

Code of Ethics

The European Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education (hereafter referred to as 'the Journal') is committed to promoting integrity and ethics in the publication of scientific articles and adheres to the principles established by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE). All parties involved in the editorial process, including the Editor-in-Chief, the Scientific Committee, the Editorial Board, reviewers, authors and the Editorial Office, are required to be aware of and comply with the following duties and responsibilities.

1. General principles of the scientific evaluation process

All manuscripts submitted for publication undergo a rigorous double-blind peer review process, carried out by two qualified reviewers or more in case of disagreement between the reviewers. Peer review is an essential mechanism for ensuring the originality, methodological soundness and scientific relevance of the published scientific contributions.

The Journal is committed to ensuring transparency throughout the evaluation process and making it understandable and accessible to authors, reviewers and readers.

2. Purpose and scope

The journal is organized into thematic sections covering various dimensions of education, including basic skills, the quality of education systems, teaching methodologies, and educational data analysis. It welcomes both qualitative and quantitative contributions characterized by methodological rigor and scientific originality. Articles draw on psychological, sociological, pedagogical, economic, and statistical perspectives, promoting a genuinely interdisciplinary approach to the study of educational and training processes. All submissions undergo a double-blind peer-review process to ensure impartiality and high scientific quality.

3. Editorial governance

The Journal is governed by an editorial structure composed of its principal bodies, which operate in a coordinated manner to ensure the integrity, scientific quality and transparency of the editorial process. These bodies include the Editor-in-Chief, the Editorial Board, the Scientific Committee, the Editorial Office and external Reviewers. Each body performs distinct and complementary roles in accordance with principles of scientific independence, impartiality,

confidentiality, and ethical responsibility. Through their combined actions, the Journal ensures compliance with editorial best practices and international standards of scholarly publishing.

In accordance with the principles of respect for human dignity, the Editor-in-Chief exercises control over the content of the journal to prevent the publication of criminal offences or messages that could damage the reputation of the Journal or offend third parties.

The Scientific Committee, composed of scholars from academia and the national and international research community, safeguards pluralism and freedom of expression as essential criteria for the research published by the Journal. It guides and ensures the qualitative development of the Journal within the international scientific community over time.

The Editorial Board operates in accordance with the editorial policies of the Journal and current legislation regarding defamation, copyright, and plagiarism. It guarantees the confidentiality of information relating to submitted manuscripts and does not use such information for its own purposes without the author's written consent.

The Editorial Office manages the administrative and operational activities of the Journal and supports the Editor-in-Chief and the Editorial Board throughout the editorial process. It coordinates submissions and communications with authors and reviewers and ensures that procedures are conducted efficiently, confidentially, and in accordance with the policies of the Journal.

The bodies of the Journal are required not to disclose information on submissions to people outside the peer review process and undertake not to use the contents of unpublished articles for their own research without the author's express written consent. Only in cases of serious necessity and urgency (e.g. public safety) and after consulting the author, may the Editor-in-Chief independently use unpublished information, notifying the relevant authorities where necessary.

With the support of the Editorial Board, the Editor-in-Chief is responsible for making the final decision on the publication of submitted manuscripts based on their originality, scientific relevance, and compliance with the editorial guidelines of the Journal.

Manuscripts must be evaluated without discrimination on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation, religious belief, ethnic origin, nationality, age or political affiliation. The journal is committed to actively promoting diversity, equity and inclusion in the selection of authors and in the peer-review process and encourages submissions from under-represented groups.

The Editor-in-Chief and the Editorial Board must not consider submissions where conflicts of interest arise from competitive, collaborative, or other relationships with the authors.

4. Submission and evaluation of the manuscript

4.1 Submission of the manuscript

The selection process begins upon receipt of submissions via the “Submit a paper” section on the INVALSI webpage dedicated to the Journal. Manuscripts must be submitted in English and prepared using the official Journal template. Manuscripts must be anonymized and must not contain any references within the text that could identify the author(s). All authors are required to submit a brief biographical profile (maximum 100 words) in a separate file.

4.2 Peer review process

Following submission, the Editorial Board conducts an initial assessment to verify:

- the thematic coherence of the manuscript with the aims of the Journal;
- the scholarly quality of the manuscript;
- the presence of declarations regarding conflicts of interest and sources of funding;
- all submitted manuscripts are screened using plagiarism detection software to identify potential breaches of this ethical principle.

