

# Research Ethics FAQ

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# 1 Authorship Criteria

## Q1 When submitting a paper to a journal with two first (lead) authors, how should the authors be indicated?

q1 Two researchers have contributed equally to a paper, so I intend to designate both as lead authors. Can a paper have two lead authors? Are there general guidelines applicable across all journals, or do specific technical guidelines exist? I have noticed that some papers list lead authors and co-authors in order, with a footnote explanation. Is there a standardized policy for listing multiple lead authors? If this varies by journal, should I contact each journal individually?

a1 While it is most common for a paper to have a single lead (first) author, interdisciplinary research or collaborative studies often allow multiple lead authors. Some international journals recognize the designation of "co-first authors" or "co-lead authors." Although listing multiple lead authors might seem unconventional, it is possible by using symbols (such as an asterisk) and providing an explanatory note. The visibility of an author's name in a paper carries significance, and the first-listed author typically receives the most recognition. Even when multiple authors are designated as co-first authors, there may still be a preference for a particular order of names. In most cases, journals follow a structured format where: The lead(first) author is the one who contributed most significantly to drafting and research. The corresponding author is usually listed last, though in some cases, they may be noted in a footnote directly after the first author. Some journals explicitly recognize co-first authors by indicating this with a special notation in the author list or a footnote. Journals and academic societies may have their own policies regarding the recognition and placement of co-first authors, so it is advisable to follow the specific journal's editorial guidelines. Since policies on co-lead authors vary by journal, you should check each journal's submission guidelines or contact the editorial office for clarification. Typically, authorship order follows the principle of contribution, where: The first author is the primary contributor to writing and

research. The corresponding author holds the responsibility for correspondence and administrative duties. Co-authors after the first author are generally ranked by level of contribution, though in some disciplines—especially in large collaborative projects—alphabetical ordering is used instead. It is highly recommended that co-authors discuss and agree on the authorship order in advance and confirm the journal's policies before submission.

## Q2 What are the criteria for authorship?

**q** What are the authorship criteria established by International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) as a specific criterion for judging 'Inappropriate authorship', such as granting authorship to individuals who have not contributed to the research or its results?

**a** Authorship plays a crucial role in academic recognition and credibility. However, the criteria for determining authorship may vary across different academic disciplines. The International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) has established specific guidelines to ensure that only those who have made substantial and intellectual contributions to a paper are recognized as authors. According to ICMJE, authorship means taking responsibility and accountability for the published papers. To qualify as an author, an individual must meet all of the following four criteria. First, the individual must have made a substantial contribution to the conception or design of the research, or to the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of research data. Second, the individual must have been involved in drafting the manuscript or revising it critically for important intellectual content. Third, the individual must have given final approval of the version to be published. Fourth, the individual must agree to take responsibility for all aspects of the research, ensuring that any questions related to its accuracy or integrity are appropriately investigated and resolved. Claiming authorship means publicly declaring responsibility for the research. Since journals generally do not verify whether all listed authors meet these criteria, they may request additional information about the originality of the research, the contributions of each author, and their involvement in the study. However, accurately assessing the extent and quality of each author's contribution can be challenging, as issues related to inappropriate authorship—such as honorary or guest authorship—are sometimes difficult to resolve through internal agreements among co-authors.

## Q3

### What are the criteria for determining the first author, second author, and corresponding author of a paper, and what ethical considerations apply?

**q** Are there any criteria for determining the first(lead) author, corresponding author, and co-authors based on the following factors: ① making a significant contribution to the planning of research or to the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of research data, ② preparing a draft or revising the main academic contents, and ③ giving final approval of the manuscript to be published? For example, in the case of a project-based paper, is it correct to classify the researcher with the highest contribution as the first(lead) author, a principal investigator of research is classified as a corresponding author, and the participating researcher, or a non-participating researcher who contributed to the project by providing the data necessary for the paper, is classified as a co-author?

