



DAY-TO-DAY JOURNAL OPERATIONS

Milica Ševkušić, EIFL

Strengthening Scholarly Publishing in Africa, 7 October 2026



Different working conditions have an impact on publishing workflows

Commercial publishers

- Paid staff
- More specialized roles
- Established internal procedures
- Training is usually provided, esp. for technical positions

Institutional and volunteer-led journals

Researchers, librarians and support staff usually combine journal duties with other jobs.

Key operational roles may be concentrated in a few individuals

More staff and resources does not imply a higher level of professionalism.

The operational model has an impact on publishing workflows

Journal 1

- Two issues per year
- Calls for papers
- Email submissions
- Peer review is handled via email
- Copyediting begins only after all manuscripts scheduled for an issue have been accepted.

Journal 2

- Continuous publication
- An online journal management system is used to handle all processes from submission to publication

Journal 3

- Six issues per year
- Submission and publication are managed via an online journal management system
- Peer review is managed via email
- Online first

Where do editors find guidance on publishing workflows?

Expert guidelines

COPE - ethics, flowcharts

ICMJE - Editorial guidance

EASE - Journal management and editorial processes (for members only)

Software documentation

Instructions on how to perform tasks within a particular publishing platform

On-the-job learning

Acquiring skills through practice, colleagues and local conventions.

The community highlighted the need for a comprehensive guide suited to the needs of Diamond OA journals.

Notes

- The tone of the allegations may be aggressive or personal. Respond politely; don't get drawn into personal exchanges.
- Sometimes the whistleblower may prefer to remain anonymous. It is important not to try to "out" people who wish to be anonymous.
- It is important to take the discussion away from the public domain; don't engage in specific discussions on social media.



Let the publisher and the communications team know about any allegations. It is useful to establish an escalation procedure and agree a process for responding ahead of time

Do the allegations contain specific and detailed evidence to support the claim?



Yes

Treat in the same way as concerns raised directly

Respond via the same social media, ideally within 24 hours, saying that you are going to investigate

Let the authors know via email that concerns were raised and ask them for an explanation. You should not generally add them to an exchange (eg, in a Twitter response). If the concerns were raised only about the research findings, in some instances the authors may wish to respond themselves

Investigate according to the appropriate COPE Flowchart or guidance, and also follow own publisher's guidance



IF THERE IS AN OUTCOME TO YOUR INVESTIGATION, SUCH AS A CORRECTION OR RETRACTION, CONSIDER PUTTING INFORMATION ABOUT IT ON THE SAME SOCIAL MEDIA(SITE(S)) WHERE THE CONCERNS WERE ORIGINALLY RAISED

It may not be appropriate for Twitter but useful on other sites. Post a link to the resolution on the journal site



No

Are the comments targeted directly at the author, editor, publisher, or the journal?



Yes



RESPOND VIA THE SAME SOCIAL MEDIA TO SAY "THANK YOU. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO RAISE A COMPLAINT PLEASE CONTACT [XYZ]" PROVIDE A GENERIC CONTACT (EG, CUSTOMER SERVICES), WHO WILL BE ABLE TO FORWARD THE COMPLAINT TO THE APPROPRIATE PERSON

It is appropriate to respond from a journal/publisher account rather than a personal Twitter account for legal and ethical reasons

