

Policy Name: Author Conduct Policy for ASCO Publications
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The American Society of Clinical Oncology (collectively with its affiliates, “ASCO”) is dedicated to conquering cancer through research, education, and promotion of the highest quality, equitable patient care. ASCO carries out this mission through publishing a number of peer-reviewed scientific journals and presenting educational content in live, hybrid, print, and online formats. ASCO provides its members and the public with trustworthy information about the latest updates in science and clinical practice to advance high-quality cancer care.

ASCO takes concerns about the integrity of the material submitted, presented, and published very seriously. This Author Conduct Policy for ASCO Publications (“Policy”) applies to authors of abstracts and manuscripts submitted to any ASCO meeting or publication, including the *Journal of Clinical Oncology* family of journals, the ASCO Annual Meeting and the various thematic meetings, including those published as meeting proceedings (“ASCO Publication”). For the sake of clarity, author conduct concerns regarding posters, live presentations, poster discussion sessions, oral discussion or presentation, will also be addressed under this Policy. The Policy sets forth both the responsibilities of such authors, and ASCO’s approach to addressing potential author misconduct when concerns arise both pre and post publication or presentation.

A. Author Responsibilities

The responsibilities of authors who submit and/or publish work in an ASCO Publication include ensuring that content submitted to ASCO accurately represents their original work and that of their co-authors (unless otherwise noted), acknowledging the work of others through appropriate attribution or citation, and reviewing proofs of their manuscripts and other content rigorously and in a timely manner prior to publication online or in print. Where the authors base their manuscripts or presentations on scientific research, the research should meet applicable legal requirements and accepted ethical and scientific standards. Authors are responsible for disclosing relationships in accordance with [ASCO’s Conflict of Interest Policy](#), and for compliance with the submission guidelines and author policies of the applicable place of publication.

Journal Submission Guidelines can be found [here](#).

Meeting Submission Guidelines can be found [here](#).

B. Definition of Author Misconduct

Unless otherwise noted herein, ASCO follows the definitions of authorship and author/researcher misconduct described by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) and the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE). Potential author misconduct could arise from submitted or published abstracts, manuscripts, presentations, articles, or other content. For purposes of this Policy, “Author Misconduct” may include but is not limited to:

- Fabrication or falsification of data;
- Plagiarism, defined according to the COPE as unattributed use of large portions of text and/or data, presented as if they were by the plagiarist, including of ideas, processes, results, or words;
- Redundant publication of content that overlaps substantially with content already published in print or electronic media, undisclosed or otherwise in violation of ASCO submission guidelines;
- Failure to credit an author, including removal of an author without the author’s consent and the consent of other co-authors.
- Inappropriate credit of an author, including adding as a “gift” or “guest” author an individual whose contribution does not meet ASCO’s definition of authorship.*
- Submitting as one’s own work “ghostwritten” manuscripts, where the listed author(s) is unfamiliar with the underlying data and relevant documentation and had minimal or limited input in the development and/or writing of the article;
- Treatment of research subjects in a manner that does not comport with applicable laws or accepted standards of ethics; and
- Failure to disclose relationships in accordance with ASCO’s [Conflict of Interest Policy](#)

Author misconduct does not include honest errors or differences of opinion, which may be managed through the applicable ASCO content errata processes.

C. ASCO Response to Potential Author Misconduct

1. Notice of Potential Misconduct and Response to Complaining Party

A proceeding under this Policy may be initiated in response to a complaint from an ASCO member or a third party. The complaint must be in writing, must disclose the identity of the complaining party, and must set out with reasonable particularity allegations of misconduct that could form a basis for finding a violation of this Policy. Notification of potential Author Misconduct is immediately referred to the ASCO staff leading the Publication or Meeting to which the relevant material was submitted or in which it is published or presented. The individual who notifies ASCO of the potential Misconduct will receive acknowledgement that ASCO has received the notice and will generally not be entitled to any further notice or role in the investigation, except in limited circumstances where he or she is affected personally by the potential Misconduct (e.g., their work was plagiarized). The identity of the complaining party may be disclosed to the author at ASCO’s discretion, unless the complaining party provides ASCO, in writing, with reasonable grounds for not disclosing his or her identity. ASCO strives to maintain the confidentiality of complainants to the extent feasible.

Notification of potential author misconduct may also arise internally, where an ASCO staff member becomes aware of potential author misconduct and alerts the ASCO staff lead of the applicable Publication or Meeting.

2. Author Notification and Investigation

Upon receiving notice of potential Author Misconduct, ASCO publication staff, in consultation with other ASCO staff or legal representatives as needed, will conduct a preliminary assessment of available information concerning the potential Misconduct. Where the material that is the subject of the Misconduct complaint appeared in more than one ASCO venue, such as in a live meeting presentation and a journal abstract or manuscript, ASCO staff will identify a primary individual to lead a coordinated response. The preliminary assessment may include additional communication with the individual who notified ASCO of the potential Misconduct, and the reviewers, editors, and staff members responsible for the abstract, manuscript, presentation, or published material. The initial internal assessment by ASCO may include consultation with the ASCO Ethics Counsel, CEO, CMO, clinical staff or volunteers, or others as needed to assist with technical expertise. If the initial assessment demonstrates that the reported behavior appears to constitute Author Misconduct, ASCO will generally determine that additional inquiry is warranted. If ASCO staff determines that the complaint does not rise to the level of author misconduct, the complaint will be dismissed and no action will be initiated.