**a** In principle, authorship should be determined based on author's contribution, but in practice, it often involves a mutual decision among co-authors. Generally, the researcher who has made the most significant contribution to drafting the paper, with the remaining authors ranked in order of their contribution. Depending on the academic field, a corresponding author is often the research supervisor or principal investigators. However, in some cases, the same person may serve as both the first author and the corresponding author. Typically, the corresponding author is listed "last" and their roles are indicated through typographical symbols or footnotes. The last author position holds significance because it is often reserved for a senior researcher responsible for overseeing the research, reviewing its content, and ensuring the integrity of its interpretation. As for non-participating researchers who contributed by providing necessary data, it is generally more appropriate to acknowledge them in the "Acknowledgments" section rather than listing them as co-authors. However, if data production, analysis, and interpretation are crucial to the study and constitute a significant part of the research process, such contributions may be included as a co-author. Certain academic disciplines, particularly those involving large-scale collaborative projects or interdisciplinary research, may follow different authorship conventions such as listing authors alphabetically. In such cases, it is recommended that submission guidelines or journal policies clearly specify these practices to avoid confusion.

## Q4

**If a student's thesis is later published as a paper in a journal and a third party other than the advisor is added to the authors of the thesis, is this absolutely violation of research ethics?**

q1

What measures can the academic society take if it discovers that the corresponding author of a paper published paper is a third party?

a1

If a paper is co-authored by a student and a professor from the same university, efforts should be made in advance to verify whether the paper is derived from the student's thesis. This can be done through information searches and institutional checks. Additionally, the editor-in-chief of the academic society should require that any paper that is excerpted or developed from a thesis includes a statement on the first page of the journal acknowledging this fact. If the contents of the thesis and the published paper are substantially identical, but the listed authors do not include the advisor and instead include a third party or an additional third author, the journal should, in accordance with research ethics, reject the paper or deem it unpublishable during the review and editing process. However, if the corresponding author is a third party and the journal submission significantly differs from the thesis—meaning it presents different research results and contains substantial revisions and developments beyond the original thesis—an exception may be made. In such cases, if the advisor did not participate in the writing process of the journal paper, it may be possible for a third party to serve as the corresponding author. Even in such an exception, it is recommended that the editor-in-chief requests a confirmation document from the first author or corresponding author. This document should confirm that the advisor is aware of the paper's submission to the journal and acknowledges that they have been excluded from the co-authorship.

- q2** When submitting a thesis to a journal, the student was listed as the first author, the advisor as the corresponding author, and a professor who reviewed the thesis was included as a co-author. In this case, is the professor inappropriately listed as a co-author? The overall structure of the thesis and the published paper is identical, but some content was revised and supplemented. The co-author claims to have contributed to these revisions, and both the first and corresponding authors acknowledge this. Is there a definite criterion for determining whether this constitutes inappropriate authorship?
- a2** In principle, when submitting a thesis as a journal paper, a third party should not be included as a co-author unless they made a substantial academic contribution. In this case, since the overall structure of the thesis and the journal paper remains identical, merely revising and supplementing some content does not automatically justify adding a new author. There is no absolute criterion for determining inappropriate authorship in such cases. However, a third author may be justified if the journal paper is not merely an excerpt or summary of the thesis but has undergone substantial development. The additional co-author's role is recognized based on contributions such as introducing new hypotheses, adding significant new data, modifying the research methodology, or providing new research implications. All listed authors, including the first and corresponding authors, agree on the inclusion of the additional co-author. Ultimately, this is a matter that should be evaluated by the journal's editor-in-chief and anonymous reviewers, who must determine whether the co-author's contribution meets ethical authorship standards.

## Q5

### **Does jointly publishing multiple papers among family members constitute research misconduct?**

**q** If family members have different academic backgrounds but share similar research interests and have comparable achievements in related topics, is it acceptable for them to co-author a paper? While publishing independently is permissible, would co-authoring with a spouse or parent/child be considered an attempt to artificially inflate research achievements? Additionally, to what extent is it acceptable if some family members do not hold a master's or doctoral degree?

**a** If all listed authors actively participated in the research and contributed sufficiently to warrant authorship, there is no issue with family members co-authoring a paper. However, many research institutions have recently established internal regulations requiring prior disclosure and approval for research collaborations involving family members or other closely related individuals. Similarly, some academic journals have implemented policies regulating co-authorship among family members to prevent ethical concerns. To include family members as co-authors, it is crucial to adhere to both institutional guidelines and journal policies governing co-authorship and research participation. Additionally, cases of research misconduct have arisen when family members were listed as co-authors without clear evidence of contribution, such as research notes or supporting documentation. Such instances have led to formal investigations into unethical authorship practices. Therefore, before including a family member as a co-author, it is essential to carefully review their contributions and ensure that they meet the necessary qualifications for authorship in accordance with ethical research standards.



