Code of Practice

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Preamble

The *European Mathematical Society Ethics Committee* was created by the *Executive Committee* of the *European Mathematical Society* in the spring of 2010. The remit and the list of inaugural members of the Committee are given at the end of this Code.

The first task of the *Ethics Committee* was to prepare a Code of Practice; this is the present document. The Code was approved by the *Executive Committee* of the *European Mathematical Society* on October 29, 2012, on the recommendation of the *Council of the European Mathematical Society*, and came into effect on November 1, 2012.

The *European Mathematical Society* recommends that this Code be adhered to by all mathematicians, editors, and publishers of mathematics, especially those based in Europe, but more generally by all who are concerned with the publication, dissemination, and assessment of mathematical research.

It is recommended that this Code of Practice be taken into account by officials of universities and other institutions that employ European mathematicians when transgressions of the Code by their employees are drawn to their attention.

The Code emphasises ethical aspects of publication, dissemination, and assessment of mathematics. The *European Mathematical Society* considers the successful open and transparent publication and dissemination of mathematical research to be of the greatest importance for the future of our subject. Unethical behaviour in publication and dissemination contaminates and jeopardises the integrity and expansion of mathematics, and could have serious consequences for individuals.

The Code will be revised within three years, in the light of experience with cases analysed, and after consideration of comments received.

The *Ethics Committee* is willing to consider cases involving allegations of unethical behaviour in the publishing of mathematics. The practices that the Committee intends to follow are laid down in the section 'Procedures', given below.

Code of Practice

In this section, we set out a code of good practice and ethical behaviour in the publication, dissemination, and assessment of mathematical research, and we specify what we consider to be misconduct or unethical behaviour in this area.

Responsibilities of authors

1. Individual researchers and authors should understand and uphold high standards of ethical behaviour, particularly in relation to the publication and dissemination of their research. An aspect of good practice is the granting of proper credit, and the referencing of the work of others, with appropriate bibliographic references.

   It is important to note that it is not unethical to be mistaken in the attribution, or lack of attribution, of results, provided that authors have carefully sought to determine whether their claimed results are new, and provided that errors of attribution are corrected in a timely and appropriate manner, as they are discovered or pointed out.

   Publication of mathematical results as one's own when the author has learned of the results from others, for example through published material, lectures, conversation, or earlier informal publication, constitutes plagiarism: this is a form of theft, is unethical, and constitutes serious misconduct.

2. Each co-author should have contributed significantly to the research reported in any published work, and each person who contributed significantly to the relevant research should be named as a co-author. Further, all named authors should accept joint responsibility for any submitted manuscript and final publication. It is misconduct for one author to submit and to publish joint research without the consent of his or her named co-authors.

3. Most mathematics is published by the submission of manuscripts to journals or conference proceedings (including those that will appear only online), or by the writing of books. Our guiding principle is that an author or authors who submit a work to editors or publishers take responsibility for the integrity of what they have written, seeking carefully to ensure that the mathematics presented is correct and that the work of others is appropriately acknowledged.

4. In mathematics simultaneous or concurrent submission of a manuscript describing the same research to more than one publication constitutes misconduct. Similarly, in mathematics the publication of the same research in more than one journal or outlet without appropriate acknowledgement and citation constitutes misconduct.

5. Translations of published or unpublished works should always fully acknowledge the source of the work.

6. Mathematicians should not make public claims of potential new theorems or the resolution of particular mathematical problems unless they are able to provide full details in a timely manner.

Responsibilities of editors and publishers

1. It is recommended that journals publishing mathematics should establish and conspicuously present their standards for ethical behaviour in publishing, and specify their responsibilities and the steps to be taken to investigate and respond to suspicions or accusations of misconduct. Journals should respond to an author's complaints with respect and due process.

2. Editors should adhere to high standards of ethical treatment of all authors in arriving at a responsible and objective decision about publication. An editor should withdraw from any editorial duties that would involve a personal, commercial, or professional conflict of interest. An editor should also avoid any misuse of their privileged position or of information received as part of their editorial duties to influence the handling of their own papers, or those of colleagues, students, or personal acquaintances. Certainly no information received in confidence should ever be used in the editor's own work.

3. It is recommended that journals publishing mathematics should make clear their policy and practices for handling submissions. In particular, an editor or publisher should acknowledge receipt of a manuscript. A publisher should ensure that the progress of consideration of a submitted manuscript is monitored, and seek diligently to avoid excessive delays in either the refereeing of a paper or the decision process. The publisher must obtain consent to publish either from one author acting on behalf of all authors, or from all authors.

   The date of submission of, and the date of any significant changes to, a manuscript should be published; this is important, in particular, in cases of disputes concerning priority.

