

# GCEJ Ethical Policy

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# 1. Ethical Policy for Authors

## 1.1 Research Ethics

- **Research Involving Human Subjects**

- **Institutional Review Board Statement**

When reporting on research that involves subjects, material, tissues, or data of humans, authors must declare that the investigations were carried out following the rules of the [Declaration of Helsinki of 1975](#), which was revised in 2013. According to point 23 of this declaration, approval from the local **Institutional Review Board (IRB)** or another appropriate ethics committee must be obtained before undertaking the research to confirm that the study meets national and international guidelines. As a minimum, a statement including the project identification code, date of approval, and name of the ethics committee or institutional review board must be stated in the “**Institutional Review Board Statement**” in the **Back Matter** of the manuscript.

**Example of an Institutional Review Board Statement:** “The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki, and the protocol was approved by the Ethics Committee of XXX (Project identification code) on [date of approval].”

For non-interventional studies (e.g. surveys, questionnaires, social media research), all participants must be fully informed whether their anonymity is assured, why the research is being conducted, how their data will be used, and if there are any risks involved in participating. As with all research involving humans, ethical approval from an appropriate ethics committee must be obtained prior to conducting the study. If ethical approval is not required, authors must either provide an exemption from the ethics committee or cite the local or national legislation that indicates ethics approval is not required for this type of study. When a study has been granted the exemption, the name of the ethics committee that provided this should be stated in the ‘Institutional Review Board Statement’ Section with a full explanation for the rejection of ethical approval.

- **Informed Consent Statement**

Manuscripts reporting studies involving subjects, material, tissues, or data of humans must include a **Statement of Informed Consent for Participation**. Verbal informed consent to participate in a study can be acceptable under some circumstances (such as in ethnographic studies). The authors must explain the rationale for using this kind of consent in the **Back Matter** of the manuscript. For verbal informed consent, a copy of the script used must be provided during the submission stage.

For all manuscripts that include identifying patients/participants information (personal details, images, or videos related to a person), the written **Informed Consent for Publication** of these details must be obtained from patients/participants (or their relatives/guardians) before submitting to *GCEJ*. A blank version of the form used to obtain permission (without the patient/participant name or signature) should be provided upon submission. You may refer to our [GCEJ-Patient Consent Form](#) and provide an appropriate form after consulting with your

affiliated institution.

To publish in *GCEJ*, a consent, permission, or release form should include unlimited permission for publication in all formats (including print, electronic, and online), in sublicensed and reprinted versions (including translations and derived works), and in other works and products under open access license. To respect patients'/participants' and any other individuals' privacy, please do not send signed forms.

Private information identifying participants need not be included unless the identifiable materials are of relevance to the research (e.g., photographs of participants' faces that show a particular symptom). Patients'/participants' initials or other personal identifiers must not appear in any images. Patient/participant details must be anonymized as much as possible, e.g., do not mention specific age, ethnicity, or occupation where they are not relevant to the conclusions. Steps necessary to protect privacy may include de-identifying data, adding noise, or blocking portions of the database. Editors reserve the right to reject any submission that does not meet these requirements.

The Editorial Office reserves the right to request further documentation when necessary. The Editorial Office will scrutinize the submitted manuscript, and upon request, documentary evidence ([\*Signed Consent Forms\*](#) and any related discussion documents from the ethics board) must be provided.

**Example of an Informed Consent Statement:** “Informed consent for participation was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.” OR “Informed consent for participation is not required as per local legislation [provide local legislation].” OR “Verbal informed consent was obtained from the participants. Verbal consent was obtained rather than written because [state the reason]”, OR “Informed consent for publication was obtained from all identifiable human participants.”

- **Requirements for Studies on Vulnerable Groups**

If a study involves vulnerable groups, the manuscript will undergo an additional review by the Editorial Office. If requested, the author must provide documentary evidence, including blank consent forms and any related discussion documents from the ethics board or other relevant bodies. Additionally, when studies describe groups by race, ethnicity, gender, disability, disease, etc., an explanation regarding why such categorization was needed must be clearly stated in the article.

- **Clinical Trials Registration**

- **Registration**

*GCEJ* follows the *International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) Guidelines* which require and recommend registration of clinical trials in a public trials registry at or before the time of first patient enrollment as a condition of consideration for publication.

Purely observational studies do not require registration. A clinical trial not only refers to studies that take place in a hospital or involve pharmaceuticals but also refers to all studies that involve participant randomization and group classification in the context of the intervention under assessment.

