

MUHIMBILI UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH AND ALLIED SCIENCES



**GUIDELINES FOR MANAGEMENT OF SCIENTIFIC JOURNALS PUBLISHED BY
OR AFFILIATED TO MUHAS**

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EAJPH	East African Journal of Public Health
ICMJE	International Committee of Medical Journal Editors
ISSN	International Standard Serial Number
MUHAS	Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences
TDHJ	Tanzania Dental and Health Journal
TMJ	Tanzania Medical Journal

1. INTRODUCTION

Universally, the core functions of universities include teaching, research and professional consultancy/service delivery. Research plays a significant role in generating new knowledge, whose dissemination is facilitated by, among other modalities, publication in journals that various stakeholders can access. New knowledge emanating from research findings plays a significant role in bringing about socioeconomic development. Indeed, effective communication and dissemination of research findings is critical in ensuring that the findings have social, economic, and political impact to society. It is desirable to publish research findings in accessible platforms to the targeted end users. The goal is to spread knowledge and any associated evidence-based interventions widely within and across various networks of end users. Oftentimes, research findings intended to target the scientific community are recommended by universities to be published in peer-reviewed journals. In addition to making the research findings known to scientists, it also provides instructions so that other researchers can repeat the methodology used or build on it to verify and confirm the results. In order to underscore the importance of publishing, universities frequently use the number of publications in assessing an individual's credit as the measure of competency and a significant parameter for evaluating worthiness for career advancement.

Given the significant importance of proper, wide and quality dissemination of research findings, it is essential to establish guidelines for use in managing scientific journals and other scholarly writings that are published by the University. This need is further underscored by the fact that since Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS) became an autonomous university it has desired to become a research-intensive university that engages in conducting demand driven quality health research, that would generate implementable and impactful solutions to the endemic, emerging and re-emerging diseases in the country and beyond. The guidelines, therefore, will contribute to establishing a strong, objective and reliable structure that will serve as a source of knowledge management emanating from the scholarly endeavours of the University.

By June 2024, there were no institutional journals per se, the only arrangement in place is the management of the Tanzania Medical Journal (TMJ), the Tanzania Dental and Health Journal (TDHJ) and the East African Journal of Public Health (EAJPH) in agreement with the parent

organizations; Medical Association of Tanzania for TMJ Tanzania Dental Association for TDHJ and MUHAS School of Public Health and Social Sciences, for EAJPH. Since the times of predecessor institutions, MUHAS has incubated the desire to have in place institutional scientific journals that are under the University management, which can be used by academic staff, researchers and students to publish their scientific work. It was correctly argued that this would promote documentation of our research output in journals that are easily accessible to the local as well as the international scientific community. It would also promote conduct of research in general and contribute to strengthening of the core function of research by the university staff.

Because of its importance, the University Management decided to establish guidelines that will provide guidance on setting standards for scholarly scientific journals owned or co-owned and managed by the University. To this end, the Deputy Vice Chancellor responsible for Research and Consultancy appointed a committee to undertake this task. The committee conducted a broad review of management of journals by universities nationally, regionally and globally and submitted a detailed report of the findings (Appendix 1) which have been used in developing these guidelines.

2. PURPOSE OF THE GUIDELINES

The guidelines are intended to provide MUHAS with clearly stated procedures, instructions and recommendations for the management of journals that are published or administered by the University with the overall goal of supporting and facilitating the transparent aggregation, and dissemination of scholarly works. The guidelines are also intended to empower the University to effectively manage quality-assured knowledge dissemination as an important strategy for fostering the visibility of MUHAS in the global research arena and for promoting technological advancement in the country.

3. CRITERIA FOR A SCIENTIFIC JOURNAL TO BE MANAGED BY MUHAS

3.1. Journal categories

Three major kinds of journals to be hosted by MUHAS are envisioned:

- a. Journals arising from within the institution e.g., School journals.
- b. Journals of professional associations managed by MUHAS e.g., TMJ, TDHJ.