4. Publishers have an obligation to present mathematical papers and books in a clear and precise format, and they should ensure that the mathematical symbols, words, and sentences that are used in the published work are clear and are not a barrier to understanding. It is misconduct on the part of publishers merely to reproduce without improvement submitted manuscripts that are badly written or presented.

5. Editors and publishers should consider carefully and make objective judgements about the acceptance of submitted manuscripts. Normally this will be on the basis of reports from appropriate referees, but the Committee recognises that it will sometimes be clear to editors that a submitted manuscript is considerably below the standards of the journal, or not in an appropriate subject area, and can therefore be rejected without submission to referees; in this case, the authors should be courteously informed of this rejection in a timely and reasoned manner.

6. The editors should inform potential authors of decisions taken in a courteous and timely manner, always passing on constructive criticism and information provided by the referees. Editors may decide that it is appropriate that certain comments provided by the referees should be confidential to the Editorial Board, and not passed on verbatim to the authors.

7. An author may communicate to the editors the information that a mathematical statement or an attribution in his or her published article is incorrect. In the case where

this information is significant, it is recommended that the editors publish a correction or retraction, preferably written by the original author.

8. In some cases, it may be pointed out to the editors by another person that certain statements or attributions in an article appear to be incorrect. In these cases, the editors should consider the comments carefully and react in a proportionate manner; when appropriate, they should insist that the authors write a correction or retraction.

9. In rare cases, the editors may become convinced that parts of a work that they have published have been plagiarised from another source. In these cases, the editors should request the authors to submit for publication a substantial retraction; if this is not forthcoming, the editors themselves should publish a statement giving details of the plagiarism involved.

10. Many articles are first published on the journal web site. It may become apparent that an article so published contains mathematical errors, incorrect attributions, or has been plagiarised in whole or in part. It is recommended that publishers retain the original article for the historical record, but that they indicate by addition at a later specific date appropriate corrections, as they would for a printed article. In extreme cases, it may be that the publishers should indicate that the article has been 'withdrawn' either at the request of the authors or by a decision of the publishers; in this case, any subsequent printed version should reflect this decision.

11. A publisher of journals or books should not list on any of its publications a person as 'editor' or 'editorial advisor' or similar without full disclosure of this to the person concerned and receipt of his or her explicit agreement. The name of any person who resigns from such a position must quickly be removed from the displayed list.

12. Any person listed as editor or editorial advisor should be aware of, and content with, the standards and editorial procedures and policies of the journal, and be willing to act in extreme cases when it is clear that the publishers are not following this Code.

Responsibilities of referees

1. Referees should adhere to high standards of ethical treatment of all authors in arriving at responsible and objective recommendations about the publication of material that they assess. Referees should seek to validate the correctness, significance, novelty, and clarity of a manuscript under consideration, and then report their findings to the editor in a careful and constructive manner. Nevertheless, final responsibility for the published work lies with the authors.

2. A person asked to accept the task of refereeing a paper may feel that there is a potential personal or professional conflict of interest, for example, when he or she is asked to referee a manuscript from a recent student, collaborator, or colleague. In such cases, the potential referee should discuss with the editor any possible conflicts of interest, and continue to act only with the agreement of the editor.

3. Once they have accepted the task of refereeing a manuscript, referees should seek to report in a timely manner, taking into account the length of the manuscript and the requests of the editors.

4. A referee should eschew the use of privileged information gleaned from a manuscript under review.

5. A referee who suspects any element of plagiarism in a manuscript under consideration, or any other unethical behaviour, should quickly report these concerns to the editor.

Responsibilities of users of bibliometric data

1. Whilst accepting that mathematical research is and should be evaluated by appropriate authorities, and especially by those that fund mathematical research, the Committee sees grave danger in the routine use of bibliometric and other related measures to assess the alleged quality of mathematical research and the performance of individuals or small groups of people.

2. It is irresponsible for institutions or committees assessing individuals for possible promotion or the award of a grant or distinction to base their decisions on automatic responses to bibliometric data.

3. It is unethical to manipulate references within an article or to arrange the publication of articles for the purpose of artificially influencing the bibliometric data, impact factors, and citation counts that are generated.

4. It is unethical to include inappropriate citations of one's own work or of the work of particular colleagues or of articles in journals with which the author has a connection.

5. It is misconduct for publishers to advertise their own journals by the quotation of insecure or partial or tendentious bibliometric data.

Procedures

The following procedures will guide the considerations of individual cases that are brought to the attention of the *Ethics Committee*.

P1 The Committee will consider only cases that are formally submitted to it by persons or bodies that are involved in claims of unethical behaviour. The Committee will not consider cases submitted by those who have no standing in a dispute, and the Committee will not itself seek out instances of apparent unethical behaviour.