Authors are strongly encouraged to pre-register clinical trials with international clinical trials register and cite a reference to the registration in the **Methods** section. Suitable databases include [clinicaltrials.gov](http://clinicaltrials.gov), [the EU Clinical Trials Register](#), and those listed by the World Health Organization [International Clinical Trials Registry Platform](#).

Approval to conduct a study from an independent local, regional, or national review body is not equivalent to prospective clinical trial registration. *GCEJ* reserves the right to decline any paper without trial registration for further peer review. However, if the study protocol has been published before the enrolment, the registration can be waived with the correct citation of the published protocol.

- **CONSORT Statement**

*GCEJ* requires a completed CONSORT 2010 [Checklist](#) and [Flow Diagram](#) as a condition of submission when reporting the results of a randomized trial. Templates for these can be found here or on the [CONSORT website](#), which also describes several CONSORT checklist extensions for different designs and types of data beyond two group parallel trials. At a minimum, your manuscript should report the content addressed by each item of the checklist.

- **Dual Use Research of Concern**

*GCEJ* follows the practical framework defined in [Guidance for Editors: Research, Audit and Service Evaluations](#) and introduced by the **Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)**. Research that could pose a significant threat, with broad potential consequences to public health or national security, should be clearly indicated in the manuscript, and potential dual-use research of concern should be explained in the cover letter upon submission. Potential areas of concern include but are not limited to biosecurity, nuclear and chemical threats, and research with a military purpose or application, etc. For these manuscripts to be considered for peer review, the benefits to the general public or public health must outweigh the risks. The authors have a responsibility to comply with relevant national and international laws.

## **1.2 Borders and Territories**

Potential disputes over borders and territories may have particular relevance for authors in describing their research or in an author or editor correspondence address, and should be respected. Content decisions are an editorial matter and where there is a potential or perceived dispute or complaint, the editorial team will attempt to find a resolution that satisfies the parties involved.

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## **1.3 Publication Ethics Statement**

The editors of *GCEJ* enforce a rigorous peer review process together with strict ethical policies and standards to ensure high-quality scientific works in the field of scholarly publication. Unfortunately, cases of plagiarism, data falsification, image manipulation, inappropriate authorship credit, etc., do arise. The editors of *GCEJ* take such publishing ethics issues very seriously and are trained to proceed in such cases with a zero-tolerance policy.

**Authors wishing to publish their papers in *GCEJ* must abide by the following:**

- Any facts that might be perceived as possible conflicts of interest of the author(s) must be disclosed in the paper before submission;
- Authors should accurately present their research findings and include an objective discussion of the significance of their findings;
- Data and methods used in the research need to be presented in sufficient detail in the paper so that other researchers can replicate the work;
- Raw data should preferably be publicly deposited by the authors before submission of their manuscript. Authors need to at least have the raw data readily available for presentation to the referees and the editors of the journal if requested. Authors need to ensure appropriate measures are taken so that raw data is retained in full for a reasonable time after publication;
- Submitting the same manuscript to more than one journal simultaneously is considered violating the basic ethics of the author, and will not be acceptable;
- The journal accepts exact translations of previously published work. All submissions of translations must conform with our [\*Policies on Translations\*](#) (on page 6 of the pdf document);
- If errors and inaccuracies are found by the authors after the publication of their paper, they should communicate with the editors of *GCEJ*, so that appropriate actions can be taken. Please refer to our policy regarding [\*Updating Published Papers\*](#) (on page 8 of the pdf document);
- Your manuscript should not contain any information that has already been published. If you include already published figures or images, please obtain the necessary permission from the copyright holder to publish under the CC-BY license. For further information, see the [\*Copyrights\*](#) (on page 11 of the pdf document).
- **Plagiarism, data fabrication, and image manipulation are never tolerated.**
  - **Plagiarism is not acceptable** in submissions of *GCEJ*.
  - Plagiarism includes copying text, ideas, images, or data from another source, even from your own publications, without giving any credit to the original source.
  - Reuse of text that is copied from another source must be between quotes and the original source must be cited. If a study's design or the manuscript's structure or language has been inspired by previous works, these works must be explicitly cited.
  - All submissions are checked for plagiarism. If plagiarism is detected during the peer review process, the manuscript may be rejected. If plagiarism is detected after publication, an investigation will take place, and action taken in accordance with our policies.