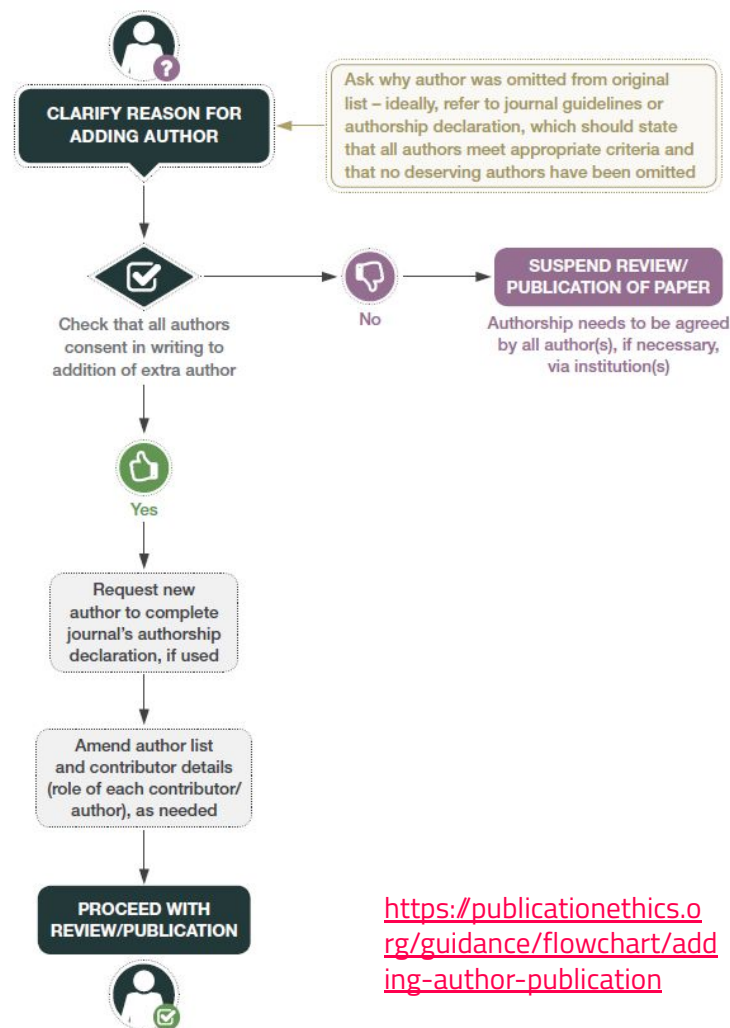
IF THEY PERSIST WITH VAGUE CLAIMS, POLITELY SAY YOU CANNOT PURSUE THIS FURTHER AND DO NOT RESPOND TO ANY FURTHER COMMENTS

DON'T RESPOND, BUT FLAG TO THE PUBLISHER SO THEY CAN DECIDE ON THEIR APPROACH

Consider letting the authors know and explain why you are not responding at the moment. Make sure the authors will be able to access the comments (eg, some authors are not able to access Twitter or Google)

COPE Flowcharts

<https://publicationethics.org/guidance/flowchart/responding-concerns-raised-social-media>





Learning OJS for Editors: Editorial Workflow from Submission to Post-Publication

OJS features a robust editorial workflow for guiding new submissions through various stages leading up to publication. In this guide, editorial board members will learn about each stage in the editorial workflow, including the purpose of each stage and how various editor roles will participate. This guide is intended for Journal Managers, Editors (including Journal Editors, Section Editors, and Guest Editors), Copyeditors, Proofreaders, and Layout Editors, and covers editorial tasks necessary for publishing user-submitted manuscripts in OJS, including:

- Using the Dashboard to manage submissions, tasks, and deadlines
- Using discussions to communicate with key people involved in a submission
- Assigning Journal Editors or Section Editors to a submission
- Assigning reviewers
- Making editorial decisions
- Editing essential article details and metadata
- Formatting the final version of articles
- Creating and publishing issues
- Using versions to make corrections to articles that have already been published.

This guide is part of a series of learning materials for OJS users. Other parts in the series include:

<https://docs.pkp.sfu.ca/learning-ojs/editorial-workflow/en/>

Editorial workflows in Diamond Open Access journals

eifl KNOWLEDGE
WITHOUT
BOUNDARIES



Editorial Workflows in Diamond Open Access Journals: A Guide

Authors:

Iryna Kuchma, EIFL

Ina Smith, Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf)

Milica Ševkušić, EIFL

June 2026



This work is licensed under a
[Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

- From submission to post-publication in 9 steps
- For journals using journal management systems and those with email-based workflows
- Examples from OJS
- Role descriptions
- Adaptable email templates

Kuchma, I., Smith, I., & Ševkušić, M. (2026). Editorial Workflows in Diamond Open Access Journals. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20594400>

Structure

01 Submission

02 Editorial screening

03 Selecting reviewers

04 Peer review

05 Production

06 Publication

07 Indexing & preservation

08 Promotion

09 Post-publication

Section structure



Who is in charge



Aim



Actions



Notifications

Issues that may occur during manuscript submission

Solutions

01 Manuscript submission

Receive a manuscript

-

Metadata and file
compliance check

-

Reject or pass to the next
step

- Tasks can be handled by a technical role.
- If you can, use a journal management system
- Don't waste time on incomplete submissions or those out of scope.

02 Editorial screening

Check author(s) identity

-

Aims & Scope compliance check

-

Check manuscript structure

-

Check formatting and references

-

Reject or pass to similarity check

-

Reject or send for review

- Tasks can be largely be handled by a technical role.
- Accepting manuscripts continuously, rather than within fixed deadlines, helps reduce bottlenecks.
- Adopt screening checklists to ensure consistency.

