

Journal of Consumer Research

Conflict of Interest Policy and Recommended Governance Norms for *JCR* Revised 08-26-2022

A conflict of interest occurs when someone in a position of authority has the opportunity to participate in decisions that may lead to a perception of bias or favoritism based on that person's relationship with an individual who would be affected by the decision.

At *JCR*, conflicts of interest typically involve decisions made by editors or members of the editorial team, members of the Policy Board, and the like that affect colleagues (former and current), classmates, co-authors (from the past five years), students/advises, mentors/advisers, rivals, family members, or close friends. Editors might also have conflicts because of their obligations to other journals or organizations.

This document aims to specify some circumstances in which a conflict of interest might occur and defines policy and governance remedies to address such conflicts.

1. Editors

The editorial management model may vary over time. In this document, the term “editor” refers to the editor in chief as well as others who are designated as editors, co-editors, or action editors (but not associate editors), and is intended to apply to those individuals who make final decisions on the disposition of a manuscript.

1.1 Conflicts

- 1.1.1 Editors may not serve as editors or associate editors for other journals during their term as editors at *JCR*.
- 1.1.2 Editors may not oversee the reviewing of papers authored by colleagues of their same institution, current or former students, co-authors within the past five years, or someone with whom the editor has a close personal or professional relationship. “Close personal or personal relationship” is defined broadly to include any relationship that a third party might reasonably conclude would threaten the objective processing of a work. In cases with *potential* for such an actual or reasonable perceived conflict, editors are required to have papers processed either by a co-editor, or if those also pose a COI, by the special guest editor. In cases of uncertainty, the editor is required to disclose the COI to the president of the Policy Board, who makes a final decision about processing.

1.2 Submission of papers for publication

Editors are discouraged from submitting papers for publication in *JCR* while they hold the position. Manuscripts authored or co-authored by editors may nevertheless submit manuscripts subject to the following conditions:

- 1.2.1 New submissions. All new submissions must be processed by a special guest editor who is appointed by the Policy Board;
- 1.2.2 An editor cannot be a solo or lead author on any paper, and an editor cannot be the communicating author on the paper;
- 1.2.3 If the paper is accepted for publication, a note will accompany the published version describing the special nature of the review process;
- 1.2.4 An editor's paper may not receive any special promotional attention by the journal while the editor serves in that capacity with the journal. This includes special publicity on the journal's website and special designation in the journal.

1.3 Papers in progress

If an incoming editor has a manuscript in progress (i.e., the manuscript has not been rejected outright) at the time they assume editorial responsibilities, the manuscript will continue to be processed by the prior editor, and in a manner designed to assure the integrity of the blind review process. If the paper is accepted for publication, a note will accompany the published version describing the special nature of the review process.

1.4 Editors' papers accepted by a prior review team

If an editor's paper has been accepted for publication by a prior review team but has not yet appeared in print, policies 1.2.3 and 1.2.4 will apply even though there is no COI. Decisions about the order of appearance will be made by the prior editor team.

1.5 Award considerations

An article on which an editor is listed as co-author may be considered, if nominated, for one of the journal's two awards (Ferber and Best Article).

Because the Ferber award is overseen by the editors, if an eligible paper lists an editor as co-author, the award process will be turned over to the Policy Board, where the COI policies for the Best Article award would apply (e.g., a PB member who is a co-author or colleague would not be able to vote).

1.6 Conflicts regarding the review process

Editors are required to ensure that the review process is free of conflicts:

- Editors should ensure that associate editors and reviewers are free of conflict of interest with respect to an author.
- Associate editors and reviewers must notify the editor if they are assigned to a paper where there is a conflict of interest with respect to an author.

1.7 Recommendations regarding governance

- 1.7.1 Editors should be sensitive to perceptions of bias on the part of readers, authors, and reviewers of *JCR* manuscripts when creating their Editorial Review Board (ERB). Editors should consider the individual's history of quality and timeliness of reviewing, publications, scholarly expertise, citations, and similar objective criteria of excellence when selecting ERB members. They should also consider the ability of the ERB members to contribute to the diversity mission of the journal.
- 1.7.2 Editors should be sensitive to perceptions of bias on the part of readers, authors, and reviewers of *JCR* manuscripts, as well as other nominees when selecting outstanding reviewer award recipients. Criteria such as quality of reviews as judged by the editor, associate editors (or authors), timeliness of reviews, and workload, should serve as inputs into these decisions. It is recommended that criteria for awards be made public prior to the selection of awardees.

2. Policy Board

JCR's Policy Board is composed of representatives appointed by the journal's eleven sponsoring organizations. The Policy Board is responsible for the development and implementation of editorial direction and policy. The Policy Board is also responsible for the business affairs of the nonprofit corporation that owns the journal.

2.1 Conflicts

- 2.1.1 **Editor selections.** One of the major functions of the Policy Board is to select a new editor. Policy Board members should reveal potential or obvious conflicts of interest (e.g., editor candidates are colleagues (former and current), classmates, relatives, advisees/students, advisers/mentors, coauthors (in the past five years), rivals, close friends) prior to the onset of final deliberations regarding the editor candidates. If such conflicts exist, they will be recused and replaced with a former board member representative from the relevant association.
- 2.1.2 **Other decisions.** Similar COIs should be considered in other deliberations made by the Policy Board, such as awards, allocations of resources to institutions, and ethics

discussions. In these cases, no replacement would be named but instead made by the remaining members of the board who do not have conflicts.

- 2.1.3 Policy Board members may not serve as associate editors during their terms on the Policy Board. If a Policy Board member is selected as an associate editor, this person must resign from the Policy Board. If an associate editor is selected as a Policy Board member, this person must resign from the associate editor position.

2.2 Publication by policy board members

Although members of the Policy Board are not involved in the day-to-day operations of JCR and are less publicly associated with the journal, they are responsible for appointing editors and providing annual feedback to the editors. Hence the processing of Policy Board members' papers by editors would constitute a conflict of interest. Policy Board members may submit to the journal, but subject to condition 1.2.1, submissions must be processed by the special guest editor.