- **Image files must not be manipulated or adjusted in any way**, that could lead to misinterpretation of the information provided by the original image.
- Irregular manipulation includes: 1) introduction, enhancement, moving, or removing features from the original image; 2) grouping of images that should obviously be presented separately (e.g., from different parts of the same gel, or different gels); or 3) modifying the contrast, brightness or color balance to obscure, eliminate or enhance some information.
- If irregular image manipulation is identified and confirmed during the peer review process, we may reject the manuscript. If irregular image manipulation is identified and confirmed after publication, we may correct or retract the paper.

Our in-house editors will investigate any allegations of publication misconduct and may contact the authors' institutions or funders if necessary. If evidence of misconduct is found, appropriate action will be taken to correct or retract the publication. Authors are expected to comply with the best ethical publication practices when publishing with *GCEJ*.

#### 1.4 Translations

*GCEJ* can consider high-quality content that has been previously published in different languages for publication, provided that the original study is appropriately referenced in the **Acknowledgments** section.

If you are planning to submit a translated version to *GCEJ*, please pay attention to the following issues:

1. Authors should clearly declare that their paper is a translated version in the cover letter at submission;
2. All authors from the original publication must appear on the submitted manuscript;
3. Appropriate permission must be sought and granted from the previous publisher, copyright holders, and/or authors of the original article before submitting the translated manuscript;
4. Relevant documentation relating to these permissions must be uploaded in the **Supplementary Materials** section during submission;
5. The journal editor must be informed about the publishing history of the previously published content;
6. The original article must be referenced in the **Acknowledgments** section.

You can consider the following announcement **“This is a translation/reprint of (insert title here) originally published in (insert language) by (insert publisher) (insert journal name, year, issue/volume number, page numbers). This translation was prepared by (insert name) with support from (insert name of funding source, if any). Permission was granted by (insert publisher, copyright holder, and/or author name).”**

Please note that any translated articles that do not follow the above guidelines are unacceptable.

Those passing the pre-check will be strictly peer-reviewed following our editorial process.

### 1.5 Citation Policy

Authors should ensure that where the material is taken from other sources (including their own published papers). The source should be clearly cited, and authors should state where appropriate permission is obtained.

Regarding the citation policy, please pay attention to the following issues:

1. Authors should not engage in excessive self-citation of their own work;
2. Authors should not copy references from other publications if they have not read the cited work;
3. Authors should not preferentially cite their own or their friends', peers', or institution's publications;
4. Authors should not cite advertisements or advertorial material.

In accordance with COPE guidelines, we expect that "original wording taken directly from publications by other researchers should appear in quotation marks with the appropriate citations." This condition also applies to an author's own work. COPE has produced a discussion document on [Citation Manipulation](#) with recommendations for best practices.

### 1.6 Reviewer Suggestions

During the submission process, we suggest authors recommend 3–5 potential reviewers with the appropriate expertise to review the manuscript. Please provide detailed contact information (affiliation, homepage, phone, E-mail address) to our editors, but please note that editors have the right to check their qualifications and won't approach them necessarily. The proposed reviewers should neither be current collaborators of the co-authors nor have published with any of the co-authors of the manuscript in the last year, meanwhile, they should come from different institutions with the authors.

### 1.7 Extensive English Editing

It is the authors' responsibility to submit their work in correct English and academic narrating style. In order to avoid **Reject Decisions** proposed by reviewers owing to language issues, we suggest authors have their work reviewed by an experienced English-speaking colleague or use a paid language-editing service before submitting their papers to us. If extensive editing is required, the manuscript will be returned to the authors for English editing, which may delay the peer review.

### 1.8 Preprints and Conference Papers

*GCEJ* accepts submissions that have previously been made available as preprints provided that they have not undergone peer review.

Expanded high-quality conference papers can also be considered as articles if they fulfill the following requirements: (1) the paper should be expanded to the size of a regular paper which is suitable to be published in a scientific journal; (2) the conference paper should be cited and



noted on the first page of the paper; (3) if the authors do not hold the copyright of the published conference paper, authors should seek the appropriate permission from the copyright holder; (4) authors should disclose the source of this conference paper in the cover letter and include a statement on what has been changed compared to the original conference paper.