03 Selecting reviewers

Identify potential reviewers

-

Check potential conflicts of interest

-

Identify backup reviewers

-

Send invitations to reviewers

- Maintain an internal reviewer database.
- Consult with the Editorial Board members.
- Engage with research networks, conferences, and scholarly communities to expand the reviewer pool.
- Take into account previous performance

04 Peer review

A manuscript is sent to a reviewer.

The reviewer submits a review report.

The Editor sends the review report to the authors.

The authors send the revised manuscript.

Accept or send for another review round.

- Use reminders to prompt timely responses.
- Backup reviewers
- Incentives for reviewers
- Use structured review forms or checklists to guide reviewers and improve report quality.
- Consider collecting author feedback on the quality of reviews.

05 Production

Copyediting

-

Layout and typesetting

-

Proofreading

-

Accessibility audit

-

Preparing metadata

-

Assigning PIDs

-

Final checks

- Tasks can be handled by a technical role or outsourced.
- Consider accessibility requirements during production.
- If possible, follow the XML-first workflow (e.g. using [JATS XML Converter Service](#)) ([Kupreyev et al., 2026](#)).
- Use simple and visually clear design templates that can be maintained by any journal staff member.

06 Publication

Publish content on the platform

-

Review landing pages,
metadata and full text

-

Inform authors

- Tasks can be handled by a technical role.
- Automate publication steps where possible.
- Perform metadata validation before publication.
- Test PID resolution and URLs prior to public release.

07 Indexing, archiving & preservation

Submit content a preservation service and verify it's functioning

-

Expose metadata via OAI-PMH or APIs

-

Submit the journal to relevant indexing and abstracting services and aggregators

-

Send copies to legal deposit and deposit in repositories

- Tasks can be handled by a technical role.
- Journals using OJS can use the PKP Preservation Network free of charge.
- Ensure metadata exposure via OAI-PMH and that detailed metadata is deposited with DOI registration agencies.
- Register the journal with relevant free indexing services and directories (e.g. DOAJ, BASE, CORE).

08 Marketing and promotion

Disseminate through all
available channels

-

Track engagement indicators to
inform dissemination strategy

- Tasks can be handled by a technical role.
- Prepare short, ready-to-use templates for announcements and social media posts to reduce preparation time.
- Collaborate with institutional support services, if available.

09 Post-publication discussions

Provide channels for expressions of concern

-

Review concerns promptly and objectively

-

Post formal responses to expressions of concern

- Follow COPE Core Practices
- Assign clear responsibility and timelines for handling post-publication issues.
- Define in advance the standard outcomes of post-publication discussions (correction, expression of concern, retraction) and criteria for each outcome.

Ways to improve publishing workflows

Optimize organization

01 Define and describe procedures

02 Define who does what

03 Keep all key information and documents in one shared place

03 Standardize recurring tasks (e.g. using checklists, email templates, etc.)

05 Plan for continuity

Establishing the operational backbone

COORDINATION & CONTINUITY

Consider introducing a technical role that would make sure:

- Every submission is tracked
- Files, metadata and declarations are checked
- Queries reach the right person
- Actions are coordinated
- Deadlines are observed
- Documentation is kept up-to-date and preserved

Job title can vary: Editorial Assistant, Managing Editor, etc.

Initial triage before academic assessment

Check
submission
completeness

Check author
identities

Check
declarations

Check
references

Check
metadata

Check
manuscript
structure

Similarity
screening

Triage reduces the workload for editors and reviewers, as well as avoidable delays.

Avoiding bottlenecks: continuous publishing

ISSUE-BASED PUBLISHING

**Accepted → produced →
WAIT
for other articles and issue
assembly**

CONTINUOUS PUBLISHING

**Accepted → produced →
PUBLISHED
as soon as the article is ready**

- **Less end-of-issue pressure**
- **No post-production waiting**
- **Articles become citable sooner**

[How to Move From Issue-Based Production to Truly Continuous Publishing - Sheridan](#)

Where does your journal lose the most time?

- ☐ Initial triage and editorial screening
- ☐ Reviewer recruitment and review delays
- ☐ Production and publication scheduling
- ☐ Metadata, discovery and preservation
- ☐ Coordination and handovers

Thank you!

Questions?

milica.sevkusic@eifl.net

