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ETHICS POLICY

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Editorial Note: This Ethics Policy should be read together with the Publication & Management Policy, Instructions for Authors, Peer Review Policy, and Guidelines for Peer Reviewers. Items in square brackets require confirmation by the Foundation/Editorial Board, including the specific plagiarism-detection tool and similarity thresholds to be adopted.

A. Commitment to Ethics and Reference Frameworks

1. Al-Ameen Journal of Interdisciplinary Research (“AJIR”) is a peer-reviewed, International, Interdisciplinary Research journal published half-yearly by the Al-Ameen Research Foundation, Bengaluru (“the Foundation”).
2. AJIR is committed to honouring the Ethical imperatives of Research Publication and maintains a sound Ethics Policy, discussed, reviewed, and approved by its Editorial Board and Advisory Board, and adopted by the Al-Ameen Research Foundation.
3. Ethics Policy shall be reviewed and updated periodically (at least once every [two years]) as the scope and nature of Research and Publication practice evolves.
4. In order to uphold Ethical standards in Research and Publication, AJIR refers to, and is guided by, the regulations, guidelines, and flowcharts of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE: <https://publicationethics.org>), adapted to the context of the Foundation. Editors, authors, and reviewers are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the relevant COPE flowcharts when Ethical questions arise.

B. Conduct and Presentation of Research

1. AJIR accepts a manuscript only where the underlying research has been conducted in accordance with universally accepted standards of research integrity, including any specific standards and procedures prescribed by the relevant professional or disciplinary research associations of the institution or country where the research was conducted.
2. Research involving human participants, animals, or sensitive data must comply with the “Do No Harm” (DNH) principle. Wherever applicable, the Authors must confirm that informed consent was obtained from participants and that the research received appropriate institutional/ethics committee clearance, and must report this in the manuscript and the Declaration by Authors.
3. Research must be presented with transparency, responsibility, and accountability. Authors must not engage in fabrication, falsification, or inappropriate manipulation of data, images, or results. Any image processing must be limited to improving only clarity and must not misrepresent the underlying data; the nature of any such processing must be disclosed.
4. Authors must clearly state the limitations and delimitations of their study, and must present methodology in sufficient detail to allow replication by other researchers.
5. AJIR may, for purposes of verification, request access to the underlying field data or materials of a study. Authors must cooperate promptly with such requests without compromising on the confidentiality owed to research participants. Subject to that constraint, authors are encouraged to make their data available to other researchers seeking to verify findings.

C. Authorship, Contributorship and Conflict of Interest

1. Authorship must accurately reflect each individual's substantive contribution to the conception, design, execution, analysis, or writing of the work.
2. AJIR does not permit guest, gift, or ghost authorship. **Guest authorship** refers to authorship granted on the basis of seniority, reputation, or influence without substantial contribution. **Gift authorship** refers to authorship granted as a favour or in exchange for any benefit, sans substantial contribution. **Ghost authorship** refers to the omission, from the byline, of someone who has made a substantial contribution.
3. Individuals who have made a contribution that does not meet the threshold for authorship (e.g., technical, administrative, or editorial assistance; funding acquisition without intellectual input) may be recognised in the Acknowledgements section.
4. Where there are multiple Authors, the sequence of Authorship shall be decided by mutual agreement among the Authors, ordinarily reflecting the relative proportion of contribution.
5. All Authors must review and approve the final version of the manuscript submitted, and take collective responsibility for its content, including the accuracy of data, tables, figures, and citations.
6. Every submission must be accompanied by a signed Declaration by Authors (see the Journal's Author Declaration template), in which authors affirm originality, disclose any

conflicts of interest, acknowledge funding/material support, and confirm compliance with the Journal's ethical guidelines.

7. Authors must disclose, with transparency, any financial, professional, or personal relationships that could be perceived to influence, or to create a conflict of interest in relation to, the research or its reporting — including sources of funding, equipment, statistical, writing, linguistic, or literature-survey assistance.

