

CODE OF ETHICS AT COMUNICAR

Introduction

Comunicar ensures integrity and academic ethics in scientific production as a basic principle in all phases of the research process: from initial conception to publication and final dissemination. This document aims to compile the essential ethical practices for a quality scientific publication, useful for the different parties involved in and outside the editorial process (authors, reviewers, editors, associations, sponsors, and funding sources).

Comunicar accepts and adheres to the principles of the **Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)** (<https://publicationethics.org/core-practices>), a non-profit organization whose goal is to support researchers in achieving ethical, integrity and responsible publishing.

Research integrity

The principles of ethical integrity at *Comunicar* are governed by honesty in all stages, areas and scientific dimensions: from the scrupulous and meticulous care in research practice, to transparency and open communication of data, respect among participants and subjects involved in the research, and the responsibility of the behaviours introduced in this Code of Ethics.

Observations, doubts, complaints or claims shall be addressed in accordance with this Code and, where appropriate, with COPE's guidelines, raising, if necessary, the issues presented to *Comunicar's* Editorial Board, which shall advise on best practices in editorial ethics, mediating the appropriate decisions regarding the subjects involved.

Regardless of their association with the journal, anyone who feels that ethical guidelines are not being followed at any stage in our publication may correspond directly with the Editor-in-Chief (editor@grupocomunicar.com).

Editorial process

Comunicar ensures its editorial, scientific and professional independence as a basic principle, not accepting public subsidies or permanent sponsorship from public or private institutions, always striving to meet independent scientific criteria, and without commitments to political, business or financial interests, nor to pressure groups or specific scientific circles.

Our editorial processes don't discriminate against authors, editors or reviewers based on their personal characteristics or their identity. We promise to integrate diversity in its multiple dimensions, encouraging inclusion and promoting equality in each stage of our editorial process.

The Editorial Board does not accept inappropriate nor abusive behaviour towards our team of editors, authors or reviewers, nor towards any other individual involved in the publication process. If anyone displays such behaviour, the Editorial Board has the duty and right to take measures in order to protect the individuals involved. This may result, for example, in the withdrawal of a manuscript, or the challenge of clearly incorrect or abusive blind peer review comments.

Co-review

Our publication accepts co-review as a way to train new reviewers. An invited reviewer may collaborate with another junior colleague to evaluate a manuscript for formative purposes. This makes it easier for the novice reviewer (who must be a doctoral candidate or an official postgraduate candidate) to acquire experience and knowledge in the editorial process, and to become a potential reviewer of the journal.

An invited reviewer may be assisted by a co-reviewer on a manuscript, provided that the Editorial Board of *Comunicar* is notified in advance and the co-review is authorized by the Editorial Board. For this purpose, the invited reviewer must notify the Editor responsible for the evaluation assignment in advance. Once this has been approved and the evaluation is completed, the reviewer shall identify the co-reviewer, so that their certified acknowledgement can be sent to them.

Authorship and co-authorship

Comunicar is aware that, depending on the discipline, number, priority and format, authorship and co-authorship may differ drastically. When guidance on author inclusion and ranking is not specified, we recommend that the following principles be taken into consideration:

1. Contribute substantially to the conception or design of the idea, in the development of the analysis, or in the interpretation of the data extracted.
2. Draft the work or revise it critically and intellectually during the development process.
3. Approve the final version prior to sending and its publication.
4. Agree in advance on the responsibility for the development of all aspects involving work, making this participation public in the "Authors' Contribution" section of the Cover Letter sent with the manuscript.

COPE proposes recommendations and resources on authorship and its potential conflicts and disputes. Our publication is guided by these guidelines and maintains pre-established authorship transfer protocols (e.g., ORCID, or the fixed "Author Contribution" section), which facilitate transparency and ethics in authorial contribution.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism, understood as the use of ideas, words, data or material produced by others without their consent, can occur in a variety of typologies, including text, illustrations, music, computer coding, material downloaded from websites, other manuscripts or digital media, as well as unpublished or un-edited material (courses, presentations and grey literature).

Comunicar only publishes and encourages original, innovative, relevant, and socially transferable work. Therefore, it does not accept plagiarism percentages in its manuscripts, and proceeds rigorously to review submissions submitted through the OJS platform using professional anti-plagiarism tools, especially CrossCheck.