## 2 Acknowledgments

**Q1** **Is it possible to list two Acknowledgments when two professors from different affiliations conduct collaborative research and receive research aid from each university to write a paper?**

**q** Professors A and B are collaborating on a research paper while receiving separate research aid from their respective universities, C and D. Since the funding is provided separately to both co-researchers for the same paper, is it possible to list two Acknowledgments? Additionally, are there any regulations or guidelines that can be referred to in this regard?

**a** Listing multiple Acknowledgments is generally at the discretion of the authors. However, some journals and research funding agencies may have restrictions on the number of institutions that can be listed in the Acknowledgments section. Therefore, if you intend to acknowledge multiple institutions, it is essential to review the policies of the relevant journal and research funding agencies in advance to ensure compliance.

## Q2

**How should Acknowledgments be written when revising, supplementing, and developing a doctoral thesis with aid from a postdoctoral fellowship, then publishing it as a paper?**

**q** I plan to publish two papers by further revising, supplementing, and analyzing my doctoral thesis with aid from a postdoctoral fellowship. In the first paper, I intend to revise and supplement a part of my doctoral thesis and publish it in a journal, and write at the section of Acknowledgments, “This paper is a revised and supplemented version of a part of my doctoral thesis, and the research was supported by the OO University Postdoctoral Fellowship.” In this case, I will be listed as the first author, and my advisor as the corresponding author. Would this be considered inappropriate or in violation of research ethics?

**a** There is no ethical issue with the doctoral graduate being listed as the first author and their advisor as the corresponding author when publishing a thesis-derived paper in a journal. Additionally, since the research fund is provided by a single institution, it is acceptable to acknowledge the university that awarded the postdoctoral fellowship in the Acknowledgments section. This statement accurately reflects the source of funding and the development of the research, making it ethically appropriate.

## Q3

**When submitting a paper that excerpts only a part of a doctoral thesis to a journal, is it acceptable to Acknowledge Research funding from my current employer?**

**q** A graduate who received a doctoral degree in dentistry from our institution this year plans to submit a part of his/her doctoral thesis to the SCIE journal. The graduate is now employed at other university hospital. Would not it be violation of research ethics to acknowledge the research aid received from the university hospital in the journal's Acknowledgments section?

- a** The Acknowledgments section is meant to express gratitude, and listing an institution in this section does not constitute research misconduct such as fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, or inappropriate authorship. However, correctly acknowledging research funding sources is crucial for maintaining a transparent and ethical academic ecosystem. In this case, acknowledging the new university hospital may be inappropriate because the paper is based on the doctoral thesis and does not include significant additions or developments beyond the original research. Since the submitted paper is not a product of the research aid provided by the new employer, listing the university hospital in the Acknowledgments could be misleading. Therefore, it is advisable to acknowledge only the institution that originally supported the research.

## **Q4** When writing a thesis that excerpts a part of a paper containing Acknowledgments, should the Acknowledgments be cited?

- q** I published a paper (Paper A) in a journal with research funds from a private company (Company B) and acknowledged this funding in the paper's Acknowledgments section. If I later excerpt part of Paper A for my doctoral thesis, is it sufficient to simply cite Paper A, or should I also indicate that Paper A was written with funding from Company B? Company B initially granted me full autonomy regarding Acknowledgments.
- a** Since Paper A was funded by Company B, the original Acknowledgments in the journal paper were appropriately stated. However, when incorporating content from Paper A into a doctoral thesis, there are two considerations: First, if the thesis is primarily based on Paper A and largely identical to it—meaning the thesis is essentially a further development of the paper—it is recommended to mention that the research was originally supported by Company B in some part of the thesis. Second, If the excerpt from Paper A is minor and falls within the general scope of citation, it is not necessary to repeat the Acknowledgments from the original paper in the thesis. In this case, a standard citation to Paper A should suffice. Unless the funding institution (Company B) has specific requirements for continued Acknowledgments in later works, the decision ultimately falls within the researcher's discretion. However, ensuring clear and ethical attribution of funding sources helps maintain academic transparency.

## Q5

**If I use only the data from a research report funded by a research grant for another study, should I include a separate Acknowledgment in addition to mentioning it in the paper?**

**q** I have data (a survey in the field of social sciences) that was collected for a project I led as the principal investigator a year ago. If I write a journal paper using only this data (without including the content from the research report), should I indicate this on the first page of the paper or in the Acknowledgments section, in addition to stating the use of the data in the research methodology chapter?

