



DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH & PUBLICATIONS

Quaid-E-Awam University of Engineering, Science & Technology (QUEST), Nawabshah-67450, Sindh, Pakistan

Phone: : +92-244-9370435, Email: editor_rj@quest.edu.pk, Web: <http://publications.quest.edu.pk>



POLICIES FOR CONFLICTING/COMPETING INTERESTS

A conflict of interest occurs when professional conclusions regarding the complete and objective presentation of research are influenced or could be influenced by a secondary interest. Therefore, we require that our authors disclose such possible competing interests. Competing interests often arise with regard to financial matters. However, conflicts of interest can also be non-financial, professional, or personal and can exist in relation to institutions or individuals.

Authors:

Examples of possible competing interest that are directly or indirectly related to the authors' research include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Employment or consultancy;
- Position on advisory board, government board, board of directors, or other type of management relationships;
- Financial relationships, for example stock or share ownership or investment interest;
- Intellectual property;
- Holdings of relatives that may have financial interest in the work;
- Gifts;
- Acting as an expert witness;
- Membership of lobbying or advocacy organizations;
- Personal relationships with individuals involved in the publication process.

To prevent ambiguity, authors must state explicitly whether potential conflicts do or do not exist. Authors should do so in the manuscript after acknowledgement section, providing additional detail, if necessary, in a cover letter that accompanies the manuscript.

Editors & Reviewers:

A conflict of interest takes place when there is any interference with the objective decision making by an editor or objective peer review by the referee. Such secondary interests could be financial, personal, or in relation to any organization. If editors or referees encounter their own conflict of interest, they have to declare so and – if necessary – renounce their role in assessing the respective manuscript.

Reasons for editors and referees to recuse themselves from the peer-review process include (but are not limited to) the following:

- They currently work or have recently worked at the same institution or organization as an author.
- They are currently collaborating with an author or have done so recently.
- They have published with an author during the past 3 years.
- They currently hold or have recently held grants with an author.
- They have a personal relationship with an author that does not allow them to evaluate the manuscript objectively.

Where there is a strong case (e.g. in small fields of science) for editors to use a referee to whom one or more of these cases apply, the editors should aim to obtain an objective review. They should also secure at least one review from a fully independent referee.

Editors who make final decisions about manuscripts must have no personal, professional, or financial involvement in any of the issues they might judge. Other members of the editorial staff, if they participate in editorial decisions, must provide editors with a current description of their financial interests (as they might relate to editorial judgments) and recuse themselves from any decisions in which a conflict of interest exists. Editorial staff must not use information gained through working with manuscripts for private gain. The journal editors should publish regular disclosure statements about potential conflicts of interests related to the commitments of journal staff.

Reviewers must disclose to the journal editors any conflicts of interest that could bias their opinions of the manuscript, and they should recuse themselves from reviewing specific manuscripts if the potential for bias exists. As in the case of authors, silence on the part of reviewers concerning potential conflicts may mean either that conflicts exist and the reviewer has failed to disclose them or conflicts do not exist. Reviewers must therefore also be asked to state explicitly whether conflicts do or do not exist. Reviewers must not use knowledge of the work, before its publication, to further their own interests.