The Editorial Board may request additions or clarifications before initiating the peer review process. Manuscripts deemed inconsistent with the profile of the Journal or aims may be rejected prior to peer review. Authors are formally notified of the outcome of this preliminary assessment.

Manuscripts passing the initial screening are submitted to a double-blind peer review process. Each submission is assigned to two external reviewers selected from the official List of Reviewers established through the Call for Applications.

Reviewers submit their evaluations within four weeks of accepting the assignment. Possible outcomes of the review are:

- rejection for publication;
- a request for minor or major revisions;
- acceptance without changes.

Evaluation forms must be completed using the template provided by the submission platform. If reviews are conflicting or inconclusive, an additional reviewer may be appointed. In case of major revisions, the revised manuscript is returned to the same reviewers for a second round of evaluation. In the case of minor revisions, the manuscript will not undergo a second full review; instead, it will be sent back to the reviewers to verify that the revisions are adequate. Once a manuscript is approved, it proceeds to the editing and publication stages.

4.3 Duties of Editorial Board

The Editorial Board is responsible for:

- assessing the suitability of submissions for the Journal;
- verifying declarations of conflicts of interest and funding sources;
- selecting appropriate reviewers;
- overseeing the peer review process.

The Editorial Board reserves the right to request clarifications or revisions at any stage prior to publication.

4.4 Duties of reviewers

Before accepting a review assignment, reviewers are required to assess their expertise in relation to the subject matter of the manuscript, their availability to complete the review within the established timeframe, and the absence of any conflicts of interest. Reviewers must respond to the invitation within one week; failure to do so will result in the appointment of an alternative reviewer. Once the assignment is accepted, reviews must be submitted within four weeks.

Reviewers assist the Editorial Board in evaluating submissions, which they receive exclusively in anonymous form, and are required to comply with the prescribed deadlines. If a reviewer does not consider themselves sufficiently qualified to assess a manuscript or is unable to meet the review deadline, they must promptly inform the Editorial Office.

All manuscripts received for review must be treated as strictly confidential documents until they are published. Reviews must be conducted objectively and professionally, avoiding personal criticism and fostering constructive scholarly discussion. Reviewers are expected to provide well-reasoned and adequately justified evaluations by completing the designated assessment form.

Reviewers should also identify any relevant published works on the subject that have not been cited by the author, in order to allow for the appropriate inclusion of bibliographic references and the accurate positioning of the manuscript within the scientific debate. In addition, reviewers must report any substantial similarities or overlaps between the manuscript under review and other works of which they are aware.

All information obtained during the review process must remain confidential and must not be used for personal advantage. Reviewers must decline review assignments if a conflict of interest arises from prior collaborative, competitive, or institutional relationships with the author—

who, although anonymous, may potentially be identifiable by inference—or with entities or institutions connected to the research under evaluation.

4.5 Duties of authors

Authors are required to submit original and unpublished manuscripts that are not under consideration by other journals or publication venues. The submission of the same work, or substantially similar work, to more than one outlet is considered unethical and may result in rejection of the manuscript or retraction of a published manuscript.

Submissions must be prepared in accordance with the guidelines of the Journal and submitted in fully anonymized form. Authors must ensure that all non-original content—including text, images, audiovisual materials, or data—is properly cited and that any necessary permissions have been obtained for the use of copyrighted material. Failure to correctly acknowledge sources constitutes plagiarism. Where required, copyright holders must be informed that the material will be published under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International licence.

All individuals who have made a significant scholarly manuscript to the work must be listed as co-authors, with names and affiliations clearly indicated. The primary affiliation should correspond to the institution where the majority of the work was carried out and cannot be changed after publication.

In the case of multi-authored manuscripts, one author must be designated as the corresponding author, who acts on behalf of all co-authors and serves as the main point of contact with the Journal. All authors must approve the final version of the manuscript prior to submission. The corresponding author is responsible for confirming, at the time of submission, that all co-authors have read and approved the final version and have agreed to its submission. No separate or individual declarations from each author are required.

The corresponding author also manages communications with the Journal, ensures transparency regarding the reuse of materials and the inclusion of unpublished content, and verifies that all required declarations – particularly those concerning conflicts of interest, sources of funding, and data availability – are properly included in the manuscript.