**a** This situation falls under contribution-type Acknowledgments, specifically regarding research funding. In such cases, acknowledgments serve to clarify "who did what", and in this instance, it would be an expression of gratitude for "data access and use." Therefore, it would be appropriate to state that the research findings are based on data collected in a project supported by research funding. The requirements for Acknowledgments are typically outlined in the original project notice, relevant regulations, or agreement governing the research funding. If no explicit guidelines exist, it is advisable to contact the funding institution for clarification on how they prefer the acknowledgment to be stated in the paper. Additionally, the format and placement of the Acknowledgments section depend on the journal's editorial policies and submission guidelines. It is recommended to review the journal's instructions and follow their prescribed format.

## 3 Conflicts of Interest

### Q1 **If I receive financial aid, do I have to disclose that fact in my thesis or report?**

- A** When a researcher receives research grants, conducts research and subsequently writes a report or academic paper based on that research, it is important to disclose the funding source. This ensures transparency and allows readers to understand and evaluate the research objectively, considering the potential influence of financial relationships.
- q1** I conducted research upon a policy research project and published a report. I clearly stated in the report that this report was upon a government-funded policy research project I am writing a paper based on the research, and the university is providing the funding for publication. Is it a problem to receive the publication funding when I conducted research upon policy research contract? In this case, how should I properly disclose any conflicts of interest?
- a1** The paper funded by the university is not directly related to the original research, but the policy research contract under which the research was conducted is directly relevant. The primary financial interest that readers should be informed about is the fact that the research was conducted as part of a policy research project. Therefore, it is a priority to explicitly disclose in the paper that the research was conducted under a policy research contract. If you receive financial aid from the university for writing the paper, this could be considered receiving two separate research funds for the same study. To avoid any ethical concerns, you should inform your university about this situation and follow any institutional policies regarding multiple sources of funding. Additionally, if you accept the university's paper aid, it is recommended that you disclose this financial support in the paper to ensure full transparency.

- q2** I am currently conducting two research projects, both funded by different institutions. I plan to write a paper based on the results of both projects. Should I disclose the financial supports from both institutions?
- a2** If you conduct research with funding from two different institutions and write a paper based on the results, you should disclose the details of the financial supports from both institutions. There is no issue in listing multiple funding sources in one paper, and doing so ensures transparency and adherence to research ethics.
- q3** I am currently conducting research with research funding from a research institution. However, I recently published a paper that was submitted before I received this research funding. The research institution is now raising concerns, stating that I failed to disclose their support, as the paper is similar in topic to the research they funded. Should I have disclosed this funding?
- a3** Since your paper was submitted before you received the research funding, it was not necessary to acknowledge the funding institution in that paper. Your decision not to include Acknowledgments was legitimate, as the research was not conducted with the institution's financial support. The institution is likely raising concerns because the content of the paper is similar to the research they funded. You should clearly explain the timeline, providing documentation of the manuscript submission date and the date you received the research funding to clarify that the research was conducted independently of their support. Additionally, not including an Acknowledgments section does not constitute research misconduct. However, the funding institution may not recognize papers without Acknowledgments as part of their funded research output. Therefore, when writing papers under research funding, it is essential to fully understand the institution's requirements regarding disclosure and Acknowledgments.

## Q2 **What is a private conflicts of Interest, and how do I cope with it when it occurs?**

**A** A private conflicts of Interest arises when personal relationships influence any aspect of the research process, including research opportunities, resources, evaluation, supervision, or the distribution of research achievements. This occurs when a researcher allows a family member or an individual with whom they have a close (or hostile) personal relationship to participate in key decision-making processes, such as hiring, evaluation, supervision, intellectual assessment, or granting/denying intellectual or administrative benefits to that person. Proper management of private conflicts of Interest requires transparent disclosure, adherence to institutional policies, and ensuring that all evaluations and decisions are made objectively, free from personal bias.

**q1** **My wife and I majored in the same field, and my wife is also a professor at another university. So we plan to write a paper together. However, my university requires me to report this collaboration. Why do I need to disclose this to the university?**

**a1** In your case, there is no issue with conducting collaborative research with your spouse, provided that she is a qualified researcher and has made a substantial contribution to the study. However, you are still required to report this collaboration to your institution. Even if you affirm that your spouse is fully qualified to conduct research, third parties may perceive potential bias and question the legitimacy of authorship. They may assume that your spouse was listed as an author despite not having made a significant research contribution, or you were included as an author without proper contribution in the research. Since conducting research with a family member creates a potential private conflicts of Interest, disclosing this relationship to your institution ensures transparency and prevents misunderstandings or ethical concerns. It is also advisable to strictly follow research integrity guidelines to demonstrate that the research was conducted objectively and ethically.

