

Ethic Guidelines (20250325)

Ethics Policies

[Editorial Board](#) of the Microbes and Environments (M&E) follows the recommended procedures outlined by the [Committee on Publication Ethics \(COPE\) International Standards](#) for responsible research publication for authors and editors when dealing with allegations of misconduct.

Any identified misconduct is subject to investigation by the [Editorial Board](#) of M&E. All misconduct and breach of publication ethics, irrespective of the extent thereof, may result in retraction, publication of formal notice of the misconduct, and formal embargo on future contribution to M&E.

Handling Allegations of Misconduct

M&E follows the COPE's [Core Practices](#) guidelines and flowcharts for handling allegations of publishing misconduct pre- and post-publication. Editorial actions should be expected if publication misconduct is attempted or occurs. Editorial actions may include the following: immediate rejection of the submitted manuscript, retraction of published work, a published notice of violation, and revocation of publishing privileges in the journal.

Procedure for Handling Allegations of Misconduct in Submitted Manuscripts

- When editors, reviewers, authors, and/or journal staff suspect any instances of ethical misconduct during peer review, they should bring them to the attention of the Editor-in-Chief (EIC).
- EIC will review the case and make the preliminary assessment.
- If the EIC finds that an explanation from the authors is necessary, the EIC sends the corresponding author a notification, which points out the allegation and requests an explanation.
- If the corresponding author does not respond and/or provide sufficient rationale for the raised concern, the EIC refers the case to the [Editorial Board](#) to discuss the allegations, explanations, evidence and possible sanctions.

Possible sanctions may include:

- Official warning to the author
- Immediate rejection of the manuscript
- Publication of formal notice of misconduct (erratum, expression of concern etc.)
- Formal notice to an author's institution
- Formal embargo on future contributions to M&E

Complaints and Appeals

The peer review decisions made based on the editors' judgment will not be rescinded once they are made. M&E will not reconsider the paper for peer review unless misconduct, negligence, or absolutely unusual pattern of review process by our editorial team is found. M&E, however, considers complaints an opportunity to improve our peer review process, manuscript handling procedures, and management for journal publishing. To submit a complaint about the policies, procedures, or actions of the journal staff of M&E, send an e-mail to microb.environ@microbial-ecology.jp.

Reporting Misconduct

Allegations misconduct related to fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, copyright or intellectual property infringement, breach of research ethics, authorship disputes, conflicts of interest, or any other problematic conduct either pre- or post-publication should be submitted to the Journal's Editorial Office: microb.environ@microbial-ecology.jp.

Dealing with Complaints

In a case of a publication ethics violation, the allegations will be investigated, and the necessary decisions will be made in accordance with the [COPE's guidelines](#) and [flowcharts](#).

Errata, Expressions of Concern, and Retractions

In order to ensure that retractions, errata, and expressions of concern are handled according to industry best practice, M&E follows the COPE's [Retraction Guidelines](#), including:

Errata

An erratum may be issued to notify readers of important errors such as spelling, data, terms, typography, or omission, which occurred during the production process of an accepted article, which may mislead the readers. An erratum is also issued for the correction of author and contributor information.

Authors' Corrections

The Author's Correction will be issued to correct errors of omission (e.g., author names or citations) and errors of a scientific nature that do not alter the overall basic results or conclusions of a published article (e.g., an incorrect unit of measurement or order of magnitude used throughout, contamination of one of numerous cultures, or misidentification of a mutant strain, causing erroneous data for only a portion [noncritical] of the study). The addition of new data is not permitted.

Expression of Concern

An expression of concern will be issued if the investigation of an issue concerning a published article raises suspicion but does not provide conclusive evidence, and yet the EIC feels the article contains invalid results or has strong concerns that readers should be made aware of potentially misleading information contained in

the article. Also, an expression of concern may be issued if the investigation requires a considerable amount of time to reach a resolution.

Retractions

M&E adopts the following retraction process:

1. Instances requiring an investigation are brought to the attention of the EIC.
2. The EIC investigates the case following the step-by-step guidelines provided in the COPE flowcharts. The EIC may contact the authors to request an explanation, which will be evaluated.
3. The final decision as to whether to retract is then communicated to the author and, if necessary, any other relevant bodies, such as the author's institution.
4. The retraction statement is then posted online and published in the next available issue of the journal.

Retractions are published if the EIC has convincing evidence for the following cases, either as a result of ethical violations or honest error:

1. The findings or data are unreliable or misleading
2. Plagiarism
3. Duplicate publication without permission
4. Unethical research

The retraction notice will include:

1. Information of the retracted article, such as title and authors
2. Link to the retracted article
3. Reasons for retraction

To preserve the integrity of the published record, the Journal will not remove the retracted article. It will be maintained on the platform.

Advertising Ethics

The Journal accepts advertising and sponsorship of the Journal, according to the following principles:

- All advertisements must clearly and prominently identify the advertiser by trademark or signature.
- Advertising must be factually accurate, and must not be misleading.
- Advertising is separate from editorial content. All advertising must be clearly identifiable as advertising and must not be confused with editorial content in format or appearance.
- Advertisement must not include content or expressions that may disturb the social order.
- Advertisement must not include the risk of defamation, infringement on privacy, damage to credit or obstruction.

- The advertisement must not use names, photographs, comments, trademarks, copyrighted works, etc. without permission from the subject.
- All advertisements are subject to approval of the Journal, which reserves the right to reject or cancel any ad that does not meet the advertising policy of the Society.

No advertisement is available for the webpages.