

This document sets out *Acta Structilia* Journal's policies and procedures:

## **1. Article Retraction Policy**

Published articles should remain extant and intact. However, under exceptional circumstances involving plagiarism (see Plagiarism Policy) and redundant publication or data error, articles may need to be retracted, removed or replaced in order to protect the integrity of the literature and the journal. The need for a retraction will be determined by the Editor, but may be initiated, in cases of flawed data or conclusions, at the request of the author/s.

To retract an article, a notice of retraction will be published in the next issue. This notice of retraction will:

- include the title and authors of the article, the reason for the retraction and who is retracting the article
- be linked to the article online

## **2. Article Corrections and Errata Policy**

A published article forms part of the published record and will not be altered or removed (see the Article Retraction Policy).

A correction will be published if a published article contains a significant error that affects, for example, the accuracy of the article. Minor errors, such as typographical errors, will generally not be corrected. Corrections are published as either Errata or Corrigenda. Both Errata and Corrigenda are published at the discretion of the Editor. An Erratum or Corrigendum will be linked to the original article online.

*Amendments are published in the article category "Addenda and Errata" and will be further classified as an "Erratum" or "Corrigendum".*

### **Erratum**

An Erratum is the correction of an error introduced by the Journal during editing or production. The Author will be given an opportunity to approve an Erratum before publication.

### **Corrigendum**

A Corrigendum is the correction of an error made by the author/s.

## **3. Article Withdrawal policy**

Only used for Articles in Press (articles that have been accepted for publication but which have not been formally published and will not yet have the complete volume/issue/page information). Articles in Press that include errors, or are discovered to be accidental duplicates of other published article(s), or are determined to violate our journal publishing ethics guidelines in the view of the editors (such as multiple submission, bogus claims of authorship, plagiarism, fraudulent use of data or the like), may be "Withdrawn" from *Acta Structilia*. Withdrawn means that the article content (HTML and PDF) is removed and replaced with a HTML page and PDF simply stating that the article has been withdrawn according to the Journal's Policy on Article in Press Withdrawal.

#### **4. Conflict of interest policies**

Conflicts of interest as “those which may not be fully apparent and may influence the judgement of authors, reviewers and editors”. Such interests must be declared by authors, reviewers and editors. In case of uncertainty, rather disclose.

##### **Authors’ conflicts of interest**

Authors are asked during the submission process to declare any potential conflicts of interest for the Editor’s consideration. Examples include employment, funding sources, owning of shares and grants/payments for lectures or travel.

Should a potential conflict of interest exist, it must be declared and will be included in the published version if the article is accepted for publication. A potential conflict of interest does not necessarily mean the submission will be rejected.

##### **Reviewers’ conflicts of interest**

Reviewers are asked to declare any potential conflicts of interest in the manuscript review form. Examples include submissions by family members or students and discerning the identity of the authors. A conflict of interest does not necessarily invalidate the review report.

##### **Editors’ conflicts of interest**

The same policy for authors’ conflicts of interest applies when editors are the authors of editorials, non-reviewed front section articles and manuscripts for peer review. In addition, with regard to the submission of manuscripts for peer review, the manuscript management system automatically precludes an editor from accessing the manuscript information of manuscripts for which they have been identified as an author.

With regard to assigning reviewers and making a decision on a manuscript, an editor will withdraw as editor for that manuscript if there is a conflict of interest, such as in the case of a submission by a family member or student.

##### **Editorial Board members**

Members of the Editorial Board are permitted to publish in the Journal. Submissions received from Board members are treated in the same manner as other submissions.

#### **5. Plagiarism policy**

Plagiarism implies direct duplication of the formulation and insights of a source text with the intention of presenting it as one’s own work. All cases of suspected or alleged plagiarism will be considered seriously and on an individual basis.

*Acta Structilia* is a member of Turn-it-In. Manuscripts submitted for consideration for publication will be scanned for potential plagiarism before undergoing peer review to verify their originality. Similarity reports will be reviewed on an individual basis.

##### **Submitted manuscripts**

- Suspected plagiarism in a submitted manuscript can be brought to the attention of the Editor either through the similarity report of the plagiarism detection scan or through a Reviewer of the manuscript.
- When a similarity report is indicative of a potential offence, the report and manuscript will be examined by the Editor to determine whether or not material has been plagiarised and, if so, the extent of the plagiarism.
- When suspected plagiarism is reported to the Editorial Office, the report will be acknowledged and all relevant documentation/evidence will be retrieved and examined by the Editor, in conjunction with the relevant Associate Editor, to

determine whether or not material has been plagiarised and, if so, the extent of the plagiarism.

- If material has been plagiarised, the corresponding author will be informed by the Editor that the manuscript is rejected on these grounds.
- If the extent of the plagiarism is minor and the Editor determines that the author/s did not intend to plagiarise, no further action will be taken. If the plagiarism is extensive or admitted to, the author/s' institution/s and funding bodies will be informed of the offence (the submitted and plagiarised material will be sent to them) by the Editor. Authors will be notified by the Editor that their institution/s will be informed and that they will be banned from submitting to *Acta Structilia* in the future.
- The reader or Reviewer reporting the suspected plagiarism will be informed of the outcome of the investigation.