- c. Journals from other institutions and associations that may wish to be affiliated to MUHAS.
- d. Pursuant to fulfilling conditions a-c, for such journal to be hosted by MUHAS should fulfil the following additional conditions:
 - i. At least 25% of the editorial board members should come from MUHAS
 - ii. The Chief editor or Associate Chief editor should come from MUHAS
 - iii. Any plans to charge article processing charges should be prior discussed and agreed by MUHAS

3.2. Aim and scope of the journal

- a. The scope of the journal must be in health and allied sciences to qualify for inclusion in MUHAS management.
- b. The aim of the journal should be to promote health through dissemination of scientific knowledge to inform relevant decision-making processes at all levels of the healthcare system.
- c. The manuscript published through this journal should adhere to the criteria for International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) or as will be revised by MUHAS from time to time.

3.3. Journal leadership and ownership

- a. Journals external to the University should belong to organizations that should be legally registered entities in Tanzania, with a clear structure of organization, example: professional society or non-governmental organization.
- b. Journals from organs within the University should have an endorsement of the department and school prior to application for management under the University.
- c. The Journal should have a clear organogram of its management and operations that has capability of making autonomous decisions on scientific work of the journal.
- d. Journal leadership should include a minimum of Editor-in-Chief, two Associate Editors and as much as possible, Advisory Editors from other countries.

3.4. Legal agreement with University for journals originating from professional associations or other affiliated entities

- a. The organization shall file an official request to the University, endorsed by the relevant bodies (example: council or executive committee of the professional society) of the hosting organization.
- b. Journal shall sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) of management of the journal with the University.

3.5. Publication and indexing criteria

- a. Should have clear publication history and retrievable archives of the previous issues for old manuscripts.
- b. Journal should include an indexing criterion such as an International Standard Serial Number (ISSN), equivalent or higher.
- c. Journal should have a clear peer review policy, retraction policy and the statements on publication ethics.
- d. Journal should have an established publication calendar.
- e. The Journal should have a copyright policy.

4. LEADERSHIP OF MUHAS-APPROVED SCIENTIFIC JOURNALS

4.1. Management structure

- a. The Journal shall have at minimum: An Editor-in-Chief, Associate editors-in-chief, associate editors, advisory board, Editorial team (reviewers), and Publishing Team, (Managing Editor and Administrator)
- b. Editor in chief shall be a senior scholar (minimum Associate Professor and/or with PhD) in the relevant field of the scope of the journal, with a tract record of publications and/ or management of journals locally or internationally. He/she is overall in charge of the journal.
- c. Associate editors-in-chief shall be a minimum of one and shall be scholars in the relevant field of the scope of the journal, with history of publications and/ or management of journals locally or internationally. They support the role of Editor-in-Chief.

- d. Associate editors shall be scholars in relevant field of scope of the journal and shall handle the incoming manuscripts to reviewers.
- e. Editorial Board (reviewers) shall be a minimum of six (6) (for international journals 25% shall be international reviewers), and will be responsible for peer reviewing process and recommendations of manuscript for publications.
- f. Advisory board four (4) members (one international), and shall compose of senior researchers and scholars who will be responsible to provide unique insight towards the overall journal direction, governance and output on specific field of interest published by the journal
- g. Publishing team (Managing Editor and Administrator) shall be responsible for day-to-day operations of the journal and work to support the editor-in-chief.
- h. Journal shall have a pool of reviewers from which relevant experts can be picked to help with the peer review process.
- i. Journal shall have a process for how the management is selected and replaced from time to time.

4.2. University responsibilities in the management of scientific journals

The University bears the primary responsibility for ensuring that all scientific journals hosted within MUHAS uphold the highest standards of academic integrity, quality, and ethical publishing. This involves establishing robust editorial policies and guidelines that align with international best practices.