Papers with plagiarism scores, total or partial, are systematically rejected. This decision is communicated by transparently attaching a plagiarism report, both quantitative and qualitative,

without the option of resubmission, as these actions are considered to be unacceptable and punishable practices.

Reviewers, authors or the scientific community may raise suspicions of plagiarism that will be analysed by the Editorial Board, following COPE's correction and retraction guidelines.

Duplicity and redundant publications

Duplicate or redundant publications or self-plagiarism occurs when a work, or substantial parts of it, are published more than once by an author without identifying plagiarism, but without reference to the original work to justify its extension or complimentary nature. This can occur in the same language or between different languages. *Comunicar* does not allow substantial overlap between publications, unless it is considered, from an editorial point of view, that the manuscript reinforces and extends the academic discourse, that it has the approval of the publisher to which the original publication subscribes, and that the citation to the original source is included. Our readers, reviewers and editors should raise any suspicion of duplicate or redundant publication by contacting the Editor-in-Chief (editor@comunicarjournal.com), who will forward the case to the Editorial Board, which will analyse and resolve it.

When authors submit manuscripts to our journal, they must not be under consideration, accepted for publication or in "OnlineFirst" format in another journal or publisher. However, the deposit of a preprint in the author's personal website or in an institutional repository institutionally adhered to by the authors will not be considered as a prior or duplicate publication. Authors must follow our "OnlineFirst" policy regarding preprint files and maintaining the registered version on our platform.

Any manuscript derived from a thesis must be submitted reworked and edited in accordance with the journal's Author Guidelines. When citing information from the thesis or reusing figures and resources introduced in the document, authors should avoid self-plagiarism by properly referencing the adapted extracts. If a thesis has been published by a publisher and is publicly available, permission from the publisher may be required for submission to the journal. This information shall be reported to the Editorial Board through the "Comments to the Editor" space on the platform. Likewise, *Comunicar* authors who wish to include their publication(s) in their thesis must notify the journal prior to their defence.

Research with humans or animals

Research that requires and that involves experiments with humans or animals must be approved by an Ethics Committee, endorsed in accordance with the legal standards of international research. *Comunicar* advocates respect and the right to privacy of the participants, whose involvement must be supported by "informed consent" or anonymization. Likewise, research carried out with minors, children and adolescents, which affects their privacy or private spaces, must be duly authorized by their parents, guardians or legal representatives.

Data protection and guarantee of digital rights

Comunicar is aware of, complies with and enforces the provisions of the Spanish Organic Law 3/2018 of 5th December, on Personal Data Protection and Guarantee of Digital Rights. It also complies with the European Parliament and European Council Regulation (European Union) 2016/679 of 27th April 2016, on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data.

Competing interests and financing

Comunicar guarantees the legality of any published manuscript. Authors submitting a manuscript to the journal are required to declare any competing interests that may interfere with the objectivity or integrity of the submitted work, whether financial, professional, contractual, or personal in nature. Our publication also invites anyone who suspects undisclosed competing interests in a published work to inform the Editorial Board. In addition, if applicable, *Comunicar* requires the public declaration of financial support, subsequently verified (CrossFund) in all published manuscripts.

Libel, defamation and freedom of expression

Freedom of expression is fundamental for *Comunicar*. The Editorial Board disapproves of publications that introduce false statements that damage the reputation of individuals, groups or organizations. Our Editorial Board will review texts for potential defamation prior to publication and will address allegations of defamation in any of its publications.

Retractions, corrections and expression of concerns

Comunicar's Editorial Board will consider retractions, corrections, or expression of unlawful concerns about its publications in accordance with COPE's guidelines. If an author is found to have made an error, the journal will publish a correction. If the journal is found to have made an error, an erratum will be published. Retractions are reserved for articles that present a very serious error that raises doubts about their results or conclusions, or that contain substantial or partial plagiarism. *Comunicar* has an "OnlineFirst" policy that allows, prior to final publication, the review and reading of the manuscript, with the possibility of corrections during the proofing period.