## 1.9 Authorship

*GCEJ* follows the [International Committee of Medical Journal Editors \(ICMJE\) Guidelines](#) which state that, in order to qualify for authorship of a manuscript, the following criteria should be observed:

1. Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work;
2. Drafting the work or reviewing it critically for important intellectual content;
3. Final approval of the version to be published;
4. Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved;
5. **Please note that we suggest every manuscript have only one Corresponding Author**, however, if authors have a special request, please explain the reason in the cover letter when submitting, or contact the Editorial Office of *GCEJ*.

Those who contributed to the work but do not qualify for authorship should be listed in the **Acknowledgments**. For more detailed guidance on authorship, please refer to the [International Committee of Medical Journal Editors \(ICMJE\)](#).

**Any change to the author list should be approved by all authors including any who have been removed from the list.** The corresponding author should act as a point of contact between editors and the other authors and should keep co-authors informed and involve them in major decisions about the publication. We reserve the right to request confirmation that all authors meet the authorship conditions.

## 1.10 Updating Published Papers

*GCEJ* recognizes our responsibility to correct scientifically relevant errors or ethical issues that have been brought to our attention. To offer transparency regarding any changes for our authors and readers, we have the following standardized criteria in place for updates to any of our published papers.

- **Direct Update**

It refers to the updates made directly to the publication and can be completed in certain situations if deemed by the Editorial Office to be a reasonable request. Once approved, the paper will be updated and re-published on our website. Following this, all relevant indexing databases will be notified to ensure that the database versions have also been revised.



- **Corrections**

There are two types of *Corrections*:

- *Minor corrections* address issues that do not impact the scientific content of an article but require an updated version to be uploaded to the version of the record. If this update is approved, it will be accompanied by the addition of a footnote on the PDF version and the addition of a “correction statement” located in the **Back Matter** of the website version. A minor correction will not be accompanied by a separate published correction notice.
- *Major corrections* aim to address issues and errors that could affect the scientific interpretation of an article. Once approved, the paper will be updated and re-published on our website, along with the publication of a *Correction*. This notice is a separate publication that links to the updated paper but is published in the most current issue of the journal. The *Correction* notifies all readers that a significant change has occurred to the paper and that the revised version is now available on the website.

Following both the *Minor and Major Corrections*, all relevant indexing databases will be notified to ensure that the database versions have also been revised.

- **Author Name Change Policy**

Some authors might wish to change their names after the publication of their papers. In such cases, *GCEJ* will update and republish the article and re-deliver the updated metadata to the appropriate indexing databases (please note that all updates are dependent upon the policies of the databases). Our teams are aware that name changes can be sensitive and/or private, for a variety of reasons that may include alignment with gender identity, marriage, divorce, or religious conversion. Therefore, to protect the author's identity, a *Correction* will not be published and co-authors will not be notified. Authors should contact the journal's Editorial Office with their name change request.

- **Retractions**

Sometimes a paper needs to be retracted from the body of research literature. This could be due to inadvertent errors made during the research process, gross ethical breaches, fabrication of data, large amounts of plagiarism, or other reasons. Such articles threaten the integrity of scientific records and need to be retracted.

*GCEJ* follows the recommendations of the [Committee On Publication Ethics \(COPE\) For Retraction](#).

If a *Retraction* is published, the original publication is amended with a “RETRACTED” watermark, but will still be available on the journal's website for future reference. However, retracted articles should not be cited and used for further research, as they cannot be relied upon. *Retractions* are published using the same authorship and affiliation as the paper being retracted, so that the notice and the original retracted paper can be properly found by readers within indexing databases. The *Retraction* notice will also be published in the current Issue of the journal. *Partial Retractions* might be published in cases where results are only partially wrong.

A paper will only be completely removed from *GCEJ*'s website and relevant indexing databases in very exceptional circumstances, such as:

- (1) The removal has been requested by an order from a court or government authority;
- (2) The content poses a threat to personal privacy or the legal rights of other parties, which cannot be adequately addressed through editorial notices or updates;
- (3) The research was conducted or published unlawfully, and its ongoing presence may lead to potential legal issues or privacy concerns;
- (4) Although marked as retracted, the content poses risks to the general public.

Under these situations, the retraction notice explains why the entire paper has been removed, and only the metadata (title and authors) is kept.

- **Expression of Concern**

For complex, inconclusive, or prolonged situations, an *Expression of Concern* may be published. If investigations into alleged or suspected research misconduct have not yet been completed or prove to be inconclusive, our in-house editor may wish to publish an *Expression of Concern*, detailing the points of concern and what actions, if any, are in progress.