4.2.1 Key Responsibilities

- a. Establishing Editorial Policies and Guidelines
 - i. Develop and implement editorial policies aligned with international standards.
 - ii. Ensure transparency, fairness, and rigour in the peer-review process.
 - iii. Provide regular training and workshops on academic publishing and ethical standards.
- b. Facilitating Accessibility and Dissemination
 - i. Maintain a reliable and user-friendly digital platform for journal access.
 - ii. Ensure proper indexing and abstracting in reputable databases.

- iii. Support technical aspects such as website maintenance, archiving, and plagiarism detection.
- c. Promoting Journals and Enhancing Visibility
 - i. Organize conferences, seminars, and collaborations to promote journals.
 - ii. Provide financial, administrative, and technical support to ensure sustainability.
 - iii. Foster relationships with other institutions and research bodies for broader dissemination.
- d. Supporting Editorial and Review Processes
 - i. Assist in the recruitment and training of editors and reviewers.
 - ii. Ensure timely and efficient handling of submissions and reviews.
 - iii. Provide resources and tools to enhance the efficiency of the editorial workflow.
- e. Monitoring and Evaluation
 - i. Regularly assess the performance and impact of the journals.
 - ii. Gather feedback from stakeholders to inform continuous improvement.
 - iii. Ensure compliance with open access policies and funder requirements.

By adhering to these responsibilities, MUHAS ensures that its hosted journals are respected, credible, and impactful, thereby enhancing the institution's academic reputation and contributing to the global body of knowledge.

4.3. Key leadership positions

Key leaders have been conceptualized as the stewards, key implementers and administrators of the respective journal. Key leaders of a scientific journal are a diverse range of staff. A typical scientific journal staff is composed of:

- a. Editor-in-chief: One
- b. Deputy Editor-in-chief: At least one
- c. Associate editors: Minimum of six (6)
- d. Advisory Board – At least three (3) members (one should be international)
- e. Editorial Board (reviewers): A minimum of six (6) members. Journals intending to be considered of “International composition” should have at least 25% of their members from outside Tanzania

- f. Publishing Team
 - Managing editor - At least one
 - Journal administrator – At least one

4.4. Roles and responsibility of each position

4.4.1 Editor-in-Chief

a. Qualifications

- i. A relevant advanced degree (Master's/PhD) in a relevant field
- ii. Minimum 3 years in senior academic editing roles (example: Associate Editor).
- i. Experience in the publication field.

b. Responsibilities

- i. Set the journal's mission, scope, and editorial policies in consultation with the Advisory Board.
- ii. Ensure compliance with indexing criteria (Scopus, PubMed, DOAJ).
- iii. Oversee final acceptance/rejection of manuscripts, particularly for contentious or high-profile submissions.
- iv. Approve special issues, guest editors, and thematic directions.
- v. Appoint and supervise Deputy Editors, Associate Editors, and Section Editors.
- vi. Conduct annual editorial board evaluations and renewals.
- vii. Uphold COPE guidelines for ethical issues (e.g., authorship disputes, misconduct).
- viii. Implement initiatives to enhance manuscript quality (e.g., reviewer training, author workshops).
- ix. Represent the journal at conferences, funding bodies, and publisher meetings.
- x. Collaborate with the Managing Editor on budgets, timelines, and workflows.

4.4.2 Deputy Editor-in-Chief

c. Qualifications

- i. A relevant advanced degree (Master's/PhD) in a relevant field
- ii. Experience in the publication field.
- iii. Minimum one (1) year in academic editing roles (example: Associate Editor).

d. Responsibilities

- i. Deputize and assists the Editor-in-Chief overseeing all editorial operations.
- ii. Contribute to journal policy development (e.g., scope expansion, ethical guidelines).
- iii. Assist Editor in chief to make final editorial decisions on controversial or high-impact manuscripts.
- iv. Resolve disputes between authors, reviewers, or editors.
- v. Mentor Associate/Section Editors and train new editorial staff.
- vi. Assist Editor in chief to conduct annual performance reviews for editorial team members.
- vii. Assist Editor in chief to ensure that contents published meets the editorial strategy and policies of the journal, as stated in the journal's aim and scope.
- viii. Responsible for key aspects of the journal; including its editorial contents and types of publications.
- ix. Assigning peer reviewers.