If a Misconduct inquiry is launched, ASCO will then notify in writing the author of the claim of potential Misconduct and ask for an explanation. Such notice will set forth the allegations of conduct that may form the basis for action under the Policy and may, at ASCO's sole discretion as needed and where appropriate, include the name of the complaining party or a copy of the complaint. The Author will have 10 (ten) business days in which to respond to the notification and offer any explanation they may wish. Authors may request an additional 15 (fifteen) business days to prepare a response or to collect or assemble information requested by ASCO. The response must be in writing and may be any length, attaching any supporting or explanatory materials that the author(s) feels are relevant. The Author may, but does not need to, consult with private counsel or legal assistance if they wish. The response may be updated with additional information at any time prior to a final determination being made under this Policy. Throughout this process, ASCO will use as reference points algorithms and flow charts suggested by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), which are available online at <http://publicationethics.org/resources/flowcharts>, and requirements set out by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE), which are available online at <http://www.icmje.org/recommendations>.

If no response is received within the initial 10 business days from ASCO's first contact with the author, or if ASCO receives an unsatisfactory response, ASCO will proceed with the inquiry. Next steps will be tailored to the relevant type of content as submitted to ASCO, and may include contacting the corresponding author's institution and co-authors, as appropriate. If the potential Misconduct implicates work published in an outside publication or meeting, ASCO may contact the other journal or publisher. If the potential Misconduct relates to scientific research, ASCO may ask the institution where the research was conducted to provide study data and other information to establish the legitimacy of reported research results. ASCO may also seek outside assistance from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Research Integrity or another appropriate body in the jurisdiction where the research was conducted. If at any point during ASCO's inquiry, an author admits to Misconduct or provides a satisfactory explanation, ASCO

will conclude its inquiry and consider sanctions.

During the inquiry, ASCO may decide to place a notice of concern in connection with the material under inquiry, or in the case of a non-indexed publication, may remove the content pending the outcome of the conduct review. Editorial notices and removal of content pending inquiry are at the sole discretion of ASCO.

3. Review Committee

Some conduct matters may rise to the level of misconduct sanctions beyond editorial notices or removal of content. In such instances, once the author has had an opportunity to respond to the complaint and the inquiry has been completed, ASCO staff and/or publication editors may decide to refer the matter to a Review Committee for a determination and the imposition of sanctions, if appropriate.

The Review Committee will be appointed by the CEO or COO with the advice of ASCO Counsel and will consist of three (3) of the following individuals, as appropriate for the publication and subject matter under review. The individual(s) serving in the named roles during the time that the relevant material was submitted or published by ASCO will generally be selected to serve on the Review Committee:

Editor-in-Chief (EiC) of the applicable ASCO Journal
Associate Editor or other editor at the invitation of the applicable EIC
The JCO Consultant Editor for Meetings Proceedings
The Education Book Editor
The Chair of the Cancer Education Committee
The Chair of the Scientific Program Committee
The Chair of the affected Meeting Steering or Program Committee
The Chair of the Ethics Committee
The Chair of the Cancer Communications Committee

4. Sanctions

If misconduct is verified or admitted, ASCO may apply sanctions against the author(s) at the recommendation of the Review Committee and the discretion of the relevant Editor-in-Chief and Publisher. Sanctions may vary depending upon the severity and nature of the Misconduct. Authors will be notified of any sanctions in writing. Editorial notices and removal of content pending investigation can occur at the sole discretion of ASCO and are not considered findings of misconduct or sanctions.

Sanctions may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Letter of reprimand to author(s) of a submitted or published manuscript;
- b. Notice to author's institution and/or institution where research was conducted;
- c. Restriction on author(s) submitting or publishing in ASCO venues for a specified period of time.
- d. ASCO reserves the right to reject a submitted manuscript, and to retract or publish an erratum or statement of concern about a published article, as appropriate.

D. Application of Policy to ASCO Members

For authors who are ASCO members, Author Misconduct may rise to the level of ASCO's Member Discipline Procedures ("Procedures"). Where an inquiry conducted under this Policy reveals Misconduct by an author who is an ASCO member, the matter will generally be referred to ASCO's Center for Integrity and Law for review in accordance with the Procedures. In certain circumstances, Member Disciplinary proceedings and Author Conduct proceedings may occur in parallel. If ASCO decides to conduct a parallel proceeding, the procedures and timeline of the Member Discipline Procedures will be followed.

* The *Journals* adhere to the guidelines on authorship established by the ICMJE. According to these guidelines, the criteria established for authorship are intended to present an honest account of what took place. Those who have participated in the writing of the manuscript or made substantial intellectual contributions should be included as authors. Entering patients for study or providing funding or administrative oversight are not sufficient for authorship; instead, these contributions should appear in the Acknowledgments section. If someone other than the authors, such as a science writer or corporate employee, has participated in writing the paper, this participation should be disclosed in the Acknowledgments section. If a multicenter group conducted the research, the group should identify a writing committee that accepts direct responsibility for the manuscript.