The Committee may decline to act on any case that is brought to its attention. The Committee will not reconsider a case after a decision has been made unless substantial new information which could lead to a different decision is made available.

P2 Cases for consideration should be communicated to the Chairman of the Committee.

Although the Committee will not act until a formal complaint is lodged, earlier informal enquiries may be addressed to the Chairman.

P3 The Committee expects that before submitting a case a complainant will have already sought to address the issues involved and, in the case of published works, will have utilised the procedure for dealing with ethical issues formulated by the publishers.

P4 The Committee will not consider any case in which formal legal proceedings have been instigated, and may cease to consider a case if such proceedings are commenced. The Committee will not consider any case that is a matter of direct dispute between a mathematician and the institution that employs that person.

P5 The normal procedure of the Committee when it receives a formal complaint will be as follows.

First, the Committee will determine whether it is appropriate to consider the complaint and whether a prima facie case exists.

If it does so determine, the Committee will then seek to discover the underlying facts of a case. As part of this process, the Chairman will write privately to the accused person or bodies, and invite them either to act quickly to accept the complaint and make appropriate amends, or to explain to the Committee why they do not deem it appropriate to act in this way.

In the latter case, or when the accused party does not respond, especially when accusations of plagiarism are made, the Committee will normally ask some experts, each unconnected to the various parties, to study the accusations and advise the Committee whether they are justified. On receipt of this advice, the Committee will form a view on the merits of the case, and will then communicate its findings privately to all parties.

The Committee expects that any party deemed to have acted unethically will make appropriate and timely amends.

P6 In the case where the party deemed to have acted unethically remains obdurate, and the Committee is convinced that unethical behaviour has occurred, the Committee will make a formal finding, which will be sent by the Chairman to the *President* of the *European Mathematical Society*.

The *President*, after consultation with the *Executive Committee*, may communicate the findings, for example by informing the Head of the Institution that employs the party deemed to have acted unethically, the relevant Heads of Department of people involved, relevant editors and publishers, as appropriate.

The *European Mathematical Society* may publicise the findings of the Ethics Committee in a particular case.

P7 The Committee will report regularly on its activities and summarise its findings, without identifying persons or institutions involved in specific cases, in the *Newsletter* of the *European Mathematical Society*.

Members of the Ethics Committee will adhere to the following principles.

- Each member of the Committee will excuse himself or herself from the discussion of and any participation in the decision concerning any case submitted to the Committee if they have any conflict of interest (or anything that could give an appearance of a conflict of interest) related to the submitted case. Such a Committee member should inform the Chairman in advance, and then he or she will not receive any papers or information related to the relevant case.

- All members of the Committee will keep all cases confidential until a decision has been made public; all internal discussions and information received concerning individuals will remain confidential.

Remit

The remit of the *European Mathematical Society Ethics Committee* was specified by the *Executive Committee of the European Mathematical Society* in Spring 2010, as follows.

The Ethics Committee will focus on unethical behaviour in mathematical publications. This includes, for example, plagiarism, duplicate publication, inadequate citations, inflated self citations, dishonest refereeing, and other violations of the professional code. The Committee will be responsible for the following three tasks:

1. To raise the awareness of the problem by preparing a code of practice.

2. To encourage journals and publishers to respond to allegations of unethical behaviour in a conscientious way.

3. To provide a mechanism whereby researchers can ask the Committee to help them pursue claims of unethical behaviour.

The Committee may take up any other relevant questions related to ethics in connection with its work.

Committee

The initial membership of the *European Mathematical Society Ethics Committee* was as follows. All members were appointed for three years, from mid-2010 to mid-2013. Members serve on the Committee as individuals, and not as representatives of their institution, mathematical society, or country.

Chairman: Arne Jensen (Aalborg Universitet, Denmark)

Vice-Chairman: H. Garth Dales (University of Lancaster, UK)

Executive Committee representative: 2010–2012: Igor Krichever (Columbia University, New York, USA, and Landau Institute of Theoretical Physics, Moscow, Russia)
2013– Franco Brezzi (Istituto Universitario di Studi Superiori, Pavia, Italy).

Members:

Jean-Paul Allouche (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique and Université Pierre et Marie Curie, Paris, France)

Graziano Gentili (Università di Firenze, Italy)
Radu Gologan (Academia Română de Ştiinţe, Bucureşti, Romania)
Christine Jacob (Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique, Jouy-en-Josas, France)
Adolfo Quirós (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain)
Tomaž Pisanski (Univerza v Ljubljani, Slovenia)
Tatiana Shaposhnikova (Linköpings Universitet, Sweden)