Only in exceptional cases will *Comunicar* remove a manuscript from online publication when it deems it necessary to comply with legality obligations. This includes, without limitation, concerns about a defamatory manuscript that violates personal privacy or confidentiality laws, is the subject of a court order, or may pose a serious risk to a person's health. In these circumstances, the manuscript will be withdrawn, and its withdrawal will be indicated in the corresponding space.

Comunicar is a member of CrossRef's CrossMark application, which verifies the current and authenticated official version of an editorial content, listing the changes that have occurred since its publication.

Manipulation, falsification and creation of images

When research data are collected or presented in image format, modification of an original product that detracts from the results obtained should be considered by the authors. *Comunicar* acknowledges the existence of legitimate reasons for such modification (anonymization, confidentiality, privacy, legality, etc.). However, authors are explicitly requested to avoid modifying images that could lead to falsification or misrepresentation of the results.

Fraudulent research and misconduct in research

If *Comunicar* becomes aware of, or suspects, fraudulent research or research malpractice on the part of the author/s, the integrity of the publication will be safeguarded. To this end, the Editorial Board will work together with COPE, institutions and organizations that will facilitate the auditing of the study. Any publication that contains fraudulent results will be retracted. For more information, see the section *Retractions, corrections and expression of concerns*.

Versions and adaptations

Our publications are distributed in a wide variety of contextual, scientific and cultural contexts worldwide. For this reason, *Comunicar* has International Co-publications, whose task is to adapt the scientific production of previous access (title, abstract, keywords and institutional data of the authors) to Spanish, English, Portuguese, Chinese and Russian. The journal does not modify the contents, nor does it create new material, and is dedicated to the accurate publication of works in their different languages.

We grant volume licenses and subsidiary rights to third parties that additionally allow the reproduction, reuse or adaptation of our content in different contexts, languages and territories. However, *Comunicar* reserves the right to withhold approval of the publication if its integrity, accuracy with the licensed edition, or acknowledgment of its authors is compromised.

Transparency

Comunicar is committed to following the Principles of Transparency and Good Practices in COPE's Academic Publishing, encouraging all those involved in the editorial process to maintain and safeguard the same reasoning.

Data and evidence

Comunicar advocates for transparency and openness of data, codes and materials associated with research. For this reason, authors are requested to keep accurate records of their research evidence that are necessary to verify and reproduce the findings, so that these can be provided and made accessible upon reasoned request. In this regard, we invite the authors to:

1. Keep the evidence in an appropriate repository or storage place that allows them to share it with third parties.
2. Describe where evidence of data can be located for contrast.

Our publication also offers authors the possibility to present and publish their work with essential materials through external tools and platforms. Unless otherwise indicated, these data should be anonymized in order to carry out a blind peer review in the initial submission phase.

Record integrity

Comunicar holds documentary records with the published manuscripts (metadata), hosted in different international portals. In addition, the journal has an internal registration system for the correspondence of all manuscripts received (dismissed, rejected, accepted, and published) with a complete history in the OJS 3 platform. Despite being confidential internal information, this information may be consulted or accessed in the event of a conflict of interest, problems related to academic integrity, or in compliance with legal processes in force.

Affiliations

Comunicar allows one affiliation per author, this being the institution representing the research that is being presented and funded. Double affiliations are not allowed in order to avoid fraudulent institutional affiliations. Authors have the right to declare their main institution and, therefore, their signature, which should be the one that has supported the previous research and the writing of the manuscript.

Commitments

Comunicar urges the different parties involved in the journal's editorial process to comply with a series of commitments.

Authors

- **Originality and plagiarism:** Authors of manuscripts submitted to *Comunicar* assure that the work is original, that it does not contain parts of other authors' work or fragments of work already published by the authors. In addition, they confirm the veracity of the data, that is, that the empirical data have not been altered to verify hypotheses.
- **Multiple and/or repetitive publications:** The author should not publish articles that contain a repetition of the same results in more than one scientific journal. Simultaneous submission of the same contribution to multiple scientific journals is considered ethically incorrect and reprehensible.
- **List of sources:** The author must always provide the correct indication of the sources and contributions mentioned in the article.

