

*Editorial*

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## Declaration of Interests

All authors are members of the European Association of Science Editors (EASE), K.B. is the Editor in Chief, J.M. is an associate editor and D.N. is member of the Advisory Board of the European Science Editing (ESE).

# Introducing the EASE Interactive Checklist for Submitting Authors

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The European Association of Science Editors (EASE) is an organization dedicated to scientific editing and publishing. It comprises a diverse international community whose members have different backgrounds, linguistic traditions, and professional experiences but share the same goals: improving science and scholarly communication, editing, and publishing.<sup>1</sup>

The European Association of Science Editors is dedicated to making the publishing process easier for all participants in the submission process, producing an evolving series of toolkits, guidelines, and checklists to support consistency in the quality of research publishing for authors, editors, and reviewers.<sup>1</sup> Among the most notable and frequently used materials developed by EASE are the Sex and Gender Equity in Research (SAGER) Guidelines and checklist,<sup>2</sup> the EASE Retraction form,<sup>3</sup> the Peer Review Toolkit,<sup>4</sup> and the EASE Guidelines for Authors and Translators of Scientific Articles to be Published in English.<sup>5</sup> The EASE Guidelines for Authors and Translators are currently being revised into a completely new version titled 'Writing your Research Paper: tips from EASE editors'. The guidelines contain a wider range of useful, up-to-date information and guidance on modern journal publishing aimed at helping authors worldwide communicate their research results through clear, effective writing and data presentation.

In 2020, EASE produced guidance to encourage editors to simplify manuscript submissions through the Quick Check Table for Submissions, which we adopted for use in *European Science Editing*.<sup>6</sup> This table has been translated into 15 languages by members

of EASE, including representatives of its regional chapters.<sup>7</sup>

The European Association of Science Editors also has two long-running forms that assist journals in collecting important information related to articles and authors, namely the EASE Form for Authors' Contributions and Conflict of Interest Disclosure,<sup>8</sup> created in 2015, and the EASE Ethics Checklist for Authors,<sup>9</sup> created in 2018.

With this editorial, we introduce the new EASE Interactive Checklist for Submitting Authors.<sup>10</sup> In keeping with the aims of our Quick Check Table, and to further streamline the experience of submitting papers to *European Science Editing* for our authors, we have merged the 2 existing checklists for submission into one form, namely the EASE Interactive Checklist for Submitting Authors. This new form requests information in a more convenient check-box format, with up-to-date questions and terminology. For example, the term 'Conflict of interest' has been amended to 'Competing interest' to minimize the implication of negative behaviour by replacing it with a more neutral indication of the author's situation.

The new EASE Interactive Checklist is provided in an editable Word document format (\*.docx; <https://ease.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/EASE-Interactive-Checklist-for-Submitting-Authors.docx>) to increase accessibility and enable easy completion by the corresponding and signing co-authors. The checklist has 4 components:

Form 1. Details of the manuscript under submission.

Form 2. Name and roles of each contributing author.

Form 3. Competing interest statements for all relevant authors.

Form 4. Ethics checklist.

The section on submission details requests basic information: journal title, manuscript title, and details of the corresponding author. The authors' contributions form now follows Contributor Roles Taxonomy (CRediT).<sup>11</sup> The competing interests section has been simplified and made into a separate form to make it easier to complete, with space to provide details of entities with which the author has had any relationships. The ethics checklist now includes information about preprints and the use of generative AI in text and image creation.<sup>12</sup>

Journals play a vital role in ensuring the ethical integrity of research communications. Good-quality journals help to foster trust in the work they publish and in the research process by promoting best practices and high standards among their communities of readers, authors, reviewers, and beyond. The information requested in the submission process, through forms such as those created by EASE, captures information that assures journal editors and readers that the research has been conducted in keeping with relevant established guidelines, policies, and ethical standards and promotes greater recognition, equity, fairness, and accountability in authorship.

We encourage all journal editors to consider adopting the new EASE Interactive Checklist for Submitting Authors. We hope they will find it useful in their own work and in making

it easier for authors when submitting their manuscripts.

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