Authors receive reviewers' comments in anonymous form and are required to respond clearly and point by point when revisions are requested. Upon acceptance of the manuscript, authors grant the Journal the right to publish the work in accordance with the terms specified in the indemnity agreement.

4.6 Conflicts of interest

The Journal requires the utmost transparency regarding conflicts of interest. A conflict of interest is defined as any financial, professional, personal or institutional relationship that could influence, or be perceived as influencing, the objectivity of the scientific manuscript.

All authors are required to declare the following in their submission:

- all sources of funding, both direct and indirect;
- the role of any funders or sponsors in the conduct of the research;
- any relevant relationship that may influence the interpretation of the results or the editorial process.

Failure to declare a conflict of interest constitutes a breach of the ethical guidelines of the Journal and may result in the suspension or review of the editorial process.

The Editorial Board checks for the presence of such declarations during the initial assessment of manuscripts.

4.6 Corrections and retractions of published manuscripts

Published manuscripts should be kept available, up to date and intact for as long as possible. Therefore, they cannot be amended after publication, except for editorial corrections that do not impact the scientific content, or in exceptional circumstances that are duly justified and documented.

If serious errors are found that substantially compromise readers' understanding or evaluation of the manuscript, the Journal will publish a specific correction note formally linked to the original manuscript, which will remain unchanged in its published version.

Originality and scientific accuracy are fundamental requirements for all manuscripts submitted to the Journal. The Journal uses plagiarism detection software to identify possible breaches of this ethical principle and expressly requires reviewers to pay particular attention to this aspect. The Editor-in-Chief may retract a manuscript if they no longer consider the reported results and conclusions to be reliable. A manuscript is considered unreliable if irregularities emerge in the data, its analysis or availability. This includes fictitious data, manipulated images or substantial errors. A manuscript is also considered unreliable if authorship cannot be verified or if there are serious doubts regarding scientific accountability. Authorship should be based on substantial contributions to conception/design, data acquisition, analysis, drafting, and final approval. Any form of misrepresentation, such as fraud, deception, fictitious authorship, or

failure to declare the use of artificial intelligence, undermines the integrity of the work. Unacceptable overlap with previously published content, redundant contributions lacking adequate attribution or authorisation, unauthorised use of material, copyright infringement, unethical research conduct, or compromised peer review processes are also grounds for retraction. Failure to declare relevant conflicts of interest also constitutes grounds for invalidation.

The Journal does not permit the publication of content that could damage the reputation of individuals or organisations. While criticism of a published manuscript is permitted, it must contribute in a relevant and rigorous manner to the scientific debate. However, personal remarks, direct attacks and defamatory content are not tolerated under any circumstances.

4.7 Appeals and complaints

Authors have the right to appeal editorial decisions. Appeals must be submitted in writing and will be reviewed by the Editor-in-Chief and, where appropriate, by an independent member of the Editorial Board.

5. Post-publication issues

The Journal encourages scholarly discussion of published articles and is committed to publishing notes, letters, and constructive criticism. Such manuscripts are subject to review by the Editorial Board.

6. Research ethics

Research involving human participants must comply with relevant ethical standards and regulations, including prior approval by an appropriate ethics committee where required. Authors must confirm that informed consent has been obtained where applicable.

7. Open science and data availability

Authors are required, where possible, to make the data, materials, and analytical code underlying their findings publicly available in trusted repositories. If restrictions apply (e.g., privacy, legal constraints), authors must clearly state the reasons and provide access conditions where feasible.

8. Use of Artificial Intelligence tools

Authors must explicitly state whether artificial intelligence tools were used in the preparation of the manuscript and, where applicable, provide a description of the tools used and the purpose for which they were used.

Authors remain fully responsible for the accuracy, integrity, originality and reliability of the submitted work. They must verify any AI-assisted content, including factual statements, data, sources and references.

Artificial intelligence tools cannot be listed as authors, as authorship requires responsibility and accountability for the submitted work.

AI tools must not be used to fabricate data, manipulate results, create misleading content, or generate false or unverifiable references. The use of AI-generated images, figures, tables or other visual material must be explicitly declared and is subject to the journal's editorial approval.