- q2** My advisor has a high school son, and asked me, a doctoral student, to conduct experiment with his son and write a paper together. However, the student has no prior experience in conducting experiments and has never done any related research. Additionally, I cannot teach him all the necessary college-level coursework. Is not this a problem?
- a2** If your description of the situation is accurate, this constitutes a private conflicts of Interest. Furthermore, if the advisor's son is included as an author despite lacking the necessary research contribution, it would be considered inappropriate authorship, which is a violation of research ethics. You should discuss your concerns directly with your advisor to clarify expectations. If you feel pressured or believe that the situation is ethically problematic, it is advisable to seek guidance from the university's research ethics office or human rights center for proper evaluation and intervention.
- q3** My advisor asks me to conduct a peer review on his behalf. While I can evaluate the paper within my knowledge, I find it mentally burdensome. If I conduct the peer review instead, is there no issue?
- a3** If the advisor is asking you, a student, to conduct a peer review on his behalf, several ethical and procedural concerns arise. Peer review is a responsibility assigned to the advisor, and transferring this duty to a student can be considered a failure to properly fulfill professional obligations. One of the most fundamental principles of peer review is confidentiality. Only the designated reviewer is permitted to access and evaluate the manuscript. By sharing the manuscript with a student, the advisor violates this principle, potentially compromising the integrity of the review process. Peer review plays a crucial role in ensuring the quality of academic research. If a doctoral student, who may lack the necessary experience in conducting peer reviews, evaluates an important research project, the author of the manuscript could suffer harm due to an inadequate or improper review. Given these concerns, you are advised to report the situation to the appropriate organization, such as the human rights center at your university, the relevant academic society, or the research funding institution. This ensures that ethical review practices are upheld and that students are not placed in uncomfortable or inappropriate professional situations.



**q4** My advisor's relative is also a researcher at the same university, and his/her advisor is the same as mine. The advisor is responsible for writing exam questions and reviewing papers, which I believe is unfair. However, my friend says there is no issue. Is this really not a problem?

**a4** The situation you describe is a classic case of a private conflicts of Interest. Even though the advisor may claim to evaluate students fairly, their close personal relationship with a particular student creates the appearance of bias, which can undermine trust in the academic process. In such cases, others may perceive that the advisor's relative did not properly conduct research but still received academic recognition. Personal connections were used to secure authorship or favorable evaluation. If the advisor's relative must be under their supervision due to unavoidable circumstances, the advisor should be excluded from certain responsibilities, such as evaluating students, writing exam questions, and reviewing their papers. When the advisor is actively involved in both supervision and evaluation without any restrictions, it constitutes a private conflicts of Interest, and it suggests that the university is not properly managing conflicts of interest within its academic policies. If you believe this situation compromises fairness, you may consider reporting it to the appropriate university ethics committee or administrative office for further review.

**q5** The president of an academic society is also a paper editor and intends to publish a paper in the journal of that academic society. Is this a problem?

**a5** If the editorial process is fully independent, there is no issue with the president of an academic society publishing a paper in that society's journal. However, when an editor submits a paper to the same journal they oversee, it may create a private conflicts of Interest and raise concerns about fairness in the review process. In such cases, another editor from the academic society should be responsible for selecting independent peer reviewers and making the final decision on whether to publish the paper. However, as stated in the question, if the president of the academic society is also a paper editor and submits a paper to the same society's journal, the risk of a private conflicts of Interest increases significantly. Extra caution is required to ensure transparency and maintain the integrity of the publication process.

**q6** I was asked to review a manuscript by the academic society I belong to, and I reviewed the paper without knowing the author's name. The paper was published, but I found out that the author was a relative of mine. I would have filed a request for recusal if I had known, but I had no reason to file a request for recusal in the situation where I did not know. Is it a problem?

**a6** Since you conducted the review under a blind peer review process and were unaware of the author's identity, your evaluation was likely fair and unbiased. Therefore, the peer review itself was conducted properly based on the available information at the time. However, once you discovered the conflicts of Interest after publication, it would be appropriate to inform the journal to prevent any misunderstandings. This ensures transparency and upholds ethical standards in academic publishing. In this case, the responsibility lies with the journal's editorial process, as the peer review system should have mechanisms to prevent conflicts of interest. Since you had no prior knowledge of the author's identity, this is not an ethical violation on your part.

