Editor *Briefing*

Issue 6

Dear Editor,

I hope this finds you well. Following our last issue in April and as part of our ongoing collaboration to advance trusted research, I am writing with some important updates on our research integrity processes, tools, and policies. We are committed to working together to ensure that our publications are both trustworthy and inclusive, which benefits your authors, science and society at large.

Collaborating to advance trusted research

Expanding Check Integrity and Clear Skies acquisition

I'm pleased to share that we are expanding our pre-publication screening tool Check Integrity, strengthening our ability to detect and prevent research malpractice. This expansion combines Elsevier's proprietary tools with newly acquired Clear Skies technology — a specialist provider of research misconduct detection services — alongside other third-party tools, within a single screening framework.

Together, these expanded capabilities will improve our ability to assess a wider range of risk indicators, including analyzing manuscript text, citation patterns, author publication histories, and collaboration networks. Once incorporated, this will help reject more problematic papers, allowing you to spend more time focusing on manuscripts that are policy-compliant and ready for your evaluation. The tool will continue to evolve and improve as the range of risk indicators expands.

What it means for you

For journals where the new screening capabilities are active, if an assigned submission is flagged as high risk, our Research Integrity & Publishing Ethics (RI&PE) team will take one of the following actions:

- they may notify you for awareness and/or to provide guidance via the Discussion Forum; or
- for Elsevier-owned titles, they may reject the submission using the term "Reject for potential ethical concerns" where there are significant ethics or policy-compliance concerns.

If a submission is rejected through this process, the decision is limited to ethics or policy compliance considerations, and the author receives a generic rejection notice. The screening process complements and supports your editorial decision making without replacing it. You retain full responsibility and independence in evaluating the scientific merit of submissions.

Timeline
New screening capabilities are being introduced in phases, beginning with a small number of journals, with plans to roll out to all titles in 2027. We will notify you once Clear Skies screening is ready to be incorporated in your journal.

Note
If you are an editor of one of our Society- or third-party-owned journals, your workflow stays the same. Your publishing contact will let you know when your journal will receive new screening capabilities. If you have specific questions or would like to discuss how Check Integrity can further support your journal, please reach out to your publishing contact.

New webinar on AI & ethics

We are pleased to announce a new editor training webinar on AI, research integrity & publishing ethics. The webinar will take place on **Thursday 3rd December at 3pm CET** and will be hosted on our editor training platform. The webinar will also be available on demand from the platform after the live event. If you are interested in attending the live webinar, please email us at: STMJEditorTraining@elsevier.com. Our team will ensure you can access the training platform and are registered. Should you wish to submit a question in advance, please feel free to do so by contacting us at the above address.

Recent policy changes

Recognizing the constantly changing research and publishing landscape, we continuously review our policies to ensure they reflect current realities and provide maximum clarity for all parties. Two recent updates are relevant for you:

Authorship changes
To strengthen trust in authorship attribution and help protect the integrity of papers published in our journals, we recently updated our policy for authorship changes. This can be found under "Authorship of the paper" on our publishing ethics policy page and in the guide for authors.

What's new:

Elsevier journals no longer accept authorship changes after acceptance. This includes additions, deletions, rearrangement of authors, or changes to the corresponding author. This policy applies to all proprietary journals and any Society titles which have opted in to our authorship change policies. Relatedly, we do not permit switching corresponding authors on open access articles for the purpose of accessing funding for article publishing charges. This update aligns all journals to a unified, consistent policy and reflects changing industry standards.

We will continue to evaluate this policy as well as the exceptions list. Our intention is to uphold rigorous authorship standards, not prevent legitimate authors from being recognized. If you have any questions, please contact your Publisher.

Resources:

- *Authorship of the paper policy*
- *Authorship change request form*
- *Inclusive author name change policy*
- *Article correction (corrigendum) policy*

Systematic manipulation of the publishing process

We have updated our publishing ethics policy to address ongoing concerns about systematic manipulation of the publishing process.

What's new:

This new policy helps ensure that we can continue to carry out our duty to safeguard scholarly literature and aligns our publishing ethics policies with the Committee on Publication Ethics' supplemental guidance on addressing concerns about systematic manipulation of the publication process. The policy outlines how we will act if we suspect systematic manipulation, which includes rejecting or retracting identified manuscripts, and avoiding the disclosure of information that might further compromise the integrity of our publishing processes and systems.

Phishing alert

Phishing schemes continue to target editors of Elsevier journals. The latest attempts involve individuals impersonating journal Editors-in-Chief and requesting payment processing or access to confidential information. As a reminder, always verify the sender's email address before acting on any request, be cautious of urgent or unusual asks — even if apparently from colleagues — and never click links or share sensitive information unless you are certain of the sender's identity. If you receive a suspicious email, please do not respond and report it to your Publisher.

I hope that you have found this update useful. If you have any questions or feedback, please let your publishing contact know.

Thank you, as always, for your continued commitment and support.



Laura Hassink
President, Elsevier Journals

How helpful was the communication to you?

If you have any questions or suggestions, please write to us:
STMJcommunications@elsevier.com