- **Authorship:** Regarding the authorship of the manuscript, the authors guarantee the inclusion of those persons who have made a significant scientific and intellectual contribution in the conceptualization and planning of the work, as well as in the interpretation of the results and in the writing of the manuscript. At the same time, the authors have been ranked according to their level of responsibility and involvement.
- **Access and retention:** If deemed appropriate by the editors, authors of articles should also make available the sources or data on which the research is based, which may be retained for a reasonable period of time after publication and possibly made accessible.
- **Conflict of interest and disclosure:** All authors are required to declare explicitly that there are no conflicts of interest that may have influenced the results obtained or the interpretations proposed. Authors should also indicate any agency and/or project funding from which the research article arises.
- **Errors in published articles:** When an author identifies an important error or inaccuracy in their article, they should immediately inform the editors of the journal and provide them with all the necessary information to list the pertinent corrections at the bottom of the article.
- **Responsibility:** All authors accept responsibility for the statements in their text. They also agree to review the most current and relevant scientific literature on the analysed topic, considering the different branches of knowledge in a pluralistic manner.

Reviewers

- **Contribution to the editorial decision:** Peer review is a procedure that helps editors to make decisions on proposed articles, and also allows the author to improve the contribution submitted for publication. The reviewers assume the commitment to perform a critical, honest, constructive, and unbiased review of both the scientific and literary quality of the paper in the field of their knowledge and skills.
- **Respect for time limits:** The reviewer who does not feel competent in the subject matter to be reviewed or who is unable to complete the evaluation within the scheduled time will immediately notify the editors. The reviewers are committed to evaluate the papers in the shortest possible time in order to respect the deadlines, since at *Comunicar* the limits of custody of the manuscripts are limited and inflexible out of respect for the authors and their work.
- **Confidentiality:** Each assigned manuscript should be considered as confidential. Therefore, these texts should not be discussed with others without the explicit consent of the editors.
- **Objectivity:** Peer review will be conducted in an objective manner. No personal judgment of the authors of the contributions is considered appropriate. Reviewers are required to give sufficient reasons for their appraisals. Reviewers will submit a complete

critical report with appropriate references according to *Comunicar's* review protocol and the public guidelines for reviewers; especially if the paper is proposed for rejection. They are obliged to advise the editors if substantial parts of the work have already been published or are under revision for another publication.

- **Text display:** The reviewers agree to accurately indicate the bibliographic references of fundamental works possibly overlooked by the author. The reviewer should also inform the editors of any similarities or overlaps of the manuscript with other published work.
- **Conflict of interests and disclosure:** Confidential information or information obtained during the peer review process must be considered confidential and may not be used for personal purposes. Reviewers only review a manuscript if there are no conflicts of interest.

Editors

- **Publication decisions:** The editors will guarantee the selection of the most qualified and scientifically specialized reviewers to issue a critical and expert appraisal of the work, with the least amount of bias possible. *Comunicar* chooses to select between 10 and 15 reviewers for each paper to ensure greater objectivity in the review process.
- **Honesty:** The Editors will establish strategies for the review of manuscripts received exclusively on the basis of the scientific merit of the contents, without discrimination of race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnic origin, nationality, or ideological or political opinion of the authors, or any other condition.
- **Confidentiality:** The editors and members of the working group promise not to disclose information about articles submitted for publication to anyone other than authors, reviewers, and editors. The editors and the Editorial Committee are committed to the confidentiality of the manuscripts, their authors and reviewers, so that anonymity preserves the intellectual integrity of the entire process.
- **Conflict of interests and disclosure:** The editors agree not to use the contents of the articles submitted for publication in their research without the written consent of the author.
- **Respect for time limits:** The editors are ultimately responsible for compliance with the time limits for reviews and publication of accepted papers, to ensure rapid dissemination of their results. They are committed to meet the published deadlines (maximum of 30 days in the consideration/rejection of the manuscript from the day it is received on the Review Platform and a maximum of 90 days from the beginning of the scientific peer review process). Likewise, papers will not remain unpublished in infinite waiting lists beyond the time needed for their publication in the next issue. Therefore, at *Comunicar*, waiting lists are avoided.

The *Comunicar* journal adheres to COPE's ethical standards
Committee on Publication Ethics:

<http://publicationethics.org/resources/code-conduct>