

# **Publications Policy Excerpted from The Oceanography Society (TOS) Policy on Professional Integrity, Ethics, Conduct, and Implementation Guidelines**

Approved by TOS Council – Dec 13, 2018

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This document, The Oceanography Society (*TOS Policy on Professional Integrity, Ethics, Conduct, and Implementation Guidelines*), has five parts: 1) this introduction, which outlines the purpose of this document and its contents; 2) the *Policy of Professional Integrity, Ethics, and Conduct*, which includes a statement of expectations for positive professional and personal behavior and a set of definitions of misconduct; 3) the *Policy on Scientific Publications*, which outlines expectations associated with TOS Publications for authors, editors, and reviewers and defines misconduct related to publication; 4) the *TOS Guidelines for Investigating Scientific Misconduct*, which outlines specific procedures for actions in case TOS standards of integrity, ethics, and/or conduct are not met; and 5) a list of sources as guidance regarding this set of policies and implementation practices and acknowledgments.

This set of policies and guidelines is intended to make explicit issues related to integrity, ethics, and conduct that has always been implicit in TOS. While codifying expectations, the document also establishes procedures for investigation and action in case the Society's expectations are not met. TOS is a non-profit organization incorporated in the United States of America, and is thus bound by US laws and regulations. Additional local laws may apply, appropriate to the specific location of TOS events. TOS is not bound by any policies or actions of other organizations.

The full policy document is available online at: <https://tos.org/policies>

## **3. POLICY ON PUBLICATION**

### **3.1. Overview**

TOS publishes and makes publicly available a variety of products including text, video, and audio, in venues including but not limited to its web page, newsletter, ad hoc reports, and its scientific journal, *Oceanography*. In all of these offerings, TOS upholds ethical standards of respectful professional discourse, honesty, and fairness.

Web and newsletter offerings and reports may or may not be subject to peer review, and are published by TOS management (Executive Director and designees) under the oversight of TOS Council.

*Oceanography* publishes peer-reviewed articles that present significant research, noteworthy achievements, exciting new technology, and hands-on oceanography labs, as well as editor-reviewed commentaries, education columns, book reviews, and career profiles. The overall goal of

*Oceanography* is cross-disciplinary communication in the ocean sciences. The content and publication of *Oceanography* and its review process are managed by the editor or an appropriate designated guest editor or editors. Activities of the editor(s) are subject to oversight by TOS Council under accepted practices of editorial independence.

Editors, authors, reviewers, and the TOS Council all have ethical responsibilities to ensure and sustain the trust of the public and the scientific community in the integrity of the science and of the published works in *Oceanography*.

TOS uses peer review to acquire independent evaluations of manuscript submissions to ensure their quality. TOS strives to make the peer-review process objective, fair, and thorough. The basis for peer review in *Oceanography* is trust and honesty among editors, including guest editors, authors, researchers, reviewers, and funding agencies. Decisions about a manuscript are based only on its importance, originality, clarity, and relevance to the journal's scope and content.

Authors, editors, and reviewers are expected to comply with guidance from the Committee on Publication Ethics (<http://publicationethics.org/>) and the Coalition for Publishing Data in the Earth and Space Sciences (<http://www.copdess.org/>).

### **3.2. Obligations of Editors**

Every editor, including guest editors, has the responsibility to adhere to the ethical standards set forth in this document for selecting and accepting papers submitted to *Oceanography*. To uphold integrity in the *Oceanography* publishing process, the editor, associate editors, and guest editors are expected to do the following:

3.2.1. Provide unbiased consideration of manuscripts offered for publication, judging each solely on its merits, based upon the criteria of importance, originality, clarity, and relevance.

3.2.2. Process all manuscripts promptly, with fairness, equity, and respect.

3.2.3. Take full responsibility for acceptance or rejection of a manuscript, working in the best interest of science and excellence and utilizing the recommendations of peer reviewers. Manuscripts may be rejected without review if considered inappropriate for the journal, at the discretion of the *Oceanography* editor. The editor may consult with associate editors or reviewers to aid in this decision. The editor makes the final decision to publish a manuscript.

3.2.4. Ensure the peer review process is objective, fair, and thorough, and that reviews do not contain personal attacks or comments that are not constructive.

3.2.5. Ensure confidentiality regarding a manuscript under consideration, i.e., without disclosing information about a manuscript to anyone other than those from whom professional advice is sought. An editor may disclose manuscript titles and names of authors of papers that have been accepted for publication.

3.2.6. In situations of perceived conflict of interest involving the *Oceanography* editor, fully delegate editorial responsibility for a manuscript to another editor, associate editor, or guest editor. Conflicts include manuscripts authored by the editor, manuscripts authored by scientists

with whom the editor has a close relationship, or when a manuscript is so closely related to the research of an editor as to create a conflict of interest.

3.2.7. Never use unpublished information or interpretations from a submitted manuscript for their own or a reviewer's own research, except with the consent of the author.