### **Q3** Does failing to disclose a conflicts of Interest constitute research misconduct?

**A** Failing to disclose a conflicts of Interest does not constitute research misconduct. However, according to Article 58 of the Enforcement Decree of the National Research and Development Innovation Act, affiliated institutions are advised to establish regulations to prevent conflicts of Interest. Your affiliated institution may have specific policies regarding conflicts of Interest disclosure. If such regulations exist, failure to disclose relevant conflicts may lead to issues, even if it does not qualify as formal research misconduct. It is advisable to check your institution's guidelines and comply with the required disclosure policies. An issue may arise depending on the relevant regulations.

**q1** I recently published a paper and indicated the financial supports from a research funding agency in the Acknowledgments section. However, someone reported this, and I was investigated for research misconduct because the research was not actually conducted with that funding. Does incorrectly stating unrelated financial aid in the Acknowledgments constitute research misconduct?

**a1** Since the research paper you published was not funded by the research fund you acknowledged, your statement was incorrectly presented as a financial conflicts of Interest. While this is a misrepresentation, it is not necessarily research misconduct. If possible, you should inform the journal about the error and request a correction or retraction of the incorrect acknowledgment. However, an incorrect statement of financial support alone does not typically qualify as research misconduct unless it was done intentionally or with deceptive intent.

**q2** I recently published a paper with my child, and did not disclose this relationship in the paper. Someone reported it as inappropriate authorship and a conflicts of Interest. However, my child actively participated in the research and was listed as an author. I do not understand why this is being investigated. Is this a problem?

**a2** Publishing a paper with your child is not inherently research misconduct. However, a third party may question whether your child was qualified to conduct research or suspect that their name was included without making a proper contribution. Since family relationships can create a private conflicts of Interest, it is advisable to disclose such relationships in advance to prevent misunderstandings. If, as you stated, your child actively participated in the research and made a significant contribution, you should be able to explain this to the investigation committee and provide evidence of their contribution. Proper documentation (such as lab notebooks, data analysis, or drafting contributions) can support your case.

## 4 Predatory Academic Practices

### Q1 What are the definition or characteristics that can distinguish a predatory journal?

**A** It is difficult to precisely define or universally identify predatory journals, and there is no definitive list that is widely recognized. In other words, there is no universally agreed-upon definition of predatory journals. Predatory journals are those that prioritize profit over academic integrity, conducting questionable or inadequate peer review processes, in contrast to legitimate journals that uphold rigorous peer review standards to advance knowledge and contribute to academic development.

The characteristics of predatory journals are very diverse, but the following are frequently mentioned:

- ① Rapid publication for a fee without conducting rigorous peer review.
- ② Falsely listing prominent researchers or scientists as editors without their consent.
- ③ Using fraudulent impact factors to falsely enhance the journal's credibility.
- ④ Imitating the title of a well-established journal to mislead authors and readers.
- ⑤ Aggressively soliciting manuscript submissions through mass emails and other means.

### Q2 I plan to submit to another journal after submitting to a predatory journal. Is it a problem?

**A** Even if a journal is predatory, publishing a paper that has already been published elsewhere without a valid reason is considered inappropriate redundant publication. It becomes problematic if the paper is not retracted from the predatory journal before being submitted to another journal. Therefore, a paper that has been published in a predatory journal should not be submitted or republished in another journal.

**q1** A graduate student unknowingly submitted a paper to a predatory journal and later requested a retraction. However, the journal refused to retract the paper and demanded a publication fee. What should the student do?

**a1** If a student unknowingly submits a paper to a predatory journal and later requests retraction, but the journal refuses to comply, the student should firmly state that they will pursue a legal action if the journal does not grant the request. If the journal continues to demand a publication fee, it is strongly recommended not to pay. Refusing to pay the fee may prevent the paper from being published, allowing the student to submit it elsewhere. However, if the paper has already been published in the predatory journal, submitting it to another journal would be considered inappropriate redundant publication. The primary reason for not paying the publication fee is to minimize financial loss to the predatory journal while avoiding unnecessary complications.

**q2** I unknowingly submitted a paper to an overseas predatory journal. Can I publish the same paper in a domestic journal instead?