- **Comments and Replies**

If readers have concerns about the reported results or methods used in a specific paper, they should approach our Editorial Office and if deemed reasonable, a *Comment* may be submitted for potential publication. *Comments* are short letters to the editors from readers who would like to publicly question a specific paper.

Once a *Comment* is approved for further peer review, the Editorial Office will then approach the authors of the paper in question and invite them to prepare a *Reply* to this *Comment*. The *Reply* allows the authors to publicly respond to the concerns pointed out by the reader. If the reader's complaints are substantiated, and the authors are not able to adequately respond to the concerns, a *Correction* of the original paper may be published, or the paper can be retracted entirely. If authors do not provide a response by the deadline provided, or decide not to respond, the *Comment* may be published alongside a note that explains the absence of the *Reply*.

Both *Comments* and *Replies* will be reviewed to ensure that:

- the *Comment* addresses significant aspects of the original paper without becoming essentially a new paper;
- the *Reply* responds directly to any concerns, without becoming evasive;
- the tone of both publications is appropriate for a scientific journal.

While *Comments* can criticize the work, they should not criticize the work's authors. *Comments* should not reiterate previously published disagreements. No more than one round of *Comment* and *Reply* will be facilitated where that discussion is from the same reader/s. Please note that *GCEJ* only accepts the submission of *Comments* on articles that were published by us.

### 1.11 Copyrights and Licensing

**For all papers published by GCEJ, the copyright is retained by the authors.** The *Journal* allows authors to retain the copyright of their papers without restrictions. However, the *Journal* reserves the right to reprint all or portions of the paper and to post all or part of the article paper. The *Journal* reserves the right to edit manuscripts as required to publish. Authors are responsible for obtaining any clearances as appropriate. Unless stated otherwise, all papers are licensed under an open access [Creative Commons CC BY 4.0](#) license, which means that any re-user can freely **share—copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format for any purpose, even commercially, and adapt—remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially.** In addition, the authors must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made.

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2. Reasonably short quotes are considered fair use and therefore do not require permission;
3. Graphs, Charts, Schemes, and Artworks that are completely redrawn by the authors and significantly changed beyond recognition do not require permission.

- **Obtaining Permission**

In order to avoid unnecessary delays in the publication process, you should start obtaining permissions as early as possible. Please note that *GCEJ* cannot publish material from other publications without permission. If you have any questions about the copyright, please ask for permission.

The copyright holder may give you instructions on the form of acknowledgment to be followed; otherwise, follow the style: “Reproduced with permission from [author], [book/journal title]; published by [publisher], [year].” at the end of the caption of the Table, Figure or Scheme.

## **1.12 Conflicts of Interest**

According to **The International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE)**, “Authors should avoid entering into agreements with study sponsors, both for-profit and non-profit, that interfere with authors’ access to all of the study’s data or that interfere with their ability to analyze and interpret the data and to prepare and publish manuscripts independently when and where they choose.”

All authors must disclose all relationships or interests that could inappropriately influence or bias their work. Examples of potential conflicts of interest include but are not limited to financial interests (such as membership, employment, consultancies, stocks/shares ownership, honoraria, grants or other funding, paid expert testimonies, and patent-licensing arrangements) and non-financial interests (such as personal or professional relationships, affiliations, personal beliefs).

Authors can disclose potential conflicts of interest via the online submission system during the submission process. Declarations regarding conflicts of interest can also be collected via the [GCEJ Disclosure Form](#). The corresponding author must include a summary statement in the manuscript in a separate section “**Conflicts of Interest**” placed just before the reference list. The statement should reflect all the collected potential conflicts of interest disclosures in the form.

### **See below for examples of disclosures:**

Conflicts of Interest: Author A has received research grants from Company A. Author B has received a speaker honorarium from Company X and owns stocks in Company Y. Author C has been involved as a consultant and expert witness in Company Z. Author D is the inventor of patent X.

### **If no conflicts exist, the authors should state:**

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

## 2. Ethical Policy for Editors and Reviewers

Together with the Editorial Office, all individuals involved in the peer-review procedure, comprising *Editor-in-Chief*, *Editorial Board Members*, Guest Editors, and Reviewers, must bear the responsibility of ensuring the integrity of *GCEJ*'s [Editorial Process](#).

If a reviewer encounters ethical concerns regarding a manuscript under review or post-publication, they should promptly notify the Editorial Office. The Editorial Office will initiate an investigation following the *GCEJ* Policy and adhering to [COPE guidelines](#).