#### **Published articles**

- When suspected plagiarism is reported to the Editorial Office, the report will be acknowledged and all relevant documentation/evidence will be retrieved and examined by the Editor, in conjunction with the relevant Associate Editor, to determine whether or not material has been plagiarised and, if so, the extent of the plagiarism.
- If material has been plagiarised, the corresponding author will be informed by the Editor and questioned.
- If the extent of the plagiarism is minor and the Editor determines that the author/s did not intend to plagiarise, a statement indicating the plagiarised material and appropriate reference will be published online and the article online will be linked to the statement and vice versa.
- If the plagiarism is extensive or admitted to, the article will be retracted (see [Article Retraction Policy](#)) and a statement published acknowledging the original author/s.
- The author/s' institution/s and funding bodies will be informed of the offence (submitted and plagiarised material will be sent to them) by the Editor. Authors will be notified by the Editor that the relevant institution/s will be informed and that they will be banned from submitting to *Acta Structilia* in the future.
- The original author/s and publisher will also be informed of the offence.
- The reader or Reviewer reporting the suspected plagiarism will be informed of the outcome of the investigation.

## **6. Archiving possibilities**

The digital content of *Acta Structilia* is extremely valuable and measures are in place to ensure both its current accessibility and long-term preservation.

#### **On the website**

All digital Journal content is stored on a secure server which is backed up frequently.

#### **On other sites**

*Acta Structilia* articles in digital format are archived on [AJOL](#) and in the [Sabinet Open Access Collection](#).

#### **Self-archiving**

Authors may archive the final published version of their articles in personal or institutional repositories immediately after publication.

## 7. Peer review process

1. Manuscripts are submitted online via e-mail to the Editor. Manuscripts undergo an initial assessment by the **Editorial Office** to ensure that they comply with the guidelines.
2. Manuscripts are then assigned to the **Editor** to decide whether or not they fall within the remit of the journal. The Editor may also refer to Associate Editors for their assessment. All manuscripts should be written in a style suitable for non-specialists.
3. All manuscripts deemed potentially suitable then undergo a **plagiarism detection process** using Turn-it-In. When a similarity report is indicative of a potential offence, the report and manuscript will be examined by the Editor to determine whether or not material has been plagiarised and, if so, the extent of the plagiarism. In the case of suspected plagiarism, the Plagiarism Policy will come into effect. When the similarity report indicates no plagiarism detected, the Editor assigns the manuscript to an Associate Editor.
4. **Associate Editors** can at this stage reject manuscripts that does not comply or refer manuscripts back to the authors for language editing or re-writing. If a manuscript is deemed suitable for review, the Associate Editor appoints and invites Reviewers online. It is at the discretion of the Associate Editor whether or not Reviewers recommended by Authors are selected; the selection will, however, include Reviewers who are not on the recommended list.
5. **Reviewers** are normally given 21 days to submit a report. (Sometimes the stipulated time may be extended if reviewers asked for postponement). At least two reports are required to make a decision. The review process is double blind, that is, both authors' and reviewers' identities are concealed.
6. Once at least two reports have been received, the **Associate Editor** makes a decision on the manuscript. If Reviewers' recommendations diverge, the Associate Editor can arbitrate the recommendation or refer the manuscript to a third Reviewer.
7. **Authors** are given 7 days to revise a manuscript needing minor revisions and 14 days to revise a manuscript needing major revisions.
8. **Associate Editors** then make a decision on minor revisions and refer major revisions to one or more Reviewers (the original Reviewer/s when possible) for their recommendations before making a decision.
9. **Authors** can appeal a decision in writing to the Editor.
10. Accepted manuscripts are received by the **Editorial Office** where they enter the production queue to undergo copy-editing, layout and proofing. Research Articles and Review Articles are produced for publication in date order of acceptance, but can, at the discretion of the editors and for compelling reasons, be assigned to a particular issue.

## 8. Appeals and complaints

### Appeals

Authors have the right to appeal a decision on their submission if they believe the decision was unfair.

To appeal a decision, please submit a letter detailing the nature of the appeal and indicating why the decision is viewed as unfair.

The letter should be submitted to the Editor within 10 days of the decision.

The Editor will review all relevant documentation relating to the submission, may consult the relevant Associate Editor or Reviewers and may appoint a new Reviewer to evaluate the submission before making a decision.

The decision of the Editor will be final.

### **Complaints**

For complaints relating to the policies and procedures of the Journal or the conduct of editorial staff, please email the details of the complaint to the Editor.

All complaints directed through the correct channels will be acknowledged and the resolution will be conveyed to the complainant. Complaints will be resolved as quickly as possible.

## **9. Production Process and Publication**

1. Accepted manuscripts are received by the Editorial Office where they enter the production queue to undergo copy-editing, layout and proofing. Research Articles and Review Articles are produced for publication in date order of acceptance, but can, at the discretion of the editors and for compelling reasons, be assigned to a particular issue.

2. Manuscripts and supplementary material undergo **copy-editing** to ensure, inter alia, that the language is clear and suitable for a non-specialist reader, that the text conforms to the house style, that the figures are presentable and that the referencing is correct. Authors are given the opportunity to approve the copy-editing changes made and to address any queries at this stage; however, major text changes are not permitted at this stage.

3. Edited manuscripts then undergo **layout**. Supplementary material does not undergo layout.

4. **Proofs** are checked first by the Editorial Office and then sent to Authors for correction. Only minor corrections such as typos and corrections to layout can be made at this stage. Figures should be carefully checked as they may have been redrawn or relabelled. Any major changes at proof stage will incur a cost and result in a delay. Final corrected proofs are not returned to authors unless requested. No changes can be made after the proof has been approved for publication. Any *essential* corrections can be published in a subsequent issue.

5. Any delays during the Production Process as a result of missing deadlines or failure to address queries will delay the publication of the article. Major delays will necessitate the manuscript being re-scheduled to avoid delaying the publication of the issue.

6. Authors will be informed as soon as their articles are **published online**. Authors are welcome to deposit the final published version in institutional repositories or personal archives.

7. A **full digital** issue, is sent once the issue has been published.

8. Authors receive two complimentary printed issues.