement to the research, to be published together with the article. Cases of fabrication or falsification of data will be evaluated by the journal’s editors and by the *REEC* Ethics Committee. The editors may request

that the authors provide them with the pure data if they deem this necessary. The Editorial Board may also be invited to participate in the evaluation of articles and in the elaboration of allegations concerning such issues. If the author(s)' explanations do not prove satisfactory, the Editorial Board will reject the article and may even rule out any possible future collaborations with said author(s).

- **Allegations of misconduct**– The *REEC*'s Ethics Committee will take up and resolve all cases of misconduct.
- **Reviewer bias or possible reviewer competitiveness or harmful behavior** – Editors will avoid choosing external reviewers with potential conflicts of interest, such as academics working in the same institution or department as the author of an article.
- **Simultaneous or multiple presentation of a same work** – Articles submitted for publication in the *la REEC* must be original and they must not have been presented to another publication.

The fluid communication and contact between chief editors of different journals is crucial for sharing information and for dealing with these types of misconduct in a decisive, consensual way.

The *Publishing Ethics Resource Kit*, for editors of Elsevier, provides a range of general guidelines relating to the handling of allegations concerning ethical issues arising during the editorial process. The editors of *REEC* as well as the journal's Ethics Committee resort to these guidelines when necessary for resolving occasional cases of misconduct in the publishing process.

SECOND PART– ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EDITORS, THE *REEC*, THE *SEEC* AND THE UNED, AND OF THE REVIEWERS AND AUTHORS OF THE *REEC*

In order to achieve a transparent, smooth and satisfactory editorial process that meets appropriate standards of conduct, the various figures involved in the publication of articles – editors, the *SEEC*, the UNED as co-editing institution, reviewers, and authors - must all assume their responsibilities and commitments. Below are shown the specific responsibilities of each of these players. In the exposition of these guidelines we have followed the ethical norms and directives given by the *Revista Científica de Comunicación y Educación* (Scientific Journal of Communication and Education) *Comunicar*, along with the guidelines provided by the publisher *Cambridge University Press*, among other sources.

- Editors' responsibilities
 - **Decisions regarding publication:** in selecting reviewers, editors must guarantee the selection of those who are most qualified and best able to provide a critical, expert and unbiased evaluation of a manuscript.
 - **Honesty:** editors are to evaluate articles submitted for publication solely on the scientific merits of their content, with no regard to the author/s'

gender, sexual orientation, religious or political beliefs, or their ethnic or geographic origin.

- **Confidentiality:** editors and editorial staff members may not divulge any information relating to articles that have been submitted for publication to any other persons beyond the authors, reviewers and editors. The editors and the Editorial Board of the *REEC* are committed to the confidentiality of manuscripts, authors and reviewers, ensuring that the necessary anonymity is maintained throughout the entire publishing process.
- **Objective, reasonable posture:** editors shall adopt and follow reasonable procedures in dealing with complaints and ethical conflicts, giving authors an adequate chance to respond to any perceived grievance. All issues of this nature are to be investigated, regardless of when the submission's publication was approved. Records relating to said complaints shall be kept on file.
- **Respect for time frames:** it is the editors who are ultimately in charge of ensuring the timely completion of the reviewers' work and of the articles' publication and subsequent divulgation. They must meet the publishing deadlines: a maximum of three months from the start of the peer review process. Submissions that have been accepted for publication shall not be kept on a waiting list longer than the time necessary for inclusion in the journal's next issue.

The rigorous fulfilment of ethical guidelines by editors is one of the pillars of the editorial process. In their handling of ethical issues, editors must ensure the confidentiality of each case, avoiding the involvement of persons not related to the particular case. Should an ethical conflict arise, the Editorial Board will transfer the case file to the Ethics Committee of the *REEC* for a thorough analysis.

- Responsibilities of the Society (*SEEC*) and the co-editing University (UNED) of the *REEC*
 - The *SEEC* and the UNED must ensure the fulfilment of proper ethical conduct in keeping with the guidelines detailed in the journal's Code of Ethics.
 - The *SEEC* and the UNED must guarantee adherence to principles specified herein or, should it be the case, their modification or the adoption of their own guidelines for use by their editors and editorial boards.
- Responsibilities and commitments for reviewers:

- **Contributing to the decision-making process** and to the quality of the manuscript that is to be published by furnishing an objective and detailed evaluation of the manuscript.
- Maintaining the **confidentiality** of any information provided by the editor or author. The reviewer must not copy or keep the manuscript.
- **Alerting the editor** about any content or literature that has been presented or published and that is significantly similar to the work being reviewed. Also, being alert to any potential **conflict of interest** (economic, institutional, collaborative, i.e., concerning the relationship between author and reviewer) and notifying the editor or even recusing him or herself from the evaluation of the manuscript.
- **Objectivity**: peer reviews must be done in an objective way and reviewers must reason their evaluations, submitting to the editors a complete, detailed report. This report must follow the guidelines established in the *REEC* evaluation protocol, especially when the reviewer proposes the rejection of the manuscript.
- **Punctuality**: reviewers who do not feel sufficiently qualified in the subject matter of the manuscript they are reviewing or in their ability to finish the evaluation in the stipulated time frame must advise the editors immediately. Reviewers must commit to evaluating the manuscripts as quickly as possible in order to meet the deadlines, due to the limited margins of time with which the *REEC* works.
- Responsibilities and commitments of authors submitting manuscripts to the *REEC*
 - Confirming that all of the work submitted is **original** and free of any **plagiarism**. This implies acknowledging and citing all content from other sources and obtaining permission for the reproduction of material from other sources.
 - Ensuring that the manuscript submitted is not under consideration for publication in another journal or with another publisher. This is to avoid **multiple** and/or repeated **publications**. If certain sections or parts of the contents coincide with other material that has been presented or published, the **sources** must be acknowledged and cited. In such cases, authors are also responsible for providing the editors with a copy of the manuscript containing the coincident material.
 - Declaring any potential **conflict of interest** that could be conceived or considered to exercise an inappropriate influence on any stage of the publication process.
 - Notifying the editors of the *REEC* immediately if they become aware of a **significant error** in the publication. Cooperating with the editor in publishing a correction if need be, or in retracting the article.

- Guaranteeing the acknowledgment and crediting of all persons who have contributed significantly to the scientific and intellectual conceptualization, be it in the planning, interpretation or writing of the work. With regard to the attribution of **authorship**, establishing a hierarchy that reflects each individual's degree of responsibility and implication.
- Accepting **responsibility** for what they have written and being up to date on the latest scientific literature concerning the subject written about.

THIRD PART– ETHICS COMMITTEE OF THE REEC: *makeup and functions*

The Editorial Board of the *REEC* together with the Board of Directors of the *SEEC* have designated and established the *REEC* Ethics Committee, made up of scholars renowned in the field of Comparative Education and known for their integrity. Some of these academics also sit on the ethics committees of other publications, giving them broad experience in the resolution of ethical conflicts that arise in periodical publications. The Ethics Committee of the *REEC* is made up of the following scholars:

Dra. María Inmaculada Egido Gálvez – *SEEC* Scholar – Universidad Complutense de Madrid

Dr. Francesc Raventós Santamaría – *SEEC* Scholar – Universidad de Barcelona

Dra. Marta Ruiz Corbella – UNED Scholar – Editor of the publication *Educación XXI*

Dra. Terri Kim – Scholar of the *Comparative Education Society of Europe (CESE)* – Member of the editorial staff of the journal *Comparative Education* – University of East London.

Dr. Francesc Pedró García – Scholar of the UNESCO.

Among other functions, the Ethics Committee is responsible for:

- Identifying editorial misconduct or unethical practices, including but not limited to those enumerated in the first part of this Code of Ethics.
- Studying and investigating all cases of potentially unethical conduct detected by any of the persons involved in the editorial processes of the *REEC* or denounced by them. The individual denouncing the alleged misconduct must provide sufficient information and evidence to warrant the opening of an investigation.
- Taking an initial decision, based on the evidence, with regard to the misconduct that is being investigated and then bringing it to the attention of the *REEC*'s Editorial Board.

- In cases of minor misconduct, these may be resolved by the Committee without a need for further consultation. In all cases, authors must be given the opportunity to respond to the allegations.
- In cases of serious misconduct, it may be necessary to inform the employee of the accused. Upon being notified by the Ethics Committee of such cases, it is the editors of the *REEC* who must decide, after a review of the evidence, whether or not to involve the employers of the accused.
- Issuing a resolution (in an increasing order of severity) in the form of a letter to the author or reviewer regarding the misconduct, together with a warning about future conduct; a formal letter to the author's superior or to the reviewer's department; the withdrawal of a manuscript from the publication; or the imposition of a formal embargo with regard to the individual's work during a stipulated time, among other measures.

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Further directives of interest concerning publishing ethics:

Elsevier – <https://www.elsevier.com/editors/perk%20>

Committee on Publication Ethics, COPE – <https://publicationethics.org>

World Association of Medical Editors, WAME – <http://www.wame.org>

International Committee of Medical Journal Editors, ICMJE – <http://www.icmje.org>

Cambridge University Press, CUP – <http://www.cambridge.org>

Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, CSIC – <http://www.csic.es>