**a2** If you submitted a paper to an overseas predatory journal and intend to publish the same contents in a domestic journal, it is considered as inappropriate redundant publication. However, if you plan to publish a translated version of the paper in a domestic journal, you must obtain approval from both the overseas journal and the domestic journal before proceeding. Also, you must clearly cite the source that the was previously published in another language.

**q3** I originally intended to submit my paper to Journal A, but I later discovered that it had been submitted to Journal B instead. As soon as I realized this, I immediately requested the editor of Journal B to retract the paper, but it was published without any revisions. What should I do in this situation?

**a3** Unfortunately, republishing a paper that has already been published elsewhere without a valid reason is considered inappropriate redundant publication. In your case, it seems that Journal B may be a fake or predatory journal that deceptively uses the name of an authoritative journal to mislead researchers. Unfortunately, once the paper is published, it cannot be submitted to another legitimate journal without retraction.

## Q3

## Does submitting a paper to a predatory journal constitute research misconduct?

**A** Whether submitting a paper to a predatory or suspected predatory journal constitutes research misconduct depends on the internal regulations and policies of the researcher's affiliated institution. Different institutions may interpret this issue differently based on their ethical guidelines. However, Article 11 of the Ministry of Education's "Guidelines for Upholding Research Ethics" and Article 31 of the "National Research and Development Innovation Act" do not explicitly classify submission to a predatory journal as research misconduct.

**q1** I was notified by the university that my paper was published in a predatory journal. The school also notified me that they would investigate the matter for research misconduct. I was unaware that it was a predatory journal, and this happened. What should I do?

**a1** As we mentioned, publishing a paper in a predatory journal is not considered as a research misconduct as defined by "the Guidelines for Upholding Research Ethics" or "the National Research and Development Innovation Act" However, if a university or institution has its own research ethics regulations that explicitly define submitting a paper to a predatory journal as a research misconduct, it may be considered a violation. In such cases, it is best to respond honestly to the investigation by explaining the circumstances and reasons for submitting the paper to the predatory journal.

**q2** I found out that the paper I published in Publisher A was published in another journal without my knowledge. I have never submitted a paper to that journal, nor have I permitted my paper to be published. What should I do?

**a2** Based on your description, it appears that your paper was plagiarized and republished without permission by a predatory journal. Predatory journals, due to a lack of submitted manuscripts, often steal already published papers and republish them without the author's consent. In this case, you should request the predatory journal to retract the paper via email. If they still do not retract, it is good to inform the journal that actually published the paper of the facts.

**q3** I recently published a paper in a journal indexed in SCIE and received a reprint. However, when I searched for my paper in SCIE, it was not found. My paper was still published on the website of the academic society. Can the paper be recognized that it was published in a SCIE journal?

**a3** Among predatory journals, there are some journals that accept a large number of papers for publication in one issue and then deceive researchers by publishing only a portion of the accepted papers on the homepage of SCI or SCOPUS. Researchers often submit manuscripts without any doubt, believing that the journal is indexed in SCI or SCOPUS. Since these journals accept a large number of papers, low-quality papers are sometimes published, and in order to maintain its status of SCI or SCOPUS, they upload only selected papers to official indexing platforms while keeping others on the society's website. In your case, it appears that the journal engaged in this deceptive practice, meaning your paper may not be officially recognized as an SCIE-indexed publication.

**q4** It was judged that a paper was submitted to a predatory journal. Can this act be considered as misconduct related to national research and development projects under Article 31 of "the National Research and Development Innovation Act."?

**a4** The National Research and Development Innovation Act does not explicitly classify publishing a paper in a predatory journal as a research misconduct. However, Article 58 of the Enforcement Decree of the Act states that each research institution must establish its own research ethics regulations, including guidelines for academic activities such as journal submissions and conference participation. Some institutions have internal policies or procedures in place to prevent papers from being submitted to predatory journals. If a particular institution's internal regulations define submitting to a predatory journal as research misconduct, an investigation or verification process may be conducted. Even if submitting a paper to a predatory journal does not constitute research misconduct under national law, it is strongly discouraged as it can harm academic integrity, misrepresent research contributions, and impact future research evaluations.



## **Research Ethics FAQ**

Authorship Criteria, Acknowledgments,  
Conflicts of Interest,  
Predatory Academic Practices

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### **Planning · publishing**

National Research Foundation of Korea(NRF)  
Research Ethics & Legal Affairs Team

### **Data of Printing**

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