

Editorial Policy

Governance, peer review and publication ethics for all IIAR Journals

This Editorial Policy sets out how journals published by the International Institute of Artificial Intelligence and Research (IIAR) are governed, how manuscripts are assessed, and the standards of publication ethics that authors, reviewers and editors are expected to uphold. It applies to every IIAR journal and should be read with the IIAR Author Guidelines, Reviewer Guidelines, Style Guide, Author Agreement Form and Copyright & Licence Agreement and Ethics Declaration Form. IIAR follows the Core Practices of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) and the Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing issued jointly by COPE, DOAJ, OASPA and WAME.

1. MISSION AND SCOPE

IIAR journals publish original, rigorously reviewed research that advances knowledge in their declared subject areas, with particular attention to work from and about Africa and other regions under-represented in the global research record. Each journal publishes its own aims and scope on its website; manuscripts outside that scope are returned without review. IIAR welcomes empirical studies, theoretical and conceptual papers, systematic reviews and applied research, including work that applies artificial intelligence and data-driven methods to the journal's field.

2. PUBLISHER AND GOVERNANCE

IIAR journals are published by the International Institute of Artificial Intelligence and Research (IIAR), a research institute operated by Veristzon Global Research Lab. The IIAR Editorial Office administers all journals and is the single point of contact for authors and reviewers.

Each journal has:

- an **Editor-in-Chief**, who holds final responsibility for editorial decisions and the scholarly content of the journal;
- an **Editorial Board** of active researchers with verifiable affiliations, each of whom has agreed in writing to serve. Board membership, with affiliation and country, is published on the journal website and reviewed at least every two years;
- **Handling Editors** (Associate Editors) assigned by the Editor-in-Chief to manage the review of individual manuscripts.

The names and contact details of the Editor-in-Chief and Editorial Office are published on each journal's website. IIAR does not list any person on an editorial board without their documented consent.

3. EDITORIAL INDEPENDENCE

Editorial decisions are made solely on the basis of scholarly merit, relevance to the journal's scope and compliance with this Policy. They are not influenced by the identity, nationality, gender, institution or seniority of the authors, by commercial considerations, or by the interests of IIAR or its parent organisation. Where an author is employed by IIAR, Veristzon Global Research Lab, or is a member of the journal's editorial team, the manuscript is handled entirely by an editor with no connection to the author, and the relationship is disclosed in the published article (see Section 9.4).

4. SUBMISSION AND EDITORIAL SCREENING

Manuscripts are submitted through the journal's online system on the IIAR platform. On receipt, the Editorial Office checks each submission for:

1. fit with the journal's aims and scope;
2. compliance with the Author Guidelines, Submission Template and Style Guide;
3. completeness — abstract, keywords, declarations, references, Author Agreement Form;

4. textual similarity, using recognised similarity-detection software, with a threshold below 15–20% excluding references and properly quoted material;
5. indications of undisclosed AI-generated writing, with a detection threshold below 20%, interpreted with judgement and never as the sole basis of a decision;
6. presence of required ethics approvals and consent statements.

Manuscripts that fail screening are returned to the authors with the reasons, normally within **ten working days** of submission. Manuscripts that pass are assigned to a Handling Editor.

5. PEER REVIEW

5.1 Review model

IIAR journals operate **double-blind peer review**: the identities of authors and reviewers are concealed from each other throughout the process. Authors must supply an anonymised manuscript; the Editorial Office removes identifying metadata before review.

5.2 Reviewer selection

Each manuscript that proceeds to review is assessed by **at least two independent reviewers** with expertise in the subject, chosen by the Handling Editor. Reviewers must not be from the same institution as any author, must not have collaborated with the authors in the preceding three years, and must declare any conflict of interest before accepting. Authors may suggest or oppose reviewers with reasons; the editor is not bound by these suggestions.

5.3 Timeline

Stage	Target
Editorial screening decision	10 working days from submission
Reviewer invitation and acceptance	10 working days from assignment
Reviewer report	2–3 weeks from acceptance of invitation
First editorial decision	Within 8 weeks of submission (target)
Author revision — minor	2 weeks
Author revision — major	6 weeks
Publication after acceptance	Continuous (online-first) once proofs are approved and the signed Copyright & Licence Agreement is received

5.4 What reviewers assess

Reviewers evaluate originality, fit to scope, soundness and reproducibility of methods, presentation and support of results, justification of conclusions, ethics and integrity, and compliance with the Template — as set out in the IIAR Reviewer Guidelines. Reviewers treat manuscripts as confidential and may not use generative AI tools to evaluate a manuscript or to draft their report, since doing so breaches confidentiality.

5.5 Decisions

On the basis of the reviews and their own reading, the Handling Editor recommends and the Editor-in-Chief confirms one of four decisions: **Accept**, **Minor revision**, **Major revision** (re-review required), or **Reject**. The decision letter includes the reviewers' comments to authors. Revised manuscripts must be accompanied by a point-by-point response. A manuscript may not be revised more than twice; a third round normally results in rejection.

5.6 Appeals

Authors may appeal a rejection once, in writing to the Editorial Office within 30 days, stating specific grounds — such as a factual error or demonstrable reviewer bias. Appeals are considered by the Editor-in-Chief, who may consult an additional reviewer or board member not involved in the original decision. The outcome of an appeal is final.

6. PUBLICATION ETHICS

6.1 Authorship

Authorship is limited to those who made a substantial contribution to the conception, design, execution or interpretation of the work and who approve the final manuscript. Guest, gift and ghost authorship are forms of misconduct. Every article carries an *Author contributions* statement. Changes to authorship after submission require the written agreement of all authors and the approval of the editor; changes after publication are made only by a published correction.