4.4.3 Associate Editors

a. Qualifications

- i. A relevant bachelor's degree.
- ii. Experience in the publication field.

b. Responsibilities

- i. Assist the Editor-in-Chief and Deputy Editor in manuscript development, from submission to final publication.
- ii. Conduct preliminary reviews to ensure submissions align with the journal's scope and standards.
- iii. Serve as the primary point of contact for authors, guiding them through submission, revision, and publication processes.
- iv. Coordinate with peer reviewers to ensure timely and constructive feedback.
- v. Manage submission workflows, deadlines, and editorial calendars.
- vi. Maintain documentation of editorial decisions and correspondence.
- vii. Partner with production teams to ensure timely publication.

- viii. Liaise with marketing/sales departments to promote published content.

4.4.4 Editorial Board Members

a. Qualifications

- i. Degree (PhD, MD, or equivalent) in a field relevant to the journal's scope.
- ii. Relevant expertise with at least a relevant bachelor's degree.
- iii. Active in research (publications, scientific presentation etc).

b. Responsibilities

- i. Review a minimum set of manuscripts annually ensuring rigorous, timely evaluations.
- ii. Recommend high-potential submissions for fast-track publication.
- iii. Propose special issues, thematic foci, or emerging research trends.
- iv. Identify and recruit new authors/reviewers to expand the journal's network.
- v. Uphold publication ethics by flagging misconduct (plagiarism, data fabrication).
- vi. Promote the journal at conferences and through professional networks.
- vii. Participate in annual editorial board meetings (virtual/in-person).
- viii. Provide feedback on journal policies, indexing strategies, and reader engagement.

4.4.5 Advisory Board Members

a. Qualifications

- i. Senior academician or researcher.
- ii. Experienced entities considered to be able to provide unique insights and perspectives.

b. Responsibilities

- i. To provide current knowledge, critical thinking and analysis to increase the confidence of the decision-makers who represent the journal.
- ii. Exhibit opinion on the Journal's direction and performance.
- iii. Provide subject-specific support.
- iv. Explore novel ideas to develop "Special Issues" with specific topics that will be an innovation corner for the Journal.

- v. Request a quarterly report of the journal and assist in strategic planning and similar issues.

4.4.6 Managing Editor

a. Qualifications

- i. A relevant bachelor's degree.
- ii. Experience working in publishing.

b. Responsibilities

- i. Manages day-to-day operations of the journal.
- ii. Coordinates communication between editors, authors, and reviewers.
- iii. Oversees the manuscript submission system and workflow.
- iv. Handles administrative tasks, including budgeting and scheduling.
- v. Oversee editorial management.
- vi. Oversee article processing.
- vii. Production oversight.
- viii. Work with editors to ensure Quality.
- ix. Journal platform management.
- x. Work with the relevant team to ensure compliance and ethics.

4.4.7 Journal Administrator

a. Qualifications

- i. Relevant undergraduate degree.

b. Responsibilities

- ii. Day to day running of the journal activities.
- iii. Coordination and communication within the journal reviewers.
- iv. Prepare and provide periodic reports of journal activities as scheduled.

4.5. Modality of appointment of leaders

4.5.1 Processes for appointment of journal key leaders

- a. Appointment of the key leaders should be upon the discretion of the owners of the respective journals.