3.2.8. Quickly facilitate publication of errata to correct erroneous information in a published report.

### **3.3. Obligations of Authors and Contributors**

Every submitting author, coauthor, and reviewer has specific responsibilities in these activities, as well as the overall responsibility as members of the profession for respecting codes of conduct. To ensure the highest quality contributions to *Oceanography*, authors are expected to do the following:

3.3.1. Present a precise and accurate account of the research performed and a clear, objective discussion of its significance, or the logical basis of commentaries.

3.3.2. In scientific articles, include sufficient detail and reference to sources of information and/or data in a manuscript to permit the author's peers to repeat the work. Any limitations on use of or access to data must be clearly identified.

3.3.3. Identify sources of all information and cite those publications that have been influential in determining the nature of the reported work and that guide the reader quickly to the primary and other earlier work essential for understanding the present investigation or policy position. If information has been obtained privately, as in conversation or correspondence, explicit permission from the source is required, and must be included as a "personal communication" within the manuscript.

3.3.4. Document methodology, assumptions, and uncertainty.

3.3.5. Follow current governing standards for ethics of work done with human or animal subjects.

3.3.6. Provide appropriate citation and attribution, without plagiarizing the work of others or your own work.

3.3.7. Obtain the necessary authorizations from copyright holders.

3.3.8. Avoid unnecessary fragmentation or redundant publication of research reports.

3.3.9. Eschew criticism of a personal nature.

3.3.10. Report to the editor any changes made to the manuscript after acceptance.

3.3.11. Include as coauthors only those persons who have made significant scientific contributions to the work, and determine the order of authorship in a manner appropriate to the contribution. Pay careful attention to inclusion and appropriate attribution of student work. All coauthors share responsibility for the quality and integrity of the submitted and published manuscript. Authorship obligations apply to peer-reviewed papers, as well as research abstracts, and in oral and poster presentations at meetings.

3.3.12. Reveal to the editor any potential conflict of interest that might be affected by publication of the results contained in a manuscript.

3.3.13. In the role of corresponding author, ensure that all coauthors are fully cognizant of the steps and changes in the manuscript during the review and that all authors agree to the final version of the manuscript.

### **3.4. Obligations of Reviewers of Manuscripts**

To ensure the highest quality contributions to *Oceanography*, reviewers are expected to do the following:

3.4.1. Judge the paper solely on its merits. Provide clearly written, unbiased feedback in a timely manner on the scholarly merits and scientific value of the work, together with a documented basis for the reviewer's opinion.

3.4.2. Thoroughly address all review criteria provided by the journal.

3.4.3. Decline to review manuscripts for which the reviewer lacks sufficient time, is not qualified, or has a real or perceived conflict of interest with any of the authors, including personal or competitive relationships.

3.4.4. Explain and support judgments adequately so that editors and authors may understand the basis of their comments. Any statement by a reviewer on an observation, derivation, or argument that has been previously published shall be accompanied by the relevant citation.

3.4.5. Alert the editor to any significant similarity between the manuscript under consideration and any other published paper or manuscript submitted concurrently to another journal. Report any plagiarism or the appearance of plagiarism.

3.4.6. Never use or disclose unpublished information, arguments, or interpretations contained in a manuscript under consideration, except with the consent of the author.

3.4.7. Never include personal criticism of the author in reviewing a manuscript.

### **3.5. Obligations of the TOS Council and Staff Toward Its Editors**

The TOS Council has responsibility to ensure the editorial independence of *Oceanography* and provide agreed-upon support so that the quality of publications is not compromised. To maintain honesty and trust in the publishing process, TOS councilors, officers and staff are expected to do the following:

3.5.1. Fully inform the *Oceanography* editor, associate editors, and guest editors of their responsibilities, authorities, terms of appointment, and mechanisms for resolving conflict.

3.5.2. Not interfere in the evaluation, selection, or editing of individual articles, and respect that the *Oceanography* editor has authority over the content of the journal, generally referred to as "editorial independence."

3.5.3. Support editorial decisions made based on the clarity, originality, importance, and relevance to the journal’s audience, including manuscripts that are critical of the current paradigm, policy, or that may be contrary to the published statements of TOS.

3.5.4. Protect the editorial, peer review, and publishing process from influence of commercial interest, personal self-interest, political influence, or other nonscientific influences.

3.5.5. Responsibly use the right to appoint and terminate the editor, associate editors, and guest editors.

### **3.6 Definitions of Misconduct related to TOS Publications**

In the context of scientific publication, misconduct includes the following forms of research misconduct: fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results, as defined in Box 3.

#### **Box 3 – Definitions of Misconduct in Publication**

- *Fabrication* is making up data or results and recording or reporting them.
- *Falsification* is manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record.
- *Plagiarism* is the appropriation of another person’s ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit. This applies when proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results.
- *Research misconduct* does not include honest error or differences of opinion.

### **3.7. Reporting of Misconduct related to TOS Publications**

Suspected misconduct in publication shall be reported appropriately by a complainant and evaluated as outlined in Section 4: *Guidelines for Investigating and Acting on Complaints of Misconduct*. Please see <https://tos.org/policies> for the full TOS Ethics document that includes Section 4.