6.2 Originality and plagiarism

Submissions must be original and not published or under consideration elsewhere. Plagiarism — including self-plagiarism and unattributed reuse of text, data or images — is not tolerated. All submissions are screened as described in Section 4. Established plagiarism results in rejection and may lead to notification of the authors' institution.

6.3 Data integrity

Fabrication, falsification or selective reporting of data is misconduct. Authors must retain raw data for at least five years after publication and provide it to the editor on request. Every article carries a *Data availability* statement. Images may be adjusted only uniformly (brightness, contrast, colour balance applied to the whole image) and any adjustment must be disclosed.

6.4 Ethical approval and consent

Research involving human participants, personal data or animals must have been approved by an appropriate ethics committee or regulatory authority before it began, and the approving body and reference number must be stated in the article. Written informed consent is required from participants, and separately for the publication of any identifiable information.

6.5 Competing interests

Authors, reviewers and editors must disclose all financial and non-financial interests that could be perceived to influence their work or judgement. Author disclosures are published with the article. Reviewers and editors with a conflict withdraw from handling the manuscript.

6.6 Use of artificial intelligence

IIAR journals publish research on artificial intelligence and hold their own processes to the standards they study. The following rules apply to all parties:

Party	Rule
Authors	Any use of generative AI or AI-assisted tools in preparing a manuscript must be disclosed specifically — tool, version and purpose — under the heading <i>Use of AI tools</i> in the Declarations. AI tools cannot be authors. AI-generated data, images or results are not permitted. Authors are fully responsible for all content.
Reviewers	Manuscripts must not be uploaded to any generative AI tool; doing so breaches confidentiality. Reviews must be the reviewer's own assessment.
Editors	Editorial decisions are made by people. AI-based similarity and writing-detection tools inform screening but no decision rests on a detection score alone.
IIAR as publisher	The same disclosure standard applies to articles authored by IIAR staff and to any content IIAR itself produces for its journals.

7. CORRECTIONS, RETRACTIONS AND EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN

IIAR follows COPE guidance in maintaining the integrity of the published record. The version of record is never silently altered.

- **Correction** — for an honest error that does not invalidate the findings. A linked correction notice is published and the article is updated with a note of the change.

- **Retraction** — where findings are unreliable through misconduct or honest error, where the work is plagiarised or redundant, where ethics approval was absent, or where authorship was misrepresented. The article remains online, watermarked “Retracted”, with a retraction notice stating the reason and who initiated it.
- **Expression of concern** — where an investigation is under way or inconclusive and readers should be alerted.
- **Removal** — only where legally required (for example, defamation or a court order). Bibliographic metadata is retained.

Concerns about a published article may be raised by anyone with the Editorial Office. Allegations of misconduct are investigated by the Editor-in-Chief following COPE flowcharts; authors are given the opportunity to respond, and institutions may be informed where warranted.

8. COPYRIGHT, LICENSING AND OPEN ACCESS

IIAR journals are **fully open access**. All articles are published under a **Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0)** licence and are free to read, download and reuse with attribution immediately on publication, without embargo. **Authors retain copyright** and grant IIAR a non-exclusive licence to publish, as set out in the IIAR Copyright & Licence Agreement and Ethics Declaration Form. Authors may deposit any version of their article in any repository at any time. Each article carries the line “© [year] the Authors. Published by IIAR under a CC BY 4.0 licence.”

9. FEES

[Confirm and insert one of the following before publishing this Policy — the statement must match Settings → Distribution → Payments in OJS.]

Option A — no charges: “IIAR journals do not charge submission fees, article processing charges (APCs) or any other author-side fees. Publication is free to authors and free to readers.”

Option B — APC: “IIAR journals charge an article processing charge of [amount and currency] on acceptance. No fee is charged at submission. Waivers are available on request to authors without institutional or grant funding; a waiver request has no bearing on the editorial decision.”

10. PUBLICATION FREQUENCY AND ARTICLE IDENTIFIERS

Articles are published online on a continuous basis as they are accepted and compiled into [quarterly / insert frequency] issues. Each journal is identified by an ISSN [insert ISSN once issued by the National Library of Nigeria]. Articles are assigned a Digital Object Identifier (DOI) registered with Crossref [insert prefix once membership is confirmed], and every article deposits full metadata including author names, affiliations, ORCID iDs where supplied, and reference lists.

11. ARCHIVING AND INDEXING

IIAR lists only archiving and indexing arrangements that are actually in place. Content is preserved through [insert — e.g. the PKP Preservation Network, once enabled] to ensure long-term access if a journal ceases publication. Current indexing is stated on each journal’s website and updated as new agreements take effect.

12. ADVERTISING AND REVENUE

IIAR journals do not carry advertising. Editorial decisions are not influenced by any source of revenue, and no fee, sponsorship or institutional relationship purchases publication or expedited review.

13. COMPLAINTS

Complaints about editorial process, conduct of reviewers or editors, or the handling of a manuscript should be addressed to the Editorial Office. Complaints about the Editor-in-Chief may be addressed to the Director of IIAR. IIAR aims to acknowledge complaints within five working days and to resolve them within 30 days. Where the complainant remains dissatisfied and the matter concerns publication ethics, IIAR will engage with COPE’s facilitation process where available.

14. REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

This Policy is reviewed annually by the Editorial Office and the Editors-in-Chief, and whenever COPE or industry guidance changes materially. The date of the current version is shown below.

Version	Date	Change
1.0	31 August 2026	First issue

15. CONTACT

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