- b. After identifying the journal key leaders, owners submit the proposed names to MUHAS for verification of adherence to set criteria.
- c. MUHAS to review and provide feedback to journal owners regarding suitability of the proposed key leaders (accept or recommend modifications) with respect to the set criteria.
- d. Upon satisfactory review, MUHAS will communicate the same to the journal owners to proceed with the appointing process.

4.5.2 Appointment of Advisory Boards

- a. Each journal hosted by MUHAS is required to have an Advisory Board.
- b. The Advisory Board will have a minimum of three members.
- c. MUHAS will appoint an Advisory Board for each of the journals arising from within MUHAS.
- d. Other kinds of Journals hosted by MUHAS will be responsible for the appointment of their respective Advisory Boards.

5. QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISM AND INTERNAL ACCREDITATION OF JOURNALS

The following quality assurance mechanism and internally accreditation of worthiness of MUHAS-affiliated journals shall be followed with all respective journals:

5.1. Peer review process

- a. Journal must have a written policy on peer-review process that should address a wide scope of publication process, including plagiarism, conflicts of interest, internal review board approval, informed consent, human and animal subject research, confidentiality, fraud, salami (or segmented) publications, data and image manipulation.
- b. Journal shall have clear instructions to authors and reviewers available to open access.
- c. The journal shall specify the review process (whether open/single or double-blinded) in the guidelines to the authors.

- d. The Journals shall indicate the incentives of being affiliated with the journal as an editor or reviewer, so as to enhance the interest of scientific community to contribute to the Journal

5.2. Compliance with local and international committee

- a. The journal policy should comply with guidelines and best practices stipulated in the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE), Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), and the World Association of Medical Editors (WAME).
- b. The journal policy should also comply with National Guidelines for Recognition and Promotion of Scientific Journals, Tanzania Commission of Science and Technology (COSTECH).

5.3. Journal administration and publication frequency

- a. The journal should have an established administration process that includes the presence of a journal administrator or equivalent who handles day-to-day journal operations.
- b. The journal must have a clearly defined minimum period of publication on an annual basis.
- c. The journal should have a quantity criterion, defining how many manuscripts, or case reports should be in each of the publications.
- d. Journal shall be published online through an open access channel that is available for all.
- e. Journal shall aim to attain indexing with regional and international bodies over a period of time.

5.4. Visibility, turnaround time and open access

- a. Journal shall be open access and be published in several formats of interoperability such as (PDF, EPub, HTML, XML), diffuse the preprint version of the article and active in the academic social networks.
- b. Journal shall have the policy on turnaround time and expectations for the authors and reviewers.

- c. The turnaround policy shall clearly state the mitigation plans in case of protracted delays in the review process, in alignment with the international standards.

6. GUIDELINES STATUS

These are the first guidelines for the management of journals owned by or affiliated to MUHAS.

7. KEY STAKEHOLDERS

The stakeholders who were consulted during development of these guidelines were:

- a. Editorial team of East African Journal of Public Health
- b. Editorial team of Tanzania Dental and Health Journal
- c. Editorial team of Tanzania Medical Journal
- d. Individual scholarly reviewers of various local and international journals

8. APPROVAL DETAILS

The Guidelines were approved by the Council at its meeting held on.....

9. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- a. MUHAS Research Policy
- b. MUHAS Research Agenda
- c. MUHAS Research Excellence Award Guidelines
- d. Guidelines For Research Integrity and Conflict of Interest
- e. MUHAS Guidelines for Recruitment, Performance Assessment and Promotion or Ranking of Academic/Teaching Staff, 2023

10. NEXT REVIEW DATE

The Guidelines for Management of Scientific Journals owned by or Affiliated to MUHAS will be reviewed after every three years. The periodic review will ensure the rules and regulations are in line with the University, national and international changes that might have taken place

11. OWNER OF THE GUIDELINES

The University Council shall own the Guidelines.

12. CONTACT PERSON

The Contact Person for issues related to the Guidelines for Management of scientific journals owned by or affiliated to MUHAS shall be: -

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