After receiving the submission and during the peer review, the Editorial Office will check the following issues:

1. Ethics approval and permissions for research involving human subjects or animals;
2. Plagiarism, duplicate publication, and necessary permission from the copyright holder for the use of previously published figures or images;
3. Clinical Trials Registration, and reference to the registration in the **Methods Section**.

When proposing review or editorial recommendations, especially for the final acceptance decision on a manuscript, Reviewers and Editors should carefully consider:

1. The submission must closely align with the journal's scope;
2. Authors are required to disclose any facts that could be seen as potential conflicts of interest, including those related to their manuscript or study, before submission;
3. Authors must truthfully present their research results and offer an unbiased analysis of the importance of their findings;
4. The paper should provide adequate detail on the data and methodologies utilized in the research to enable other researchers to replicate the study.

### 2.1 Potential Conflicts of Interest

We adhere to transparency, and individuals engaged in the peer-review process must openly disclose any conflicts of interest when engaging in reviewing, decision-making, and publishing a manuscript. Any affiliations that may influence or be perceived as influencing the impartial evaluation, peer review, and decision-making process must be disclosed.

If a Reviewer or Editor perceives that there is a conflict of interest, even if they believe it will

not influence the peer review or decision-making process, they should excuse themselves from the procedure. This action is essential to prevent any perception of a conflict of interest and uphold the integrity of the peer-review process.

## 2.2 Types of Conflicts of Interest

- **Personal or Cooperative Conflicts**

Reviewers and Editors are advised against participating in the evaluation of manuscripts submitted by authors affiliated with their institution, research or project collaborators, personal friends, or family members. Additionally, they should refrain from engaging in the review or decision-making process for manuscripts submitted by authors who have served as mentors or mentees or have had collaborative or coauthoring relationships within the past two years.

- **Financial or Professional Conflicts**

Financial conflicts refer to any professional or business relationships, financial or commercial interests, or other competing interests that could potentially introduce bias into the review process. Reviewers and Editors should not receive professional or personal benefits, salary, board memberships, funding, or grants from companies with interests in the reported results or any other aspects of the manuscript, nor should they hold any interest in a company whose products are discussed in the article. Additionally, intellectual property rights such as patents, royalties, and copyrights resulting from their contributions should not create conflicts. Reviewers and Editors must abstain from participating in the review or decision-making process of manuscripts where conflicts of interest that could lead to bias are present.

- **Other Types of Conflicts**

Any other conflicts of interest, whether actual or perceived, that could influence the peer review process or decision-making should be disclosed. Reviewers and Editors are expected to assess the manuscript's merit, originality, and relevance to the journal, following the *GCEJ* editorial guidelines. *GCEJ* is committed to ensuring that discrimination based on race, color, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, religion, nationality, physical ability, or socio-economic status has no place in the review process. Reviewers and Editors must also disclose any personal biases that might impact their evaluation of the manuscript.

In cases of conflicts of interest, alternative Reviewers and/or Editors will be appointed. If an Editor submits a manuscript to the journal, it will be reviewed by other Editors who do not have any conflicts of interest.

## 2.3 Confidentiality and Anonymity

Reviewers and Editors are required to maintain the confidentiality of the manuscript content, including the Abstract. If a Reviewer wishes to have a student or colleague complete the review on their behalf, they must inform the Editorial Office.

*GCEJ* follows a double-blind peer review process. Reviewers should take care not to disclose their identity to the authors, either through comments or metadata in reports submitted in Microsoft Word or PDF formats.

## 2.4 Editorial Independence

### • Non-interference in Editorial Decisions

Editorial independence is paramount, and *GCEJ* will not interfere with editorial decisions. All articles published by *GCEJ* undergo double-blind peer review and are evaluated by our *Editor-in-Chief* or independent *Editorial Boards*. *GCEJ* staff do not participate in decisions regarding manuscript acceptance. When making an editorial decision, the *Editor-in-Chief* will make the decision based only upon:

- The scope and topic of the manuscript;
- Overall scientific quality of the manuscript;
- The suitability of reviewers and their review reports;
- Adequacy of authors' responses and the improvements in their revisions.

In all aspects of its operations, *GCEJ*'s policies are guided by the mission to make science and clinical engineering research findings as open and accessible as possible, with a focus on speed and broad dissemination.

### • Editors and Editorial Staff as Authors

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