D. Submission, Originality and Plagiarism

1. AJIR considers only original manuscripts that have not been published previously and are not under simultaneous consideration by any other journal or publisher. Simultaneous submission of the same, or substantially overlapping, work to multiple outlets is not permitted.
2. Every full-length submission is subject to a plagiarism check using [a recognised plagiarism-detection tool, e.g., Turnitin / iThenticate / Urkund — to be specified]. The recommended threshold is an overall similarity index not exceeding [15%] (excluding references, quotations, and common phrases), with no single source exceeding [5%]; final thresholds are at the discretion of the Editor-in-Chief in light of the nature of the work.
3. A manuscript that fails the plagiarism check is returned to the author(s) for revision or is rejected, at the discretion of the Editor-in-Chief. If plagiarism is identified after acceptance but before publication, the Editor-in-Chief shall notify the author(s) and require correction; if the author(s) do not comply, the manuscript shall be rejected. If plagiarism is identified after publication, the matter shall be addressed under Section G (Corrections, Retractions, and Errata) below, in consultation with COPE guidance.
4. English translations of previously published works, and full-text versions of conference proceedings, are acceptable only where accompanied by the necessary permissions from the original publisher/conference organisers and a written undertaking that the work is not concurrently under consideration elsewhere.

E. Peer Review Policy and Process

1. AJIR follows a Double-Blind Peer review process, as detailed in the Peer Review Policy and the Guidelines for Peer Reviewers, both of which form part of this Ethics Policy by reference.
2. Manuscripts that pass the plagiarism check are forwarded for double-blind review to reviewers selected for the goodness of fit between their expertise and the subject matter of the manuscript, drawn from the Journal's Roster of Peer Reviewers or identified on an adhoc basis.
3. Neither the identity of the Author(s) nor that of the Reviewer(s) is disclosed to the other party at any stage. All parties to the Review process are required to maintain the confidentiality of the manuscript and the Review.

F. Research and Publication Misconduct

1. Research and Publication misconduct without limitation includes plagiarism; citation or reference manipulation; data fabrication or falsification; inappropriate image manipulation; violation of the Do No Harm (DNH) principle; undisclosed conflicts of interest; simultaneous or duplicate submission/publication (including “salami slicing” of a single study into multiple papers without justification); and guest, gift, or ghost authorship.
2. Allegations of misconduct — whether raised during review, after acceptance, or after publication — shall be examined by the Editor-in-Chief in consultation with the Editorial Board and, where necessary, the Advisory Board, following the relevant flowcharts and recommendations of COPE, adapted to the context and resources of the Foundation.
3. Throughout any such examination, AJIR shall respect the dignity of all persons involved and observe the level of confidentiality appropriate to the matter, disclosing information only to those who need to know, except where a legal requirement compels broader disclosure.

G. Corrections, Retractions and Errata

1. Authors who discover a significant error or inaccuracy in their own published work must promptly inform the Editor-in-Chief and cooperate in issuing a correction or retraction, as appropriate.
2. Where an error is identified by the Editor, a reviewer, or a reader, the Editor-in-Chief shall investigate and, where warranted, publish a correction, erratum, or expression of concern, or retract the article, following the relevant COPE guidelines on retractions and corrections. Retraction notices shall clearly state the reason for retraction and shall be linked to the original article, which shall remain accessible but be clearly marked as retracted.

H. Complaints and Appeals

1. The Editorial decision on matters relating to the publication of a manuscript is Final in the ordinary course.
2. However, a complaint or appeal against an Editorial decision that, on a fair preliminary assessment by the Editor-in-Chief, has merit and warrants review, shall be referred to an Appeals Committee comprising three (3) members of the Editorial Board, chosen by the Editor-in-Chief. The decision of the Appeals Committee shall be binding.
3. If the Appeals Committee is unable to resolve the matter, the Editor-in-Chief shall refer it to a Higher Appeals Committee comprising three (3) members of the Advisory Board, whose decision shall be Binding & Final.
4. Both the Appeals Committee and the Higher Appeals Committee may, at their discretion, seek the advice of independent experts from outside the Boards. In all such matters, the dignity of the persons involved and the confidentiality appropriate to the matter shall be respected.

I. Data Protection and Confidentiality

1. Personal information of Authors, Reviewers, and Board members — including contact details, affiliations, and review records — shall be used solely for Editorial and Publication purposes and shall not be shared with Third parties except as required for the publication process or as mandated by law.