

Correspondence

Received: 15 Mar 2022

Accepted: 23 Mar 2022

Published: 15 Apr 2022

Competing interests

The author declares no conflicts of interest of relevance to this topic.

Academia's challenges in the face of the 2022 Russia-Ukraine war

Jaime A. Teixeira da Silva ✉

Independent Researcher, Japan

jaimetex@yahoo.com



This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0).

Citation

Teixeira da Silva JA. Academia's challenges in the face of the 2022 Russia-Ukraine war. *Eur Sci Ed.* 2022;48:e83864.

<https://doi.org/10.3897/ese.2022.e83864>

Dear *European Science Editing* Editors,

The European Union (EU) is at an unprecedented historical crossroad with the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine on its Eastern border. In this geo-politically complex part of the world, where European and post-Soviet value systems battle for ideological survival, to sustain geo-political and cultural influence, academics in EU and non-EU states, as well as in Russia and in post-Soviet Republics, will be most affected.

As a result of the 2022 Russia-Ukraine war, Ukrainian academia will suffer. Several Ukrainian state universities have already been bombed, such as Sumy State University and Kharkiv State University. Absent socio-political stability, it is difficult to realistically envision a quick return to peace-time academic activities. Ukrainian academia has thus been set back and disadvantaged.

Russian academics might face consequences as a direct result of international sanctions while parties associated with Russian universities, or collaborating with Russian scientists, might also be affected. For example, Russian academics might be banned from submissions to journals published by nations that have imposed bans.

The most obvious assistance that academics can offer is humanitarian, especially to Ukrainian refugees. Although there is anti-war support and calls to target funding, collaborations, and the involvement of Russian scientists in global academic

participation,¹ it is important not to overly politicize viewpoints and to treat academic issues as “neutrally” as possible.

In one case, the Editor-in-Chief and Editors of an Elsevier journal title, *Journal of Molecular Structure*, have temporarily banned the submission of papers by Russian academics at Russian state universities.² This suggests that academia is divided about whether to continue support of, or ban, Russian academics and/or institutes. However, the precedent set by that Elsevier journal does not seem to have gained traction among other journals and publishers.³ This may pit editorial freedom and independence against publishers' moral/ethical stance and legal responsibilities.

This becomes increasingly important for COPE member journals,⁴ who need to provide a moral and practical explanation for their position, even more so if they are open access journals that collect article processing fees (APCs) from Russian academics. This is because such funding might be perceived as a form of financial support of the Russian state. It is unclear if receiving money from Russians or Russian-based publishers or institutions would violate any international laws pertaining to economic sanctions. The *BMJ* has opted for opposing sanctions.⁵

Passionate debate is needed.

References

1. Gaid N, Else H. Global Research Community Condemns Russian Invasion of Ukraine [Internet].

Nature News; 2022 Mar 1. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-022-00601-w>.

2. Statement from the Editors of the Journal of Molecular Structure [Internet]. Journal of Molecular Structure; 2022 Mar 18. Available from: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/journal-of-molecular-structure/about/editors-policy-on-submissions-from-russian-federation-institutions>.

3. Brainard J. Few Journals Heed Calls to Boycott Russian Papers [Internet]. Science; 2022 Mar 10. Available from: <https://www.science.org/content/article/few-journals-heed-calls-boycott-russian-papers>; <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.adb1981>.

4. COPE Members. "Russia" [Internet]. COPE. [accessed 2022 Mar 18]. Available from: <https://publicationethics.org/members?t=&country%5B%5D=236&sort=score>.

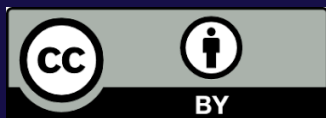
5. Abbassi K. 2022. Russia's war: Why the BMJ opposes an academic boycott. *BMJ*. 2022;376:o613.

ease / publications

ese / European Science Editing

European Science Editing is an official publication of EASE. It is an open access peer-reviewed journal that publishes original research, review and commentary on all aspects of scientific, scholarly editing and publishing.

<https://ese.arphahub.com/>
<https://www.ease.org.uk>
https://twitter.com/Eur_Sci_Ed
<https://www.linkedin.com/company/easeeditors/>



© 2022 the authors. This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.